
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TEACHER HOUSING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that approximately ten
2 per cent of the State's teachers switch schools, relocate, or
3 leave the profession each year. Only fifty to sixty per cent of
4 current teachers have been at their school for five years or
5 more. Chronic teacher turnover forces the department of
6 education to rely on emergency hires and substitute teachers to
7 fill vacancies. The legislature further finds that teacher
8 recruitment and retention are especially difficult at hard-to-
9 staff schools.

10 The legislature additionally finds that Hawaii's high cost
11 of living is a significant contributing factor in the department
12 of education's teacher recruitment and retention efforts.

13 According to a WalletHub study, Hawaii ranked fifty-first out of
14 fifty states and the District of Columbia for starting teacher
15 salary and median teacher salary, adjusted for cost of living.

16 The purpose of this Act is to alleviate the financial
17 burden on teachers and improve teacher recruitment and retention



1 by establishing a teacher housing assistance program to provide
2 housing vouchers to qualified full-time teachers who are
3 employed by the department of education or a charter school and
4 teach at a hard to staff school, as determined by the
5 department, including public charter schools.

6 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended by adding a new section to subpart E, part III to be
8 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

9 **"S302A- Teacher housing assistance program.** (a) There
10 is established a teacher housing assistance program to be
11 administered by the department to provide housing vouchers to
12 eligible teachers. If the number of applications exceeds the
13 number of available housing vouchers, housing vouchers shall be
14 provided to eligible teachers through a lottery process.

15 (b) A housing voucher provided under this section shall be
16 used for:

17 (1) Rent for the eligible teacher's primary residence;
18 (2) Mortgage payments for the eligible teacher's primary
19 residence; or



1 (3) Down payment on residential real property; provided
2 that the property shall be the eligible teacher's
3 primary residence.

4 (c) A housing voucher shall not exceed \$700 per month or
5 the eligible teacher's monthly rent or mortgage payment,
6 whichever is less. A housing voucher granted pursuant to this
7 section shall be applicable for one year. The voucher shall be
8 renewable for one additional year.

9 (d) Upon the establishment of the teacher housing
10 assistance program, the department shall develop an application
11 procedure and processes, procedures, and forms necessary to
12 implement and maintain the program. The department shall work
13 with the state public charter school commission to develop a
14 process to verify that an eligible charter school teacher
15 satisfies the criteria listed in subsection (j).

16 (e) Applications for housing vouchers shall be made to the
17 department and contain the information required by rules adopted
18 by the department. At a minimum, the applicant shall:

19 (1) Be an eligible teacher;
20 (2) Agree to use state funds exclusively for the purposes
21 of this section;



1 (3) Indicate capability to properly use the voucher for
2 the purposes of this section;
3 (4) Comply with other requirements as the department may
4 require;
5 (5) Comply with all applicable federal, state, and county
6 laws, rules, and ordinances;
7 (6) Agree to indemnify and save harmless the State and its
8 officers, agents, and employees from and against any
9 and all claims arising out of or resulting from the
10 use of vouchers pursuant to this section, and procure
11 sufficient insurance to provide this indemnification
12 if requested to do so by the department; and
13 (7) Agree to make available to the department all records
14 the applicant may have relating to the voucher, to
15 allow state agencies to monitor the applicant's
16 compliance with this section.
17 (f) If a voucher recipient fails to satisfy the work
18 requirements in accordance with subsection (j) (4), the recipient
19 shall repay the total amount of voucher funds received as a loan
20 repayable to the department. The repayment shall be subject to
21 the terms and conditions set by the department, including



1 circumstances under which recipients may be eligible for
2 deferment or forgiveness due to hardship or inability to secure
3 employment and potential fees relating to the collection of
4 delinquent repayment.

5 (g) Voucher funds repaid by the voucher recipient pursuant
6 to subsection (f) shall be deposited into the teachers' housing
7 revolving fund established pursuant to section 302A-833.

8 (h) In accordance with chapter 103D, the department may
9 enter into written contracts with collection agencies to collect
10 delinquent repayment of vouchers owed to the department pursuant
11 to subsection (f). A collection agency that enters into a
12 written contract with the department to collect delinquent
13 voucher repayments pursuant to this section may collect a fee
14 from the debtor in accordance with the terms of, and up to the
15 amounts authorized in, the written contract.

16 (i) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
17 to effectuate the purpose of this section.

18 (j) For the purposes of this section, "eligible teacher"
19 means a person who:

20 (1) Is a full-time teacher;



- 1 (2) Has taught at a public school or public charter school
- 2 in the State for at least one year before the
- 3 application date;
- 4 (3) Is employed by the department or a public charter
- 5 school;
- 6 (4) Commits to teach at a hard-to-staff school, as
- 7 determined by the department, or a public charter
- 8 school for no less than five consecutive years;
- 9 (5) Resides in the State;
- 10 (6) Does not own, operate, rent, or control any
- 11 residential real property in addition to the eligible
- 12 teacher's primary residence for which the housing
- 13 voucher is sought; and
- 14 (7) Has a household income below eighty per cent of the
- 15 area median income."

16 SECTION 3. Section 302A-833, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

18 "(b) The revolving fund may be used by the department of
19 education for any and all of the purposes of teachers' housing,
20 including the [planning,]:



1 (1) Planning, construction, maintenance, and operation of
2 teachers' housing[, ~~as well as for the salaries];~~
3 (2) Teacher housing assistance program pursuant to section
4 302A- ; and
5 (3) Salaries of the necessary personnel in charge
6 thereof."

7 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the teachers'
8 housing revolving fund the sum of \$ or so much thereof
9 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the provision
10 of housing vouchers through the teacher housing assistance
11 program established by this Act.

12 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
13 education for the purposes of this Act.

14 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
15 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

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INTRODUCED BY:

frank
JAN 23 2026



H.B. NO. 2122

Report Title:

Teacher Housing Assistance Program; Teacher Recruitment and Retention; Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the Teacher Housing Assistance Program to provide housing vouchers to certain eligible teachers. Appropriates funds out of the Teachers' Housing Revolving Fund.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

