
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY POVERTY REDUCTION TASK
FORCE.

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

1 SECTION 1. **Findings and purpose.** (a) The legislature
2 finds that:

3 (1) It is in the public interest to pursue the common good
4 whereby all families and individuals in Hawaii have
5 improved access to economic and educational
6 opportunities that help families achieve self-
7 sufficiency and financial security while reducing the
8 number of Hawaii residents living in poverty;

9 (2) Poverty has social and economic costs for children and
10 families, communities, and the State. Children living
11 in poverty often experience lower academic achievement
12 and increased health and behavioral problems. These
13 problems often continue into adulthood, resulting in
14 greater social and economic costs to society,
15 including increased crime rates, health problems, and
16 negative economic impacts estimated to cost the United
17 States \$500,000,000,000 in lost earnings each year;



- 1 (3) More and more middle-class Hawaii families and
2 children are living from paycheck to paycheck,
3 especially in these very difficult economic times; and
- 4 (4) More states are recognizing that reducing poverty by
5 addressing the needs of low- and moderate-income
6 families is a critical economic development issue.
7 Reducing poverty requires strategic, integrated, and
8 comprehensive approaches that create opportunities for
9 families to achieve economic success, including
10 creating quality jobs, providing work support,
11 promoting greater collaboration with the private
12 sector, and implementing targeted tax policies.
- 13 (b) The purpose of this Act is to:
- 14 (1) Create a task force to assess current state policies
15 and practices, along with evidence-based solutions
16 used in other states, that promote economic
17 opportunity and poverty reduction; and
- 18 (2) Develop a strategic, integrated, and comprehensive
19 plan to expand economic opportunities in Hawaii to
20 reduce, by at least fifty per cent by 2021, the number
21 of Hawaii residents, including children and families,
22 living in poverty.



1 SECTION 2. **Definitions.** As used in this Act, unless the
2 context clearly requires otherwise:

3 "Federal poverty level" means the poverty guidelines
4 updated periodically in the federal register by the United
5 States Department of Health and Human Services under the
6 authority of Title 42 United States Code Section 9902(2).

7 "Poverty" means living at or below one hundred per cent of
8 the federal poverty level.

9 "Self-sufficiency standard" means a measure of the income
10 needed by a family of a given composition in a given place to
11 adequately meet its basic needs without public or private
12 assistance.

13 "Supplemental nutrition assistance program" means the
14 federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program created in
15 Title 7 United States Code Section 2011 et seq.

16 "Task force" means the economic opportunity poverty
17 reduction task force.

18 SECTION 3. **Economic opportunity poverty reduction task**
19 **force; established; subcommittees; duties.** (a) There is hereby
20 created the economic opportunity poverty reduction task force to
21 assess current state practices that promote economic opportunity
22 and poverty reduction and to develop a strategic, integrated,



1 and comprehensive plan to expand economic opportunities in
2 Hawaii to reduce, by at least fifty per cent by 2021, the number
3 of Hawaii residents, including children and families, living in
4 poverty.

5 (b) The task force shall consist of five members as
6 follows:

7 (1) One member of the house of representatives appointed
8 by the speaker of the house of representatives;

9 (2) One member of the senate appointed by the president of
10 the senate;

11 (3) One member appointed by the governor;

12 (4) One member of a community organization with expertise
13 in poverty reduction or asset building chosen by the
14 speaker of the house of representatives from a list of
15 three organizations submitted by the majority leader
16 of the house of representatives; and

17 (5) One member of a community organization with expertise
18 in poverty reduction or asset building chosen by the
19 president of the senate from a list of three
20 organizations submitted by the majority leader of the
21 senate.



1 (c) The members shall select one member to serve as
2 chairperson of the task force.

3 (d) Initial appointments to the task force shall be made
4 by August 1, 2011.

5 (e) The members of the task force shall serve without
6 compensation and shall not be reimbursed for any expenses
7 incurred in the performance of their duties.

8 (f) The task force shall meet at least four times and
9 additionally as convened by the chairperson.

10 (g) The task force may appoint subcommittees to advise the
11 task force in completing its duties. The chairperson shall
12 select subcommittee members from stakeholder groups that shall
13 include relevant executive branch agencies, the counties,
14 business and labor organizations, educational organizations,
15 advocates, and individuals directly affected by the work of the
16 task force. The chairperson of the task force shall appoint a
17 member of the task force to chair each subcommittee.

18 (h) The task force shall:

19 (1) Assess current state policies and practices that
20 promote economic opportunity and poverty reduction
21 and, before December 22, 2012, shall develop a
22 strategic, integrated, and comprehensive plan that



1 will expand economic opportunities in Hawaii and, by
2 2021, reduce by at least fifty per cent the number of
3 Hawaii residents, including children and families,
4 living in poverty;

5 (2) Study and evaluate best policies and practices that:

6 (A) Build family assets and financial stability;

7 (B) Increase preschool through postsecondary
8 educational opportunities;

9 (C) Expand the work force with quality jobs that meet
10 private sector needs;

11 (D) Make work pay through the use of fair and
12 sustainable targeted tax policies; and

13 (E) Address work-support issues;

14 (3) Study and evaluate:

15 (A) Federally-supported and state-supported programs
16 that serve persons living in poverty;

17 (B) The economic impact of poverty;

18 (C) Current policies and services that affect persons
19 living below the self-sufficiency standard;

20 (D) The interaction of various issues that affect
21 poverty, such as a lack of education, health



1 care, housing, income, child care, and food
2 security; and

3 (E) The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,
4 with the goal of recommending changes to increase
5 participation and secure additional federal funds
6 for assistance with education and training; and

7 (4) Prepare an initial and final report to be submitted to
8 the legislature on December 22, 2011, and on December
9 22, 2012, respectively, that includes:

10 (A) An outline of the issues being addressed by the
11 task force and the proposed time frame for
12 addressing those issues;

13 (B) A general description of the scope of the problem
14 in Hawaii with respect to poverty;

15 (C) In the initial report, an assessment of current
16 policies and procedures that address poverty;

17 (D) A summary of the work accomplished by the task
18 force over the prior year; and

19 (E) Any legislative recommendations as the task force
20 deems necessary.

21 (i) The task force shall terminate on December 22, 2012.

22 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2012.



Report Title:

Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force

Description:

Establishes the economic opportunity poverty reduction task force to develop a strategic, integrated, and comprehensive plan to expand economic opportunities in Hawaii to reduce, by at least 50 per cent by 2021, the number of Hawaii residents, including children and families, living in poverty. Effective July 1, 2112. (HB734 HD1)

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