

ACT 297

H.B. NO. 613

A Bill for an Act Relating to Homeless Youth.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022 (Act 130), established a safe spaces for youth pilot program within the department of human services. Act 130 will be repealed on June 30, 2025. The office of youth services

has worked on planning and developing the safe spaces for youth pilot program and, with appropriations, recommends the pilot program become permanent, and is ready to open the first state-funded shelter for young adults on the island of Hawaii.

The purpose of this Act is to:

- (1) Make the safe spaces for youth pilot program a permanent program within the office of youth services; and
- (2) Provide funding for a permanent safe spaces for youth program in the office of youth services.

SECTION 2. Chapter 352D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§352D- Safe spaces for youth program; establishment; reports. (a) There is established within the office of youth services a safe spaces for youth program, which shall provide, subject to the availability of funds, safe spaces in each county for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

(b) The program shall collaborate with all departments of the State and its political subdivisions that offer services for the purpose of ensuring the well-being of youth and young adults in Hawaii, including the department of education, department of corrections and rehabilitation, department of health, department of human services, department of land and natural resources, department of law enforcement, state office on homelessness and housing solutions, county police departments and other agencies, and judiciary, to coordinate the identification of youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness, and placement of these youth and young adults at a shelter for homeless youth or young adults.

(c) The office of youth services may enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to provide services for youth or young adults experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. Any nonprofit organization contracted under this subsection shall have the knowledge, experience, and qualifications, including licenses as needed for child caring institutions, and other requirements to operate a shelter for homeless youth or young adults experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Youth under the age of eighteen shall not be sheltered with young adults age eighteen to twenty-four.

(d) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a shelter for homeless youth or young adults contracted under subsection (c) may admit a youth into the shelter’s care for up to ninety days without the consent of the youth’s parent or guardian.

(e) The office shall submit a report pertaining to the safe spaces for youth program to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session.

(f) The office may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

(g) For the purposes of this section, “shelter for homeless youth or young adults” means a facility that operates to receive youth or young adults twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and provide youth or young adults with services, including:

- (1) Overnight lodging and supervision;
- (2) Hot meals and hot showers;

- (3) Access to medical and behavioral health services; and
- (4) Education and employment support.”

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$871,016 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and \$1,841,016 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for a permanent safe spaces for youth program within the office of youth services.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Approved July 7, 2025.)

Note

- 1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.