

**REPORT TO THE TWENTY-SEVENTH HAWAII STATE  
LEGISLATURE 2014**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF  
ACT 169, SECTION 3  
SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII (SLH) 2013**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division  
November 2013**

**REPORT ON ACT 169, SECTION 3, RELATING TO SCHOOL READINESS,  
SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII (SLH) 2013**

ACT 169, SLH 2013, established a school readiness program to be known as the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program within the Department of Human Services' (DHS) child care assistance program. SECTION 3 of this Act requires the Department to report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2014 and 2015 Regular Sessions on the following:

- (1) The number of applicants to the Preschool Open Doors program established pursuant to this Act;
- (2) The number of applicants that were placed on a waitlist for the Preschool Open Doors program;
- (3) The geographic distribution of services to participants in the Preschool Open Doors program;
- (4) The number of participating providers; and
- (5) A summary of any capacity and funding issues the Department has experienced in carrying out the purposes of this Act.

The Department is to adopt interim rules to carry out the purposes of this section, to be in effect for no more than one year after their adoption, without regard to chapter 91 or 201M, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

The DHS is currently still in the process of implementing the POD program and does not have the data to report regarding items 1 – 5 above.

To obtain the information required by this Act, the program application period for the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program needed to be completed prior to December 2013. This meant that the preschool providers, by November 2013, had to commit a confirmed placement (i.e. enrollment) for a POD eligible child who would start the POD program in July 2014. There was also concern that since the POD funding does not assist families with deposit costs, some families would not have the funds to provide the preschool with a deposit so far in advance.

After discussions with the preschool provider community, the DHS data system contractor, and the Governor's policy staff, the Department concluded that the POD program implementation prior to December 2013 was not feasible, as all aspects related to implementation could not be completed within this timeframe.

The Department is currently in the process of contracting to deliver the POD services. The POD administrative rules have been drafted and are being routed for Governor's approval to go to public hearing. The necessary DHS data system application modifications have been identified and are scheduled for implementation by March 1, 2014. The preschool provider community agreed that the enrollment of POD eligible children into their programs between the periods of May – June is the most feasible plan and aligns with the current enrollment practices already in place with the preschool providers.

Provided all implementation elements stay on course, the Department anticipates having an open application period for the POD program to be conducted March 1 - April 30 of 2014, and for POD eligible families to then enroll their child into their selected preschool for POD payments beginning in State Fiscal Year 2014. The Department will then have the requested data in time to provide an updated report before the 2015 Legislative session.