

JAN 21 2026

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

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

SECTION 1. Section 394-11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

**"[~~§~~394-11~~§~~] State internship and workforce development program.** (a) There is established within the department of labor and industrial relations the state internship and workforce development program. The department of labor and industrial relations shall collaborate with the department of human resources development, legislature, and judiciary to process all public program applications and place interns in ~~[temporary or permanent]~~ positions at state ~~[executive branch departments, agencies, or programs.]~~ agencies for a period of ten to eleven months. The program shall:

(1) Provide paid, full-time internship opportunities within various state ~~[departments and]~~ agencies;

(2) Prioritize placement in ~~[departments]~~ state agencies with significant workforce shortages; and



(3) Include comprehensive training, mentorship, and evaluation components.

(b) The department of labor and industrial relations, in collaboration with the department of human resources development, legislature, and judiciary, shall develop eligibility criteria for interns, including minimum qualifications that the intern shall:

(1) Have earned or be scheduled to earn a bachelor's degree no later than September 1 of the calendar year in which the program begins;

(2) Have a:

(A) Cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 2.5 or higher, on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent; or

(B) Grade point average of 2.5 or higher, on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent, in the last sixty semester units or ninety quarter units of the degree program;

(3) Attain twenty years of age no later than September 1 of the calendar year in which the program begins;

(4) Be capable and prepared for full-time employment; and



1       (5) Be authorized to work in the United States for the  
2       duration of the program; provided that an individual  
3       who is not a citizen or national of the United States  
4       shall submit documentation evidencing lawful  
5       immigration status; provided further that an  
6       individual admitted to the United States in a  
7       nonimmigrant classification described in title 8  
8       United States Code section 1101(a)(15)(F) or (J), or  
9       whose employment authorization requires participation  
10       in the E-Verify employment eligibility verification  
11       system established pursuant to 8 U.S.C. section 1324a  
12       note, shall not be eligible for the program.

13       (c) To apply for the program, eligible applicants shall  
14       submit:

15       (1) A completed online application;

16       (2) A personal or policy statement describing the  
17       applicant's commitment to public service with the  
18       State;

19       (3) A resume describing the applicant's education and work  
20       experience;



1        (4) Contact information for three professional or academic  
2        references;

3        (5) At least two letters of recommendation; and

4        (6) Transcripts from each college and university the  
5        applicant attended.

6        ~~[(b)]~~ (d) Selection of internship participants shall be  
7 based upon:

8        (1) Academic achievement or relevant work experience;

9        (2) Interest in public service careers; and

10       (3) Alignment with departmental workforce needs~~[-]~~;

11 provided that preference shall be given to eligible applicants  
12 with an existing personal, educational, or professional  
13 connection to the State or a demonstrated commitment to long-  
14 term public service or leadership in the State.

15       ~~[(e)]~~ (e) As part of the program, internship participants  
16 shall:

17       (1) Attend and actively participate in all required work  
18       experience training sessions;

19       (2) Perform assigned duties and responsibilities in  
20       accordance with program guidelines; and

21       (3) Adhere to workplace policies and procedures.



~~[(d)]~~ (f) As part of the program, coordinating agency work sites shall:

- (1) Provide meaningful and adequate work experience to help interns meet the requirements for employment in the relevant position;
- (2) Conduct regular performance evaluations of interns and provide feedback to the coordinating agency;
- (3) Collaborate with the department of labor and industrial relations to create career pathways for interns; and
- (4) Ensure that viable and vacant positions relative to the interns' field of study are available for them to participate in this program.

~~[(e)]~~ (g) The department of labor and industrial relations shall:

- (1) Ensure that the experience gained through the program qualifies participants to apply for vacant positions of a similar level and scope within the ~~[hosting department]~~ coordinating agency;



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(2) Develop standardized guidelines to align internship duties with the qualifications required for full-time employment;

(3) Provide ongoing support to coordinating agencies to ensure compliance with program objectives; and

(4) Collaborate with coordinating agencies to ~~[create]~~:

(A) Promote the program;

(B) Recruit eligible applicants; and

(C) Create career pathways for interns.

~~[+f+]~~ (h) As part of the program, participants shall receive opportunities for professional development and skills training.

~~[+g+]~~ (i) Before the first day of each internship within the executive branch of the state government, the department of labor and industrial relations shall provide the department of human resources development with:

(1) The name of the intern;

(2) The state ~~[executive branch department,]~~ agency~~[, or program]~~ to which the intern is assigned;

(3) The expected start and end dates of the internship; and



(4) Any other relevant information that the department of human resources development may require to assist the intern in pursuing future employment with the state ~~[executive branch.]~~ government.

~~[(h)]~~ (j) For the purposes of this section:

"Coordinating agency" means the participating ~~[State of Hawaii department, agency, or office]~~ state agencies hosting and employing an intern program participant.

"Eligible ~~[participant]~~ applicant" means an individual who meets established guidelines for participation in the program, including ~~[recent high school graduates, college students, and]~~ post-graduate students~~[7]~~ and individuals seeking to transition into public service careers.

"Internship program" or "program" means the state internship and workforce development program established pursuant to this section.

"Participant" means an individual accepted into the internship program.

"State agency" means the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of the state government, including



departments, offices, divisions, programs, or other agencies  
within the executive, legislative, or judicial branches."

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                      or so  
much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for  
the state internship and workforce development program,  
including development of an online application system.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
labor and industrial relations for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

INTRODUCED BY:                     





# S.B. NO. 2231

**Report Title:**

DLIR; Department of Human Resources Development; Legislature; Judiciary; State Internship and Workforce Development Program; State Agencies; Eligibility; Applications; Appropriation

**Description:**

Amends the State Internship and Workforce Development Program for the public sector by expanding the program to the Legislative and Judicial branches; limiting the internships to full-time placements of ten to eleven months; establishing eligibility criteria, application requirements, and selection preferences; and requiring the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to collaborate with coordinating agencies to promote the program and recruit eligible applicants. Appropriates funds.

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

