

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many low-income
2 households struggle to purchase food due to Hawaii's high cost
3 of living and food prices. The supplemental nutrition
4 assistance program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp
5 program, is crucial to providing necessary food assistance to
6 some of Hawaii's most economically disadvantaged residents.

7 The legislature further finds that SNAP is the most
8 effective anti-hunger initiative in the country. In Hawaii,
9 SNAP supports over one hundred thirty thousand individuals,
10 bringing more than \$630,000,000 into the State's economy each
11 year. These benefits help economically vulnerable households
12 meet their basic nutritional needs without sacrificing their
13 financial security.

14 The legislature additionally finds that a study co-authored
15 by the university of Hawaii economic research organization and
16 Hawaii Public Health Institute found that eliminating the net
17 income limit criteria for SNAP beneficiaries would provide an



1 additional \$45,000,000 in benefits to struggling families
2 across the State and expand eligibility for thirteen thousand to
3 fourteen thousand more households, with each household receiving
4 an average of \$3,200 annually in food assistance. In September
5 2024, Governor Josh Green subsequently announced that the State
6 would remove the net income limit criteria to strengthen
7 Hawaii's social welfare system for working-class families.

8 The legislature also finds that SNAP access and
9 participation rates are hampered by understaffing at the
10 department of human services. Improvements to SNAP in the
11 State, including elimination of the net income limit, will only
12 be effective if they are able to be fully implemented, which
13 will require additional staffing for the department of human
14 services. Moreover, since SNAP benefits are federally
15 reimbursable, increasing staff for the State's SNAP program
16 could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in federal
17 revenue to combat food insecurity in local communities by
18 strengthening the State's SNAP participation rate.

19 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
20 funds to the department of human services to enhance staffing
21 related to the supplemental nutrition assistance program.



SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to strengthen access to the supplemental nutrition assistance program by:

(1) Authorizing differential pay increases for positions related to the facilitation of the supplemental nutrition assistance program;

(2) Establishing new positions to improve access to the supplemental nutrition assistance program, particularly for economically disadvantaged communities; and

(3) Undertaking any other programs or initiatives the department of human services deems effective in improving supplemental nutrition assistance program participation rates.

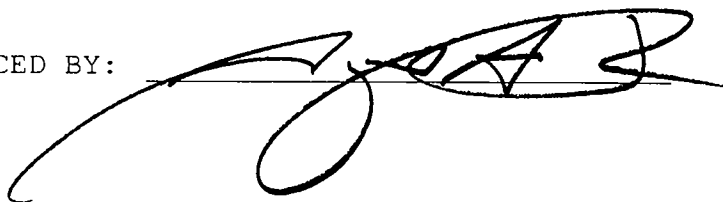
The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.



S.B. NO. 960

INTRODUCED BY:

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S.B. NO. 960

Report Title:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; DHS; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rates, including establishing additional positions.

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