

JAN 28 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

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

1 SECTION 1. This Act is recommended by the governor for
2 immediate passage in accordance with section 9 of article VII of
3 the Constitution of the State of Hawaii.

4 SECTION 2. The legislature finds that the federal
5 government shutdown that commenced on October 1, 2025, and ended
6 on November 12, 2025, threatened the food security of Hawaii
7 residents who receive supplemental nutrition assistance program
8 benefits, as well as Hawaii's federal employees and contractors
9 whose employment and income were disrupted. The shutdown also
10 delayed access to other federal grant funding.

11 During the shutdown, the United States Department of
12 Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, issued multiple
13 instructions to the department of human service regarding the
14 benefit amounts and the timing of distribution for November
15 supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits. To fund
16 these efforts, the department of human services redirected state
17 fiscal year 2025-2026 general fund appropriations from its

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1 eighteen programs and received transferred funds from the
2 department of labor and industrial relations.

3 To date, the department of human services has distributed
4 Hawaii emergency food assistance program benefits to 81,399
5 eligible households, which includes 161,549 individuals enrolled
6 in the supplemental nutrition assistance program. To cover the
7 cost for 27,406 eligible households with a dependent child
8 totaling 101,655 individuals, the department of human services
9 can access federal funds from the temporary assistance for needy
10 families program.

11 The legislature further finds that the department of human
12 services needs an emergency appropriation in the amount of
13 \$14,248,126 in general funds to cover the amounts it paid for
14 the response to federal shutdown, specifically: \$11,807,126 for
15 the Hawaii emergency food relief program, \$2,000,000 to support
16 the Hawaii Food Bank for purchase and distribution of food, and
17 \$441,000 to the Aloha United Way for 211 call center support.

18 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
19 general funds to replenish the remaining balance of fiscal year
20 2025-2026 general fund appropriations that were redirected to
21 support Hawaii residents' food security, enabling the department

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1 of human services to meet its existing obligations and avoid the
2 assessment of penalties and interest.

3 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$14,248,126, or so
5 much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year 2025-2026
6 to offset costs incurred by the department of human services in
7 providing emergency food assistance to Hawaii residents during
8 the federal government shutdown. The sum appropriated shall be
9 expended by the department of human services for the purposes of
10 this Act.

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

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INTRODUCED BY: 

14

BY REQUEST

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Report Title:

DHS; Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program; Federal Government Shutdown; Emergency Appropriation

Description:

Provides an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services to replace general fund appropriations redirected to provide emergency food assistance during the 2025 federal government shutdown.

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

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JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Human Services

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

PURPOSE: To provide an emergency appropriation of \$14,248,126 to the Department to restore general fund appropriations that were redirected to provide residents with access to food and reduce food insecurity resulting from the federal government shutdown that started on October 1, 2025, and ended on November 12, 2025. An emergency appropriation is urgently needed to ensure that multiple Department programs have sufficient funds to meet state fiscal year 2025-2026 obligations and to avoid the assessment of penalties and interest.

MEANS: Make an emergency appropriation of general funds.

JUSTIFICATION: The federal government shutdown from October 1, 2025, through November 12, 2025, threatened food security statewide and disrupted federal programs, including the employment and compensation of Hawaii's federal workforce and contractors. During the shutdown, the Department faced significant operational challenges when the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, issued multiple instructions that caused considerable confusion about the amount and timing of the November Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits distribution.

To ensure continued access to food for residents impacted by the shutdown, the Department redirected \$46,151,160 in general fund appropriations from multiple program IDs to establish the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program (HEFAP). The HEFAP provided a \$250 food benefit to eligible

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SNAP recipient households. Redirected funds were also used to contract with the Food Bank and its statewide network to increase food availability for the public; with Aloha United Way to provide call center support to assist residents in locating resources; and with the Department information technology services to facilitate benefit distribution.

As of November 25, 2025, the Department successfully issued the HEFAP food benefit to 81,399 eligible SNAP households, representing 161,549 individuals. Cost associated with 27,406 eligible households with a dependent child, totaling 101,655 individuals, may be covered using federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds. The remaining balance of \$14,248,126 in redirected general fund appropriations, specifically: \$11,807,126 for Hawaii emergency food relief program, \$2,000,000 to support Hawaii Food Bank for purchase and distribution of food, and \$441,000 to the Aloha United Way for 211 call center support, must be restored to ensure that affected programs can meet their fiscal year 2025-2026 obligations and to avoid incurring penalties and interest.

Impact on the public: The emergency appropriation will enable the Department to timely meet its financial obligations, including payments for contracted services statewide. Community service providers will be able to continue delivering essential services without disruption.

Impact on the department and other agencies:
None.

GENERAL FUND:	\$14,248,126.
OTHER FUNDS:	None.
PPBS PROGRAM DESIGNATION:	HMS-various.

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OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES:

Department of Budget and Finance.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

Upon approval.