

JAN 28 2009

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii loses  
2 millions of dollars in federal funding each year due to its  
3 seventy-two per cent participation rate among eligible  
4 households in the supplemental nutrition assistance program,  
5 formerly known as the food stamp program, under title 7 United  
6 States Code sections 2011 to 2027. A higher rate of  
7 participation would draw millions of additional federal dollars  
8 to the State.

9           The State's stringent eligibility standards are more  
10 restrictive than those required by federal law. The continued  
11 use of the asset test, which considers a household's savings and  
12 other non-liquid capital, denies access to the food stamp  
13 program by needy individuals. Additionally, the State's lengthy  
14 application process deters otherwise eligible households from  
15 applying.

16           Hawaii's food stamp eligibility standards also affect the  
17 local economy by failing to maximize the amount of federal



1 funding available for the program. If the participation rate,  
 2 currently seventy-two per cent, increased to ninety per cent,  
 3 approximately \$45,000,000 additional federal dollars would be  
 4 spent by Hawaii consumers at local retail outlets. This lost  
 5 revenue is magnified by what the United States Department of  
 6 Agriculture has identified as the ripple effect; for every \$5  
 7 spent through the supplemental nutrition assistance program,  
 8 there is a \$9.20 economic benefit to the community.

9 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
 10 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
 11 and to read as follows:

12 "§346- Administration of the supplemental nutrition  
 13 assistance program. (a) The department shall establish a  
 14 program of expanded categorical eligibility for benefits, in  
 15 accordance with subdivision (a) of the federal supplemental  
 16 nutrition assistance program, title 7 United States Code section  
 17 2014, and title 7 Code of Federal Regulations section  
 18 273.2(j)(2). The department shall not consider the level or  
 19 types of assets of a household in determining the eligibility of  
 20 the household for, or the amount or types of assistance to  
 21 provide to the household under the supplemental nutrition  
 22 assistance program.



1        (b) The department shall allow any household to apply for  
2 benefits under this section by facsimile transmission, and shall  
3 accept the signature provided on the application as original.  
4 Upon request of the applicant, the department shall allow  
5 telephone interviews in lieu of a face-to-face interview.

6        (c) The department shall limit the length of the  
7 application for benefits under this section to no more than four  
8 pages.

9        (d) The department shall set the gross monthly income  
10 limit for households eligible to receive benefits under the  
11 supplemental nutrition assistance program at one hundred eighty-  
12 five per cent of the federal poverty guidelines or less.

13        (e) For purposes of this section, "household" means an  
14 individual or group of individuals as provided under title 7  
15 Code of Federal Regulations section 273.1."

16        SECTION 3. The department of human services shall prepare  
17 a food stamp outreach plan as provided under title 7 Code of  
18 Federal Regulations section 272.5. The plan shall meet the  
19 requirements provided under title 7 Code of Federal Regulations  
20 section 272.2, and shall be submitted to the United States  
21 Department of Agriculture, through the governor, prior to the  
22 2009-2010 fiscal year.





**Report Title:**

Food Stamps; Eligibility Requirements; Department of Human Services; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

**Description:**

Eases the eligibility requirements for benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

