
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. One important
5 component of the solution is ensuring that low-income kupuna are
6 not forced into homelessness through a combination of fixed
7 incomes and rapidly rising rents. Therefore, a rent subsidy
8 program targeted toward assisting kupuna in this situation is
9 necessary.

10 Over the last fifty years, the number of cost-burdened
11 renters, those paying more than thirty per cent of their income
12 for rent, has significantly increased. Today, almost half of
13 renters in the State pay more than thirty per cent of their
14 income for rent. High housing costs have driven more and more
15 Hawaii residents into homelessness and now Hawaii has the
16 highest homelessness rate in the nation.



1 The legislature finds that by making smart investments in
2 homelessness and housing, using data-driven practices, and
3 improving coordination, Hawaii has gradually begun to turn the
4 tide in the homelessness crisis. In 2017, Hawaii's homelessness
5 rate went down for the first time in years, a trend that
6 continued in 2018. During the regular session of 2018, the
7 legislature made unprecedented levels of investment in low-
8 income housing and homelessness, appropriating \$200,000,000 for
9 the rental housing revolving fund, \$30,000,000 for ohana zones,
10 and \$13,500,000 for proven-effective and promising homelessness
11 programs.

12 To turn back fifty years of growth in Hawaii's housing and
13 homelessness crisis, investments of this scale must be made
14 consistently in the coming years. Hawaii must prioritize
15 programs that are the most cost-effective and target the most
16 vulnerable populations, such as the State's kupuna. The latest
17 Homeless Service Utilization Report (2017) found that there are
18 1,386 homeless elders in Hawaii. Many more elders face
19 homelessness as rents skyrocket. Due to the fixed incomes of
20 elders, a long-term rental assistance program is needed.



1 The purpose of this Act is to establish the long-term
2 rental assistance pilot program for kupuna.

3 SECTION 2. (a) There is established the long-term rental
4 assistance pilot program to be administered by the department of
5 health. The department of health shall enter into a memoranda
6 of agreement with the counties to implement this Act. The
7 department of health and the counties shall:

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

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

14 (3) Provide housing counseling and landlord assistance to
15 assist elders in obtaining or retaining permanent
16 housing.

17 (b) The department of health may work with the executive
18 office on aging to merge the long-term rental assistance pilot
19 program with existing programs, if in the opinion of the
20 department of health, it is more efficient to do so.



1 (c) The department of health may establish rules and
2 qualification standards for beneficiaries of the long-term
3 rental assistance pilot program.

4 (d) The department of health shall require the long-term
5 rental assistance program to participate in the Continuum of
6 Care's Coordinated Entry System for homeless services.

7 (e) The department of health shall require the provider of
8 the long-term assistance pilot program to input data into the
9 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's
10 Homeless Management Information System.

11 (f) The department of health shall submit a report to the
12 legislature of its findings and recommendations, including any
13 proposed legislation, regarding the long-term rental assistance
14 pilot program no later than one month prior to the convening of
15 the regular sessions of 2020, 2021, and 2022.

16 (g) The long-term rental assistance pilot program shall
17 cease to exist on June 30, 2022.

18 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much
20 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 long-term rental assistance pilot program.

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

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

6



Report Title:

Kupuna Caucus; Long-Term Rental Assistance Pilot Program;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the long-term rental assistance pilot program to be administered by the department of health. Appropriates funds for the administration of the pilot program. (SD1)

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