
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

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

1 SECTION 1. Homelessness is a complex issue that requires a
2 comprehensive and collaborative approach among public, private,
3 nonprofit, and other community stakeholders to provide services
4 and resources to homeless individuals and families, and to
5 prevent homelessness. Act 279, Session Laws of Hawaii 1992,
6 established the Hale Kokua project, a two-year homeless
7 assistance pilot project within the Hawaii housing authority to
8 provide incentives and assistance to private homeowners in the
9 city and county of Honolulu who set aside existing dwelling
10 units, or construct new or improve existing dwelling units, for
11 rental for a period of five years by families or individuals
12 classified as homeless under the project.

13 Subsequently, Act 167, Session Laws of Hawaii 1998,
14 established the Hale Kokua program within the housing and
15 community development corporation of Hawaii to address the issue
16 of homelessness by providing housing and job-training for the
17 State's homeless population. This homeless assistance program
18 authorized the payment of a state grant and monthly rent



1 supplement to interested property owners who set aside existing
2 rental space or made improvements or constructed adjoining or
3 separate dwelling units to rent the units to families or
4 individuals classified as employed but homeless under the
5 program. The Hale Kokua program was subsequently placed under
6 the Hawaii public housing authority by Act 180, Session Laws of
7 Hawaii 2006; however, the program was later repealed by Act 89,
8 Session Laws of Hawaii 2010.

9 The legislature finds that homelessness continues to be one
10 of the primary challenges in the State. According to the
11 Homelessness Research Institute, Hawaii has the highest rate of
12 homeless per capita of any state with about forty-five homeless
13 individuals out of every ten thousand.

14 The purpose of this Act is to assist homeless families and
15 individuals in the State by establishing the Hale Kokua program
16 as an additional housing resource within the housing first
17 program under the department of human services.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
19 amended by adding a new section to part XVII to be appropriately
20 designated and to read as follows:



1 "§346- Hale Kokua program; established. (a) There is
2 established, as a housing first program under section 346-378, a
3 homeless assistance program known as the Hale Kokua program, to
4 provide incentives and assistance to homeowners throughout the
5 State who set aside existing dwelling units for rental for a
6 period of five years by families or individuals classified as
7 employed but homeless; provided that the family or individual
8 shall be:

9 (1) Unrelated to the homeowner who sets aside any dwelling
10 unit for rental under this part; and

11 (2) Registered in the State of Hawaii Homeless Management
12 Information System.

13 (b) The department shall administer the Hale Kokua program
14 as an additional housing resource under the housing first
15 program. The department may contract with private sector
16 agencies to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the
17 program. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, any
18 contracts entered into by the department with a private sector
19 agency pursuant to this subsection shall not be subject to
20 chapters 76 and 89.

21 (c) The duties of the department or contracted agency
22 shall include:



- 1 (1) Carrying out the requirements of the Hale Kokua
2 program under this section;
- 3 (2) Developing and adopting the requirements, eligibility,
4 registration, background check, initial screening
5 procedures, and procedures for follow-up after
6 placement to determine the ability to make rental
7 payments and the need for social services and
8 referrals for homeless families and individuals to
9 qualify them as tenants under this program;
- 10 (3) Compiling a registry of property-owners who are
11 willing to rent out rooms or ohana units under this
12 program;
- 13 (4) Developing and adopting the requirements, which shall
14 include a background check, qualifications, and
15 registration procedures for property owners who
16 provide rental housing to qualified homeless tenants;
- 17 (5) Developing appropriate procedures to address potential
18 liabilities of the State;
- 19 (6) Adopting procedures to place qualified homeless
20 tenants with property owners participating in the
21 program. Participating property owners shall
22 interview and make final tenant selection from lists



- 1 of prospective tenants compiled by the department or
2 the contracted agency;
- 3 (7) Establishing the procedures and requirements for the
4 disbursement of rental subsidies and the amounts
5 thereof to property owners participating in the
6 program;
- 7 (8) Working with the counties to develop and propose
8 uniform incentives to encourage and facilitate the
9 participation of property owners;
- 10 (9) Monitoring the financial status and progress of
11 homeless tenants in the program and cooperating with
12 other agencies in establishing and coordinating job
13 training and other programs to help tenants to
14 progress toward self-sufficiency;
- 15 (10) Promoting and assisting in the development of
16 employer-employee relationships between homeless
17 tenants and participating property owners including,
18 but not limited to, tenant caretaker, housekeeper, or
19 groundskeeper employment situations;
- 20 (11) Working toward seeking financial, in-kind, and
21 administrative assistance from law enforcement and



1 other state and county agencies and the private sector
2 to implement the program;

3 (12) Working toward securing funding assistance from
4 federal agencies and programs involved in housing
5 development, job-training, or homeless assistance;

6 (13) Monitoring the progress of the program, and collecting
7 annual statistics showing the numbers of homeless
8 persons, homeless families, and homeless children,
9 using appropriate measurement systems; and

10 (14) Preparing recommendations to improve and expand the
11 program including but not limited to incentives for
12 participating property owners to sign up for
13 additional terms.

14 (d) The department shall limit participation to not more
15 than ten property owners within each census tract at any given
16 period in time, without regard to the existence or operation of
17 shelters and other facilities to aid the homeless in the tract.
18 The department or contracted agency shall notify prospective
19 participants registered on the waiting list in each census tract
20 of the opportunity to participate in the program as these
21 opportunities may arise in each tract.



1 (e) Assistance to any qualified property owner providing
2 rental housing to any homeless tenant under this part for a
3 period of five years shall include the payment of a monthly
4 state rent subsidy to supplement the monthly rental payments
5 made by the homeless tenant or other incentives consistent with
6 the purposes of this part to assist in the participation of
7 property owners under the program.

8 (f) All rental subsidies and payments allocated by the
9 program under this part shall be subject to the availability of
10 funds.

11 (g) As used in this section, unless the context clearly
12 requires otherwise:

13 "Administrator" means the state homeless section
14 administrator.

15 "Employed but homeless" means any person who is homeless as
16 defined in section 346-361 and:

- 17 (1) Is employed at least nineteen hours per week; or
18 (2) Participates in an employment training program and
19 does volunteer work for a total of nineteen hours per
20 week until employment can be found."

21 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
22 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 to be
2 deposited into the housing first special fund.

3 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the housing first
4 special fund the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be
5 necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 to:

6 (1) Establish one full-time equivalent (1.00 FTE)
7 permanent state homeless section administrator in the
8 department of human services to head and oversee the
9 Hale Kokua program;

10 (2) Implement the Hale Kokua program; and

11 (3) Carry out the purposes of this Act.

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

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



Report Title:

Homeless; Hale Kokua Program; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the Hale Kokua Program under the Housing First Program within the Department of Human Services to incentivize homeowners statewide to set aside dwelling units for rental by families or individuals classified as employed but homeless. Appropriates funds to the Housing First Special Fund for the Hale Kokua Program. Effective July 1, 2025. (HB1841 HD1)

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

