

JAN 21 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately
3 designated and to read as follows:

4 "§346- General assistance to households upon the
5 governor's declaration of a state of emergency. (a) Upon
6 issuance of a proclamation by the governor declaring a state of
7 emergency in the State under section 127A-14, the department may
8 administer and provide public assistance during the emergency
9 period to persons who are not otherwise provided for under this
10 chapter and who are unable to provide sufficient support for
11 themselves or those dependent upon them; provided that the
12 persons:

13 (1) Are bona fide residents of this State, as determined
14 by the residency criteria established in section
15 346-71(a);

16 (2) Have furnished to the department a social security
17 account number or verification that an application was



1 made with the Social Security Administration for a
2 social security account number for each member of the
3 assistance unit; and

4 (3) Satisfy the income criteria adopted by the department
5 and other conditions set forth in this section.

6 (b) A person between eighteen and sixty-five years of age
7 shall be eligible for general assistance under this section if
8 the person is:

9 (1) Determined to be needy in accordance with standards
10 established by this chapter and the rules adopted
11 under subsection (f);

12 (2) Unable to meet the income and financial resources
13 eligibility criteria for the federal supplemental
14 security income program or the program's successor;
15 and

16 (3) Unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity
17 because of the governor-declared state of emergency.

18 (c) The allowance for general assistance under this
19 section shall not exceed the monthly federal supplemental
20 security income benefit payment for the State.



1 (d) Applicants and recipients shall satisfy all applicable
2 provisions of this section. Recipients disqualified for failure
3 to comply with any of the requirements under this section shall
4 be excluded from general assistance under this section for a
5 period not to exceed twelve months.

6 (e) Failure of any adult member of the assistance unit to
7 comply with the requirements or conditions of general assistance
8 under this section shall disqualify the entire assistance unit
9 from receiving financial assistance under this section; provided
10 that the assistance unit shall not be disqualified if an adult
11 member is disqualified for failing to meet the work requirement
12 and the assistance unit was formed after the failure had
13 occurred.

14 (f) Within the limitations of this section, the department
15 shall, by rules adopted pursuant to chapter 91, determine:

16 (1) The allowance for general assistance under this
17 section based on the total amount available for
18 expenditure from the Hawaii hurricane relief fund
19 pursuant to section 431P- and applicable federal
20 funds;

21 (2) A method for determining assistance amounts; and



(3) Other necessary provisions to implement, administer,
and provide general assistance under this section.

(g) For the purposes of this section:

"Assistance unit" means a person or group of persons,
including their dependents, whose needs and income are
considered in determining the payment of financial assistance
under this section.

"Substantial gainful activity" means work for which the
person earns at minimum the amount set forth in the Social
Security Administration's Substantial Gainful Activity Earnings
Guidelines."

SECTION 2. Chapter 431P, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
and to read as follows:

"431P- Public assistance during a governor-declared
state of emergency. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary,
the department of human services may expend up
to from the fund to provide public assistance to
eligible residents during a governor-declared state of emergency
pursuant to section 346- ; provided that any funds expended for
the purposes of this section from the fund shall be reimbursed



1 with any federal funds as appropriate or a general fund
2 appropriation in the regular session immediately succeeding the
3 expenditure."

4 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

6
INTRODUCED BY: Karl Rhoads



S.B. NO. 2148

Report Title:

DHS; General Assistance; State of Emergency; Emergency
Supplementary Income; Eligibility; Hawaii Hurricane Relief Fund

Description:

Allows the Department of Human Services to administer and provide public assistance to eligible residents of the State during a Governor-declared state of emergency. Allows the Department of Human Services to expend funds from the Hawaii Hurricane Relief Fund.

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

