
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that homelessness is one
2 of the most pressing problems in Hawai'i, which requires a
3 robust, comprehensive, long-term solution to address Hawai'i's
4 affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

5 Over the last fifty years in Hawai'i, the number of cost-
6 burdened renters, those paying more than thirty per cent of
7 their income for rent, went from less than a quarter of the
8 population to over half. High housing costs have driven more
9 and more Hawai'i residents into homelessness. Hawai'i has the
10 highest homelessness rate in the nation.

11 The legislature further finds that by making smart
12 investments in homelessness and housing, using data-driven
13 practices, and improving coordination, Hawai'i has gradually
14 begun to turn the tide in the homelessness crisis. In 2017,
15 Hawai'i's homelessness rate went down for the first time in
16 years, a trend that continued in 2018. During the Regular



1 Session of 2018, the legislature made unprecedented levels of
2 investment in low-income housing and homelessness, appropriating
3 \$200,000,000 for the rental housing revolving fund, \$30,000,000
4 for ohana zones, and \$13,500,000 for proven-effective and
5 promising homelessness programs.

6 To turn back the fifty years of growth in Hawai'i's housing
7 and homelessness crisis, investments of this scale must be made
8 consistently in the coming years. Hawai'i must prioritize
9 programs that are the most cost-effective and target the most
10 vulnerable populations, such as outreach, rapid re-housing,
11 housing first, family assessment centers, law-enforcement
12 assisted diversion, and the coordinated statewide homelessness
13 initiative. The State also needs to experiment with innovative
14 approaches to addressing homelessness, such as:

- 15 (1) Providing shallow, short-term rent subsidies to
16 families whose income levels are not sufficient to pay
17 their rent; and
18 (2) Providing shallow, long-term rent subsidies to kupuna
19 on fixed incomes who face the threat of homelessness
20 due to rapidly rising rents.



1 The purpose of this Act is to fund core homelessness
2 services and establish new pilot programs to address the State's
3 housing and homelessness crisis.

4 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$16,500,000 or so
6 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and
7 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
8 year 2020-2021 for the department of human services and
9 department of health to fund and administer the outreach
10 program, rapid re-housing program, housing first program, family
11 assessment centers, law enforcement assisted diversion program,
12 and coordinated statewide homelessness initiative.

13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
14 of human services and department of health for the purposes of
15 this Act.

16 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$800,000 or so much
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the
19 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
20 2020-2021 for the department of human services to establish and
21 administer a short-term rental assistance pilot program to:



1 (1) Provide time-limited rental assistance to families and
2 individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming
3 homeless; and

4 (2) Provide financial case management to individuals and
5 families participating in the program.

6 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
7 of human services for the purposes of the short-term rental
8 assistance Act.

9 SECTION 4. (a) The department of human services may merge
10 the short-term rental assistance pilot program established
11 pursuant to section 3 of this Act with other existing homeless
12 or rental assistance programs, if in the opinion of the
13 department of human services, it is efficient to do so.

14 (b) The department of human services may establish rules
15 and qualification standards for beneficiaries of the short-term
16 rental assistance program.

17 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much
19 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the
20 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year



1 2020-2021 for the executive office of aging, to establish and
2 administer a long-term rental assistance pilot program to:

- 3 (1) Provide long-term rental assistance to individuals who
4 are over the age of sixty who are homeless or at
5 imminent risk of becoming homeless;
- 6 (2) Ensure that individuals participating in the program
7 will not pay more than fifty per cent of their income
8 for rent; and
- 9 (3) Provide housing counseling and landlord assistance to
10 assist elders to obtain and retain permanent housing.

11 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
12 of health for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 6. (a) The department of health may merge the
14 long-term rental assistance program established pursuant to
15 section 5 of this Act with other existing programs, if in the
16 opinion of the department of health, it is efficient to do so.

17 (b) The department of health may establish rules and
18 qualification standards for beneficiaries of the long-term
19 rental assistance program.

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H.B. NO. 574

1 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Sam Kang*

JAN 18 2019



H.B. NO. 574

Report Title:

Homelessness; Housing; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates funds to the outreach program, rapid re-housing program, housing first program, family assessment centers, law enforcement assisted diversion program, and coordinated statewide homelessness initiative. Establishes and appropriates funds for a short-term rental assistance pilot program and a long-term rental assistance pilot program.

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