

---

---

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there are  
2 approximately six thousand deaf people statewide who use  
3 American Sign Language as their preferred method of  
4 communication. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act  
5 requires state government to provide effective communication for  
6 persons with difficulty communicating, due to a disability, so  
7 they can access appropriate services.

8           State agencies are often asked to provide a sign language  
9 interpreter in order to make public services accessible to deaf,  
10 hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind individuals. Since 1990, the  
11 number of requests for sign language interpreters has increased  
12 significantly and the provision of this service needs to be  
13 coordinated for both public and private agencies.

14           In the early 1980s, the vocational rehabilitation and  
15 services for the blind division of the department of human  
16 services received an appropriation of \$55,000 to provide  
17 interpreter referral services for a two-year period. The funds



1 were used to contract the services of a private agency to  
2 coordinate interpreter referral services for both public and  
3 private agencies statewide at no charge. The appropriated funds  
4 eventually became part of the department of human services'  
5 biennium budget, and the amount has not increased since that  
6 time.

7       Given only \$27,500 per year to coordinate interpreter  
8 referral services, the department of human services limited the  
9 provision of services to state agencies only on July 1, 2001.  
10 The contracted agency providing the services then had the option  
11 of charging an administrative fee to private agencies to  
12 coordinate their interpreter requests. The administrative fees  
13 have provided additional funding for the contracted agency to  
14 continue to provide referral services to private agencies.

15       The legislature further finds that additional funds are  
16 needed to maintain the current level of interpreter referral  
17 services provided to public and private agencies to achieve  
18 appropriate communication access for all citizens who are deaf,  
19 hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind. As the provision of statewide  
20 interpreter referral services develops and stabilizes, the  
21 expectation is that it can be expanded to also provide education  
22 and training on the use of interpreter services.



1           The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the  
2 department of human services to develop and implement a  
3 statewide interpreter referral service for both public and  
4 private agencies and for persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing,  
5 or deaf-blind.

6           SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$82,500, or so much  
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007-2008, and the  
9 sum of \$27,500, or so much thereof as may be necessary for  
10 fiscal year 2008-2009, for the department of human services to  
11 develop and implement a statewide interpreter referral service  
12 for agencies and for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or  
13 blind, including:

- 14           (1) To establish and hire a coordinator position;  
15           (2) To upgrade computer equipment, including the provision  
16           of website development software; and  
17           (3) For operating expenses.

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

20           SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.



**Report Title:**

Human Services; Interpreter Referral Service

**Description:**

Appropriates funds for a statewide interpreter referral service for public and private agencies and for persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind.

