
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 the return-to-home
2 pilot program established by Act 94, Session Laws of Hawaii
3 2023, has been a success, sending over one hundred homeless
4 individuals back to their home states in the State's partnership
5 with The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

6 The legislature further finds that additional manpower
7 would assist in furthering the program.

8 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to repeal the return-
9 to-home pilot program, establish the return-to-home program on a
10 permanent basis, and appropriate funds for the program's
11 continued operations.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by adding a new section to part XVIII to be
14 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

15 "§346- Return-to-home program. (a) The statewide
16 office on homelessness and housing solutions shall coordinate a
17 voluntary homeless assistance program, to be known as the



1 return-to-home program, to provide eligible homeless individuals
2 with assistance in being reunited with family and relatives in
3 the individual's home state. The office shall establish a
4 public-private partnership by contracting with eligible
5 nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, or
6 foundations to administer the program in compliance with
7 chapters 103D and 103F. The governor's coordinator on
8 homelessness may assist with the implementation of this program.

9 (b) An individual who is homeless shall be eligible to
10 participate in the return-to-home program if:

11 (1) The individual's participation is completely
12 voluntary;

13 (2) The individual, if on parole, probation, or awaiting a
14 court hearing or sentencing, has proper clearance from
15 the court to participate in the program;

16 (3) The individual is indigent and lacks the financial
17 resources necessary to secure transportation to return
18 to the individual's home state;

19 (4) The statewide office on homelessness and housing
20 solutions, or an agency contracted to administer the
21 program, contacts the family or support group of the



1 individual and the family or support group confirms
2 their acceptance of the individual returning to their
3 home; and

4 (5) The individual's family or support group agrees to pay
5 for half of the cost of transportation for the
6 individual to return to the individual's home state;
7 provided that this paragraph shall not apply if the
8 family or support group lacks the resources necessary
9 to cover half the cost of transportation for the
10 individual; provided further that the office or the
11 agency contracted to administer the program shall
12 verify the family or support group's lack of resources
13 before covering the entire flight cost of the
14 individual.

15 (c) An individual shall participate in the return-to-home
16 program only once and shall sign an agreement to this effect
17 before participating in the program. The agreement shall be
18 kept on file with the statewide office on homelessness and
19 housing solutions.

20 (d) The return-to-home program shall actively seek the
21 participation of local airlines, cruise lines, charter



1 companies, homeless programs, travel agencies, and the visitor
2 industry to coordinate and implement the program.

3 (e) The return-to-home program shall assist program
4 participants with necessary and proper preparations for travel,
5 including obtaining proper identification, accessing public
6 transportation to the airport, providing orientation relating to
7 airport security, and ensuring sufficient personal hygiene.

8 (f) The statewide office on homelessness and housing
9 solutions shall submit a report of its findings and
10 recommendations relating to the return-to-home program,
11 including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later
12 than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular
13 session."

14 SECTION 3. Act 94, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, is
15 repealed.

16 SECTION 4. 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 return-to-home program, including:



- 1 (1) full-time equivalent (FTE) position to
- 2 assist and supervise the program; and
- 3 (2) Operation costs and other current expenses relating to
- 4 the program.

5 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the statewide
6 office on homelessness and housing solutions for the purposes of
7 this Act.

8 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

9 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

OHHS; Homelessness; Return-to-Home Program; Report;
Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to establish a permanent Return-to-Home Program to return homeless individuals in the State to families and relatives in their home states. Requires the Office to report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000.
(HD2)

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