
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO POVERTY.

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

1 SECTION 1. The department of human services has one of the
2 largest operating budgets of any state department, and is
3 responsible for a majority of all the executive branch's federal
4 funds. The department provides benefits and services to one in
5 four Hawaii residents or nearly 360,000 individuals. The
6 State's medicaid program provides medical insurance coverage for
7 nearly one-half of Hawaii's children.

8 The department's programs and services include: protection
9 of vulnerable children and adults; vocational rehabilitation and
10 financial assistance to the disabled; the supplemental nutrition
11 assistance program; financial assistance; job training and
12 placement; housing and services for the homeless; medicaid
13 services for the State's medically needy population; and
14 prevention, treatment, and housing for the State's youthful
15 offenders.

16 To provide these benefits and services to Hawaii's
17 vulnerable individuals and families, the department manages



1 significant federal and state funds and processes vast amounts
2 of information on a daily basis. Initiated by the Patient
3 Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, the department
4 continues to invest in the development of an enterprise
5 eligibility system that will support the integration of services
6 that will lead to improved individual and program outcomes
7 through more efficient service delivery and data analytics.

8 As part of the department's continuous improvement efforts,
9 in 2016, the department embarked on its 'Ohana Nui effort by
10 adopting a multigenerational approach to transform the way
11 services are provided to individuals and families to improve
12 outcomes and well-being. By providing programs and services
13 that maintain a high level of service integration, quality, and
14 intensity across multiple generations, the department intends to
15 reduce intergenerational poverty in the State, and the human and
16 financial costs associated with poverty.

17 The human and financial costs associated with poverty are
18 well-documented. The 2009 paper "Childhood and
19 Intergenerational Poverty: The Long Term Consequences of
20 Growing up Poor," by Robert L. Wagmiller, Jr., and Robert M.
21 Adelman, found that "individuals who grow up in poor families



1 are much more likely to be poor in early adulthood. Moreover,
2 the chances of being poor in early adulthood increase sharply as
3 the time spent living in poverty during childhood increases."

4 Our programs must focus on reducing the time children, families,
5 and individuals spend in poverty, and supporting every person's
6 ability to meet his or her human and economic potential.

7 Furthermore, other studies link adverse social and economic
8 conditions in childhood to health problems in adulthood. The
9 original 1998 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study
10 conducted by the Centers on Disease Control & Prevention and
11 Kaiser Permanente, surveyed nearly seventeen thousand adults in
12 southern California. The primary conclusion of the ACE study
13 was the finding of a strong relationship between "exposure to
14 abuse or household dysfunction during childhood and multiple
15 risk factors for several leading causes of death in adults,"
16 such as heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, fractures,
17 and liver disease. While adverse childhood experiences occur
18 across all races and economic classes, there is a higher
19 prevalence of ACEs for those who also live in poverty.

20 A similar conclusion was again found in a 2014 Swedish
21 study that "showed social and economic disadvantages in



1 childhood were associated with an earlier onset and faster
2 progression of functional health problems from midlife into old
3 age." See Agahi N, et al., "Social and economic conditions in
4 childhood and the progression of functional health problems from
5 midlife into old age," Journal of Epidemiology & Community
6 Health 2014; 0:1-7. doi:10.1136/jech-2013-20369.

7 The Swedish study also concluded that "creating equal
8 opportunities for educational attainment may help reduce the
9 long-term effect of disadvantaged childhood conditions and
10 postpone functional health problems." Transitioning the
11 department's service delivery to a multigenerational approach
12 will refocus the department's efforts to provide available
13 resources and support to reduce the time a child and family
14 spends in poverty, stabilize the child's basic needs and
15 environment to enhance their ability to learn, improve all
16 recipients' economic security, and ultimately reduce
17 intergenerational poverty in Hawaii.

18 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of
19 human services to use an integrated and multigenerational
20 service delivery approach to reduce the incidence of



1 intergenerational poverty and dependence on public benefits
2 consistent with the nationally recognized best practices.

3 SECTION 2. Section 26-14, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

5 "(b) The department shall administer programs through an
6 integrated and multigenerational approach designed to improve
7 the social well-being, economic security, and productivity of
8 the people of the State[-], and to reduce the incidence of
9 intergenerational poverty and dependence upon public benefits.

10 Without limit to the generality of the foregoing, the department
11 shall concern itself with problems of human behavior,
12 adjustment, and daily living through the administration of
13 programs of family, child and adult welfare, economic
14 assistance, health care assistance, rehabilitation toward self-
15 care and support, public housing, and other related programs
16 provided by law."

17 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2059.



Report Title:

DHS; Integrated and Multigenerational Approach; Poverty

Description:

Requires the Department of Human Services to use an integrated and multigenerational approach to delivering human services to reduce the incidence of intergenerational poverty and dependence on public benefits. (SB1227 HD1)

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