



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 10, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Nadine K. Nakamura, Chair
House Committee on Housing

The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **HB 2233 – RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 10, 2022, 11:00 a.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to authorize the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to TANF and TAONF program participants who are participating in the first-to-work program. The bill also appropriates funds for this purpose.

This measure will address a key barrier to housing for many low-income families with minor children, including those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, by providing ongoing shallow subsidies for rental housing. Specifically, nearly one-third (27%) of renter households in Hawaii are severely housing cost-burdened, meaning that over half of their monthly income goes to rent and utilities. A shallow rental subsidy of \$500 per month targeted to First-To-Work participants will reduce the housing cost burden for low-income families working to transition off public assistance.

In December 2021, the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) prioritized affordable housing programs for people transitioning from homelessness, including support for shallow rental subsidies, as a key priority for the 2022 legislative session.

The proposed housing assistance subsidy is similar to the state rent supplement program administered by the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. The state rent supplement is capped at \$500 per month per household and effectively reduces and prevents homelessness. Because of the shallow amount of the rental subsidy, the state rent supplement program can serve a higher number of households than programs, such as permanent supportive housing or the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, that provide deeper subsidies.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic highlights the need for programs that address the needs of low-income households, including those at risk of homelessness. In January 2021, the Economic Roundtable released a report that projected the pandemic recession would increase chronic homelessness in the United States by 49% over the next four years. Similarly, historical data for the statewide homeless Point in Time (PIT) count also indicates that demand for homeless services is likely to increase in the wake of the current economic recession. Following the last significant downturn in 2009, the statewide PIT count increased 37% between 2009 and 2016. The proposed housing assistance subsidy program will provide ongoing housing support and is an additional tool to prevent at-risk families with minor children from experiencing housing instability or falling into homelessness.

Providing shallow rental subsidies is just one piece of a more comprehensive effort to address homelessness and housing instability. In addition to prioritizing the implementation of housing subsidies, the HICH prioritizes low-income housing development for individuals transitioning out of homelessness, reducing upfront barriers to rental housing, and expanding programs that assist key homeless sub-populations (e.g., unsheltered youth, adults with severe mental illness, etc.). For more information about the 2022 HICH policy priorities, please visit <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/advocacy>.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
Tel: (808) 586-0554
email: state.procurement.office@hawaii.gov
<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY
OF
BONNIE KAHAKUI, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES
ON
HOUSING
AND
HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS
FEBRUARY 10, 2022, 11:00 AM

HOUSE BILL 2233
RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

Chair Nakamura, Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair Tam, and members of the committees, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2233. The State Procurement Office (SPO) provides comments on the exemption language on page 5, SECTION 2, lines 5 to 7 set forth below.

“... Expenditure of funds for the administration of housing assistance subsidies shall be exempt from chapters 103D and 103F.”

The SPO objects to the procurement exemption for the administration of this program.

The Hawaii Public Procurement Code (code), Chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), is the single source of public procurement policy to be applied equally and uniformly, while providing fairness, open competition, a level playing field, government disclosure, and transparency in the procurement and contracting process vital to good government.

Public procurement's primary objective is to provide everyone equal opportunity to compete for government contracts, to prevent favoritism, collusion, or fraud in awarding of contracts. To legislate that any one entity should be exempt from compliance with both Chapter 103D and 103F, HRS, conveys a sense of disproportionate equality in the law's application.

Exemptions to the code mean that all procurements made with taxpayer monies will not have the same oversight, accountability and transparency requirements mandated by those procurements processes provided in the code. It means that there is no requirement for due

diligence, proper planning or consideration of protections for the state in contract terms and conditions, nor are there any set requirements to conduct cost and price analysis and market research or post-award contract management. As such, Agencies can choose whether to compete any procurement or go directly to one contractor. As a result, leveraging economies of scale and cost savings efficiencies found in the consistent application of the procurement code are lost. It also means Agencies are not required to adhere to the code's procurement integrity laws.

The National Association of State Procurement Officials state: "Businesses suffer when there is inconsistency in procurement laws and regulations. Complex, arcane procurement rules of numerous jurisdictions discourage competition by raising the costs to businesses to understand and comply with these different rules. Higher costs are recovered through the prices offered by a smaller pool of competitors, resulting in unnecessarily inflated costs to state and local governments."

When public bodies, are removed from the state's procurement code it results in the harm described above. As these entities create their own procurement rules, businesses are forced to track their various practices. Moreover, a public body often can no longer achieve the benefits of aggregation by using another public body's contract because different state laws and regulations may apply to the various public bodies making compliance more difficult.

Each year new procurement laws are applied to state agencies causing state agency contracts to become more complex and costly, while other public bodies, such as agencies with strong legislative influence, are exempted. Relieving some public bodies from some laws by exempting or excluding them from compliance with a common set of legal requirements creates an imbalance wherein the competitive environment becomes different among the various jurisdictions and the entire procurement process becomes less efficient and costlier for the state and vendors.

Thank you.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HOUSING AND HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES,
& HOMELESSNESS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2233

February 10, 2022
11:00 a.m.
Room 329 and Videoconference

RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 2233 amends Section 346-261, HRS, to: 1) authorize the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families households participating in the First-To-Work Program; 2) require TANF expenditure plans developed pursuant to Section 346-51.5, HRS, to account for the subsidies; and 3) exempt administrative expenditures for the subsidies from Chapters 103D and 103F, HRS. The bill also appropriates unspecified amounts of general funds and federal funds in FY 23 to DHS to fund the subsidies.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

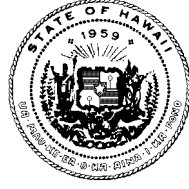
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2022

TO: The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Chair
House Committee on Housing

The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: HB 2233 – RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES.

HEARING: Thursday, February 10, 2022, 11:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and provides additional comments. The DHS appreciates the work and collaboration of Chair Nakamura and her staff and other members of House leadership who worked on this proposal. DHS also respectfully requests that passage of this measure does not replace or adversely impact budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families (TAONF) program participants engaged in the First-To-Work (FTW) program.

As of December 2021, there was an average of 4,547 TANF recipient families and 1,127 TAONF recipient families. About 62% of recipient families received less than 24 months of benefits and about \$658 of financial assistance benefits per month. Of the recipient families,

3,232 TANF recipients, or 82%, and 692 TAONF recipients, or 18%, participated with the FTW program. Approximately 64% of FTW participants were from single-parent households.

This measure would provide additional housing support to TANF and TAONF recipients while engaging in FTW activities such as education, vocational training, job readiness services, community work experience, and employment. With the pandemic, housing costs in Hawaii have increased while wages have not kept up with the inflation. Housing stability, especially for families with children, supports a family's health and well-being, children's or parents' educational and career success, and strengthens communities.

DHS projects that if 3,924 TANF and TAONF FTW participants were issued a monthly housing assistance subsidy of \$500, this would total \$1,647,000 a month, or \$19,764,000 annually. DHS estimates that \$16,206,480 federal TANF funds are required to cover the costs for TANF recipients, and \$3,557,520 in State general funds are necessary to cover the cost for TAONF recipients. Importantly, this measure will allow the State to access available TANF funds and ensure equity amongst eligible families.

Also, the Department requests an appropriation of \$200,000 needed for system enhancements to its case management and payment system to implement this measure.

Lastly, the Department requests any appropriation not to reduce or delete budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



[COMMITTEE ON HOUSING](#)

Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura, Chair, Rep. Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair

[COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS](#) Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair,

Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

Dear Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Committee Members:

February 7, 2022

RE: Zonta Club of Hilo SUPPORTS HB 2233, Relating To Temporary Assistance To Needy Families

Hearing: February 10, 2022, 11:00 am, House conference room 329 Via Videoconference.

The Zonta Club of Hilo supports **HB 2233**, and its companion Senate Bill 2150, SD1, which had a hearing on January 27, 2022, as reported in SSCR2039

[https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2022/CommReports/SB2150_SD1_SSCR2039 .htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2022/CommReports/SB2150_SD1_SSCR2039.htm)

The Zonta Club of Hilo* is part to of an international network of professionals who support empowering women and girls, worldwide and locally. We support the Department of Human Services' and Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness's testimony and support of the Senate's companion bill SB 2150, SD 1, SSCR2039 "to authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and temporary assistance for other needy families (TAONF) program participants who are also participating in the First-to-Work program." House Bill 2233 has the same intent and purpose.

The State's TANF's Funds has a surplus to address the funding amounts recommended by the Director of Human Services. As noted in the SB 2150, SD 1, SSCR2039: These costs are supported by: (2) Inserting an appropriation amount of \$16,206,480 necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to fund the housing assistance subsidies for TANF program participants from the federal funds received by the State; (3) Inserting an appropriation amount of \$200,000 necessary for the Department of Human Services to make enhancements to its case management and payment system to implement this measure.

Hawaii continues to be ranked with Tennessee in the amount unspent funds as a share of annual block grant. Earlier, Hawaii had \$352 million in unspent funds, which is 357% of the annual block grant. In 2019, the state had more than \$338 million available. In 2020, that increased to \$364 million. Currently, it's \$405,437,243. Here's why \$400M in federal funds available for needy Hawaii families is going unspent.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2022/01/08/heres-why-400m-federal-funds-available-needy-hawaii-families-is-going-unspent/>

Hawaii continues to gain negative recognition for the unspent TANF Funding. TANF: Hawaii Hoards \$364M Federal Welfare Money > Hawaii Free Press

<http://www.hawaiifreepress.com/Articles-Main/ID/29886/TANF-Hawaii-Hoards-364M-Federal-Welfare-Money>

Under federal law these funds may only be used to: (1) assisting needy families so children can be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives; (2) reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) preventing pregnancies among unmarried persons; and (4) encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families and therefore cannot be redirected to other economic needs in the state.

In order to qualify for TANF benefits for families with children, applicants must be responsible for **a child under 19 years of age with a total gross income under 185% of the poverty level**. Housing support provides the stability needed to create an environment for single parents to raise children in an environment that allows children to focus on their education, which allows them to develop positive social and emotional behaviors that encourage success.

Needy Families of Immigrants are covered by TAONF, which funds come from state, not federal, dollars. However, Hawaii has a practical approach to handling immigrants considering Hawaii's history and connections to these nations. Without these supports, these families would find themselves homeless and unable to engage ways to support themselves economically and provide safe homes for dependent children until they get established. State funds would be needed to support the housing needs of the TAONF. Difficulties persist for these groups. E.g., Hawaii Micronesian Report <https://www.usccr.gov/files/pubs/2019/08-13-Hawaii-Micronesian-Report.pdf>

Only families participating in the First-To-Work (FTW) program can qualify for this supplemental housing support. FTW provides case management, employment and support services to work eligible individuals of TANF households. In addition, the FTW Program services other work eligible individuals that are unable to work due to temporary disability, rehabilitation from substance abuse, and with domestic violence status. Single women with children continue to be disproportionately represented in these eligible categories, particularly with domestic violence.

As noted at the DHS website: “TANF and TAONF programs require work and promote self-reliance, responsibility, and family stability. Both TANF and TAONF offer a package of strong incentives and penalties, child care support for working parents, and restructured welfare benefits so that it “pays to work.” Households which include an adult who is not exempt, are allowed to receive TANF or TAONF cash benefits for a maximum of five years in their lifetime.”

With a coherent policy and practical implementation for a housing solution supported by the DHS and Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, the state can prevent more costly problems for these needy families. These families with children who are living below the poverty level need this temporary housing assistance now, as we recover from the impact of the COVID pandemic.

The Zonta Club of Hilo supports HB2233, and SB 2150, SD 1. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Mahalo,
Zonta Club of Hilo
Charlene Iboshi

*Zonta International is a leading global organization of professionals empowering women worldwide through service and advocacy. Zonta International envisions a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision making positions on an equal basis with men. Our membership includes both current and former small business owners in Hilo.

PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT HB 1826 RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

TO: House of Representatives, Committee on Housing,
House of Representatives, Committee on Health, Human Services &
Homelessness

FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)

Hearing: Thursday, February 10th, 2022, 11:00 am via videoconference

Position: **SUPPORT**

Chair Nakamura and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Chair Yamane and Members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness :

Partner In Care, Oahu's Continuum of Care, stands in **support** of **HB 2233 Relating to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**.

For many within our community, the difference between being housed and living in a shelter, out on the streets or in overcrowded housing is a few hundred dollars. The TANF/TAONF provides support for these families who are on the edge and working so hard to secure and maintain housing. This program has helped families move into more sustainable jobs which in turn can prevent them from entering homelessness. The relatively low cost of this program will have a huge impact on families who have been struggling to make ends meet and keep a roof over the heads of their children and themselves

Thank you for the opportunity to testifying on this measure. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Aloha



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2233: RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

TO: House Committees on Housing and Health, Human Services, & Homelessness
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Thursday, 2/10/22; 11:00 AM; via videoconference**

Chair Nakamura, Chair Yamane, and Members, Committees on Housing, and Health, Human Services, & Homelessness:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of HB 2233**, which authorizes the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance of up to \$500 per month to TANF and TAONF participants who are in the first-to-work program. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners In Care (PIC). **This bill is a critical step forward in enabling the very poorest of families with children to have a chance to obtain housing and to stabilize their family long term.**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

In 2021, Catholic Charities Hawai'i helped over 70 families on TANF to search for housing including 24 homeless families in our Family Assessment Center. This bill would greatly assist these families and other TANF/TAONF families to both locate housing and increase their housing stability. The first-to-work program helps these families to support their children by preparing for, accepting and retaining employment. With our high cost of living, work income is stretched very tight for rent and the many other costs of raising a family in Hawai'i. The rules for first-to-work allow participants to receive housing assistance. However, the maximum is a one month payment not exceeding two months of rent. While this may assist the family to first obtain housing, we also need to improve these families' ability to continue paying rent without constant shortages or fear of homelessness. A rental subsidy of up to \$500/month could make their lives stable instead of remaining in crisis each month, struggling to pay their ongoing rent

Providing an ongoing rental subsidy is an excellent way to expend some of the TANF funds which are currently going into a reserve fund. Approximately \$57 million goes into this fund annually. Funding would be well spent to maximize the housing stability of these families during their temporary stay on TANF. Without constant economic stress, these families could focus on their children, their work, and their health which often are impacted by economic stress and especially homelessness. Children who grow up in a homeless family have a much higher risk for becoming homeless as adults. The long term impact of these subsidies would be great.

We urge your support for this bill. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 373-0356 • bettylou.larson@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org



HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 9:02:00 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/10/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Patrick F. Hurney	Habitat for Humanity Hawaii Island, Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

Habitat for Humanity strongly supports HB2233. This would extend TANF/TAONF housing subsidies from the current two months to instead potentially up to 5-years at up to \$500/month for those in the first-to-work program.

We can't leave money on the table when we are in the middle of a housing crisis and economic downturn. Families need support during these times!

Mahalo

Patrick F. Hurney

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Authorize DHS to Provide Housing Assistance Subsidies

BILL NUMBER: HB 2233, SB 2150

INTRODUCED BY: HB by NAKAMURA, BELATTI, BRANCO, CLARK, CULLEN, GANADEN, GATES, HASHIMOTO, ICHIYAMA, ILAGAN, JOHANSON, KAPELA, KITAGAWA, KONG, LOPRESTI, LOWEN, MARTEN, MATAYOSHI, MCKELVEY, MORIKAWA, NAKASHIMA, NISHIMOTO, PERRUSO, TARNAS, WILDBERGER, WOODSON, YAMANE, YAMASHITA; SB by KOUCHI (Introduced by request of another party)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Authorizes the department of human services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to TANF and TAONF program participants who are participating in the first-to-work program. Appropriates funds.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 346-261, HRS, to allow DHS to provide eligible households receiving benefits under the temporary assistance for needy families or temporary assistance for other needy families programs with housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month during their participation in the first-to-work program. Any plan for expenditure of temporary assistance for needy families funds developed pursuant to section 346-51.5 shall be updated to account for expenditures for housing assistance subsidies. Expenditure of funds for the administration of housing assistance subsidies shall be exempt from chapters 103D and 103F.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022.

STAFF COMMENTS: One of the ways our government provides a safety net for those less fortunate is through a program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF. TANF was enacted in 1996 as a program that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which used to provide cash assistance to families with children experiencing poverty. Under TANF, the federal government provides a block grant to the states, which then use these funds to run their own programs. To receive federal funds, states must also spend some of their own dollars on those programs and face severe fiscal penalties if they fail to do so. This state-spending requirement, known as the “maintenance of effort” (MOE) requirement, replaced the state match that AFDC required.

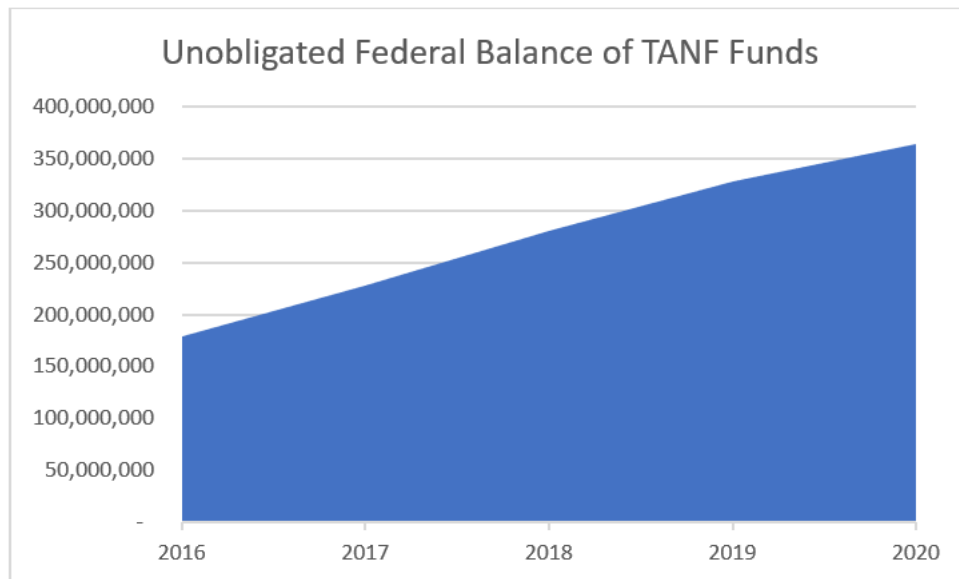
States can use federal TANF and state MOE dollars to meet any of the four goals set out in the 1996 law: (1) assisting needy families so children can be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives; (2) reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) preventing pregnancies among unmarried persons; and (4) encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

These goals are broad, giving states lots of freedom to use these federal dollars in a way that they think brings about positive outcomes.

So what have we done with the federal TANF money?

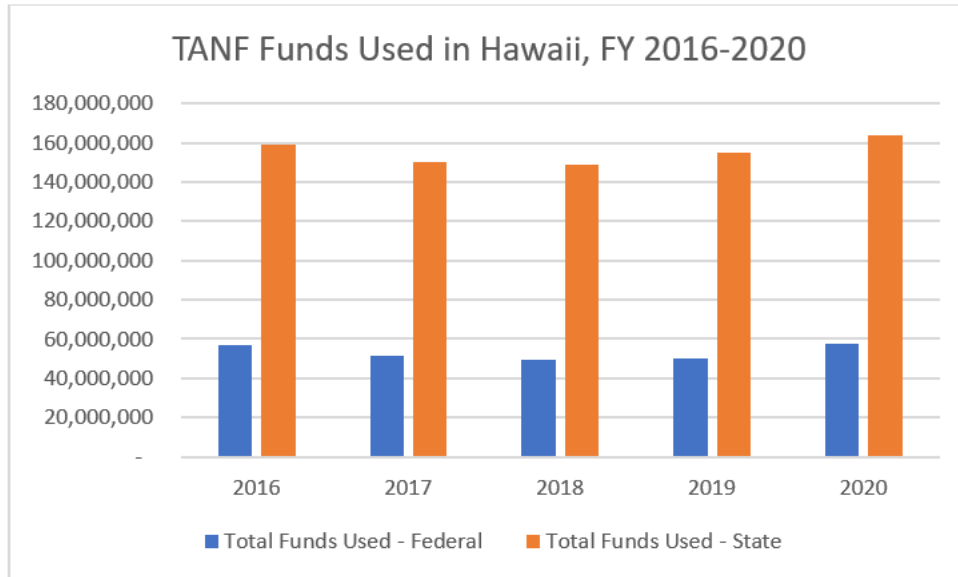
We've let lots of it pile up unused.

ProPublica, a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power, recently published an unflattering article that calls out several states for doing nothing at all with large sums of money. It reports: "According to recently released federal data, states are sitting on \$5.2 billion in unspent funds from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF. Nearly \$700 million was added to the total during the 2019 and 2020 fiscal years, with Hawaii, Tennessee and Maine hoarding the most cash per person living at or below the federal poverty line."



As this graph shows, the “unobligated balance” of the federal block grants, meaning federally authorized money that we haven’t spent, has been rising steadily over the last five fiscal years. In federal fiscal year 2020 (the year starting Oct. 1, 2019, and ending Sept. 30, 2020), our unobligated balance was \$364 million, equivalent to almost \$3,000 per person living in poverty.

Certainly, we have been using part of the TANF money. But we have been spending quite a bit of our own funds:



According to ProPublica, a Hawaii state spokesperson said that our state government plans to use its surplus to extend employment services like job coaching and placement for noncustodial parents who have children receiving TANF and to provide diaper assistance to families that are eligible for the program. The state is also considering increasing benefits and offering monthly housing assistance.

The question, however, is why has it taken so long for our bureaucrats to come up with ways to put that money to good use? It certainly won't help alleviate poverty if it's sitting in some bank somewhere.

Digested: 2/8/2022

LATE

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 11:00:15 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/10/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kristen Alice	Community Alliance Partners	Support	Yes

Comments:

We strongly support this measure.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 12:53:31 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/10/2022 11:00:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
k-nard narruhn	We Are Oceania (WAO)	Support	No

Comments:

The transition from a lesser privileged country to one of the least affordable places in the U.S. is difficult to say the least. The heavy restrictions on the local and global economy to combat a pandemic made it difficult for even the average working class person to afford basic expenses. Through this challenging time, WAO has been at the forefront of our Micronesian community to help those in need access opportunities to help alleviate financial stress. Our services would include guiding community members navigate the confusing online unemployment system, or reaching out to the massively stressed unemployment office through phone. Through the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA), we were also able to help our community members apply for rental and utilities assistance. These programs were very helpful, but limited. On behalf of WAO and members of my community, I strongly support this bill as it would help lower income families and individuals.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2233: RELATING TO TANF

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Members
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawai'i, Inc.
Hearing: HSG/HHH on Thursday, 02-10-22 11:00AM

LATE

Aloha,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 2233, which would authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to TANF and TAONF program participants who are participating in the first-to-work program.


As Hawai'i Island's largest homeless services provider, a significant portion of HOPE Services' work is dedicated to Diversion and Prevention—keeping people from entering homelessness, and helping them find alternative living arrangements so they do not enter the system. We also devote a substantial amount of energy to helping recently housed people build and budget their incomes; however, with low wages and high housing costs, they often simply do not have enough money for necessities like food, transportation, and cleaning supplies, after paying the rent. With nearly half our state struggling below the ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) threshold, we need your help to leverage all available resources to help families in Hawai'i work towards building their capacity to not only survive, but thrive.

My colleague Dale Roskamp, who is a Housing First Case Manager in Hilo, shared the story of "Annette," a single mother of two teenagers. Annette and her family are part of the **41% of the households we served** last year who received TANF payments, and who would benefit from an expansion of benefits. Annette receives general assistance payments and SNAP benefits, but her total income is still too low to afford the cost of living. Dale shared that he has taken money out of his own pocket to buy bleach and cleaning supplies to help her out. "She never asks for anything else," Dale says. "How could I turn her down?"

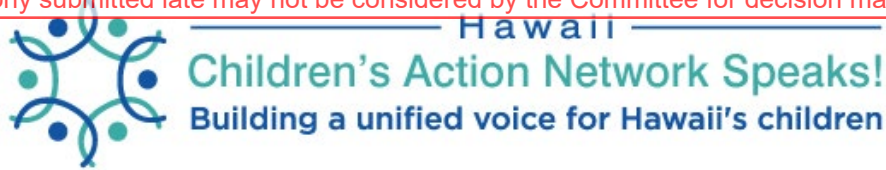
One way we can immediately help families like Annette's is to tap into our reserve of federal TANF funds and expand benefits that would help **keep families like hers stabilized in housing**. We also respectfully request that you consider increasing the number of eligible families and raising the maximum benefit amount, which has not been updated in over a decade.

Mahalo nui for considering our testimony in support of HB2233.

Sincerely,


Brandee Menino,
Chief Executive Officer





LATE

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committees on Housing and on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Re: **HB 2233 – Relating to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**
Hawai'i State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 329
February 10, 2022, 11:00 AM

Dear Chairs Nakamura and Yamane, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Tam, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 2233, relating Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. This bill would authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families (TAONF) program participants who are participating in the first-to-work program.

It is well known that Hawai'i has the highest housing costs in the nation. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, the "housing wage" needed to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Hawai'i in 2021 was \$28.86. Meanwhile, the average renter's wage didn't even come close, at \$17.56 per hour.¹

Research shows that housing instability has harmful effects on children's health and educational outcomes² and that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's development, behavioral self-control, academic performance, physical and emotional health,³ and earnings as adults.⁴

That's why providing housing assistance subsidies to our state's TANF and TAONF participants is so important, both to address our current homelessness crisis, and also to ensure better outcomes for our keiki.

And we can afford it. Hawai'i has more than \$350 million in unspent TANF reserve funds, which is more than three times our annual TANF block grant – in fact, we rank second in the nation for the most unspent TANF funds as a share of the annual block grant.⁵ That's the equivalent of \$2,923 per person living in poverty in Hawai'i, which places us in the top three states with the most TANF reserve funds per person living in poverty.⁶

With so many of our state's families struggling to make ends meet, this is the time to spend down those excess funds. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,
Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/hawaii>

² Housing Matters, <https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/how-housing-affects-childrens-outcomes>

³ Child Trends, <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/5-ways-poverty-harms-children>

⁴ American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2014/06/childhood-poverty>

⁵ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/to-promote-equity-states-should-invest-more-tanf-dollars-in-basic>

⁶ Pro Publica, <https://www.propublica.org/article/states-are-hoarding-52-billion-in-welfare-funds-even-as-the-need-for-aid-grows>



HAWAI' APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

LATE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
SUPPORTING HB2233 – Relating to TANF and TAONF
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
Thursday, February 10th, 2022 at 11:00 AM

Aloha Chair Nakamura, Chair Yamane, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to stand **in strong support of HB2233** and offering **comments**.

We applaud the efforts of the legislature to provide very low-income families with an additional \$500 of rent assistance, especially since the maximum monthly payment for a family of three is only \$610 a month and has not been updated since 2011. Even with an extra \$500 a month, a parent with two kids will find it hard to make ends meet on \$1,110 a month.

We encourage this committee to **consider increasing the maximum benefit amount and also increasing the number of families that are eligible to receive the benefit**. The cost of living has increased in the past 10 years while the benefit amount has not and the income threshold should also be adjusted so that more families can qualify. As stated in this bill, Hawai'i is spending less than half of our allocated federal amount of \$98 million per year.

Meanwhile we have families experiencing houselessness and living without basic necessities who could be benefitting from the \$57 million in unspent funds. With all the families that are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID and the high cost of living in Hawai'i, it is disheartening to know that \$57M in assistance funds went unspent. This is money that can help families immediately and will be spent in the local economy.

We urge this committee to ensure that Hawai'i that all of the \$98M in TANF funds go to low-income families and that we stop building up a reserve fund that is already almost \$400M and is the largest reserve fund in the country. A normal reserve fund amount would cover program expenses for one year or be about \$100 million. The Hawai'i reserve amount of \$400 million is a result of program rules that have not been updated in a decade and have left our lowest income families with less and less inflation-adjusted dollars every year.

We urge the committee to use TANF funds for rental assistance and to also make other program adjustments to ensure we are not leaving federal funds on the table that help our most vulnerable.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2233

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 4:49:52 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/10/2022 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Samuel Mitchell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB2233 because the Homeless need help