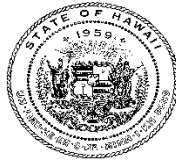


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ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, April 16, 2025
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
In-person and online via Zoom

WRITTEN SUMMARY

MEMBERS:

Derek Kanehira – Chair, Employer Engagement Committee; Senior VP, Human Resources, Alexander & Baldwin
Sean Knox – President, Hawaii Employment Services, Inc.
Trang Malone – Manager, Workforce Initiatives, CVS Health
Cheryl Cross – Executive Search Consultant, Inkinen Executive Search
Rosella Guardascione – Chair, Hawaii County Workforce Development Board
Lea Dias – Administrator, Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Thomas Chock – Program Specialist, DBEDT (Designee for Director James Tokioka)

GUESTS:

Mark Menard – Business Services Coordinator, American Job Center Hawaii
Dana DeSoto – Work-based Learning Coordinator, Vibrant Hawaii
Corey Reincke – Administrator, Hawaii Proland Authority
Paul Chen – First Hawaiian Bank
Nicolette van der Lee – Workforce Program Manager, UH Community College System
Crystal Garan – Business Services Coordinator, Workaway Youth Program
Debbie Leong-Yep – University Health Alliance (UHA)
Jasmine Francisco – Talent Acquisition Manager, Marriott International
Christine Beaulé – Director of Workforce Development, University of Hawaii System
Matt Stevens – Executive Director, Hawaii Workforce Funders Collaborative

STAFF:

Bennette Misalucha – Executive Director, Workforce Development Council
Evan Palmer – Program Specialist, Workforce Development Council

I. Call to Order [Video 00:30:38] by Derek Kanehira, Chair

Derek Kanehira called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and confirmed it was a public meeting under the open meeting law.

II. A Panel Discussion on Breaking Barriers: Real Talk from Employers [Video 00:17:23] facilitated by Mark Menard, Business Services Coordinator, American Job Center

Mark Menard facilitated a panel discussion featuring three employers sharing their experiences partnering with American Job Centers. The panelists discussed their initial hesitations, the partnership process, and workforce development outcomes.

[Video 00:19:48] by David Makilan, HAHOKO David shared how HAHOKO utilized the QUEST internship program to hire 14-15 individuals as interns and employ 10 as full-time staff, marking the organization's first W-2s in its 13-year history.

[Video 00:21:05] by Charlie Yoshimoto, Bank of Hawaii Charlie described Bank of Hawaii's successful participation in American Job Center hiring events since 2022, consistently making job offers at every event with strong return on investment.

[Video 00:23:23] by Roz Funakoshi, Samurai Incorporated Roz explained her food manufacturing company's partnership with AJC for nearly a year, successfully utilizing QUEST and On-the-Job Training programs despite initial hesitations about government bureaucracy.

III. Update on the Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit [Video 01:20:51] by Derek Kanehira, Chair

Maricar Pilotin Freitas was scheduled to provide an update on WOTC application backlog but was unavailable for the meeting.

IV. Executive Director's Report [Video 01:21:15] by Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council

Bennette provided updates on unified plan implementation, agency transition status, and unexpended funds projects. She reported on the National Governors Association grant for developing a North Star and the planned July 2025 synergy summit.

V. Announcements and Constituent Comments (if any) [Video 01:25:05] by Derek Kanehira, Chair

No announcements or comments were made.

VI. Next Meeting [Video 01:25:33] by Derek Kanehira, Chair

The next meeting for the Employer Engagement Committee is scheduled for July 16, 2025 at 1:30 pm on Zoom and at the DLIR building.

VII. Adjournment [Video 01:25:44] by Derek Kanehira, Chair

Derek Kanehira adjourned the meeting at 2:51 p.m.