
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that post-secondary
2 students should be able to access resources that help them meet
3 their basic needs. Basic needs include access to stable
4 housing, food, and healthcare services.

5 The legislature further finds that the State should help
6 ensure that post-secondary students have access to these basic
7 needs while pursuing higher education. The legislature
8 additionally finds that the State must work towards breaking
9 barriers to access in order to create a more just and accessible
10 system of higher education.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish:

- 12 (1) A homeless student stability program;
13 (2) A homeless student housing resource program;
14 (3) A minimum of one benefits navigator position at each
15 university of Hawaii system campus; and
16 (4) A position within the university of Hawaii system to
17 coordinate campus positions and initiatives.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding three new sections to be appropriately
3 designated and to read as follows:

4 **"§304A- Homeless student stability program;**
5 **established.** (a) There is established within the university of
6 Hawaii a homeless student stability program to provide grants to
7 campuses within the university of Hawaii system to increase
8 identification and support of post-secondary students
9 experiencing homelessness.

10 (b) Campuses may use grants awarded through the program to
11 support students experiencing homelessness by:

12 (1) Identifying students that may be impacted by
13 homelessness;

14 (2) Identifying potential community resources and
15 organizational partnerships;

16 (3) Providing resources to support students' basic needs,
17 including retail store gift cards, groceries, and
18 hygiene items;

19 (4) Providing students with supplemental learning
20 resources, including tutoring;



1 (5) Reimbursing students for healthcare expenses,
2 including behavioral health expenses;

3 (6) Reimbursing students for temporary housing expenses,
4 such as short-term hotel or motel stays; and

5 (7) Helping students access employment and job-training
6 resources.

7 (c) The university shall award grants based on criteria
8 that shall be developed by the board of regents. The criteria
9 shall be based on the demonstrated need of the campuses, the
10 number or overall percentage of homeless students enrolled in
11 each campus, and the ability of campuses to meet the needs of
12 their homeless student population. The university shall
13 prioritize awarding grants to campuses that demonstrate a
14 commitment to:

15 (1) Partnering with local community-based organizations
16 with experience in serving the needs of students
17 experiencing homelessness or students of color, with a
18 preference for organizations that focus on equitable
19 housing and homelessness reduction strategies; and

20 (2) Implementing evidence-informed strategies to address
21 the opportunity gap and inequities that negatively



1 impact students experiencing homelessness. Specific
2 strategies may include, but are not limited to:

3 (A) Enhancing the cultural responsiveness of current
4 and future staff;

5 (B) Ensuring all staff, faculty, and school employees
6 are actively trained in trauma-informed care;

7 (C) Using a multidisciplinary approach when serving
8 students experiencing homelessness and their
9 families;

10 (D) Intentionally seeking and utilizing input from
11 students experiencing homelessness about how
12 different policies, services, and practices can
13 be improved; and

14 (E) Identifying data and systems needed to monitor
15 progress in eliminating disparities in academic
16 outcomes.

17 (d) Funds allocated for the purposes of this section shall
18 not be used to replace any existing federal, state, or county
19 resources that support students experiencing homelessness.

20 (e) At the end of each academic year, campuses receiving
21 grants shall submit a report on the academic outcomes of the



1 students supported through the program to the university. The
2 university shall review the reports and assist campuses in
3 making necessary adjustments to grant usage based on the results
4 of the reports.

5 **§304A- Homeless student housing resource program;**

6 **established.** (a) There is established within the university of
7 Hawaii a homeless student housing resource program to provide
8 grants to housing support organizations that partner with
9 university of Hawaii system campuses to help students and their
10 attached family unit that is experiencing homelessness secure
11 stable housing located near the campus that the student
12 experiencing homelessness attends.

13 (b) Housing support organizations awarded grants pursuant
14 to this section may use those funds to support the students and
15 their attached family unit that is experiencing homelessness
16 through activities including, but not limited to the following:

17 (1) Rental assistance, including utilities, security and
18 utility deposits, first and last month's rent, rental
19 application fees, moving expenses, and other housing
20 expenses as determined by the university;



1 (2) Transportation assistance, including gasoline
2 assistance and bus passes;

3 (3) Emergency shelter;

4 (4) Housing stability case management; and

5 (5) Homelessness prevention.

6 (c) The university may contract with a third party to
7 provide technical assistance, conduct evaluations of prospective
8 grantees, and assist with the awarding of grants. At a minimum,
9 the third party shall:

10 (1) Be a non-profit organization;

11 (2) Be located and registered in the State; and

12 (3) Have a demonstrated record of working toward the
13 housing and educational stability of students and
14 families experiencing homelessness.

15 (d) The university, or the third party in consultation
16 with the university, shall develop an application and grant
17 process to award grants to housing support organizations.

18 Applications for the program shall include a letter of support
19 from the campus that the organization intends to partner with.

20 Within sixty days of being awarded a grant, a memorandum of
21 understanding shall be established between the housing support



1 organization and campus, which defines the responsibilities and
2 commitments of each party in identifying, housing, and
3 supporting students experiencing homelessness. At a minimum,
4 the memorandum of understanding shall address how:

5 (1) Housing support organizations will partner with the
6 campus to address the needs of homeless students and
7 develop sustainable strategies to house students
8 experiencing homelessness; and

9 (2) Data on students experiencing homelessness will be
10 collected and shared in accordance with relevant
11 privacy laws and protections.

12 (e) In awarding grants, the university shall ensure that
13 any housing support organization receiving a grant reflects
14 geographic diversity across the State. The university shall
15 prioritize awarding grants to housing support organizations that
16 demonstrate a commitment to:

17 (1) Establishing partnerships with university of Hawaii
18 system campuses; and

19 (2) Developing and implementing evidence-informed
20 strategies to address racial inequities. Specific



1 strategies may include, but are not limited to the
2 following:

3 (A) Hiring direct service staff who reflect the
4 racial, cultural, and language demographics of
5 the population being served;

6 (B) Committing to inclusive programming by
7 intentionally seeking and utilizing input from
8 the population being served;

9 (C) Ensuring eligibility criteria does not
10 unintentionally exclude people of color and
11 further racial inequity; and

12 (D) Creating access points in locations frequented by
13 parents, guardians, and homeless students of
14 color.

15 (f) Housing support organizations awarded grants pursuant
16 to this section shall report beneficiary information to the
17 university, including the:

18 (1) Length of time beneficiaries have been receiving
19 benefits under the program;

20 (2) Housing destination following expiration of program
21 benefits;



1 (3) Type of residence prior to receiving program benefits;
2 and

3 (4) Number of times the beneficiaries were homeless in the
4 past three years.

5 (g) The university, or the third party contracted pursuant
6 to subsection (c), shall conduct a program review every two
7 years. The program review shall evaluate the process used by
8 housing support organizations to identify and conduct outreach
9 to students experiencing homelessness and any other indicators
10 that assess the effectiveness of housing support organizations
11 in meeting the housing needs of students experiencing
12 homelessness.

13 (h) For the purposes of this section:

14 "Attached family unit" means family members that live with
15 the student.

16 "Beneficiary" means a student and the student's attached
17 family unit, if applicable, that is assisted by a housing
18 support organization that has been awarded a grant pursuant to
19 this section.

20 "Housing support organization" means a housing authority,
21 behavioral health organization, community-based non-profit



1 organization, or non-profit organization with a focus on housing
2 or homelessness.

3 **§304A- Hunger free and basic needs strategic plan;**

4 **benefits navigator.** (a) There shall be established a minimum
5 of one benefits navigator position in each university of Hawaii
6 system campus to assist students in accessing public benefits,
7 existing emergency assistance programs, and other community
8 resources. Each benefits navigator shall be located at a single
9 location on campus where students are directed to receive
10 assistance. Each campus, in coordination with respective
11 benefits navigator, shall develop a hunger-free and basic needs
12 campus strategic plan. Each strategic plan shall:

13 (1) Include policy proposals for campus food pantries, if
14 such policies have not already been established;

15 (2) Include an analysis of existing food pantry policies
16 that evaluates the accessibility to students;

17 (3) Review and update methods to identify low-income and
18 food-insecure students;

19 (4) Create a communications and outreach strategy to
20 promote existing food and nutrition benefits
21 assistance programs;



1 (5) Identify opportunities for partnerships with
2 community-based organizations; and

3 (6) Assess the need for additional state or federal
4 funding to support the basic needs of students.

5 (b) Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the
6 university shall develop and disseminate by September 30 each
7 year a survey of students enrolled at each university of Hawaii
8 system to assess food security, housing security, and access to
9 basic economic support. The university shall publish the
10 results of the survey by December 31, 2025, and each year
11 thereafter.

12 (c) Campuses shall submit an annual report to the board of
13 regents on the outcomes of the establishment of the benefits
14 navigator position and findings from respective hunger-free and
15 basic needs campus strategic plans."

16 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii to fund and
21 administer homelessness and basic needs support services for



1 post-secondary students; provided that the sums appropriated
2 shall be expended as follows:

3 (1) \$ for the homeless student stability
4 program;

5 (2) \$ for the homeless student housing resource
6 program;

7 (3) \$ for the establishment of a minimum one
8 benefits navigator position in each university of
9 Hawaii system campus; and

10 (4) \$ for the establishment of one position
11 within the university of Hawaii system to coordinate
12 campus positions and initiatives.

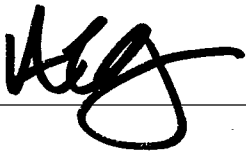
13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the university
14 of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

16 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

17

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 13 2025



H.B. NO. 91

Report Title:

University of Hawaii; Post-secondary Students; Homeless Students; Basic Needs; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a homeless student stability program and homeless student housing resource program within the University of Hawaii. Establishes a minimum of one benefits navigator position at each University of Hawaii System campus and a position within the University of Hawaii System to coordinate campus positions and initiatives. Appropriates funds.

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