

HB 519, HD1

Measure Title: RELATING TO HOUSING.

Report Title: Housing; Housing First Programs; Department of Human Services; Appropriation (\$)

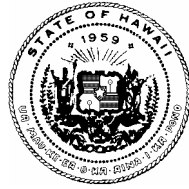
Description: Appropriates funds to the department of human services to continue to administer housing first programs for chronically homeless individuals in the State. Effective 07/01/2030. (HD1)

Companion:

Package: Housing and Homeless

Current Referral: HMS, WAM

Introducer(s): JORDAN, ITO, OSHIRO, SAY, YAMASHITA



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 9, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 519, HD1 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Saturday, March 9, 2013; 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 229, State Capitol

PURPOSE: H.B. 519 appropriates an unspecified amount of funds in fiscal year 2013-14 and 2014-15 to the Department of Human Services to continue to administer Housing First programs for chronically homeless individuals in the State.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services appreciates the overall intent of this bill as it is supportive of our objectives. The Housing First program, as administered by the Department, has been successful in engaging and placing some of urban Honolulu's most chronically homeless and vulnerable individuals into stable housing. A rich array of support services (substance abuse, mental health, general health/disability treatment) has been accessed to help provide the "wrap around" services that are necessary to maintain this population in stable housing situations.

In September, 2012, our community worked collaboratively to implement the 100,000 Homes Campaign on Oahu, a proven strategy to address housing for the most chronic and vulnerable homeless. Homeless individuals and families were interviewed and assessed using a vulnerability index that helped to assess which persons were most likely to die on the street due to age, health, and other conditions that caused them to be more vulnerable. These 400+ individuals who most need housing are already identified through the 100,000 Homes campaign. Housing First funds have been used to help house and support these and other folks who most need our help.

The Department asks that the Legislature support the Department's priorities as requested in the Executive Budget submitted by Governor Abercrombie which contains a request for \$1,500,000 for continuation of the Housing First Program, and expansion beyond urban Honolulu to other areas of Oahu and to the neighbor islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 519, HD1: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair; Committee on Human Services; Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Human Services

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Saturday, 3/9/13 ; 3:00 PM; CR 229

Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Green, and Members, Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to **strongly support HB 519, HD1 and \$1.5 million in funding for Housing First**. I am Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison at Catholic Charities Hawaii.

- This funding is critical to continue the implementation of the Housing First model in Hawaii. The public pays a heavy cost when people are chronically homeless on the streets. Public costs can be decreased by 79% by providing supportive housing with services.
- The City of Seattle found that housing 95 homeless persons with alcoholism saved the city \$4 million in the first year of operation. It cost \$13,440 per person (including housing costs) to administer their housing first program, compared with a cost of \$86,062 per person annually before Housing First.
- A 10/28/12 article in the Star-Bulletin on the 50 most frequent users of 911 found that 36% of these callers were homeless. Of the top 50 users of 911, the direct costs for ambulance and ER services was conservatively estimated at \$2.6 million/year. When projected hospitalizations were included, the cost could be as high as \$7 million annually, about \$140,000 per person. **On average, the 18 homeless frequent callers would be costing the state \$936,000 for direct costs only, without including hospitalizations.**
- Neighborhoods and businesses are impacted by homeless sleeping on their streets. The impact on tourism is of great concern since this is Hawaii's economic driver.

The Housing First program has proven its success in many states as a way to more effectively address the chronically homeless. These homeless are often the most visible homeless, living in our neighborhoods, doorways, under bridges, etc. These persons experience homelessness over a long period of time and incur very significant public costs. Housing First assists them to gain permanent housing and then provides the services needed to keep them in housing and successfully transition off the streets.

We urge your support for \$1.5 million in funding for the Housing First program. This increase would enable Housing First to expand beyond urban Honolulu to other areas, including the Neighbor Islands.

We urge your support to continue and expand Housing First to reduce the public costs and to move the most vulnerable off our streets. Thank you.



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Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
 Supporting HB 519 Relating to Housing
 Senate Committee on Human Services
 Hearing Scheduled for Saturday, March 9, 2013 at 3:00 PM, Room 229

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) law firm created to advocate on behalf of low income individuals and families in Hawai'i on civil legal issues of statewide importance. Our core mission is to help our clients gain access to the resources, services, and fair treatment that they need to realize their opportunities for self-achievement and economic security.

Thank you for an opportunity to testify in **strong support** of House Bill 519, which would **fund Housing First programs** for people experiencing chronic homelessness. We respectfully request the committee appropriate **\$1.5 million**, as requested in the Governor's budget, which will enable this invaluable program to continue and to expand beyond urban Honolulu and help the hardest-to-reach homeless individuals on the neighbor islands.

Housing First saves lives.

- Housing First is an evidence-based practice that reduces chronic homelessness, improves the health and well-being of formerly homeless individuals, and lowers costs, including those related to emergency services and incarceration. Those placed in housing show improved mental and physical health, decreases in substance use, and overall quality of life.
- The Housing First model stabilizes individuals' housing situation and provides comprehensive support services so that participants can address the other issues they face, such as mental illness, substance abuse, and chronic health conditions. The approach has a proven record of success and considered a best practice.
- Both rural and urban areas around the country have used housing first to reduce homelessness. For example, Utah's statewide implementation of a housing first program has resulted in an incredible 72 percent decrease in the number of chronically homeless individuals since 2005.

Housing first saves money.

- Around the country, visits to emergency rooms, hospitalizations, outpatient treatment, detox services, incarceration, and shelter utilization have been dramatically reduced when chronically homeless individuals are placed in supportive housing. Mounting evidence has consistently indicated significant savings resulting from Housing First programs.
- A Seattle-based controlled study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that placing 95 chronically homeless alcoholic individuals saved state and local governments \$4 million in the first year alone.
- The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Homeless Cost Avoidance Study found a 79% reduction in public costs per homeless adult once they were placed in supportive housing. Denver, Colorado saw a 73% reduction in emergency-related costs through a Housing First program, according to the Denver Housing First Collaborative's Cost Benefit Analysis.

In Honolulu, eighteen of the fifty most frequent 911 callers are homeless; the average cost for each of these top callers is \$140,000 annually. By assessing the most medically vulnerable homeless individuals and placing them into housing first programs, we can expect to see a dramatic decrease in these costs and a net cost savings. **Housing first is a proven, cost-effective program that reduces chronic homelessness and saves lives.**

WAIKIKI HEALTH CENTER



*Quality medical and social services,
regardless of ability to pay*

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 519: RELATING TO HOUSING

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair, Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Human Services

From: Marc Gannon, LSW, MBA
Chief of Community Health Services

Hearing: March 9, 2013; 3:00 PM; CR 229

Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Green, and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

Waikiki Health Center supports HB 519 related to the Housing First Program. We have found that the Housing First model effectively serves a select group of highly medically-vulnerable individuals, who would otherwise remain on the street and more likely engage in substance abuse and other dangerous behaviors. The Housing First model fosters a non-judgmental approach to housing the chronically homeless by finding a secure living situation without forcing individuals into treatment or other housing stipulations. Once housed, treatment and social service assistance can be highly effective. We support funding of \$1.5 million for the Housing First program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 519.