



1 the State must increase the investment in and commitment to the  
2 solution.

3 Addressing homelessness requires a multi-faceted approach  
4 using proven interventions that are targeted to the particular  
5 characteristics of the population being served and that address  
6 the root causes of homelessness. First and foremost, Hawaii  
7 needs more housing that is affordable to low-income families.  
8 Hawaii has the highest housing costs in the nation and the  
9 lowest wages after adjusting for the cost of living. The  
10 greatest need for housing lies at the lowest ends of the income  
11 scale. Specifically, the greatest demand is for housing that is  
12 affordable to residents with incomes at thirty per cent or less  
13 than the area median income, such as the housing provided  
14 through the state low-income public housing program.

15 The Hawaii public housing authority manages hundreds of  
16 units that are vacant due to the need for major repairs. These  
17 units could rapidly be brought back into service and assist  
18 homeless and extremely low-income families with housing  
19 available for thirty per cent of their income.

20 In addition to affordable housing, Hawaii needs to sustain  
21 programs that connect people experiencing homelessness with



1 critical services and housing programs, such as outreach, rapid  
2 rehousing, the state rent supplement program, housing first,  
3 Oahu's family assessment center, and law enforcement assisted  
4 diversion.

5 Outreach is critically necessary to connect people to all  
6 available housing options: emergency shelters, transitional  
7 shelters, housing first, rapid rehousing with rent stipends, and  
8 treatment. For many chronically homeless mentally ill persons,  
9 it can take fifty or more individual outreach contacts, spread  
10 out over several months or even years, to build up the trust  
11 needed to move these individuals and families off the streets.  
12 Outreach teams may also conduct wound care, distribute hygiene  
13 kits or snacks, and offer to obtain identification documents.

14 Housing first programs are proven to be effective in  
15 addressing homelessness for chronically homeless individuals,  
16 including those who have an addiction or mental illness, or  
17 both. The principles of housing first programs include:

18 (1) Providing robust support services for program  
19 participants that are predicated on assertive  
20 engagement rather than coercion;



- 1 (2) Granting chronically homeless individuals priority as  
2 participants in housing first programs;
- 3 (3) Embracing harm-reduction approaches, in collaboration  
4 with prevention and early intervention approaches,  
5 which include a spectrum of multiple opportunity  
6 strategies from safer use to abstinence, to reduce the  
7 impact of substance use disorders, thereby providing  
8 critical links to deepen the impact to populations at  
9 greater risk; and
- 10 (4) Providing program participants with leases and tenant  
11 protections as provided by law.

12 While housing first programs are relatively costly, they  
13 are cost-effective. Providing housing and services under the  
14 housing first program is less expensive than the alternative of  
15 incurring costs for emergency and other services necessary for  
16 unhoused persons who are chronically homeless.

17 The rapid rehousing and state rent supplement programs are  
18 proven to be effective in securing and maintaining housing for  
19 working individuals and families who are homeless. A  
20 significant segment of homeless people have a stable source of  
21 income and only need modest financial help and some "housing



1 stabilization" services instead of full scale subsidies and  
2 intensive, ongoing case management. More than a quarter of the  
3 State's households fall into homelessness simply because they  
4 are short of money to pay for their rent but have no other  
5 underlying issues. For these individuals and families, small  
6 subsidies allow them to more rapidly secure housing and move out  
7 of shelters into permanent housing.

8 Rapid rehousing provides struggling households with a  
9 financial shot in the arm - typically a one-time payment to  
10 cover delinquent rent, utility payments, or first month's rent  
11 and security deposit. This one-time intervention is often all  
12 families need to avoid homelessness or to quickly bounce back  
13 from becoming homeless.

14 The state rent supplement program provides a sustained  
15 subsidy to struggling households. Unlike the housing choice  
16 voucher program, also known as the section 8 program, which  
17 helps families at the lowest ends of the income scale by  
18 bridging a wide affordability gap between income and housing  
19 costs through subsidies, the state rent supplement program helps  
20 households who are closer to financial self-sufficiency but  
21 still have a narrow affordability gap to fill. The state rent



1 supplement program provides a small, time-limited subsidy,  
2 warding off homelessness while providing time for families to  
3 close the affordability gap and achieve self-sufficiency.  
4 Financial case management and counseling are critical to  
5 stabilize these families for future sustainability in permanent  
6 housing.

7 Because individual subsidies under the rapid rehousing and  
8 state rent supplement programs are relatively low, the programs  
9 can resolve homelessness for a large number of individuals and  
10 families relative to the total cost of the subsidy programs.

11 The family assessment center, which was opened on Oahu in  
12 September 2016, has achieved extraordinary results over its  
13 first year of operation. Out of fifty-four households served,  
14 ninety-one per cent were successfully housed. The assessment  
15 center provides comprehensive services to the households it  
16 serves, including benefits reviews and determinations, health  
17 assessments, service coordination, and housing placement. This  
18 proven model can be replicated on the neighbor islands as an  
19 effective way to move families with children to permanent  
20 housing. For example, on Hawaii island, a large parcel of land  
21 has been set aside to develop housing solutions for homelessness



1 in Kona, where the need for localized services is particularly  
2 acute.

3 Finally, to adequately address homelessness, Hawaii needs  
4 to disrupt the ineffective, destructive, and expensive revolving  
5 cycle of substance abuse addiction that leads to homelessness,  
6 arrest, incarceration, release, and back to addiction on the  
7 streets. LEAD, or law enforcement assisted diversion, is a pre-  
8 booking diversion program that grants police officers the  
9 discretionary authority to redirect low-level offenders,  
10 typically drug-involved and homeless, to case managers if the  
11 offenders are willing.

12 (b) The purpose of this Act is to:

13 (1) Establish and appropriate funds for a three-year  
14 housing homeless children pilot program to assist  
15 families with minors, or those families with minors at  
16 imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic  
17 violence, to obtain and maintain permanent housing;  
18 and

19 (2) Appropriate funds to the Hawaii public housing  
20 authority, department of human services, and  
21 department of health to support the State's most



1 effective programs to end homelessness: public  
2 housing, housing first, rapid rehousing, outreach  
3 services programs to homeless persons, including  
4 outreach services to runaway and homeless youth and  
5 civil legal services, Oahu's family assessment center,  
6 and the LEAD program.

7 **PART II**

8 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the Hawaii  
9 public housing authority a three-year housing homeless children  
10 pilot program. The purpose of this program is to assist  
11 families with minors, or those families with minors at imminent  
12 risk of homelessness due to domestic violence, to obtain and  
13 maintain permanent housing.

14 (b) The housing homeless children pilot program shall:

- 15 (1) Assist homeless families with minor children or those  
16 families with minor children at imminent risk of  
17 homelessness due to domestic violence;
- 18 (2) Assist with obtaining or maintaining permanent  
19 housing, including time-limited rental assistance in  
20 an amount to be determined by the Hawaii public  
21 housing authority; and



1 (3) Provide financial case management by a United States  
2 Department of Housing and Urban Development certified  
3 financial counseling organization.

4 (c) The board of directors of the Hawaii public housing  
5 authority shall adopt rules, pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii  
6 Revised Statutes, necessary for the purposes of this section;  
7 provided that the board of directors of the Hawaii public  
8 housing authority shall develop interim rules without regard to  
9 chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for assisting participants  
10 in the housing homeless children pilot program.

11 (d) The board of directors of the Hawaii public housing  
12 authority may employ, without regard to chapter 76, Hawaii  
13 Revised Statutes, and at pleasure may dismiss, persons it finds  
14 necessary for the performance of its functions and fix their  
15 compensation.

16 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the  
19 Hawaii public housing authority to administer the housing  
20 homeless children pilot program and administrative costs to  
21 operate the program.



1 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for  
4 the Hawaii public housing authority to provide public housing  
5 improvements and renovations statewide.

6 SECTION 5. The sums appropriated in sections 3 and 4 of  
7 this Act shall be expended by the Hawaii public housing  
8 authority for the purposes of this part.

9 **PART III**

10 SECTION 6. There is appropriated out of the general  
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
12 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the  
13 department of human services to continue to administer housing  
14 first programs for chronically homeless individuals in the  
15 State.

16 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general  
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the  
19 department of human services to continue to administer the rapid  
20 rehousing program to assist homeless individuals or families in  
21 obtaining or maintaining permanent housing and to cover housing



1 stabilization services and administrative costs to operate the  
2 program.

3 SECTION 8. There is appropriated out of the general  
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
5 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the  
6 department of human services to continue to administer the  
7 outreach services program to homeless persons, including but not  
8 limited to individuals and families with children, and  
9 unaccompanied homeless youth; provided that:

- 10 (1) \$ of the sum appropriated shall be expended for  
11 outreach services to runaway and homeless youth; and
- 12 (2) \$ of the sum appropriated shall be expended for  
13 civil legal services.

14 SECTION 9. There is appropriated out of the general  
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
16 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the  
17 department of human services to continue to administer the  
18 family assessment center on Oahu for homeless families.

19 SECTION 10. The sums appropriated in sections 6 through 9  
20 of this Act shall be expended by the department of human  
21 services for the purposes of this part.



1 **PART IV**

2 SECTION 11. There is appropriated out of the general  
3 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
4 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the  
5 department of health to continue to administer homeless  
6 outreach, counseling, and diversion for unsheltered persons  
7 experiencing substance abuse, including through professional  
8 case managers who employ basic core competencies for substance  
9 abuse treatment; provided that \$ of the sum appropriated  
10 shall be expended to continue administering the law enforcement  
11 assisted diversion pilot program.

12 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
13 health for the purposes of this part.

14 **PART V**

15 SECTION 12. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050;  
16 provided that section 2 be repealed on June 30, 2021.



**Report Title:**

Homelessness; Housing; Rapid Rehousing; HPHA; DHS; DOH; State Rental Assistance; Housing First; Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes and appropriates funds for a three-year housing homeless children pilot program to assist families with minors, or those families with minors at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence, to obtain and maintain permanent housing. Appropriates funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority for public housing improvements and renovations statewide. Appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services and Department of Health to support the State's most effective programs to end homelessness: housing first, rapid rehousing, outreach services programs to homeless persons, including outreach services to runaway and homeless youth and civil legal services, Oahu's family assessment center, and the LEAD program. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

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