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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DISASTER SERVICES.

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

1 PART I

2 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that one in five Hawaii  
3 residents has a disability, and many require functional or  
4 access support before, during, and after disasters. These  
5 individuals often encounter disproportionate risks, including  
6 difficulty evacuating without proper supports; lack of  
7 accessible transportation; barriers to receiving emergency  
8 alerts and evacuation orders in formats that they can  
9 understand; and obstacles in accessing shelters, emergency  
10 medical care, and post-disaster relief programs, such as  
11 housing, food, and financial assistance.

12 The legislature further finds that in the immediate  
13 aftermath of the 2023, Maui wildfires, many individuals with  
14 disabilities faced significant impediments to accessing  
15 emergency shelters and services. Shelters often lacked physical  
16 accessibility, disability-trained staff, and coordinated  
17 resources to address medical and functional needs. Nonprofit



1 organizations and community members stepped in to fill these  
2 gaps; however, the lack of a planned, coordinated response by  
3 state and county agencies highlighted systemic inequities in  
4 disaster preparedness and response for individuals with  
5 disabilities.

6 The legislature additionally finds that although the  
7 legislature passed Act 210, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, to  
8 establish a limited English proficiency language access  
9 coordinator within the Hawaii emergency management agency, that  
10 position addresses only the needs of limited English proficient  
11 individuals under state and federal language access laws.  
12 Importantly, American Sign Language does not fall under the  
13 language access law, as American Sign Language is not a foreign  
14 language but a distinct language of the deaf community. The  
15 rights of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or  
16 have other disabilities fall within the scope of the Americans  
17 with Disabilities Act, not language access statutes.

18 Accordingly, there remains a critical gap in disaster  
19 services planning and response for individuals with  
20 disabilities, including those who use American Sign Language and  
21 those with access and functional needs. A disability



1 integration specialist position, serving as the State's  
2 emergency management specialist within the Hawaii emergency  
3 management agency, is necessary to ensure compliance with the  
4 Americans with Disabilities Act and related federal and state  
5 disability laws, coordinate disability-related planning, advise  
6 on current best and promising practices, and guarantee  
7 accessible disaster services for all individuals with  
8 disabilities and access and functional needs.

9 Furthermore, the legislature finds that section 308 of the  
10 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act  
11 (Stafford Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended) requires entities  
12 receiving Federal Emergency Management Agency funding to ensure  
13 equitable access to disaster services for individuals with  
14 disabilities. Federal Emergency Management Agency guidance also  
15 requires disability integration throughout emergency management,  
16 emphasizing planning, preparedness, response, recovery, and  
17 mitigation.

18 Therefore, the purpose of this part is to:

- 19 (1) Add disability- and access-and-functional-needs-  
20 related planning, preparedness, response, recovery,



1 and mitigation to the designated functions of the  
2 Hawaii emergency management agency; and  
3 (2) Appropriate funds to the Hawaii emergency management  
4 agency for the establishment of a disability  
5 integration specialist, who shall serve as the  
6 emergency management specialist and provide  
7 programming support for disability and access and  
8 functional needs community projects that promote  
9 accessibility, inclusion, and equity in disaster  
10 management.

11 SECTION 2. Section 76-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
12 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

13 "(b) The civil service to which this chapter applies shall  
14 comprise all positions in the State now existing or hereafter  
15 established and embrace all personal services performed for the  
16 State, except the following:

17 (1) Commissioned and enlisted personnel of the Hawaii  
18 National Guard and positions in the Hawaii National  
19 Guard that are required by state or federal laws or  
20 regulations or orders of the National Guard to be  
21 filled from those commissioned or enlisted personnel;



- 1 (2) Positions filled by persons employed by contract where  
2 the director of human resources development has  
3 certified that the service is special or unique or is  
4 essential to the public interest and that, because of  
5 circumstances surrounding its fulfillment, personnel  
6 to perform the service cannot be obtained through  
7 normal civil service recruitment procedures. Any  
8 contract may be for any period not exceeding one year;
- 9 (3) Positions that must be filled without delay to comply  
10 with a court order or decree if the director  
11 determines that recruitment through normal recruitment  
12 civil service procedures would result in delay or  
13 noncompliance, such as the Felix-Cayetano consent  
14 decree;
- 15 (4) Positions filled by the legislature or by either house  
16 or any committee thereof;
- 17 (5) Employees in the office of the governor and office of  
18 the lieutenant governor, and household employees at  
19 Washington Place;
- 20 (6) Positions filled by popular vote;



- 1 (7) Department heads, officers, and members of any board,  
2 commission, or other state agency whose appointments  
3 are made by the governor or are required by law to be  
4 confirmed by the senate;
- 5 (8) Judges, referees, receivers, masters, jurors, notaries  
6 public, land court examiners, court commissioners, and  
7 attorneys appointed by a state court for a special  
8 temporary service;
- 9 (9) One bailiff for the chief justice of the supreme court  
10 who shall have the powers and duties of a court  
11 officer and bailiff under section 606-14; one  
12 secretary or clerk for each justice of the supreme  
13 court, each judge of the intermediate appellate court,  
14 and each judge of the circuit court; one secretary for  
15 the judicial council; one deputy administrative  
16 director of the courts; three law clerks for the chief  
17 justice of the supreme court, two law clerks for each  
18 associate justice of the supreme court and each judge  
19 of the intermediate appellate court, one law clerk for  
20 each judge of the circuit court, two additional law  
21 clerks for the civil administrative judge of the



1 circuit court of the first circuit, two additional law  
2 clerks for the criminal administrative judge of the  
3 circuit court of the first circuit, one additional law  
4 clerk for the senior judge of the family court of the  
5 first circuit, two additional law clerks for the civil  
6 motions judge of the circuit court of the first  
7 circuit, two additional law clerks for the criminal  
8 motions judge of the circuit court of the first  
9 circuit, and two law clerks for the administrative  
10 judge of the district court of the first circuit; and  
11 one private secretary for the administrative director  
12 of the courts, the deputy administrative director of  
13 the courts, each department head, each deputy or first  
14 assistant, and each additional deputy, or assistant  
15 deputy, or assistant defined in paragraph (16);  
16 (10) First deputy and deputy attorneys general, the  
17 administrative services manager of the department of  
18 the attorney general, one secretary for the  
19 administrative services manager, an administrator and  
20 any support staff for the criminal and juvenile



1 justice resources coordination functions, and law  
2 clerks;

3 (11) (A) Teachers, principals, vice-principals, complex  
4 area superintendents, deputy and assistant  
5 superintendents, other certificated personnel,  
6 and no more than twenty noncertificated  
7 administrative, professional, and technical  
8 personnel not engaged in instructional work;

9 (B) Effective July 1, 2003, teaching assistants,  
10 educational assistants, bilingual or bicultural  
11 school-home assistants, school psychologists,  
12 psychological examiners, speech pathologists,  
13 athletic health care trainers, alternative school  
14 work study assistants, alternative school  
15 educational or supportive services specialists,  
16 alternative school project coordinators, and  
17 communications aides in the department of  
18 education;

19 (C) The special assistant to the state librarian and  
20 one secretary for the special assistant to the  
21 state librarian; and



1 (D) Members of the faculty of the university of  
2 Hawaii, including research workers, extension  
3 agents, personnel engaged in instructional work,  
4 and administrative, professional, and technical  
5 personnel of the university;

6 (12) Employees engaged in special, research, or  
7 demonstration projects approved by the governor;

8 (13) (A) Positions filled by inmates, patients of state  
9 institutions, and persons with severe physical or  
10 mental disabilities participating in the work  
11 experience training programs;

12 (B) Positions filled with students in accordance with  
13 guidelines for established state employment  
14 programs; and

15 (C) Positions that provide work experience training  
16 or temporary public service employment that are  
17 filled by persons entering the workforce or  
18 persons transitioning into other careers under  
19 programs such as the federal Workforce Investment  
20 Act of 1998, as amended, or the Senior Community  
21 Service Employment Program of the Employment and



- 1                    Training Administration of the United States  
2                    Department of Labor, or under other similar state  
3                    programs;
- 4        (14)    A custodian or guide at Iolani Palace, the Royal  
5                    Mausoleum, and Hulihee Palace;
- 6        (15)    Positions filled by persons employed on a fee,  
7                    contract, or piecework basis, who may lawfully perform  
8                    their duties concurrently with their private business  
9                    or profession or other private employment and whose  
10                    duties require only a portion of their time, if it is  
11                    impracticable to ascertain or anticipate the portion  
12                    of time to be devoted to the service of the State;
- 13        (16)    Positions of first deputies or first assistants of  
14                    each department head appointed under or in the manner  
15                    provided in section 6, article V, of the Hawaii State  
16                    Constitution; three additional deputies or assistants  
17                    either in charge of the highways, harbors, and  
18                    airports divisions or other functions within the  
19                    department of transportation as may be assigned by the  
20                    director of transportation, with the approval of the  
21                    governor; one additional deputy in the department of



1 human services either in charge of welfare or other  
2 functions within the department as may be assigned by  
3 the director of human services; four additional  
4 deputies in the department of health, each in charge  
5 of one of the following: behavioral health,  
6 environmental health, hospitals, and health resources  
7 administration, including other functions within the  
8 department as may be assigned by the director of  
9 health, with the approval of the governor; two  
10 additional deputies in charge of the law enforcement  
11 programs, administration, or other functions within  
12 the department of law enforcement as may be assigned  
13 by the director of law enforcement, with the approval  
14 of the governor; three additional deputies each in  
15 charge of the correctional institutions,  
16 rehabilitation services and programs, and  
17 administration or other functions within the  
18 department of corrections and rehabilitation as may be  
19 assigned by the director of corrections and  
20 rehabilitation, with the approval of the governor; two  
21 administrative assistants to the state librarian; and



- 1 an administrative assistant to the superintendent of  
2 education;
- 3 (17) Positions specifically exempted from this part by any  
4 other law; provided that:
- 5 (A) Any exemption created after July 1, 2014, shall  
6 expire three years after its enactment unless  
7 affirmatively extended by an act of the  
8 legislature; and
- 9 (B) All of the positions defined by paragraph (9)  
10 shall be included in the position classification  
11 plan;
- 12 (18) Positions in the state foster grandparent program and  
13 positions for temporary employment of senior citizens  
14 in occupations in which there is a severe personnel  
15 shortage or in special projects;
- 16 (19) Household employees at the official residence of the  
17 president of the university of Hawaii;
- 18 (20) Employees in the department of education engaged in  
19 the supervision of students during meal periods in the  
20 distribution, collection, and counting of meal



- 1 tickets, and in the cleaning of classrooms after  
2 school hours on a less than half-time basis;
- 3 (21) Employees hired under the tenant hire program of the  
4 Hawaii public housing authority; provided that no more  
5 than twenty-six per cent of the authority's workforce  
6 in any housing project maintained or operated by the  
7 authority shall be hired under the tenant hire  
8 program;
- 9 (22) Positions of the federally funded expanded food and  
10 nutrition program of the university of Hawaii that  
11 require the hiring of nutrition program assistants who  
12 live in the areas they serve;
- 13 (23) Positions filled by persons with severe disabilities  
14 who are certified by the state vocational  
15 rehabilitation office that they are able to perform  
16 safely the duties of the positions;
- 17 (24) The sheriff;
- 18 (25) A gender and other fairness coordinator hired by the  
19 judiciary;
- 20 (26) Positions in the Hawaii National Guard youth and adult  
21 education programs;



- 1 (27) In the Hawaii state energy office in the department of  
2 business, economic development, and tourism, all  
3 energy program managers, energy program specialists,  
4 energy program assistants, and energy analysts;
- 5 (28) Administrative appeals hearing officers in the  
6 department of human services;
- 7 (29) In the Med-QUEST division of the department of human  
8 services, the division administrator, finance officer,  
9 health care services branch administrator, medical  
10 director, and clinical standards administrator;
- 11 (30) In the director's office of the department of human  
12 services, the enterprise officer, information security  
13 and privacy compliance officer, security and privacy  
14 compliance engineer, security and privacy compliance  
15 analyst, information technology implementation  
16 manager, assistant information technology  
17 implementation manager, resource manager, community or  
18 project development director, policy director, special  
19 assistant to the director, and limited English  
20 proficiency project manager or coordinator;



- 1 (31) The Alzheimer's disease and related dementia services  
2 coordinator in the executive office on aging;
- 3 (32) In the Hawaii emergency management agency, the  
4 executive officer, public information officer, civil  
5 defense administrative officer, branch chiefs,  
6 disability integration specialist, and emergency  
7 operations center state warning point personnel;  
8 provided that for state warning point personnel, the  
9 director shall determine that recruitment through  
10 normal civil service recruitment procedures would  
11 result in delay or noncompliance;
- 12 (33) The executive director and seven full-time  
13 administrative positions of the school facilities  
14 authority;
- 15 (34) Positions in the Mauna Kea stewardship and oversight  
16 authority;
- 17 (35) In the office of homeland security of the department  
18 of law enforcement, the statewide interoperable  
19 communications coordinator;
- 20 (36) In the social services division of the department of  
21 human services, the business technology analyst;



- 1 (37) The executive director and staff of the 911 board;
- 2 (38) The software developer supervisor and senior software
- 3 developers in the department of taxation;
- 4 (39) In the department of law enforcement, five Commission
- 5 on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.,
- 6 coordinator positions;
- 7 (40) The state fire marshal and deputy state fire marshal
- 8 in the office of the state fire marshal;
- 9 (41) The administrator for the law enforcement standards
- 10 board;
- 11 (42) In the office of the director of taxation, the data
- 12 privacy officer and tax business analysts; and
- 13 [+] (43) [+] All positions filled by the Hawaii tourism authority
- 14 within the department of business, economic
- 15 development, and tourism.

16 The director shall determine the applicability of this  
 17 section to specific positions.

18 Nothing in this section shall be deemed to affect the civil  
 19 service status of any incumbent as it existed on July 1, 1955."

20 SECTION 3. Section 127A-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
 21 amended by amending subsection (e) to read as follows:



1           "(e) The agency shall perform emergency management  
2 functions within the territorial limits of the State. In  
3 performing its duties, the agency shall:

4           (1) Prepare a state comprehensive emergency management  
5 plan, which shall be integrated into and coordinated  
6 with the emergency management plans of the federal  
7 government. The plan shall be integrated by a  
8 continuous, integrated comprehensive emergency  
9 management program. The plan shall contain provisions  
10 to ensure that the State prepares for, mitigates  
11 against, responds to, and recovers from emergencies  
12 and minor, major, and catastrophic disasters. In  
13 preparing and maintaining the plan, the agency shall  
14 work closely with agencies and organizations with  
15 emergency management responsibilities;

16           (2) Assign lead and support responsibilities to state  
17 agencies and personnel for emergency management  
18 functions and other support activities;

19           (3) Adopt standards and requirements for county emergency  
20 management plans. The standards and requirements  
21 shall ensure that county plans are coordinated and



- 1 consistent with the state comprehensive emergency  
2 management plan;
- 3 (4) Make recommendations to the legislature, building code  
4 organizations, and counties for zoning, building, and  
5 other land use controls; and other preparedness,  
6 prevention, and mitigation measures designed to  
7 eliminate emergencies or reduce their impact;
- 8 (5) Anticipate trends and promote innovations that will  
9 enhance the emergency management system;
- 10 (6) Institute statewide public awareness programs. This  
11 shall include intensive public educational campaigns  
12 on emergency preparedness issues, including but not  
13 limited to the personal responsibility of individual  
14 citizens to be self-sufficient for up to fourteen days  
15 following a natural or human-caused disaster;
- 16 (7) Coordinate federal, state, and local emergency  
17 management activities and take all other steps,  
18 including the partial or full mobilization of  
19 emergency management forces and organizations in  
20 advance of an actual emergency, to ensure the  
21 availability of adequately trained and equipped forces



1 of emergency management personnel before, during, and  
2 after emergencies and disasters;

3 (8) Implement training programs to improve the ability of  
4 state and local emergency management personnel to  
5 prepare and implement emergency management plans and  
6 programs. This shall include a continuous training  
7 program for agencies and individuals that will be  
8 called on to perform key roles in state and local  
9 post-disaster response and recovery efforts and for  
10 local government personnel on federal and state post-  
11 disaster response and recovery strategies and  
12 procedures;

13 (9) Adopt standards and requirements for state agency  
14 emergency operating procedures and periodically review  
15 emergency operating procedures of state agencies and  
16 recommend revisions as needed to ensure consistency  
17 with the state comprehensive emergency management plan  
18 and program; ~~and~~

19 (10) Coordinate, in advance whenever possible, such  
20 executive orders, proclamations, and rules for  
21 issuance by the governor as are necessary or



- 1 appropriate for coping with emergencies and  
2 disasters[-]; and
- 3 (11) Ensure compliance with paragraphs (1) to (10), the  
4 Americans with Disabilities Act, and related federal  
5 and state disability access laws by:
- 6 (A) Integrating the needs of individuals with  
7 disabilities and others with access and  
8 functional needs into emergency planning,  
9 preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation  
10 activities, including accessible and alternative  
11 communication formats and series to ensure  
12 effective communication in all phases of disaster  
13 management;
- 14 (B) Advising on accessibility requirements and  
15 current best and promising practices for  
16 emergency shelters, evacuation procedures, and  
17 disaster communications;
- 18 (C) Supporting continuity of preparedness and  
19 response in all counties across the State; and
- 20 (D) Interfacing with disability advocacy  
21 organizations, service providers, and community





1 SECTION 5. The legislature finds that household emergency  
2 preparedness is a critical element of statewide resilience and  
3 continuity during hurricanes, floods, wildfires, earthquakes,  
4 tsunamis, pandemics, supply chain disruptions, and other  
5 emergencies. The State is geographically remote and faces  
6 heightened risk from delays in external response and support  
7 during major disasters, increasing the importance of household  
8 self-sufficiency and advance readiness.

9 The legislature further finds that the Hawaii emergency  
10 management agency (HIEMA) recommends that households maintain a  
11 fourteen-day supply of essential emergency supplies, including  
12 food, water, and regularly used medications.

13 Only twelve per cent of households statewide appear to meet  
14 the fourteen-day standard. Indeed, household preparedness  
15 varies across counties; estimates of full adherence to the  
16 fourteen-day standard include approximately 11.5 per cent in the  
17 city and county of Honolulu, 19.5 per cent in the county of  
18 Hawaii, 8.9 per cent in Maui county, and 8.5 per cent in Kauai  
19 county. Also, many households perceive themselves as prepared  
20 while not meeting the fourteen-day standard, indicating a



1 substantial gap between perceived preparedness and actual  
2 readiness.

3 The legislature further finds that reported barriers to  
4 meeting the fourteen-day standard include limited storage space  
5 and lack of information, among other constraints. Also, limited  
6 public awareness of the fourteen-day standard remains a key  
7 obstacle.

8 The legislature further finds that households that are  
9 aware of HIEMA's updated fourteen-day recommendation and  
10 households that are familiar with general preparedness  
11 guidelines are more likely to be prepared and to comply with  
12 recommended stockpiling for water, food, and medical supplies.

13 The legislature further finds that residents' preferred  
14 channels for receiving preparedness information differ by age  
15 group, supporting the need for a coordinated, multi-channel  
16 communications strategy, including television for older groups  
17 and internet news and social media for younger groups. Research  
18 recommends a statewide multi-media communications plan and  
19 strategy, including television, internet, radio, and mobile  
20 applications, to raise public awareness of HIEMA's recommended



1 fourteen-day supply of household emergency food, water, and  
2 medicine.

3 The purpose of this part is to strengthen public readiness  
4 by directing the Hawaii emergency management agency to develop  
5 and implement a comprehensive communications plan, strategy, and  
6 related media assets to educate and motivate residents to  
7 maintain a fourteen-day supply of food, water, and essential  
8 medications, using culturally appropriate, accessible, and  
9 multilingual materials to meet the language access needs of  
10 residents with limited English proficiency, and to evaluate and  
11 report progress to the legislature.

12 SECTION 6. Chapter 127A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
13 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
14 and to read as follows:

15 **"§127A-A Fourteen-day emergency preparedness**  
16 **communications program.** (a) The agency shall develop and  
17 implement by July 1, 2027, a statewide public education and  
18 communications program to increase household preparedness  
19 consistent with the agency's fourteen-day essential supplies  
20 recommendation for food, water, and regularly used medications.



1        (b) The program shall include the development of a  
2 comprehensive communications plan and the creation and  
3 dissemination of related media assets. At a minimum, the plan  
4 shall:

5        (1) Identify priority audiences, with attention to  
6 populations disproportionately impacted by disasters,  
7 including but not limited to households with low  
8 incomes, kupuna, persons with disabilities or access  
9 and functional needs, medically vulnerable  
10 individuals, and communities with limited English  
11 proficiency;

12        (2) Provide clear, actionable guidance on how households  
13 can build and maintain a fourteen-day supply through  
14 phased and affordable steps, including messaging that  
15 supports dignity, practicality, and realistic  
16 household budgeting, and that addresses commonly  
17 reported barriers including limited storage space and  
18 information gaps;

19        (3) Include culturally relevant and multilingual  
20 communications materials appropriate for statewide



1           use, including in formats accessible to persons with  
2           disabilities;

3           (4) Specify and operationalize a statewide multi-media  
4           dissemination strategy, including television, internet  
5           news sites, social media platforms, local radio, and  
6           mobile-based communications, and tailor channel  
7           emphasis to documented age-group preferences;

8           (5) Establish a coordinated dissemination schedule for  
9           year-round outreach and targeted outreach during  
10           seasonal risk periods;

11           (6) Strengthen and expand practical information pathways  
12           for preparedness guidance, including:

13           (A) Maintaining and promoting updated preparedness  
14           content on the agency's website;

15           (B) Increasing enrollment in emergency information  
16           updates and alerts;

17           (C) Equipping state and county agencies and community  
18           partners with co-branded toolkits to support  
19           diffusion through trusted community ties; and



1            (D) Incorporating in-person or virtual informational  
2            meetings as appropriate for priority audiences;  
3            and

4            (7) Include an evaluation framework with measurable  
5            outcomes, including baseline and follow-up measures  
6            of:

7            (A) Public awareness of the agency's fourteen-day  
8            recommendation;

9            (B) Familiarity with emergency preparedness  
10           guidelines; and

11           (C) The share of households meeting the fourteen-day  
12           readiness threshold for water, food, and medical  
13           supplies, including the share meeting the  
14           threshold for all essential supplies combined, to  
15           the extent feasible.

16           (c) Media assets developed under this section may include  
17 but shall not be limited to:

18           (1) Public service announcements for radio, television,  
19           and digital platforms;

20           (2) Print-ready and digital graphics, fact sheets,  
21           checklists, and household planning templates;



- 1        (3) A fourteen-day readiness social media and partner  
2                    communications toolkit for organizations and agencies;
- 3        (4) Short instructional videos and multilingual audio  
4                    content; and
- 5        (5) Templates that counties, community partners, and state  
6                    agencies may co-brand for consistent statewide  
7                    messaging.
- 8        (d) The agency may consult and coordinate with relevant  
9                    state and county agencies and community partners to implement  
10                   this section, including but not limited to the department of  
11                   health; The department of education; The department of human  
12                   services; The office of Hawaiian affairs; and county emergency  
13                   management agencies, as appropriate.
- 14        (e) The agency shall incorporate targeted communications  
15                   that emphasize region-specific emergency preparedness  
16                   recommendations and community-based practices, and may implement  
17                   multimedia communications and georeferenced maps to attract  
18                   public attention to the urgent need for households to adhere to  
19                   the agency's fourteen-day recommendations; provided that  
20                   outreach should include multilingual strategies and



1 community-based information sessions appropriate for the State's  
2 diverse populations."

3 SECTION 7. (a) The Hawaii emergency management agency  
4 shall submit a report to the legislature on the implementation  
5 and outcomes of this part no later than twenty days prior to the  
6 convening of each regular session beginning in 2028 and  
7 continuing through 2030.

8 (b) The report shall include, at a minimum:

- 9 (1) The comprehensive communications plan developed  
10 pursuant to section 127A-A(b), Hawaii Revised  
11 Statutes, including any updates made during the  
12 reporting period;
- 13 (2) A summary of media assets produced and dissemination  
14 activities conducted, including the channels used and  
15 the frequency and timing of dissemination;
- 16 (3) A list of partner organizations engaged and the roles  
17 of each partner in dissemination, including use of  
18 co-branded toolkits and informational sessions;
- 19 (4) Progress measures, including baseline and follow-up  
20 indicators for:



- 1 (A) Statewide and county-level public awareness of
- 2 the Hawaii emergency management agency's
- 3 fourteen-day essential supplies recommendation;
- 4 (B) Familiarity with emergency preparedness
- 5 guidelines; and
- 6 (C) Statewide and county-level estimates of household
- 7 preparedness and compliance relative to the
- 8 fourteen-day recommendation for water, food, and
- 9 medical supplies, including the share meeting the
- 10 fourteen-day threshold for all essential supplies
- 11 combined, to the extent feasible;
- 12 (5) A summary of barriers to emergency preparedness
- 13 identified through evaluation activities and actions
- 14 taken to address those barriers;
- 15 (6) A description of how messaging and outreach were
- 16 targeted or tailored by county or audience segment,
- 17 including multilingual and accessibility measures, and
- 18 use of region-specific communications tools, if
- 19 implemented;
- 20 (7) Expenditures of any appropriated funds and any other
- 21 resources used to implement this part; and



1 (8) Recommendations for sustaining, improving, or  
2 expanding the fourteen-day emergency preparedness  
3 communications program.

4 (c) The Hawaii emergency management agency shall make the  
5 report publicly available on its website no later than ten  
6 business days after submission to the legislature.

7 SECTION 8. There is appropriated out of the general  
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
9 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to  
10 implement this part, including planning, community engagement,  
11 production of media assets, translation and accessibility  
12 services, evaluation, and outreach distribution costs.

13 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii  
14 emergency management agency for the purposes of this part.

15 PART III

16 SECTION 9. The purpose of this part is to:

17 (1) Require the governor or mayor of a county to provide  
18 an American Sign Language interpreter during each  
19 official announcement broadcast via television or the  
20 Internet during a state of emergency;



1 (2) Require the governor or mayor of a county to ensure,  
2 to the fullest extent possible, that the American Sign  
3 Language interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are  
4 visible during the broadcast; and

5 (3) Require the governor or mayor of a county to provide a  
6 standardized pool feed that includes the American Sign  
7 Language interpreter in a picture-in-picture window  
8 not less than one quarter the size of the primary  
9 video and large enough to clearly see the  
10 interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands.

11 SECTION 10. Chapter 127A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
12 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
13 and to read as follows:

14 **"§127A-B Official announcements; proclamations;**  
15 **emergencies; American Sign Language interpreter; display;**  
16 **requirements; picture-in-picture required.** (a) Beginning  
17 July 1, 2027, whenever the governor or mayor, as applicable,  
18 makes a proclamation pursuant to this chapter, the governor or  
19 mayor shall provide an American Sign Language interpreter who is  
20 certified by a nationally or state recognized credentialing  
21 authority at each live broadcast press conference during the



1 state of emergency. To the greatest extent possible, the  
2 governor or mayor shall ensure that the American Sign Language  
3 interpreter is physically positioned in a manner so that the  
4 interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are always visible  
5 during a television or internet broadcast of the press  
6 conference.

7 (b) The governor or mayor, as applicable, shall provide a  
8 standardized pool feed for any live official announcement that  
9 includes the American Sign Language interpreter in a  
10 picture-in-picture window not less than one quarter the size of  
11 the primary video and large enough to clearly see the  
12 interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands. The interpreter  
13 shall not be blocked or covered by captions, graphics, or other  
14 on-screen text; provided that the captions, graphics, or other  
15 on-screen text shall be repositioned as necessary. A  
16 broadcaster that rebroadcasts the official announcement shall  
17 not be required to independently generate or insert this  
18 accessibility feature."

19 PART IV

20 SECTION 11. The legislature finds that the foreign-born  
21 population in Hawaii is two hundred sixty thousand and makes up



1 eighteen per cent of the State's total population, which is  
2 higher than the fourteen per cent of the population of the  
3 United States that is foreign-born. Immigrants to Hawaii arrive  
4 from many countries, including China, Japan, Korea, Mexico,  
5 Vietnam, and the Philippines, and contribute billions to the  
6 State's economic output by paying taxes, establishing new  
7 businesses, and staffing essential jobs. However, many  
8 immigrants are paid below poverty rates and lack access to  
9 social benefits.

10 The legislature further finds that around twenty-five per  
11 cent of the State's population speak a language other than  
12 English at home and over ten per cent have limited English  
13 proficiency. Among these other languages are Ilokano, Tagalog,  
14 Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Samoan, Tongan, and Micronesian  
15 languages, including Pohnpeian, Marshallese, and Chuukese.  
16 Without access to services and resources in these languages,  
17 many residents of Hawaii face significant barriers to  
18 participation in the community.

19 The legislature further finds that the Hawaii emergency  
20 management agency has one language coordinator and needs  
21 additional bilingual resources to communicate with residents



1 with limited English proficiency, especially during emergencies.  
2 Additionally, bilingual resources are essential for the state to  
3 comply with federal and state mandates, such as the Civil Rights  
4 Act of 1964 and Presidential Executive Order 13166 of August 11,  
5 2000, to provide language access as a condition to receive  
6 grants, contracts, and other partnerships. In 2006, the State  
7 established the Office of Language Access to affirm its  
8 commitment to civil rights and comprehensive access to services  
9 regardless of national origin.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this part is to provide the  
11 Hawaii emergency management agency with resources to meet the  
12 language access needs of residents with limited English  
13 proficiency and reaffirm its commitment to civil rights. These  
14 resources will increase the Hawaii emergency management agency's  
15 capacity to serve immigrants and other residents with limited  
16 English proficiency by providing bilingual resources and  
17 services.

18 SECTION 12. There is appropriated out of the general  
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
20 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for



1 the Hawaii emergency management agency to expand access to  
2 bilingual resources and services.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii  
4 emergency management agency for the purposes of this part.

5 PART V

6 SECTION 13. In codifying the new sections added by  
7 sections 6 and 10 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall  
8 substitute appropriate section numbers for the letters used in  
9 designating the new sections in this Act.

10 SECTION 14. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
11 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 15. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

Disaster Services; HIEMA; Emergency Preparedness; Emergency Communications; Limited English Proficiency; Language Access; Official Announcements; American Sign Language; Sign Language Interpreter; Program; Reports; Position; Appropriations

**Description:**

Integrates the needs of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into emergency planning, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities. Establishes a Disability Integration Specialist position, to be located in the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, who shall provide programming support for disability community projects that promote accessibility, inclusion, and equity in disaster management. Requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to develop and implement a statewide public education and communications program to promote household emergency preparedness consistent with the Agency's 14-day essential supplies recommendation. Requires the Governor or mayor of a county to provide an American Sign Language interpreter during each official announcement broadcast via television or the Internet during a state of emergency. Requires the Governor or mayor of a county to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that the American Sign Language interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are visible during the broadcast. Requires the Governor or mayor of a county to provide a standardized pool feed that includes the American Sign Language interpreter in a picture-in-picture window not less than one quarter the size of the primary video and not blocked or covered by captions, graphics, or other on-screen text. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000.  
(SD1)

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

