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KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S
QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY**

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

In-person and online via Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

Council Members Present:

Andrew Garrett, Representative for the State House of Representatives

Nalani Brun, Designee for Mayor Kawakami, Director in Office of Economic Development on Kauai

Jade Rojas-Letisi, Designee for Mayor Bissen, Executive Assistant for the Office of Economic Development on Maui

Wanelle Kaneshiro, Designee for Keith Hayashi, Director for Workforce Development Branch in the Department of Education (DOE)

Della Teraoka, Designee for Wendy Hansel, Interim Vice President for University of Hawaii System

Thomas Chock, Designee for James Tokioka, Program Specialist for the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT)

David Rodriguez, Designee for Jade Butay, Equal Opportunity Officer for the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Rosella Guardascione, Chair for the Hawaii County Workforce Development Board

Christopher Lum Lee, Chair for the Oahu Workforce Development Board

Kehaulani Kukahiko, Acting Chair for Kauai Workforce Development Board

Leslie Wilkins, Chair and President for the Maui Economic Development Board

Amber Akana, Seafarer's International Union of North America

Scott Collins, Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA)

Pane Meatoga III, Operating Engineers Local 3

Tui Scanlan, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 665

Gina Anonuevo, First Hawaiian Bank

Keith DeMello, Ulupono Initiative

Rona Fukumoto, Lanakila Pacific

Jared Higashi, Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association
Shelli Ihori, Hawaii Pacific Health
Derek Kanehira, Alexander and Baldwin
Sean Knox, Hawaii Employment Services Inc.
Ken Loui, Pacific Marine & Supply Co., Ltd.
Trang Malone, CVS Health
Cary Miyashiro, Quad D Solutions
Sean Nakamura, Tradewind Group
Carla Kurokawa, Alu Like Inc.

Excused:

Dan Kouchi, Designee for Governor Josh Green
Andrew Kawano, Director, Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, City and County of Honolulu
Benson Medina, Director of Training, Hawaii Laborers & Employers Cooperation and Education Trust
Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Services
Dion Dizon, Director of Career and Technical Education, Kamehameha Schools
Lorna Woo, Director of Human Resources, Enterprise Holdings
Manu Bermudes, Vice President of Human Resources, Hawaii Gas
Cheryl Cross, Executive Search Consultant, Inkinen Executive Search
Robert Lietzke, Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton

Noted Guests (in order of presentation):

Roseann Freitas, Chief Executive Officer, Building Industry Association of Hawai'i
Julie Van Radke, Accountant, Administrative Services, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Adele Manera, Kaua'i Island Manager, Workforce Development Division
Harrison Kuranishi, Executive Director, O'ahu Workforce Development Board
Chentelle Rowland, Maui County Workforce Development Board Staff
Clinton Mercado, Executive Director, Hawai'i County Workforce Development Board

Staff:

Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council (WDC)
Evan Palmer, Specialist, Workforce Development Council (WDC)
Kelly Quitevis, Specialist, Workforce Development Council (WDC)
Angela Chock, Hele Imua Intern, Workforce Development Council (WDC)

WRITTEN MINUTES

I. Call to Order (00:04:23 – 00:12:48)

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Council Chair Ken Loui, who confirmed the meeting was being held in accordance with Hawai'i's Sunshine Law. He welcomed attendees, reminded Zoom participants to keep cameras on, and emphasized the importance of notifying staff if leaving early.

Angela Chock, Hele Imua Intern, conducted the roll call. Quorum was established at 9:43 a.m. with 26 members present.

Chair Loui also welcomed several newly appointed and reappointed members, county designees, and guests, many of whom introduced themselves verbally or via Zoom chat.

II. Approval of Minutes of February 19, 2025 (00:12:49 – 00:14:08)

Chair Ken Loui called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on February 19, 2025.

Board Action: Council Member Sean Knox moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cary Miyashiro.

Hearing no objections or discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

III. Presentation – Building Industry Association of Hawai'i (00:14:09 – 00:32:35)

Presenter: Roseann Freitas, Chief Executive Officer, Building Industry Association of Hawai'i (BIA)

Roseann Freitas presented on BIA-Hawai'i's Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training (PACT) Program, a 6-week curriculum aimed at preparing individuals for careers in the construction industry. The program is certified by HBI and includes safety training (OSHA-30), CPR/AED, hands-on exposure to various trades, and life skills such as resume writing and cooking.

Key highlights:

- 83% program completion rate, above national averages for similar programs
- Participants are placed in jobs or internships upon completion, with some offered jobs at graduation
- Program funding comes from sources such as WIOA, the Weinberg Foundation, and the Hawai'i Building Industry Foundation
- Efforts to expand include launching in Maui, supporting youth from underserved communities, and collaborating with HUD and other partners
- Barriers such as lack of food, transportation, and basic life skills are addressed in the program
- Emphasis on increasing female participation in the trades, currently only 10.7% industry-wide

- Future plans include stronger partnerships to create continued pathways into apprenticeships, union programs, or higher education

Freitas also shared impactful student stories, including one participant who was homeless and showed perfect attendance. She noted the importance of mentorship, accountability, and exposure to successful role models from similar backgrounds.

Q&A Discussion Topics Included:

- Funding sources and per-student costs
- Transitioning to formal apprenticeships (requires GED)
- Tracking post-program outcomes like starting salaries
- Outreach and recruitment strategies
- The value of building life habits such as punctuality and accountability

Chair Ken Loui and several Council members expressed appreciation for the program and its alignment with WIOA goals.

IV. Certification of the Kauai American Job Center (00:32:36 – 00:38:32)

During the discussion, it was noted that Scott Collins joined via Zoom, bringing the total present to 27 council members.

Presenter: Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, WDC

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided an overview of the certification process for the American Job Center (AJC) on Kaua'i, which falls under the purview of the State Workforce Development Council due to the absence of a local board. A site visit and review were conducted in April 2025, and findings and recommendations were included in the meeting packet.

Recommendation: Provisionally certify the Kaua'i AJC with conditions, including a corrective action plan due by September 30, 2025, addressing improvements such as expanded outreach.

Board Action:

Council Member Cary Miyashiro moved to approve the conditional certification, seconded by Council Member Tui Scanlan.

A roll call vote was conducted by Angela Chock, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Report on the 2025 Legislative Session (00:38:33 – 00:45:11)

Presenter: Keith DeMello, Chair, Special Projects Committee

Council Member Keith DeMello reported on the Workforce Development Council's engagement during the 2025 legislative session, noting that he and Tui Scanlan were authorized in late 2024 to represent the Council's policy positions. The Council submitted testimony on seven measures, all of which passed, including six gubernatorial appointments and Senate Bill 742, which established a data-sharing governance working group under the Office of Enterprise Technology Services.

SB 742 aligns with the Council's mission and pillars by improving workforce data integration to address challenges such as outmigration and underemployment. The bill names the WDC Chair or designee to the working group.

Keith also shared preliminary recommendations for strengthening the Council's legislative strategy in future sessions, including earlier issue identification, Special Projects Committee development, and formal WDC approval in advance of each session.

Council Member Tui Scanlan expressed appreciation for Keith's leadership and collaboration. Chair Loui and WDC staff also acknowledged the significant time and effort involved.

VI. Fiscal Reports and HIOE Vote (00:45:12 – 01:05:15)

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha introduced Julie Van Radke, DLIR Administrative Services Office staff, who now oversees the state's WIOA funds. Julie reported on the closeout of Program Year (PY) 2022 and the status of PY 2023 expenditures. Of the \$3.9M in recaptured PY 2022 funds, \$1.4M has been spent and \$2.5M is encumbered as of April 2025. These funds are awaiting liquidation through invoicing, particularly from Ready to Work programs. For PY 2023, 40–60% of local area allocations had been spent as of April 30, 2025.

Bennette followed with a county-by-county breakdown of PY 2023 expenditures and forecasts through June 30, 2025:

- Hawai'i County: \$1.78M allocated; \$885K spent (~50%); forecast to lapse \$688K.
- Honolulu: \$5M allocated; \$2.8M spent (~55%); forecast to lapse \$1.26M.
- Kaua'i: \$600K allocated; \$173K spent (~29%); forecast to lapse \$325K.
- Maui: \$1.1M allocated; \$720K spent (~64%); forecast to lapse \$255K.

The total anticipated lapse across all counties is approximately \$2.5M, down from \$3.9M the previous year.

Bennette also shared a comparative analysis of WIOA allocations from 2022–2025. Hawai'i's total allotment has decreased from \$10.3M in 2022 to \$8.3M in 2025. Although national WIOA funding has slightly declined, other states—like New Jersey and California—have seen increases, suggesting variation in the federal allocation formula based on population and economic indicators. Sean Knox presented a question about whether unspent funds contributed to Hawai'i's lower allotments, but Bennette and Maricar Pilotin-Freitas clarified that federal statute determines the formula.

Bennette then presented a proposal to use the remainder of WDC's General Appropriations (GA) funds—approximately \$378K—for a DOE Adult Education initiative involving career pathway modules. This proposal, previously endorsed by the Executive Committee, was brought to the full board for approval.

Board Action:

Council Member Cary Miyashiro moved to approve the recommendation. Council Member Carla Kurokawa seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was conducted by Angela Chock, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Status Report of Program Year 2022 Unexpended Funds (01:05:16 – 01:06:00)

Bennette reported on the disposition of \$1.5M in PY 2022 unexpended WIOA funds that were allocated to the WDC for targeted projects. Six projects are being managed under WDC oversight. While five are on track to meet liquidation deadlines by June 30, 2025, one project is experiencing complications that are still being resolved and could not be disclosed in detail at this time.

VIII. Success Stories (01:06:52 – 01:12:04)

Chair Ken Loui introduced a new recurring agenda item to highlight the real-life impact of workforce development programs across the state. He emphasized the importance of remembering how council decisions tangibly affect local communities. Two success story videos were shared—one from Hawai'i Island and one from Maui.

The first featured Kevin Aki, a former high school dropout who experienced homelessness and poverty before finding support through the American Job Center Hawai'i and Goodwill Hawai'i's Olokahana Program. With their help, he earned his diploma, developed workforce and life skills, and now works full-time with the County of Hawai'i's rapid response team.

The second story featured Dexter Corpus, a Maui resident and current high school CTE teacher in digital media. He described how local workforce programs provided educational and emotional support throughout the pandemic. With guidance and resources, he completed his associate's and bachelor's degrees, obtained a teaching certification, and now continues with professional development as an educator.

Chair Loui and members expressed appreciation for these uplifting examples and affirmed their value as inspiration for the Council's continued work.

IX. Executive Director's Report (01:11:58 – 01:25:37)

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha presented her report, covering board vacancies, unified plan implementation, delineation of roles and responsibilities, quarterly highlights, and

upcoming events. She noted three current private sector vacancies and one labor sector vacancy on the Council. Updates were shared on the July 9 Synergy Summit II, September workforce development events, and progress toward a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to clarify roles between WDC, WDD, and DLIR ASO. Bennette recognized recent staff additions Evan and Kelly, as well as intern Angela, for their contributions.

Looking ahead to Quarter 3, WDC will prioritize organizational planning, a board retreat in October, budget planning, and assisting Kauaʻi's local board transition. Upcoming events include a fiscal training and a Strada Foundation webinar. Kelly also invited members to a site visit of the Kawailoa program on Friday, July 11. The initiative, supported by the Kellogg Foundation and Partners in Development Foundation, aims to replace youth incarceration with an indigenous model of care.

X. Local Workforce Development Board Oral Reports

A. Kauai (01:25:37 – 01:29:37)

Adele Manera, Kauai Island Manager for the Workforce Development Division, shared updates on WIOA performance and priorities. Participation has increased, with adult participants doubling to 16, dislocated worker participants rising to 6, and youth enrollment at 4. Much of this growth is due to dual enrollments in the Hele Imua and QUEST programs. The Kauai team is actively recruiting to fill a vacancy in the WIOA Youth Program. A fall job fair is tentatively planned for mid-October at the Kauai Convention Hall. Despite ongoing challenges with low enrollment, the local board is encouraged by a new eligible training provider: Kauai Community College will now offer WIOA-approved courses.

B. Oʻahu (01:30:25 – 01:34:26)

Harrison Kuranishi began the report by sharing recent updates from the Oʻahu Workforce Development Board (OWDB). A new Chair, Christopher Lum Lee, was elected to succeed Jason Chang, who served in the position for seven years. At the same April 2025 Board meeting, OWDB amended its bylaws for the first time in several years and expanded its membership from 19 to 23 members. New board members include Sarah Guay (Hawaiʻi Employers Council), Wes Akamine (ʻŌlelo Community Media), and Andrew Rosen (Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce).

Kuranishi reported strong Quarter 3 WIOA performance results, including a 57.3% increase in Adult program participation, a 17.58% increase in the Dislocated Worker program, and a 162% increase in Youth program enrollment. The Adult program met its employment rate goals for the fifth consecutive year, and the Youth program achieved both measurable skills gains and median earnings targets for the first time in five years. He also shared a participant letter commending American Job Center staff member Lisa Pereira for her outstanding support.

Christopher Lum Lee also addressed several administrative matters. He confirmed the completion of OWDB's One-Stop Operator Certification using a new format and announced an additional \$400,000 allocation to O'ahu's QUEST grant. He also provided an update on the extension of the service provider contract, clarifying the board's decision-making process and reaffirming its commitment to transparency and accuracy in public communications.

C. Maui - (01:34:27 – 01:39:12)

Chentelle Rowland reported on recent subcommittee meetings and key updates from the Maui County Workforce Development Board. The Sector Strategies & Employer Engagement Subcommittee met with Marshall Norman from UHMC and Good Jobs Hawai'i to address CDL training needs. Kazu Hayashida of Hawaiian Electric also expressed interest in workforce collaborations.

Rowland highlighted QUEST program activity, including the placement of 19 interns and projected 66% budget expenditure by the contract end date (9/15/25). Karey Kapoi LLC continues to support strategic outreach. QUEST's Instagram outreach yielded 37.4K views and 516 interactions.

Maui's second annual Hiring Fair for graduating high school seniors, held on April 11, 2025, at Fairmont Kea Lani, featured 56 employers, 4 community resources, and 135 students. The event focused on jobs offering wages that meet ALICE-calculated living standards (\$19.69/hour or \$39,385/year). Transportation support was provided for students from across the county, including Moloka'i and Lāna'i.

Rowland reviewed Q3 performance measures and described technical assistance efforts to improve WIOA outcomes through targeted outreach and clearer service strategies. Staff TA covered fiscal monitoring, program reporting, HireNet, and ETPL processes, with gratitude expressed to Bennette Misalucha for her support.

Upcoming events included a Maui County Career Expo (already held) and an updated date for the State of Hawai'i Vacancies Fair, now scheduled for July 10 at the State Building. Staff will also participate in Fiscal Management Training on June 26–27, 2025.

D. Hawai'i County – (01:39:24 – 01:42:45)

Clinton Mercado began by acknowledging staff member Kevin Aki, noting his contributions to the Hawai'i Island office. He reported that HCWDB currently has a full board of 19 members and recently held both a board meeting and an Oversight Committee meeting in March 2025.

He highlighted several approved updates, including:

- An increase in Individual Training Account funding from \$2,500 to \$3,000, and from \$5,000 to \$6,000 for Commercial Driver Licensing (CDL) programs.
- A policy allowing the use of WIOA funds for CPR, AED, and First Aid certifications when required for employment or training completion.

Mercado addressed continued challenges with CDL licensing due to a shortage of examiners on Hawai'i Island. He noted support from Maui examiners and efforts to coordinate with the DMV for emergency hiring solutions. A major success was the February 22 job fair at Prince Kūhiō Plaza, which drew over 2,000 attendees and nearly 50 employers. The event offered on-site interviews and resume support, and some participants were hired the same day. A similar event is being planned for West Hawai'i.

He also announced the Connect Kākou initiative, a county-led broadband expansion project that will support island-wide computer literacy classes and improve outreach for American Job Center services. The initiative involves partnerships with Hawai'i Community College, Waipahu Community School for Adults, Goodwill Hawai'i, and the Workforce Development Division. Mercado concluded by expressing optimism for continued growth and collaboration during Program Year 2024.

XI. Written Reports from Core Partners (01:42:46 – 01:43:03)

Chair Ken Loui noted that written reports from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners were included in the board packet on pages 100 to 118. Attendees were asked if there were any questions regarding the reports. Hearing none, the meeting proceeded to the next section.

XII. Review of Written Reports from Standing Committees for the period February 19, 2025 to June 24, 2025 (01:43:04 – 01:43:45)

The Chair directed the Council to the written reports submitted by various Workforce Development Council (WDC) committees, located in the board packet on pages 119 to 136.

These reports include updates from the following committees:

- Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee
- Special Projects Committee
- Employer Engagement Committee
- Military and Veteran Affairs Committee

Appreciation was expressed for the work of the committee chairs and their members. Attendees were encouraged to review the reports and were reminded that they are welcome to attend committee meetings. No questions were raised.

XIII. Announcements and Public Testimony (01:43:47 – 1:52:00)

Chair invited members of the public to provide announcements or testimony on items not listed on the agenda. It was reiterated that, in compliance with the Sunshine Law, discussion or action on such topics could not occur during this meeting, but items raised may be included on future agendas.

David Rodriguez delivered a message on behalf of the Director of DLIR. He formally acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the Attorney General's Office, Administrative Services Officer, Workforce Development Division (WDD), and the Executive Director in swiftly amending 22 program contracts—specifically those involving Vector Communications and community colleges. This prompt response ensured the timely delivery of goods and services in compliance with WIOA grant obligations and federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200), thereby upholding both fiscal and programmatic integrity. Rodriguez also shared information on the President's proposed FY 2026 budget, which includes eliminating funding for several key workforce programs, including WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker grants. The proposal consolidates 11 federal programs into state block grants under the "Make America Skilled Again" initiative, reducing ETA funding by 34%—from \$4.6 billion to \$3 billion—and eliminating programs such as Job Corps, YouthBuild, and apprenticeship grants. The topic will be added to a future agenda for formal discussion once more guidance becomes available from Congress.

Tui Scanlan (IATSE 665) alerted the Council to a historic data breach involving 16 billion leaked passwords. He advised organizations to immediately update passwords, especially those tied to financial accounts and social media, and recommended adopting multi-factor authentication and password manager applications for enhanced security.

Leslie Wilkins (MEDB) inquired about the protocol for the newly authorized Advocacy Committee to submit testimony supporting WIOA reauthorization and funding. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha affirmed that the topic could be added to the next agenda, at which point formal board action could be considered. Due to Sunshine Law restrictions, no discussion could occur at this time. Wilkins concluded with a positive announcement: MEDB has placed 147 paid interns across every island this summer, serving students from rising juniors to returning college and graduate students. The program supports work-based learning and expands the statewide talent pipeline.

XIV. 2025 Board and Executive Committee Meeting Dates (01:52:01 – 01:52:23)

The upcoming meeting dates were noted for both the WDC Quarterly Board and Executive Committee:

Quarterly Board Meetings (subject to change):

- Q3: Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
- Q4: Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Executive Committee Meetings (subject to change):

- Q3: Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM
- Q4: Wednesday, October 22, 2025, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

XV. Next Meeting

The next WDC Quarterly Board Meeting is tentatively scheduled for:

Date: Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 310, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

XVI. Adjournment (01:52:23 – 01:52:32)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 AM.