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# 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 Hawaii, which requires a  
3 robust, comprehensive, long-term solution to address Hawaii's  
4 affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

5           Over the last fifty years in Hawaii, 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 Hawaii residents into homelessness. Hawaii 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, Hawaii has gradually  
14 begun to turn the tide in the homelessness crisis. In 2017,  
15 Hawaii's homelessness rate went down for the first time in  
16 years, a trend that continued in 2018. During the regular  
17 session of 2018, the legislature made unprecedented levels of



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

5 To turn back the fifty years of growth in Hawaii's housing  
6 and homelessness crisis, investments of this scale must be made  
7 consistently in the coming years. Hawaii must prioritize  
8 programs that are the most cost-effective and target the most  
9 vulnerable populations, such as outreach, rapid re-housing,  
10 housing first, family assessment centers, law-enforcement  
11 assisted diversion, and the coordinated statewide homelessness  
12 initiative. The State also needs to experiment with innovative  
13 approaches to addressing homelessness, such as providing  
14 shallow, long-term rent subsidies to kupuna on fixed incomes who  
15 face the threat of homelessness due to rapidly rising rents.

16 The purpose of this Act is to fund core homelessness  
17 services and establish a new pilot program to address the  
18 State's housing and homelessness crisis.

19 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
21 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the



1 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
2 2020-2021 for the department of human services to fund and  
3 administer the outreach program, rapid re-housing program,  
4 housing first program, family assessment centers, and  
5 coordinated statewide homelessness initiative.

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

8 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the  
11 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
12 2020-2021 for the Hawaii public housing authority to fund and  
13 administer the law enforcement assisted diversion program and to  
14 establish and administer a long-term rental assistance pilot  
15 program.

16 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii  
17 public housing authority for the purposes of this Act.

18 SECTION 4. (a) The Hawaii public housing authority shall  
19 establish and administer a long-term rental assistance pilot  
20 program to:



1 (1) Provide long-term rental assistance to individuals who  
2 are over the age of sixty who are homeless or at  
3 imminent risk of becoming homeless;

4 (2) Ensure that individuals participating in the program  
5 will not pay more than fifty per cent of their income  
6 for rent; and

7 (3) Provide housing counseling and landlord assistance to  
8 assist elders to obtain and retain permanent housing.

9 (b) The Hawaii public housing authority may establish  
10 rules and qualification standards for beneficiaries of the long-  
11 term rental assistance program pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii  
12 Revised Statutes.

13 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Homelessness; HPHA; Department of Human Services; Appropriations

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to homeless programs, including outreach, rapid re-housing, housing first, family assessment centers, and diversion programs and the coordinated statewide homelessness initiative. Establishes a long-term rental assistance pilot program for individuals over sixty years old. (SB471 HD1)

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