



**WORKFORCE**DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL

# Quarterly Board Meeting

## Board Packet

February 18, 2026  
9:30 AM to 12:00 PM



# Meeting Agenda

February 18, 2026

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

BENNETTE MISALUCHA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII'  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 317  
HONOLULU, HAWAII' 96813  
<https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/>  
Phone: (808) 586-8815 / Fax: (808) 586-8822  
Email: [dlir.workforce.council@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlir.workforce.council@hawaii.gov)

**HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
BOARD MEETING - 2026 FIRST QUARTER**

**AGENDA**

**Date:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026  
**Time:** 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon  
**In-Person** Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Building  
**Meeting Location:** 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 310  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
**Virtual Participation:** Virtual Videoconference Meeting – Zoom Meeting (Link below)

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89009397490?pwd=PWj1QLIaaEEgL0N9Xo9TDFUW61yyB3.1>

**Meeting ID: 890 0939 7490**

**Passcode: 224167**

**Agenda:** The agenda was posted to the State electronic calendars as required by §92-7(b), Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS")

**Board Meeting**

**Materials:** Meeting materials are available for review at <https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/meeting-docs/>

Individuals may submit written testimony by hard copy mail or hand delivery to: Attn: Workforce Development Council, 830 Punchbowl Street, Suite 317, Honolulu, HI 96813 or by email at [DLIR.Workforce.Council@hawaii.gov](mailto:DLIR.Workforce.Council@hawaii.gov). We request submission of testimony at least 24 hours prior to the meeting to ensure that it can be distributed to the Board members. Any written testimony submitted after such time will be retained as part of the record and distributed to members as soon as practicable, but we cannot ensure members will receive it in sufficient time to review prior to any decision-making.

**Internet Access:**

To view the meeting and provide live oral testimony, please use the link at the top of the agenda. You will be asked to enter your name. The Board requests that you enter your full name, but you may use a pseudonym or other identifier if you wish to remain anonymous. You will also be asked for an email address. You may fill in this field with any entry in an email format, e.g., [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@\\*\\*\\*mail.com](mailto:*****@***mail.com)

Your microphone will be automatically muted, and video will be turned off. When the Chairperson asks for public testimony, you may click the Raise Hand button found on your Zoom screen to indicate that you wish to testify about an agenda item. You will individually be enabled to unmute your microphone, turn on your video if you choose to, and testify. When recognized by the Chairperson, please unmute your microphone and turn on your video if you choose to before speaking and mute your microphone and turn off your video after you finish speaking

**Phone Access:**

If you do not have internet access, you may get audio-only access by calling the Zoom Phone Number listed at the top on the agenda. Upon dialing the number, you will be prompted to enter the Meeting ID which is also listed at the top of the agenda. After entering the Meeting ID, you will be asked to wait to be admitted into the meeting. When the Chairperson asks for public testimony, you may indicate you want to testify by entering “\*” and then “9” on your phone’s keypad. After entering “\*” and then “9”, a voice prompt will let you know that the host of the meeting has been notified. When recognized by the Chairperson, you may unmute yourself by pressing “\*” and then “6” on your phone. A voice prompt will let you know that you are unmuted. Once you are finished speaking, please enter “\*” and then “6” again to mute yourself.

For both internet and phone access, when testifying, you will be asked to identify yourself and the organization, if any, that you represent. Each testifier will be limited to five minutes of testimony per agenda item. Pursuant to section 92-3.7(e), HRS, the Board may remove or block any person who willfully disrupts or compromises the conduct of the meeting.

If connection to the meeting is lost for more than 30 minutes, the meeting will be continued on a specified date and time. This information will be provided on the Council’s website [at https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/meeting-docs/](https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/meeting-docs/).

Instructions to attend State of Hawaii virtual board meetings may be found online at <https://labor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/State-of-Hawaii-Virtual-Board-Attendee-Instructions.pdf>.

Vision Statement

The Workforce Development Council’s vision is that all employers have competitively skilled employees and all residents seeking work or advancement have sustainable employment and self-sufficiency.

Mission Statement

It is the intent of the Workforce Development Council to support and guide the implementation of the Unified State Plan through active collaboration and regional sensitivity for the purpose of aligning, coordinating, and integrating workforce services to meet the needs of employers and residents in order to foster a robust economy.

I. **Call to Order** .....Keith DeMello, Workforce Development Council Chair

II. **Approval of Minutes: November 18, 2025\***

**\*Requires Board Action**

III. **Welcome New Board Members**

- A. Jason Benn – Senior Vice President, Chief Transformation & Administrative Officer, Hawaiian Electric
- B. Douglas Chang – General manager, Ritz Carlton, Oahu Turtle Bay
- C. George Denise- Director, Project Management Hawaii; Workforce Development Chair, General Contractors Association

**\*Swearing in of New Board Members**

IV. **Presentation: Federal Funding Matters** ..... Tim Carlton, National Governor’s Association, Director of Legislative Affairs

*The National Governor’s Association has been closely monitoring the budget appropriations process and will share the latest update on the State’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding as well as the efforts for WIOA re-authorization by Congress.*

V. **Presentation on Hele Imua Internship Program** ..... Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator, Workforce Development Division and Denise Yamaguchi, Executive Director, Hawaii Agricultural Foundation

*The **Hele Imua** program is a State of Hawai’i-administered, 12-week paid internship initiative designed to give eligible participants hands-on work experience, originally within state government, to help bridge education and career pathways and support transition into long-term employment. At its 2025 session, the State Legislature has expanded the program to the private sector.*

*The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) Workforce Development Division will provide an overview of the Hele Imua Internship program. In addition, the Hawaii Ag Foundation will report on the status of the Hele Imua pilot program for the private sector.*

VI. **Presentation: 2024-2028 State Unified Plan Modification\***

*One of the key responsibilities of the Workforce Development Council or State Board is the development, the modification, and the implementation of the State Workforce Unified Plan. The modification is mandated to be submitted by March 3, 2026, to the United States Department of Labor.*

*The Modified Plan sets a four-year strategy to align core workforce programs (Adult Program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, the*

*Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program) and strengthen partnerships among public, private, and educational sectors. It aims to connect residents to quality jobs, create pathways to living-wage careers, and address barriers to employment, especially for vulnerable populations. The plan focuses on economic diversification, upskilling, and leveraging federal investments to prepare Hawai'i's workforce for high-demand industries like healthcare, technology, and energy. It also seeks to transform workforce services, improve coordination, and foster long-term strategies for a sustainable, competitive economy*

*This agenda item will involve having the Council ratify the first Draft of the Plan and releasing this version for public comment which commences on February 19, 2026, and concludes on March 23, 2026. This is all in preparation for the submission of the final version of the Plan to the United States Department of Labor by the deadline of April 3, 2026.*

**\* Requires Board Action**

- VII. Presentation: Learn, Work, Thrive Hui** ..... Matt Stevens, Hawaii Workforce Funders Collaborative and Keala Peters, Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii

*The Hawaii Funders Collaborative has just published a report called "From Crisis to Coalition: A 2026 Roadmap for Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment. The Collaborative has been an active partner of the Workforce Development Council for the past two years in the implementation of the State Unified Plan, which had resulted in the convening of two Synergy summits. These summits brought together various stakeholders who were galvanized towards a common goal, or a north star, which has been dubbed "a generational commitment". This presentation showcases the community driven efforts that has since evolved and the various initiatives it plans to undertake.*

- VIII. Presentation: Holomua Collective**

*Holomua Collective brings together voices from across the community to focus on making Hawai'i more affordable for working families. They will share and present initiatives related to economic and workforce opportunities, and how different sectors can work together to create meaningful change. Their work is grounded in research, community dialogue, and a shared commitment to keeping local families thriving in Hawai'i.*

- IX. Presentation on Workforce Pell\***

*The Workforce Pell Grant is a new federal program that provides funding for short-term training programs. The Governor, in coordination with the State Workforce Development Council, will be responsible for establishing the approval framework and for approving or denying program applications. There is a working group (composed of representatives from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Workforce Development Division, the Hawaii Department of Education, University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Community Colleges), which is working on the details with guidance from the National Governors Association. This agenda item provides a status update on the project, which is scheduled to launch on **July 1, 2026**, and at which time the State must be fully prepared to begin accepting applications. A Board resolution providing the preliminary framework for Workforce Pell will be presented, which will also define the Council's role.*

**\* Requires Board Action**

**X. Governor’s Time** ..... *Dan Kouchi, Policy Advisor at Governor’s office and Designee for Governor Josh Green*

- *State of the State and Governor Green’s priorities*
  1. *Expanding Affordable Housing*
  2. *Reduction in the cost of living*
  3. *Boost Economic development and workforce development*
- *Overview of 2026 legislative session*  
*No specific legislation will be mentioned but the themes will be related to Governor Green’s priorities which are housing, reduction in the cost of living, and economic development and workforce development initiatives.*
- *Update on Governor’s work in national organizations*
  1. *Western Governors Association*
  2. *National Governors Association*

**XI. Labor Director’s Update**..... *David Rodriguez, Designee for Department of Labor Director Jade Butay*

- *Overview of legislative priorities*  
*No specific legislation will be mentioned but the themes will be related to Governor Green’s priorities in economic development and workforce development initiatives.*
- *Department Budget Briefings*  
*A report on the House Finance Committee and Senate Ways and means Committee budget briefings earlier this month.*
- *Federal funds instability*  
*A discussion on what the Department is doing in view of the possible reduction of federal budget support.*

**XII. Fiscal Reports: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Grants** .....*Hong “Julie” Radke, Administrative Services Office and Bennette Misalucha*

*Administrative Services Office Accountant Julie Radke and Executive Director Bennette Misalucha will provide an overview of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant expenditures, budget status, and financial performance. The report will highlight current allocations, spending trends, and forecasts.*

**XIII. Certification of the Kauai American Job Center \***

*Certification of an American Job Center (AJC) normally falls within the purview of their local board. However, because Kauai does not have a board, the responsibility, by default, goes to the State Board. The Workforce Development Council conducted the certification process early this year. It granted provisional certification to the Center but with some conditions. The provisional*

certification will lapse on January 31, 2026. This is an update on the certification process; to request that the provisional certification be extended to May 30, 2026.

The Full Board will vote to ratify the Executive Committee's recommendation on the extension of the provisional certification of the Kauai American Job Center.

**\* Requires Board Action**

**XIV. Legislative Plans for 2026 Legislative Session ..... Keith DeMello**

For the 2026 Legislative Session, the Council's Legislative Team, under the aegis of the Special Projects Committee, will provide a report on the legislative outlook this year. There will be no specific bills that will be discussed. The discussion will be centered on the refinement of its legislative engagement protocols based on lessons learned from the past three years. The goal is to ensure timely coordination, consistent communication, and clear roles in advancing workforce priorities aligned with the State Unified Plan. This includes strengthening collaboration with legislative partners, including the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and improving internal tracking of proposed measures and testimony processes.

This item will also contextualize the Council's approach to legislative representation and oversight, including the limited backup representation by staff, consistent with Council policy and governance best practices. \*

**\*Requires Board action**

**XV. Executive Director's Report**

**A. Projects/ Activities**

The Executive Director will report on the status of the following projects/activities

- Strategic Planning meeting in December 2025
- First Hawaii Internship Summit
- Internship Excellence Awards
- Modification of the Unified Plan/ Due March 2026
- Implementation of the State Unified Plan
- webinar series on the Transformation Journey of other states: Maine, North Dakota and North Carolina
- Workforce Pell Grant working group
- Eligible Training Provider List Task Force

**B. FOCUS FOR 2026 Quarter 2 and Quarter 3**

The Executive Director will report on the focus for the next two quarters:

- Preparation for the implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant
- Building Staff Capacity (The Council will continue to strengthen its team and align staffing for optimum efficiency.)
- Establishing Parameters for WDC Grants and Procurement of these services.

- *Continuing to maximize the relevance of existing committees and adjust as needed.*
- *Operational Transition with Workforce Development– Ongoing (We continue to clarify roles and responsibilities between the Workforce Development Division and the Workforce Development Council to ensure efficiency and compliance.)*
- *Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Task Force (A specialized task force will be convened to streamline and strengthen the process for approving and monitoring eligible training providers.)*
- *State Board Acting as the Local Board on Kauai (Training will be conducted to ensure the State Board can fully meet its responsibilities when acting as the Local Workforce Board for Kauai.)*
- *Board Member Training – State and Local Boards (We are planning an in-person statewide joint training session in April, focusing on roles, governance, and compliance).*
- *Implementation of Hawai‘i’s Unified State Plan & pivot from the Four Pillars Catalyst Teams to the values of Learn, Work, Thrive and Belong that are part of the Generational Commitment.*
- *Pro-active efforts towards continuous improvement and best practices (The Council will commit to identifying opportunities for growth and effectiveness.)*

**XVI. Acceptance of Written Reports from Core Partners of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (No Oral Presentation)**

This agenda item is informational only and does not include oral presentations. Written reports are included in the Board Packet and will be accepted into the record.

**A. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Title III – Workforce Development Division\* ..... Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator, Workforce Development Division**

\*PowerPoint slide deck will be part of the Board Packet

- *Wagner-Peyser Performance Reports (October 2025 to December 2025)*
- *Hele Imua Status Report*
- *Apprenticeship program Status report*
- *Community Outreach Activities*
- *Success Stories*

**B. WIOA Title II – Adult Education Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)..... Wanelle Kaneshiro, Hawaii Department of Education, Workforce Division**

1. *Introduction to Ryan Mandado, new program manager for AEFLA and Adult Education*
2. *AEFLA funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026*
  - *Congress agreed to maintain the Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 funding level for FY2026.*
  - *While the House passed the measure, the Senate has yet to vote.*
3. *Hawaii Department of Education is interested in establishing more Integrated Education and Training programs that will*
  - *lead to a workforce need.*

- *lead to industry-recognized certifications.*
- *provide unskilled/under-skilled individuals with opportunities to gain the skills needed for a viable career.*

C. **WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation** ..... *Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Services*

1. *Performance Measures matrix and graphs*
2. *Key Metrics and Outcomes*
3. *Employment Outcomes*
4. *Agency Updates*

*American Job Centers of Hawaii (AJCH)*

- a. Statewide: Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation collaborates with community, government, and business partners in various work groups to promote competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. These include the statewide American Job Centers (AJCs), the Hawaii Employment First Task Force, the Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE), the organization, Disability: IN, and the Society for Human Resource Management.*
- b. Oahu Branch (OB) meets with AJC monthly to discuss referrals, participants, and services. Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRS) are co-located at certain AJCs statewide on scheduled days to complete intakes and assistance.*
- c. Services for the Blind Branch (SBB) also known as “Ho`opono”: Stationed at the Oahu AJC twice per month, the Services for the Blind Branch Employment Services Specialist (ESS) is available to assist clients with disabilities in job search and collaborates with other staff in the employment section of the City and Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Ho`opono staff are helping AJC staff assess job seekers’ abilities, capabilities, and, when appropriate, accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.*
- d. DVR staff collaborate on providing an integrated service model at the AJCs.*
- e. DVR continues working with AJC staff to find a way to track dual enrollments between programs.*
- f. Ongoing support from AJC partners includes providing tours and sharing information with new Vocational Rehabilitation staff assigned to weekly on-site services for Hawaii residents with disabilities eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services.*
- g. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) with all counties but Kauai have been signed.*

*Timeliness*

- *The timeframe for processing DVR applications (30 days) and eligibility determinations (60 days) for persons with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation services continues to be shortened with DVR’s rapid engagement initiatives. DVR’s rate complies at or above 90 percent.*

Vacancies

- Still working to hire qualified individuals for various positions within DVR. We are currently at a 35% vacancy rate agency-wide, which is an improvement.

Administrative

- VR is working on updates to the Unified State Plan due in March 2026.
- VR continues to be active on the Workforce Development Council; we also have representation on the Workforce Development Boards statewide.

**XVII. Acceptance of Written Reports from Local Workforce Development Board.\***

This agenda item is informational only and does not include oral presentations. Written reports are included in the Board Packet and will be accepted into the record.

**A. Oahu Workforce Development Board..... Harrison Kuranishi,  
Executive Director**

*The Oahu Workforce Development Board (OWDB) met on January 22, 2026.*

- *Bylaw Amendments to Article III, Section 6 and Article IV, Section 1 Amendments to ensure previously scheduled meetings can be conducted in the event the respective Chair/Vice-Chairperson is unavailable to conduct said meeting.*
- *Article III, Section 6; Addition of item F to read: "If the Committee Chairperson is unable to conduct a scheduled Committee meeting and in the absence of a Committee Vice-Chairperson, any Executive Committee member may conduct the Committee meeting as the Vice-Chairperson."*
- *Article IV, Section 1; Addition of item D to read: "If the Board Chairperson is unable to conduct a scheduled Board meeting and in the absence of the Board Vice-Chairperson, any Executive Committee member may conduct the Board meeting as the Vice-Chairperson."*
- *Update on OWDB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan*
- *Recertification of the Oahu Workforce Development Board*
- *Request for Proposal status*
- *Monitoring the Service Provider*
- *Response to WIOA Title I Findings*
- *Status of Budget Modification*
- *Status of Invoices*

**B. Maui Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) ..... Chentelle Rowland, Executive Director**

1. *The Maui County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) is scheduled to meet on Friday, January 30, 2026, at 9am.*
2. *The County of Maui received a letter dated December 19, 2025 from Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Director Jade Butay, in response to Mayor Richard Bissen’s request for clarification regarding compliance requirements for the Maui County Workforce Development Board(MCWDB) in light of the recent guidance issued by the State Workforce Development Council (WDC) on September 3, 2025 in WIOA Bulletin No. 04-15 Change 2. The letter from Director Butay confirms that the MCWDB remains in compliance and is fully certified. The updated MCWDB by-laws is scheduled to be presented and approved at the next full board meeting. The updated by-laws reflect the revised term-limit language and ensure future board appointments align with the new State criteria. The updates will be completed as part of our normal certification process, which is due March 31, 2026.*
3. *Program Service/Enrollment Data*
4. *Success Stories*

**C. Hawaii County Workforce Development Board..... Clinton Mercado, Executive Director**

*Board Governance and Operations*

1. *Board Action and Membership: Hawaii County Workforce Development Board (HCWDB) held a full board meeting on November 12, 2025.*
  - a. *New Appointments: The Board welcomed new members Austen Drake (SSFM Hawaii) and Kehau Costa (Director, Hawaii County Office of Housing and Community Development).*
  - b. *Committees: The Board moved to activate the Business Engagement Committee to specifically address youth employment barriers and coordinate job fairs.*
  - c. *Upcoming Meeting: The next tentative board meeting will be in March 2026.*

*Fiscal Management and Funding Challenges*

1. *Federal Funding Delay: The County received the bulletin for Program Year 2025 allocations (covering July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) but was notified of a significant hold. Only 46% (\$652,448) of the expected \$1.22 million was released,*

*leaving a shortfall of approximately \$777,239 due to federal budget uncertainties.*

- 2. Proactive Mitigation: To prevent interruptions in service contracts, the Executive Director initiated an appropriation of \$1.4 million through the County Council. This measure ensures contracts can be executed immediately once the federal balance is released.*
- 3. Training Budget Constraints: As of late October, the Adult Program had expended approximately 90% of its training budget due to high demand for high-cost training like Commercial Driver's License (CDL) programs. This necessitated close monitoring of the budget for the remainder of the calendar year.*

#### *Workforce Development Partnerships*

- 1. One-Stop Operator (OSO) Transition: Change Makers Community Economic Development Corporation successfully assumed the role of One-Stop Operator in early October 2025.*
  - a. Operational Firewall: This transition formally removed the County from daily roles at the American Job Center of Hawaii operations, eliminating previous concerns regarding firewall violations between oversight and operations.*
  - b. Initial Progress: The new OSO has focused on coordinating partner services and managing the American Job Center Hawaii (AJCH) infrastructure. The AJCH telecommunication system was also upgraded from copper lines to a Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) system to improve public access.*
- 2. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) A Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs*
  - a. Enrollment & Spending: New enrollments were low during this quarter (example: 1 new adult participant in October) due to the nearly exhausted training funds and participants utilizing other benefits before seeking WIOA services.*
  - b. Training Outcomes: Despite enrollment caps, active participants continued to progress. In October, one participant successfully obtained licensure.*
  - c. Challenges:*
    - i. CDL Testing Backlog: A critical shortage of CDL examiners continues to prevent participants from obtaining their final licenses, despite completing training. Research and Development (R&D) staff are*

*collaborating with the County Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to address this personnel shortage.*

- ii. Data Validation: Staff reported ongoing difficulties obtaining employment verification documents from exited participants, which impacts on the "Exit-to-Follow-Up" data integrity.*

*3. WIOA Title I Youth Program (Ola I Ka Hana)*

- a. Entrepreneurial Skills Training: In October, the youth program focused on Entrepreneurship, utilizing the Banzai.org curriculum. Activities included "Becoming a Young Entrepreneur" and "The Pros and Cons of Owning a Small Business," designed to help youth recognize their strengths and understand business models.*
- b. Complex Area Partnership: In October, WIOA leadership presented to Hilo-Waiakea Complex Area Principals and Vice Principals to strengthen the referral pipeline between kindergarten to Grade 12 schools and WIOA youth services.*
- c. Campus Events: Staff conducted outreach at the PacYES Event at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo library lanai, networking with community service providers and students.*

*Strategic Economic and Workforce Development Alignments*

*1. Department of Research and Development provided updates on emerging industry sectors that will shape future workforce needs:*

- a. Film Industry: A major production (Untamed for Netflix) is scheduled to begin filming at Hawai'i National Park in February 2026. Workforce development staff are preparing to negotiate internship opportunities for local residents within the production.*
- b. Aquaculture: Strategic planning continues for the "world-class aquaculture hub" at Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA), with a long-term goal of creating 100 specialized jobs by 2030.*
- c. County Hiring Reform: The Hawaii County Mayor and Research & Development Director are actively working to remove the one-year minimum experience requirement for entry-level County jobs. This initiative aims to allow WIOA youth and local graduates to gain their first year of professional experience within the County government.*

*2. Expansion of Partnership: The HCWDB Staff continue to work with partners and community organizations to expand their network of available resources. Collaboration efforts are being utilized to reduce the amount of return funds at the end of the program's fiscal year.*

3. *Upcoming Focus for the next Quarter (January – March 31, 2026)*

- i. *Monitoring: The HCWDB Staff are preparing for the annual program monitoring of WIOA Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth) scheduled for February/March 2026.*
- ii. *Funding Resolution: Continued advocacy and tracking of the remaining 54% of federal Program Year 2025 funds.*
- iii. *Digital Literacy: Implementation of free digital literacy classes in partnership with Waipahu Community School for Adults (WCSA) to address technology gaps identified among AJC visitors.*

4. *HCWDB Meeting: The next tentative board meeting will be in March.*

**XVIII. Acceptance of Written Reports from Workforce Development Council Standing Committees**

This agenda item is informational only and does not include oral presentations. Written reports are included in the Board Packet and will be accepted into the record.

**A. Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee**

*SECTOR STRATEGIES & CAREER PATHWAYS COMMITTEE REPORT Submitted by:*

*Chair - Cary Miyashiro, Quad D Solutions*

*Vice Chair -Lorna Woo, International Union of Painters, and Allied Trades*

*Vice Chair – Rona Fukumoto, Lanakila Pacific*

*Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee Meeting,*

*Thursday, November 6, 2025, 1:00pm to 2:30pm.*

**HIGHLIGHT OF THE MEETING**

*Presentations:*

- *Hawaii Pacific Health (HPH) partnerships with education*

*\*PRESENTATION RESCHEDULED\**

*Shellie Ihori, Director of Workforce Development at Hawai'i Pacific Health, will discuss the organization's engagement with Hawai'i schools. In addition to highlighting various projects, she will share insights on the Waipahu High School Health Clinic. Shellie is a distinguished Human Resources professional with nearly two decades of experience in the health care sector. Her expertise encompasses benefits administration, talent acquisition, organizational effectiveness, regulatory compliance, and workforce development.*

- *Olelo Community Media*

*Wes Akamine, Director of Operations & Project Management, Olelo Community Media*

*Wes Akamine is a seasoned professional with over two decades of experience at ‘Ōlelo Community Media, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing public access television services in Hawai‘i. Since joining ‘Ōlelo, he has played a key role in expanding community access to media production resources and developing training programs that empower individuals to share their stories, with a particular focus on youth engagement. Wes shared about ‘Ōlelo’s K–12 programs and school partnerships, as well as the organization’s vision and desired outcomes for the future.*

- *K-12 Programs, educational partnerships*
- *Vision & desired outcomes for future*
- *Re-entry program, Hawaii Pacific University’s (HPU)  
Jennifer Merkel, Faculty Facilitator, Hawaii Pacific University  
“Incarceration to Workforce”*
  - *What is HPU doing to aid re-entry? Challenges?*
  - *What will be needed to develop a sustainable model?*
  - *Present interaction with Corrections and Parole & Pardons.*
  - *Desired Outcomes*

*Jennifer M. Merkle, Assistant Professor at Hawai‘i Pacific University, brings extensive experience in law, criminal justice, and corrections. A former Honors Attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, she has held multiple federal and academic roles focused on criminal law, human rights, and workforce training. Her research spans offender preparation, re-entry, emotional intelligence in law enforcement, and evidence-based correctional practices. Professor Merkle discussed HPU’s initiatives supporting offender re-entry, including current efforts, key challenges, and collaboration with Corrections and Parole & Pardons. The discussion will also explore what is needed to build a sustainable reentry model and identify desired outcomes for program success.*

- *Executive Directors Report, Bennette Misalucha*

*Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee Meeting, Monday, January 12, 2026 \**  
*RESCHEDULED to Monday, February 2, 2026, 1:00pm to 2:30pm.*

- *Nations First Elementary School Awarded NCAC Pre-Academy National Certification - Waikele Elementary  
Shanell Kagamida, Nuha Taberner, Michelle Tavares-Yamada*
- *Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Career Opportunities & FBI Honolulu Citizens Academy  
Ryan Noonan, Joy VanderVoort*
- *Building Resilient Communities through Multi-Lingual & Multi-Culturalism,  
Brandon Hill*

*Next Strategies & Career Pathways Committee Meeting:  
Monday, April 13, 2026  
1:00pm to 2:30pm.*

## B. Special Projects Committee

*SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT Submitted by:*

*Chair: Dion Dizon*

*Vice Chair -Pane Meatoga III*

*Vice Chair – Thomas Chock*

*Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, January 28, 2026*

### HIGHLIGHT OF THE MEETING

- 1. Discussed the Legislative protocols for the 2026 Legislative Session.*
- 2. Created the Permitted Interaction Group for the Military Spouses Project with Trang Malone and Cheryl Cross as the designated leads.*
- 3. Discussed the Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Projects Committee and the possible projects it should pursue this year.*
- 4. Executive Director's Report: Shared about the highlights of the past quarter, including the Workforce Pell Grants, the Modification of the Unified Plan, and the Implementation of the Unified Plan. Also announced about the Plans for the forthcoming Internship Summit which will be held on March 4, 2026, at the Japanese Cultural Center.*

## C. Youth Services Committee

*YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT Submitted by:*

*Chair: Tui Scanlan*

*Vice Chair – Carla Kurokawa*

*Vice Chair – Amber Akana*

*The Committee meeting was held on January 20, 2026*

- 1. Presentations*
  - a. Hawaii Future Farmers of America (FFA). Hawaii FFA became a part of the National Future Farmers of America Organization in 1929 to promote premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. State FFA Co-Coordinator Michael Barros presented about the program and current status.*
- 2. The Committee conducted a review of the current mission, vision, and role of the Youth Services Committee.*
- 3. Executive Director gave a report on the update on the 2024-2028 State Unified Plan Implementation & Plan Modification and the WDC's focus for the new calendar year.*
- 4. The next committee meeting will be held April 9, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.*

## D. Employer Engagement Committee

## *Employer Engagement Committee Report Submitted by*

*Chair: Gina Anunuevo*

*Vice Chair – Derek Kanehira*

*Vice Chair – Cheryl Cross*

Meeting was held on January 15, 2026

### HIGHLIGHT OF THE MEETING

1. *Presentation from the Tennessee Workforce Development Board Commissioner Deniece Thomas, who highlighted how the State of Tennessee has positioned itself as a national leader in employer engagement by aligning state resources to the full business life cycle.*
2. *Presentation from American Job Center Hawaii, WorkHawaii’s Business Services Team: Earl Kalani, Workforce Engagement & Recruitment Specialist. This presentation spotlighted Oahu’s unique approach to employer engagement, led by the Business Unit within WorkHawaii — the only local workforce board in the state with a dedicated outreach team. The presentation walked through how the unit builds relationships with local employers, creates on-the-job training opportunities, and leverages WIOA funds to meet business and workforce needs.*
3. *The Executive Director report covered the following topics:*
  - a. *Modification of the State Unified Plan (In order to continue to receive federal funds, the State of Hawaii needs to submit its strategic plan every four years, with a modification plan due every two years. The Modification Plan is due in March or April of this year).*
  - b. *Implementation of the Generational Commitment (Hawai`i North Star): There will be a webinar series in January and February which will feature several states who are going through a transformational journey to achieve their workforce development objectives. The details of the series were provided.*
  - c. *Internship Summit on March 4, 2026: The Workforce Development Council in collaboration with other workforce partners will hold the first ever Hawai`i Internship Summit on March 4, 2026, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm at the Japanese Cultural Center. Details on the agenda and other pertinent details were shared.*
  - d. *Internship Excellence Awards: The award recognizes the outstanding programs and participants from both the Hele Imua internship program as well as the non-governmental sectors (private businesses and non-profits). Details of the award categories as well as the nomination process were shared.*
4. *There was a strategic discussion regarding committee priorities for 2026, in view of*

*the new committee leadership. It was important to clearly redefine the committee's parameters and areas of responsibility, so all members can share a common understanding.*

5. *The next Employer Engagement committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.*

#### **E. Performance Management and Finance Committee**

*Performance Management and Finance Committee Report Submitted by:*

*Chair: Sean Nakamura*

*Vice Chair – Sean Knox*

*Vice Chair – Lea Dias*

*Meeting was held on January 13, 2026*

#### **HIGHLIGHT OF THE MEETING**

1. *There was a round table discussion on roles and responsibilities of the Performance Management and Finance Committee*
2. *Reports were shared on WIOA grant expenditures, budget status, and financial performance. The report also highlighted current allocations, spending trends, and forecasts.*
3. *Executive Director reported on the General Appropriations (GA) Funds allocated to the Workforce Development Council (WDC).*
4. *WDC Executive Director provided an overview of performance outcomes, including WIOA benchmarks, key performance indicators, and areas for improvement for all local areas:*
5. *Executive Director's Report included an Update on the 2024-2028 State Unified Plan modification, the Implementation of the plan and the planned focus for the first quarter of 2026.*
6. *The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 1:30 p.m.*

#### **XIX. Workforce Development Council's Next Meeting**

*Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 9:30 am-12 noon*

*Virtual Videoconferencing Meeting via Zoom and in-person at 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317, Honolulu, HI 96813*

#### **XX. Adjournment**

---

Reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities are available upon request. Requests for accommodations should be submitted via email to [Bennette.E.Misalucha@hawaii.gov](mailto:Bennette.E.Misalucha@hawaii.gov) or by calling

Bennette Misalucha at (808) 586- 3018 (voice) as soon as possible. Such requests should include a detailed description of the accommodation needed. In addition, please include a way for Bennette Misalucha to contact the requester if more information is needed to fulfill the request. Last minute requests will be accepted but may not be possible to accommodate. Upon request, this notice is available in alternate formats.

# Approval of Minutes

November 19, 2025

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

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

KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 317  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

<http://labor.hawaii.gov/labor> Phone: (808) 586-8815 / Fax: (808) 586-8822  
Email: [dlir.workforce.cpuncil@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlir.workforce.cpuncil@hawaii.gov)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

In-person and online via Zoom

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Council Members Present:**

Cheryl Cross, Executive Search Consultant, Inkinen Executive Search  
Keith DeMello, Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs, Ulupono Initiative  
Derek Kanehira, Senior VP, Human Resources, Alexander and Baldwin  
Sean Knox, President, Hawaii Employment Services Inc.  
Robert Lietzke, Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton  
Cary Miyashiro, President, Quad D Solutions  
Sean Nakamura, Corporate Controller and Treasurer, Tradewind Group  
Christopher Lum Lee, Chair for the Oahu Workforce Development Board  
Rosella Guardascione, Chair for the Hawaii County Workforce Development Board  
Kehaulani Kukahiko, Acting Chair for Kauai Workforce Development Board  
Rosalee Agas-Yuu, President, Hawai'i Nurses Association  
Amber Akana, Seafarer's International Union of North America  
Scott Collins, Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA)  
Dion Dizon, Director, UH West Oahu Center for Labor Education and Research  
Carla Kurokawa, Employment and Training Manager, Alu Like Inc.  
Pane Meatoga III, Deputy Political Director, Operating Engineers Local 3  
Tui Scanlan, President, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 665  
Andrew Garrett, Representative, Hawai'i House of Representatives  
Jade Rojas-Letisi, Executive Assistant, Office of Economic Development on Maui, Designee for Mayor Richard Bissen  
Nalani Brun, Director, Office of Economic Development on Kauai, Designee for Mayor Derek Kawakami

Benson Medina, Director of Training, Hawaii Laborers & Employers Cooperation and Education Trust  
David Rodriguez, Equal Opportunity Officer, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), Designee for Director Jade Butay  
Lea Diaz, Administrator, Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Wanelle Kaneshiro, Director for Workforce Development Branch, Department of Education (DOE), Designee for Superintendent Keith Hayashi  
Keala Monaco, Director of Workforce Innovation, University of Hawaii System, Designee for UH President Wendy Hansel  
Rona Fukumoto, President & CEO, Lanakila Pacific  
Gina Anonuevo, Vice Chair and Chief Administrative Officer/ Chief Human Resources Officer, First Hawaiian Bank  
Leslie Wilkins, President, Maui Economic Development Board

**Excused:**

Manu Bermudes, Vice President of Human Resources, Hawaii Gas  
Shelli Ihori, Workforce Development Director, Hawaii Pacific Health  
Trang Malone, Workforce Initiatives Manager, CVS Health  
Lorna Woo, Assistant Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, Intl Union of Painters & Allied Trades, D.C. 50  
Donovan Dela Cruz, Senator, Hawai'i State Senate  
Rick Blangiardi, Mayor, City & County of Honolulu  
Josh Green, Governor, State of Hawai'i  
James Tokioka, Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

**Noted Guests:**

Jung Yun "Kelly" Ha, Deputy Attorney General  
Lee Ann Yamashiro, Deputy Attorney General and Chair of the Labor Section  
Hong "Julie" Radke, Administrative Services Office, Department of Labor & Industrial Relations  
Erin Fernandez, Oahu Workforce Development Board  
George Denise, Director of Project Management, Turner & Townsend  
Daven Kawamura, Oahu Workforce Development Board  
Lei Ana Green, Workforce Development Division  
Lisa Pereira, Oahu Workforce Development Board

**Guests (in order of presentation):**

Tim Carlton, Director of Legislative Affairs, National Governors Association  
Teri Ushijima, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, Hawai'i Department of Education  
Abey Qureshi, Director, Curriculum Innovation Branch, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, Hawai'i Department of Education

**Staff:**

Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council (WDC)  
Jeanne Ohta, Employment Service Specialist, Workforce Development Council (WDC)  
Margaret Miura, Program Specialist, Workforce Development Council (WDC)

In-person meeting (830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu, HI 96813) room was changed from Room 310 to 317. Signs were conspicuously placed to direct attendees to the new meeting room.

**I. Call to Order (00:03:05 – 00:14:13)**

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.m. by Council Chair Keith DeMello. Chair DeMello, in accordance with Hawai'i's Sunshine Law, reminded everyone to identify themselves and others present in the room or on Zoom and as a public meeting under the Sunshine Law, members attending via Zoom must keep their cameras turned on and inform the Chair if you leave the meeting prior to the meeting adjournment to assess quorum. He welcomed attendees, reminded Zoom participants to keep cameras on, and emphasized the importance of notifying staff if leaving early.

Jeanne Ohta, WDC staff, conducted the roll call. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha confirmed 25 members were present. Per Workforce Development Council By-law Article 5, Section 7, under HRS 92-15 and HRS 202-1, until the Council has 41 members, 16 Council members shall constitute quorum to do business, and the concurrence of at least 16 council members shall be necessary to make any action of the Council valid. Chair DeMello confirmed quorum was established at 9:43 a.m. with 25 members present.

Chair DeMello welcomed a new board member and new WDC staff. Filling a board member seat under Labor, Chair DeMello introduced Rosalee Agas-Yuu, President of the Hawai'i Nurses Union. He also introduced Margaret Miura and Jeanne Ohta to the WDC staff. Executive Director Misalucha acknowledged Council member Rona Fukumoto's presence in the meeting changing the number of members present to 26.

**II. Approval of Minutes: August 20, 2025 (00:14:14 – 00:17:35)**

Chair Keith DeMello called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on August 20, 2025, found on pages 25–36 of the Board Packet.

**Board Action:** Council Member Tui Scanlan moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Council Member Christopher Lum Lee.

There were no objections or discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously by verbal responses to a roll call.

### **III. Welcome New Board Member and Staff**

Introductions were done following the Call to Order.

### **IV. Presentation on Federal Funding Matters by the National Governors Association (00:17:36 – 00:41:23)**

Presenter: Tim Carlton, Director of Legislative Affairs, National Governor's Association (NGA)

The federal government reopened earlier this month following a historic 41-day shutdown after which a Continuing Resolution (CR) was signed into law on November 12, 2025. The CR provides funding through January 30, 2026, that will give Congress a runway to figure out funding for fiscal year 2026.

NGA Director Carlton identified three bills that were fully funded and signed into law: the Agriculture Bill, Legislative Branch Bill (Congress), and Military Construction Veterans Affairs Bill. The Agriculture Bill, he noted, includes funding for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) throughout the remainder of the fiscal year 2026 despite CR funding ending on January 30, 2026.

The Labor HHS (Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education) Bill is one of 9 appropriations bills left to be decided upon by Congress. The Labor HHS Bill covers WIOA programming, apprenticeships, and other workforce-related programming that run through the Department of Labor. NGA Director Carlton compared the FY25 Funding, President's Budget, House FY26, and Senate FY26 dollar amounts for multiple programs that include Adult Employment and Training Activities, Youth Activities, Dislocated Workers Employment and Training Activities, Apprenticeship Program, Workforce Data Quality Initiative, Job Corps, and Veterans' Employment State Grant.

There were cuts to the appropriations to the WIOA program. In particular, the House proposed to cut Adult Employment and Training Activities and Youth Activities, reduce amounts for Dislocated Workers Employment and Training and Job Corps, and keep the Apprenticeship Program and Veterans' Employment State Grant level to last year. NGA Director Carlton mentioned the House was unsuccessful at passing the same proposed cuts last year and funds continued to flow at prior approved levels. The Senate has maintained level funding for FY26.

Following yesterday's announcement by the White House that the Department of Education will be entering into six inter-agency agreements, NGA Director Carlton reported a couple agreements, K-12 Education and Post-Secondary Programs, would pair the

Departments of Education and Labor. He further posed that these inter-agency agreements may complicate the funding levels if the Senate takes up their Labor HHS bill this week.

The House proposed cutting the Job Corps Program funding in half, about a billion-dollar proposed reduction from FY25. Overall, NGA Director Carlton suggested taking these numbers with a grain of salt concluding if congress reaches a full-year FY26 agreement on funding levels, we will not see significant cuts in the magnitude of what the House is proposing rather some small reductions. What is perhaps more likely, he adds, is another continuing resolution which continues the current level of funding.

In preparation for modification to the State (Unified) Plan due by March 15<sup>th</sup>, NGA Director provided a quick background for new board members. Every 4 years, the board and the governor are required to submit a state plan for WIOA to the federal government or the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to be specific. The most recent plan was submitted in the spring of 2024. Two years after the plan has been implemented states are required to submit modifications. State Plan Modifications provide an opportunity to update plans with priorities from the new Administration. NGA Director Carlton noted that the 2024 plan included the required components related to equity and the Biden Administration's Invest in America agenda. The current Administration's focus shifted to apprenticeship and the desire to have a million apprentices in America. The State Plan Modification will be expected to align with the current Administration. He, in reference to the current Administration's targeted actions, suggests replacing DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) language in favor of focusing on apprenticeship initiatives.

The TEG (Training and Employment Guidance Letter) should be coming out in the next couple of weeks.

To help Hawaii with planning before the TEG is released, NGA Director Carlton suggested apprenticeship, Workforce Pell, and the greater use of WIOA funds for training may be new areas of focus. The Workforce Pell, a provision included in the summer reconciliation law, and a greater use of WIOA funds for training have been a priority of Republicans. He noted the use of WIOA funds for training was also a priority of the ETA (Employment Training Administration) and that a few of the writers of the WIOA reauthorization are also part of the ETA staff.

America's Talent Strategy and AI (Artificial Intelligence) are areas to consider incorporating into the modified plan until the TEG is released.

NGA Director Carlton reminded the Board that when the Workforce Pell goes into effect July 1, 2026, this will be a new, potentially big opportunity for states to open short-term training programs. The Pell Grant is currently a grant for traditional higher education. As a reminder, governors, together with their state workforce boards, and other higher education partners in the state, must certify eligible programs for this workforce pilot program to align with the economic needs of the state and lead to recognized post-secondary credentials.

In the coming weeks, the U.S. Department of Education will engage in negotiated rulemaking to untangle the complexities of the law, answer existing questions, and hopefully find a regulatory path forward. The negotiated rulemaking body consists of stakeholders from interested groups and states and individuals with other workforce boards. The Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-driven (AHEAD) Workforce Pell Committee will meet December 8-12, 2025, and January 5-9, 2026 to provide federal guidance to states (governors and workforce boards) before implementation on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

As we start thinking about next year, NGA Director Carlton recapitulates, there is always the possibility that Congress takes up another budget reconciliation bill such as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, or H.R.1, that could potentially open areas of reform or change. For that reason, NGA is monitoring the National Apprenticeship Act, the law that governs the Registered Apprenticeship program, which has been in effect without change since 1937. WIOA reauthorization continues to face some hurdles, but it is a priority for many in Congress.

NGA Director Tim Carlton opened the floor for questions.

Q: [Executive Director Bennette Misalucha] The US Department of Education announced that it is going to put forth interagency agreements. Any idea whether that would affect Adult Ed or Title II and the impact it might have on the modification plan? Do we assume that it's status quo? Is it a part of the planning process?

R: I have not seen anything specific to Adult Education at this point. What I know is that there's anticipation for additional interagency agreements to be signed. I don't want to speculate too much, but I wouldn't be surprised if you see future interagency agreements. From the direction they are going right now, it seems like they [The Department of Education] are doing their best to offload as much as they can to other agencies. Other groups will challenge this objective; so, they may not be successful in the end.

Q: [Lea Dias, Director of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation] Do you know if the WIOA portal has already been transitioned from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor? I've been trying to get into the portal and I'm getting blocked.

R: I just clicked to go there, and I'm being blocked as well.

Q: [Lea Dias, Director of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation] Is Workforce Pell substituting for the regular Pell or is it an additional Pell?

R: It's an addition. The traditional Pell will continue as it always has and offer benefits to students who are going to the traditional 4-year or 2-year program. The Workforce Pell is building on that. For example, the Workforce Pell program allows students to go to the 10-

week CDL (Commercial Driver’s License), assuming it meets the various requirements of the law that the traditional Pell would not. It is not supplanting but supplementing what the Pell is already doing.

Q: [Lea Dias, Director of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation] Is it going to mandated that all our employment and training will go through the Workforce Pell?

R: No. This is additive. It is not a WIOA component. I view it as another tool in the toolkit for those looking to provide training services to job seekers. Hopefully, there will be programs in Hawaii that will qualify. Based on the requirements of the law, there might not be a lot of programs that are eligible. The bar is set high on the requirements on eligibility, i.e., 70% job placement rate, 70% completion rate, ROI (Return on Investment) components.

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha added that the Workforce Pell, to be implemented in 2026, was an important topic of discussion at the recent convening for the National Governors Association because state boards will be very involved in establishing policy, as well as determining the eligibility requirements.

Q: [WDC Council member Cheryl Cross] We have a huge transitioning workforce coming out of the military here [in Hawaii] per capita. I think we are the largest [or] second largest, even though we are a small state. What does the TEGL have an impact on for short-term credentialing/SkillBridge programs?

R: I imagine [the TEGL] will potentially address short-term programs. I also don’t know if they’re going to be specific towards military individuals or transitioning service members. In the NGA Director’s opinion, the military presence in Hawaii is unique—a bonus that every administration supports which would be a value add to the plan modification.

WDC Council member Cross stated 200,000 people leave the military each year, a small population nationally. In Hawaii, that number is 10,000. If they had opportunities to do SkillBridge, a lot of those people could be retained within the economy longer.

Executive Director Misalucha notified the Board and Board Chair that Gina Anonuevo was present (00:41:18) making the number of members present 27.

## **V. Proposed Amendments to the WDC By-laws (00:41:24 – 00:51:41)**

By-laws Changes: Both the Special Projects Committee and the Executive Committee fully vetted the proposed amendments found in pages 38-49 of the board packet and recommended its passage. The intent of these changes is to:

- Align the WDC’s by-laws with WIOA §101(b) and 20 CFR §679.110,
- Provide greater clarity and transparency in membership and appointment processes, and

- Incorporate best practices used in other state, while preserving the Governor’s authority for final appointments.

The Hawaii Attorney General’s office reviewed verbiage to ensure consistency with Hawai’i statutes, including HRS Chapter 202 and Chapter 92, and confirmed compliance with WIOA.

No testimony was presented.

**Board Action:**

A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion moved by Tui Scanlan and seconded by Cary Miyashiro to approve all amendments was passed unanimously.

**Effective Dates of By-laws Amendments:**

The proposed effective date for all approved amendments found on pages 50-54 of the board packet is November 19, 2025.

**Board Action:**

A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion moved by Dion Dizon and seconded by Chris Lum Lee to approve effective dates of amendments was passed unanimously.

No testimony or questions were presented.

Between 51:18-56:22, WDC Council member Benson Medina stepped away or lost connectivity to the meeting.

## **VI. Council Leadership Changes (00:51:42 – 01:01:53)**

According to WDC By-laws, we do not need to vote on the Committee composition, but the Board is required to vote on the WDC Vice Chair. Chair Keith DeMello and Assistant Vice Chair Senator Donovan Dela Cruz will continue in their current position. Former Vice Chair Cary Miyashiro was formally thanked for serving as Vice Chair for the last four years and will remain on the Executive Committee as the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee Chair.

**Board Action:**

Trang Malone was the only nomination for WDC Vice Chair before nominations were closed by member Chris Lum Lee, seconded by Lea Diaz, and passed unanimously by roll call vote. By another roll call, Trang Malone was elected WDC Vice Chair unanimously. Trang Malone had indicated that she is willing to serve.

Workforce Development Council Officers

Chair: Keith DeMello (appointed by Governor Green on 10/22/2025)

Vice Chair: Trang Malone (newly elected)  
Assistant Vice Chair: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz

The following is the proposed committee leadership having exercised the prerogative to have two Vice Chairs for each of the Committees:

Employer Engagement  
Chair: Gina Anonuevo  
Vice Chairs: Derek Kanehira, Cheryl Cross

Performance Management and Finance  
Chair Sean Nakamura  
Vice Chairs: Sean Knox, Lea Dias

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways  
Chair: Cary Miyashiro  
Vice Chairs: Lorna Woo, Rona Fukumoto

Special Projects  
Chair: Dion Dizon  
Vice Chairs: Pane Meatoga III, Thomas Chock

Youth Services  
Chair: Tui Scanlan  
Vice Chairs: Carla Kurokawa, Amber Akana

## **VII. Deputizing two members to pursue Military Spouses**

### **Project/Permitted Interaction (01:01:53-01:13:09)**

Chair Keith DeMello reported that the Military Spouses Project (the Project) will be moved from the defunct Military Veteran Affairs Committee to the Special Projects Committee. To continue work on this initiative under the Special Projects Committee, Chair DeMello suggested deputizing former Military Veteran Affairs Chair Trang Malone and Vice Chair Cheryl Cross to continue their work on the Project. Under the Sunshine Law, it is considered Permitted Interaction for two members to meet with other non-council members to discuss and garner information that is then reported to the Council via public Special Projects Committee meetings.

WDC Council members Tui Scanlan and Dion Dizon made a motion and seconded the motion to deputize WDC Council members Trang Malone and Cheryl Cross to lead efforts on the Military Spouses Project.

WDC Council member Chris Lum Lee interjected with a follow-up question regarding how long the PIG (Permitted Interaction Group) would be in effect. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha responded stating, in this case, this is not a PIG rather it is a Permitted Interaction between two council members. Chair Keith DeMello added that this is not a Permitted Interaction Group. It is a Permitted Interaction since it is not over two members, and they will be reporting publicly through the Special Projects Committee. These two members can interact outside of the committee meetings. In response to Chair DeMello's question about putting a timeframe on this Permitted Interaction, Executive Director Misalucha responded that a Permitted Interaction Group has three steps: 1) create PIG, 2) determine when PIG reports information, and 3) date will act upon the PIG's recommendation. In this case, Permitted Interaction may continue if there is an objective that needs to be met.

WDC Council member Dion Dizon asked for clarification that this was or was not a PIG since it's a project under the Special Projects Committee. Executive Director Bennette Misalucha confirmed this is not a PIG. Chair DeMello explained this is very similar to the Permitted Interaction of himself and Council member Scanlan representing the WDC's legislative priorities during the legislative session.

At 01:06:38, Executive Director Misalucha noted that member Derek Kanehira left the meeting to attend another meeting, and that member Cary Miyashiro was having technical issues and joined the meeting in person. 26 members were present at that time.

Deputy Attorney General Jung Yun Ha confirmed that Permitted Interaction allows a discuss between two council members and suggested the Board explain the role of the deputized members. Executive Director Misalucha explained that the deputized members would be able to meet with other non-council members to discuss and generate recommendations without having to post their meetings with each other and/or meetings with people outside of the Council. However, they cannot make recommendations on their own to the Board for action. Recommendations will have to go through the Special Projects Committee and be posted under the Sunshine Law. Then, if there is any impact where the Board is required to act, whatever is discussed at the committee level will be presented to the full board for further validation.

Prior to the vote, Council member Cheryl Cross thanked the Council for allowing the good things that came out of the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee to continue for the military-affiliated community and military spouses who continue to be underserved in the workforce.

The motion passed with 25 ayes and 1 abstain.

## **VIII. Labor Director's Update (01:13:10 – 01:27:41)**

David Rodriguez, Designee for Department of Labor Director Jade Butay, shared that the government shutdown had minimal impact to the department's funding and DLIR received appropriations for the entire program year 2025. DLIR is working with the local areas on their budget details and remains focused on minimizing unexpended funds and the first-in, first-out methodology when using funds. DLIR is continuing to work with Maui County to resolve their outstanding WIOA findings by the US Department of Labor.

Mr. Rodriguez also highlighted the following honors recognized by the state Senate:

- Ho'okele Award – Hilo Benioff Medical Center for mentoring emerging professionals into public service
- Ka Liko Lawelawe Awards
  - Kiani Aburamen (Hawai'i County)
  - Justin Silva (Maui County)
  - Angela Lindberg (City and County of Honolulu)
  - Juliet Madrid (Kaua'i County)

On behalf of Director Butay, special recognition was given to Ms. Maricar Pilotin-Freitas and her team at the Workforce Development Division with the Hele Imua Internship Program. See Video (01:20:24 – 01:26:11)

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha noted that Representative Andrew Garrett has left the meeting and Council member Leslie Wilkins is present. Headcount remained at 26.

## **IX. Hawaii Department of Education Presentation (01:27:42 – 01:47:00)**

Teri Ushijima, Assistant Superintendent (AS) of the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design (OCID), shared and asked for input on the Hawai'i Public High School Graduation Requirements & General Learner Outcomes (GLOs). The Board of Education will be considering revisions to the current graduation requirements. A Student Achievement Committee was formed and with community input approved the latest draft to the vision of a Hawai'i public school graduate.

AS Ushijima presented the General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) which are the foundational standards of learning for all students across all grade levels. GLOs are part of the elementary school report card and criteria for high school capstone or senior projects. These durable skills, according to AS Ushijima, are important and applicable for the workforce because workers who know more than just content knowledge are important in any profession. These GLOs are embedded in our system:

- Self-directed Learner
- Community Contributor

- Complex Thinker
- Quality Producer
- Effective Communicator
- Effective and Ethical User of Technology

Links to the handouts and resources are in the board packet:

[Vision of a Public School Graduate](#)

[Current Graduation Credit Requirements](#)

[Current General Learner Outcomes](#)

Q: [Council member Pane Meatoga] How many respondents have you received so far?

A: [Abey Quereshi, OCID Curriculum Innovation Branch Director] Just short of 600 so far.

## X. Fiscal Reports (01:47:01 – 01:52:08)

Hong “Julie” Radke, Fiscal Officer, who oversees the WIOA accounting, presented the financial reports for program years 2022 and 2023. There was no return of funds to the Fed for 2022 and as of June 30, 2025, there is \$2.6 million of unexpended funds for program year 2023. \$1.9 million will be used for the Ready to Work Program until June 30, 2026. There is a balance of unexpended funds (\$600,000) that have not been encumbered and a balance of \$341,582 for Rapid Response for PY23 and PY24 has not been used yet.

The NOA (Net Operating Assets) for program year 2025 is being formulated.

Q: [Council member Lea Dias] Do these expenditures include staff salaries and services to clients?

A: Yes.

## XI. General Appropriations (GA) Funds (01:52:09 – 01:57:51)

Workforce Development Council (WDC) Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided an overview of the GA funds from the state legislature. Due to the uncertainty of federal funding, WDC was advised that it was not a good idea to ask the legislature to fund additional personnel. Funds were reallocated towards grants and research instead. Both Finance and Executive Committees have reviewed the redistribution and recommended approval.

### **Board Action:**

Chris Lum Lee made the motion to accept the recommended changes to the budget and Tui Scanlan seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously with 26 votes.

## **XII. Fiscal Protocols (01:57:52 – 02:02:01)**

On behalf of the Performance Management Committee, Chair Sean Nakamura presented the new financial protocols to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities related to fiscal matters at the WDC originating from the staff, reviewed and approved by the Performance Management and Finance Committee, and validated by the Executive Committee. The committee recommends adopting the financial protocols found on pages 89-92 of the board packet.

### **Board Action:**

Committee Chair Nakamura moved to accept, and Council member Sean Knox seconded the motion. Motion passed with 26 votes.

## **XIII. Certification of the Kauai American Job Center (AJC) (02:02:02 – 02:08:15)**

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided an update of and following provisional certification granted to the Kauai AJC. While progress has been made, corrective action is still in the process of being implemented. It is recommended that provisional certification be extended to January 30, 2026, to conduct a follow-through assessment and provide time for WDD to demonstrate measurable progress.

At the October 29, 2025, meeting, the Executive Committee recommended that the WDC Board ratify the provisional certification of the Kauai AJC through January 30, 2026.

### **Board Action:**

Council member Chris Lum Lee moved to extend the provisional certification to January 30, 2026, and was seconded by Council member Cary Miyashiro. Motion passed with 26 votes.

## **XIV. Executive Director's Report (02:08:16 – 02:13:35)**

In addition to identifying some of the challenges to expand staff and board capacity, manage under the uncertainty of federal funding, and coordinate regional local boards, Executive Director Bennette Misalucha provided third and fourth quarter WDC highlights:

- Hosted a webinar with the Strada Foundation on the Hawaii's Workforce Scorecard
- Began unpacking the challenges with the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and reviewed best practices from other states
- Held the Workforce Synergy Summit in July
- Partnered with First Hawaiian Bank and SHRM (Society for Human Resources Management) to provide training sessions for Hele Imua interns
- Reorganized the WDC Committees and updated the by-laws

- Sponsored the Future of Work Conference in September recognizing our Workforce Heroes
- Recognized as an advocate at the Hawaii Farm Bureau on Kauai

Executive Director Misalucha concluded with the need to strengthen WIOA operations making sure that the services we deliver are high quality and upgrade the use of technology particularly when it comes to ETPL. Looking ahead to 2026, and with gratitude to all, she states we can expect opportunities to grow and improve.

## **XV. Discussion of Written Reports from WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Core Partners (02:13:36 – 02:14:37)**

Written Reports from the Workforce Development Division (Title I and Title III), Adult Ed (Department of Education Title II), and Vocational Rehabilitation Division (Title IV) are found in the Board Packet on pages 116 – 144.

## **XVI. Discussion of Written Reports from the Local Workforce Development Board (02:14:38 – 02:15:02)**

Written Reports from the Workforce Development boards of Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island are found in the Board Packet on pages 145 – 156.

## **XVII. Discussion of Written Reports from WDC Standing Committees (02:15:03 – 02:16:47)**

The Committee Reports from the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways, Special Projects, Youth Committee, and Performance Management and Finance are found in the Board Packet on pages 157 – 168.

## **XVIII. Next Meeting (02:16:48 – 02:19:40)**

The next WDC Quarterly Board Meeting is tentatively scheduled for:

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: Virtual Zoom and in-person at 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 310, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

### **2026 Board Meeting Dates (subject to change)**

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

In reference to Council members Cheryl Cross and Trang Malone, Deputy Attorney General Jung Yun Ha made note that under HRS §92-2.5 and OIP's (Office of Information Practices) guidance, when two or more board members are assigned to investigate an issue for the board, that group is considered a Permitted Interaction Group or a PIG. However, because Trang and Cheryl will not be reporting to the full board and would instead be reporting to the Special Projects Committee, OIP's guidance states that the standing committee may create a PIG to report back to the committee that created it. Since the work falls under the standing Special Projects Committee, her understanding was that the committee and not the full board is required to create the PIG. However, Deputy Attorney General Ha stated, Cheryl and Trang may discuss the issues as a Permitted Interaction but not a Permitted Interaction Group. Before recommendations is provided to the Special Projects Committee, the committee must make the PIG and define the requirements for them [the PIG].

### **XIX. Adjournment (02:19:41 – 02:20:21)**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 AM.

# New Board Members

## Workforce Development Council Appointees

**Douglas Chang**, General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay, joins the Council representing the tourism industry. With nearly 40 years of luxury hospitality experience, Mr. Chang has led iconic properties across Hawai'i and the continental U.S. and has played a significant role in workforce development through his leadership with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and the Hawai'i Tourism & Lodging Association.

**George Denise**, representing the construction industry, brings more than 25 years of experience in real estate development, construction, and project management across Hawai'i and international markets. A licensed contractor and LEED-accredited professional, Mr. Denise has overseen complex, large-scale projects and has been actively engaged in workforce development efforts through the General Contractors Association of Hawai'i. He is also the Workforce Development Chair for the General Contractors Association.

**Jason Benn**, representing the energy sector, serves as Senior Vice President and Chief Transformation & Administrative Officer at Hawaiian Electric. With nearly three decades of leadership in enterprise transformation, technology, and workforce planning, Mr. Benn brings extensive experience aligning talent strategy, infrastructure modernization, and public-private collaboration to support Hawai'i's energy transition and economic resilience. At Hawaiian Electric, he oversees Human Resources, Government & Community Relations, Corporate Communications, and Corporate Strategy.

The Council looks forward to working with these distinguished leaders and to the valuable perspectives they will bring as Hawai'i continues to strengthen its workforce system in alignment with the State's economic and community priorities.

# Welcome

*Jason Benn, SVP & Chief Transformation and  
Administrative Officer*

*Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.*



# Welcome

*Douglas Chang, General Manager*

*Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay*



Welcome

*George Denise, Project Management Director*

*CBRE*



# Federal Funding Matters

Tim Carlton, National Governors Association

# Presentation to Hawai'i Workforce Development Council



NATIONAL  
**GOVERNORS**  
ASSOCIATION

# President's Budget Basics

---

- **President's Budget – What is it?**

- “The President’s budget is only a request to Congress, but it establishes the President’s wishes regarding the direction of national policies and priorities and often influences the direction of congressional revenue and spending decisions.” – Congressional Research Service
- Ultimately, Congress needs 60 votes to pass appropriations and authorizing bills

- **President's FY26 Budget**

- May 2, 2025, the White House released the “Skinny Budget” – a 46-page document briefly summarizing the biggest changes in the FY26 budget
- May 30, 2025, the White House released the full budget, detailing agency-by-agency spending proposals for FY26

# FY26 President's Budget – Workforce

---

- **What does the administration propose for the public workforce system?**
  - **Make America Skilled Again (MASA) Grants** – Would consolidate 11 workforce programs into a new MASA Grant, aiming to streamline administration and increase local flexibility. If enacted as proposed, MASA would replace the current WIOA structure, reduce overall federal workforce funding by \$1.6 billion, and require at least 10% of funds to support apprenticeship.
  - **Job Corps** – Would eliminate Job Corps, citing high costs, safety concerns, and poor outcomes. The administration has sought to cut off funding for Job Corps, but last week a federal judge temporarily blocked the phase-out, pending further legal proceedings.
  - **State Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service Operations** – Would slightly increase funding for UI administration while eliminating over \$675 million in state grants for Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES). ES would be consolidated into new MASA program.

# FY26 Funding Snapshot – Workforce

Program	FY25 Funding	President's Budget	House FY26	Senate FY26
<b>Department of Labor</b>	<b>\$13.5B</b>	<b>\$9B</b>		<b>\$13.67</b>
ETA - Training and Employment Services	\$3,898,587,000	\$2,965,905,000		\$3,977,088,000
<i>*Make America Skilled Again</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>\$2,965,905,000</i>		<i>N/A</i>
Adult Employment and Training Activities	\$885,649,000	\$0		\$875,649,000
Youth Activities	\$948,130,000	\$0		\$948,130,000
Dislocated Workers Employment and Training Activities	\$1,396,412,000	\$0		\$1,396,412,000
Apprenticeship Program	\$285,000,000	\$0		\$285,000,000
Workforce Data Quality Initiative	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000		\$6,000,000
Job Corps	\$1,760,155,000	\$176,370,000		\$1,760,155,000
State Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service Operations	\$4,012,150,000	\$3,421,838,000		\$4,081,150,000
UI - State Administration	\$2,759,635,000	\$2,759,635,000		\$2,750,635,000
Employment Service - Grants to States	\$675,052,000	\$0		\$675,052,000
Foreign Labor Certification - State Grants	\$23,282,000	\$23,282,000		\$23,282,000
Veterans' Employment - State Grants	\$185,000,000	\$185,000,000		\$185,000,000

# Workforce Pell (Sec. 83002 of OBBBA)

---

- **Expands Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term, workforce training programs**
  - 150–599 clock hours, 8–15 weeks
- **FAFSA required to verify income eligibility**
- **Bachelor's degree holders are eligible**
- **Programs must be offered by accredited institutions**
- **Implementation begins July 1, 2026 for the 2026-2027 academic year**
- **ED rulemaking in the coming months**
  - ED negotiated rulemaking to get underway this fall/winter

# Workforce Pell (Sec. 83002 of OBBBA)

---

- **Governors and state workforce boards certify programs that:**
  - Align with economic needs of the state:
    - High-skill, high-wage, or in-demand sectors
    - Meet hiring requirements of employers
  - Lead to recognized postsecondary credentials:
    - Stackable and portable
    - Provide academic credit articulating to certificates or degrees
- **U.S. Secretary of Education verifies:**
  - Completion rate  $\geq 70\%$  (within 150% of normal time)
  - Job placement rate  $\geq 70\%$  (180 days post-completion)
  - Tuition and fees  $\leq$  value-added earnings of students (3 years prior)

# WIOA Reauthorization Update

---

- **Congress Fell Short of Passing “A Stronger Workforce for America Act” in 2024**
  - Initially included in Continuing Resolution but stripped at last minute
  - NGA issued statement supporting “A Stronger Workforce for America Act”
- **Key Elements of A Stronger Workforce for America Act**
  - Provides greater flexibility over statewide funding
  - Establishes process to redesignate local areas
  - Creates a new state flexibility pilot program
  - \$65M for Youth Apprenticeship Grant Program, ~\$150M for Individual Training Accounts, 5-15% of Dislocated Worker national program funding for Workforce Data Quality Initiative
  - Establishes new training mandate
- **To be determined how WIOA reauthorization will be impacted by MASA proposal**

# Q&A



NATIONAL  
**GOVERNORS**  
ASSOCIATION

# Hele Imua Internship Program

Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, WDD

Denise Yamaguchi, Hawaii Agricultural  
Foundation



**Hawai'i  
Agricultural  
Foundation**

**GROWING FOR GENERATIONS**

**Hele Imua  
Ag Internship**

Workforce Development  
Council – Board Meeting

**February 18, 2026**

# Hele Imua Ag Internship Pilot

---

DEC 15, 2025 – MAR 8, 2026





## **Act 251 (2025)**

12-week internship opportunity

Secured \$1.8 million to expand Hele Imua into the Private Sector

Hele Imua positioned for industry integration and statewide workforce impact



# Getting the Word Out

Media release issued by DLIR

E-news announcement to HAF listserv –  
19K+

Applications hosted on HAF website  
platform:

- Prospective small farms and interns

# Eligibility Requirements

## Farms

- 5 or less full-time employees
- HCE compliance
- Meets insurance requirement

**42**  
FARMS

## Interns

- 18+ years of age
- Current or recent graduate
- Interest in agriculture

**36**  
INTERNS

# Strong Interest, Strong Fit

## Farms

Applicants – 42 Qualified – 25	
Hawai'i Island	12
Kaua'i	3
Maui	5
O'ahu	5

## Interns

Applicants – 34 Qualified – 34	
Hawai'i Island	6
Kaua'i	--
Maui	3
O'ahu	25

# Our Farm Partners



**Deep Dirt Farm | *North Hilo***

**Kumano I Ke Ala at Kukuiloloa | *Hale'iwa***

**Flower Farm Hawai'i | *Wahiawā***



# Interns in Action



- Irrigation System Basics
- Water Management
- Tree Care & Orchard Maintenance
- Cacao Propagation & Pruning
- Cacao Processing
- Cultivation of Kalo
- Site Restoration
- Harvesting techniques
- Pest Identification and Management
- Business Overview

# Hele Imua Pilot: Early Success



Mentorship from working farmers

Practical, skill-based training

Paid, accessible internships

Strengthening Hawai'i's ag talent pipeline

Administrative support for small farm partners

# Lessons Learned & Opportunities to Improve



One internship ended early due to participant withdrawal.  
Administrative paperwork required more time than anticipated.  
Statewide recruitment did not yield applicants on every island.



**Hawai'i  
Agricultural  
Foundation**

**GROWING FOR GENERATIONS**

**Hele Imua  
Ag Internship**

Workforce Development  
Council – Board Meeting

**February 18, 2026**

# **2024-28 State Unified Plan Modification**

# **Modification of Hawai'i Workforce Unified Plan 2026-2028**

## **Presenters**

- Bennette Misalucha
- Maricar Pilotin-Freitas
- Ryan Mandado
- Lea Dias

# Why the Unified Plan Matters

- Federally required under WIOA

- Establishes statewide workforce strategy

- Aligns programs, funding, and performance

- Promotes coordinated service delivery

# Federal Requirement for a Modified Plan

- States must update plans at the midpoint
- Reflects policy, economic, and program changes
- Incorporates implementation lessons
- Ensures continued federal compliance

# Planning & Submission Timeline



- November 2025  
(started coordination meetings)



- Submit First Draft to WDC for approval to release first draft for public comment



- Public comment period starts on February 19 and concludes on March 23



- April 2 : Special WDC meeting to approve Final version  
**April 3: Final approval & submission**

# From Four Pillars to Generational Commitment

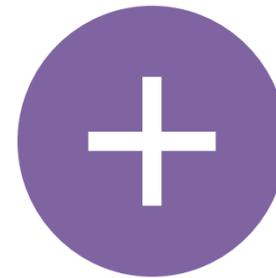
---



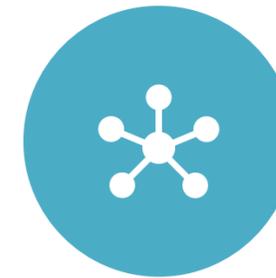
PILLAR II: STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES WITH EDUCATION & TRAINING → **LEARN**



PILLAR I: ALIGNMENT WITH ECONOMIC GROWTH → **WORK**



PILLAR III: REMOVING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT → **THRIVE**



PILLAR IV: CREATING SYSTEM SYNERGY/ INTEGRATION → **BELONG**

## Role of Core Partners

- Each partner advances specific program components

- Collective responsibility for outcomes

- Coordinated implementation & reporting

- Platform for cross-agency collaboration

## **Presentations by WIOA Core Partners**

- **Title I and Title III: Maricar Pilotin-Freitas**
- **Title II: Ryan Mandado**
- **Title IV: Lea Dias**



# Workforce Development Division

Unified State Plan Modification

Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, WDD Administrator



# WIOA Title I

## Integrated AJC Service Delivery



Functional Teams



Co-enrollment



Braided Funding

## Kaua'i Governance



State WDC acting as Local Workforce Board



MOUs in progress

## Waiver Requests

### Youth:



Lower Out of School Exp requirement from 75% to 50%



Allow individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for In-School Youth

### WIOA Adults/Dislocated Worker/Youth:



Increase OJT reimbursement from 50% up to 90%

# Veterans & Military Spouses



## Priority of Service for Veterans and Military Spouses



### Partners:

- VA Vocational Readiness and Employment
- HUD Housing Program for Veterans
- Homeless Veterans Re-employment Program
- Hiring our Heroes (National Chamber of Commerce)
- Transition Assistance Programs



### Jobs for Veterans State Grant:

Individualized counseling and employer services for qualified veterans



# Wagner-Peyser: Employment Services (Title III)

## Provides labor exchange services statewide through the American Job Centers (AJCs)

- Job matching and referrals via HireNet Hawai'i
- Career guidance and labor market information

## Integrated with RESEA and UI Claimant services

- Act 214 provides auto-registration

## Two (2) Waiver requests to increase flexibility for Wagner- Peyser staffing

- Flexibility for Merit Staffing
- Flexibility for Migrant Seasonal Farmworker outreach staff

# Registered Apprenticeship



## Program Year 2024 Impact:

1,486 new or reinstated apprentices statewide;  
480 program completions; over 5,000 active  
apprentices across industries.



## Expansion & Innovation

New programs in education (Teacher Apprenticeship) and health care (Pharmacy Technician); Virtual Reality career exploration tools at American Job Centers; statewide engagement during National Apprenticeship Week.



## **Presentation by WIOA Core Partner**

- **Title II: Ryan Mandado**

# Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)



Hawai'i Department of Education

# Hawai'i Department of Education



## Leadership:

State Director of HODOE  
Workforce Development  
Branch  
Dr. Wanelle Kaneshiro-Erdmann

Educational Specialist of  
Adult Education  
Dr. Ryan Mandado



## Provider:

McKinley Community  
School for Adults  
Principal Helen Sanpei

### 5 campuses:

- McKinley
- Farrington
- Moanalua
- Maui
- Kauai



## Provider:

Waipahu Community  
School for Adults  
Principal Pat Anbe

### 5 campuses:

- Waipahu
- Wahiawa
- Windward (Kalaheo)
- Hilo
- Kona

# ACTIVITIES

## Key Adult Education & Workforce Development Programs



### Adult Basic Education

Foundational skills development.



### Adult Secondary Education

High school equivalency pathways.



### English Language Acquisition

Proficiency for non-native speakers.



### English Literacy and Civics Education

Language, rights, and responsibilities.



### Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

Combined civics and skills training.



### Integrated Education and Training

Contextualized learning for careers.



### Corrections Education

Educational programs in correctional facilities.

# Adult Education & Workforce Development



## Adult Education

Emphasis on supporting learners to obtain their high school equivalency:



General Education Diploma (GED)



High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)



## Workforce Development

Emphasis on supporting learners to obtain workforce certifications and/or training:



Integrated Education and Training (IET)



Corrections Education (Employable after release)

## **Presentation by WIOA Core Partner**

- **Title IV: Lea Dias**

# Hawai'i DVR - WIOA Title IV Our Workforce Role

- ▶ Competitive, Integrated Employment — Real Careers. Real Wages.
- ▶ Serving Youth & Adults with an Expectation of Independence.
- ▶ Full WIOA Core Partner — Accountable for Results. Dedicated to our Generational Commitment.

# DVR Progress & Accountability

Rapid, ongoing Engagement.



Increased Employment Outcomes.



Reduced Vacancies & Stabilizing Workforce.



Accurate Data.

## Strategic Direction & WDC Partnership

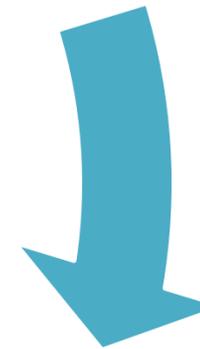
- ▶ Earlier Engagement with students & Stronger School-to-Work Pathways.
- ▶ Career Pathways in DVR!
- ▶ Employer-Driven Sector Strategies & Work-Based Learning.
- ▶ Statewide Access, Integration & System Modernization.
- ▶ Making sure individuals with disabilities have a “seat at the table”.

# Conclusion & Next Steps

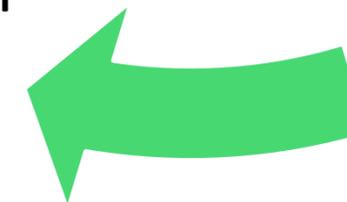
- Monitor performance & continuous improvement



- Continue strengthening system alignment



- Advance Generational Commitment outcomes



- Support partner implementation activities



## **Important Dates**

- February 18, 2026 – WDC to approve release of first Draft
- February 19, 2026 – Start of Public Comment period
- March 23, 2026 –End of Public Comment Period
- April 2 – WDC Special Meeting/Approve Final version for Submission
- April 3 – Submit to the US Department of Labor

**MAHALO!!**

# Learn, Work, Thrive Hui

Matt Stevens, Hawaii Workforce Funders Collaborative

Keala Peters, Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii

# Learn Work Thrive Hui

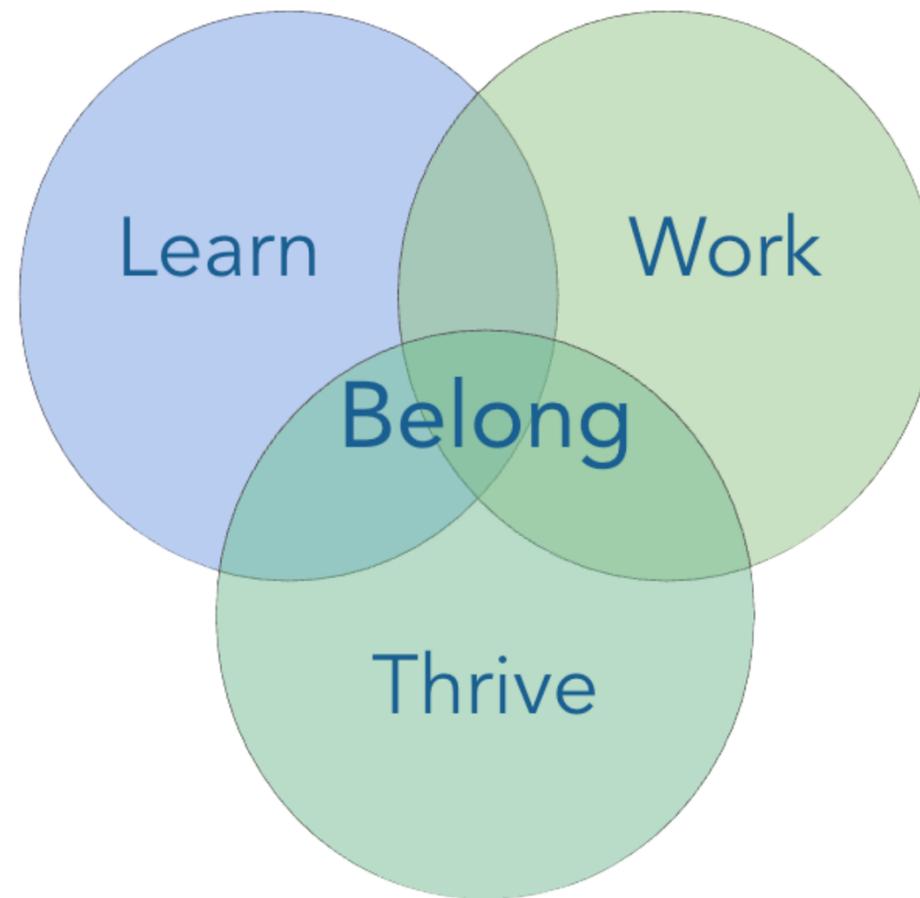
Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment



Prepared by Hawai'i Workforce  
Funders Collaborative &  
Chamber of Commerce Hawaii  
Feb 2026

### Hawai'i's Generational Commitment

By 2045, all people of Hawaii will have a path to a career that enables them to learn, work, and thrive in Hawaii and contribute to a vibrant local economy grounded in community values.



# What is the Hui?

The Learn Work Thrive Hui is a collaborative space for organizations already doing the work — focused on alignment, implementation, and shared learning in service of Hawai‘i’s Generational Workforce Commitment.

## **The Learn Work Thrive Hui supports two simultaneous flows of work:**

### 1. Getting the Goal Adopted

- Advancing the Generational Workforce Commitment through policy, executive action, and public alignment
- Building shared language, legitimacy, and statewide momentum around one clear, measurable North Star

### 2. Beginning to Deliver Toward the Goal (Every Day)

- Advancing job quality, youth pathways, and work-based learning across sectors
- Strengthening island-specific strategies, data systems, and feedback loops
- Aligning — not duplicating — the work already happening across agencies, employers, schools, and communities

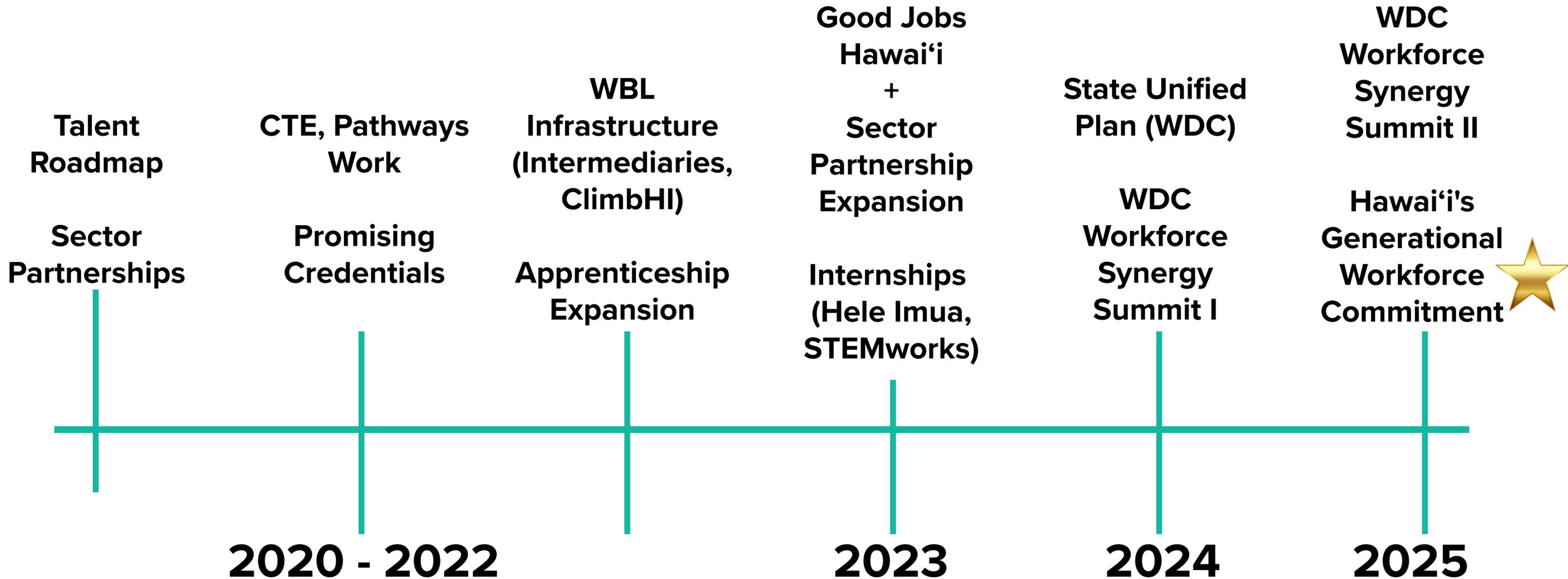
# Learn Work Thrive Hui

The Hui is a community-driven coalition of organizations doing the workforce development work, focused on implementation, action and impact.

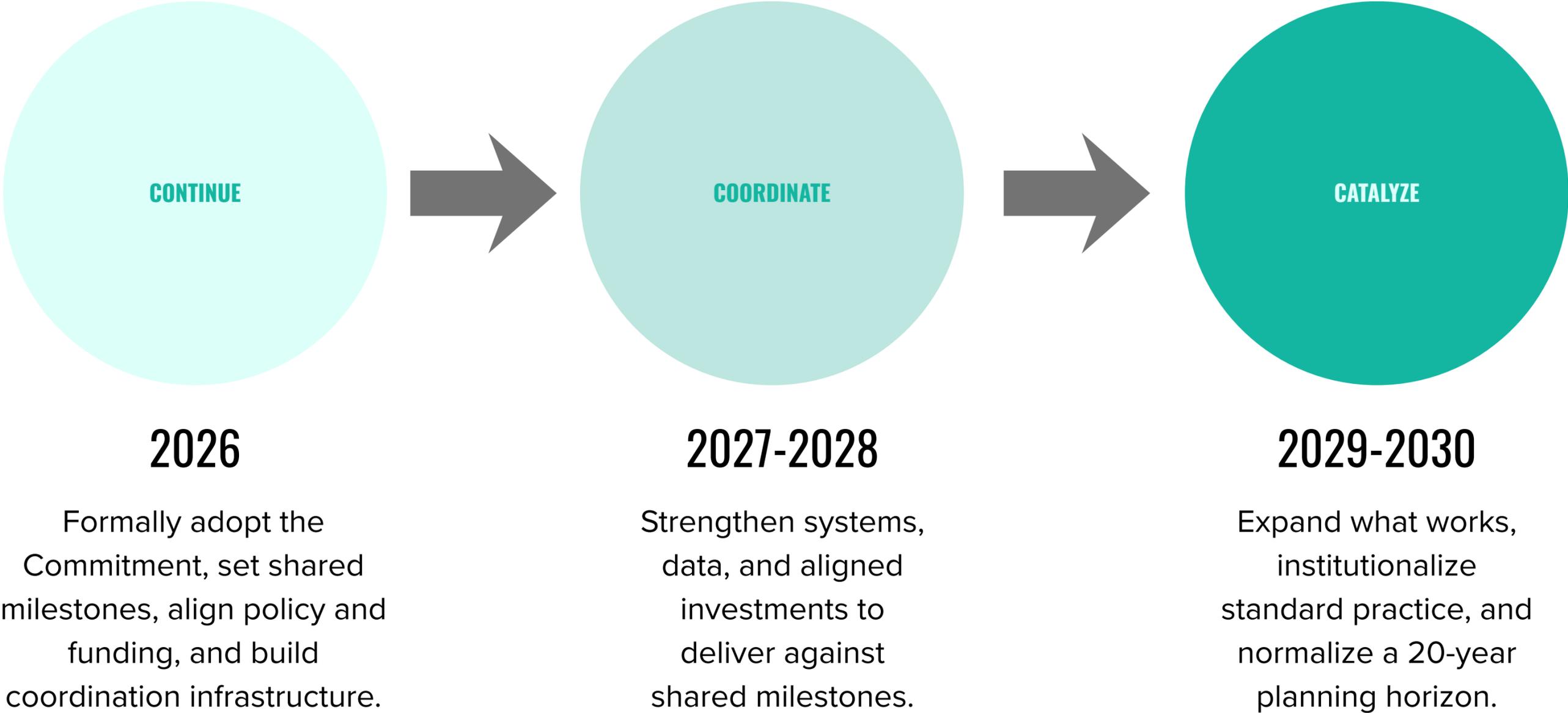
<b>Government &amp; Non Profit</b>	<b>Employers &amp; Industry</b>	<b>Education &amp; Training</b>	<b>Funders</b>
<p>Governor's Office DLIR WDC DBEDT</p> <p>DHS Division of Voc Rehab Hawai'i County Kaua'i County OED Maui County OED City &amp; Co of Honolulu OER</p> <p>MEDB Holomua Collective Hawai'iKidsCAN</p> <p>HTDC</p> <p>State Commission on the Status of Women</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Hawai'i Employers Council</p> <p>Healthcare Association of Hawai'i</p> <p>AE Consulting</p> <p>Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation</p> <p>C.A. Cross &amp; Associates</p> <p>Hawai'i Executive Collaborative</p>	<p>HIDOE</p> <p>University of Hawai'i</p> <p>Hawai'i P20</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>ClimbHI</p> <p>Hawaii Workforce Pipeline</p> <p>Lanakila Pacific</p>	<p>Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative</p> <p>Harold K.L. Castle Foundation</p> <p>Ulupono Initiative</p> <p>Aloha United Way</p> <p>Kosasa Foundation</p> <p>Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation</p> <p>Kirk-Landry Charitable Fund</p> <p>Hawai'i Community Foundation</p> <p>Stupski Foundation</p> <p>Kohala Coast Community Fund</p> <p>Kaiser Permanente</p>

# This Commitment builds on years of growing statewide collaboration.

*A shared effort that has been taking shape across education, employers, WDC, other government agencies, and community since 2020.*



# Generational Commitment Roadmap Overview



# Learn Work Thrive Hui - Q1 2026 Activities

## Workforce Development Council launches Stronger Together webinar series

- How States are Building Better Workforce Systems
- 1/23: NGA State Overview
- 1/30: Maine
- 2/6: North Dakota
- 2/27: North Carolina

## From Crisis to Coalition: A 2026 Road Map for Hawai'i's Generational Workforce Commitment Released

- Articulates a shared 2026 roadmap connecting policy, practice, and cross-sector coordination
- Identified priority levers and early milestones to move from alignment to action

## Generational Workforce Commitment Codification Bills Introduced

- HB 1859 / SB 2855 introduced to codify the Generational Workforce Commitment in state policy
- Establishes a durable, cross-administration framework for coordinated workforce action

## Generational Workforce Commitment Public Announcement

- In-Person public launch at 2/10 All-Sector Partnership Event
- Press release went out this morning to announce the goal, the bills, and the hui of opted-in supporting organizations

# Key Activities for the Learn, Work, Thrive Hui in 2026

- Provide testimony for bills that support Hawai'i's Generational Workforce Commitment
- Promote workforce events amongst stakeholders
- Hosting bi-monthly meetings
- Next meetings: begin to identify short-term 3-5 year milestones
- Let Matt and Keala know who else should be at this table.

# Holomua Collective



holomua

COLLECTIVE

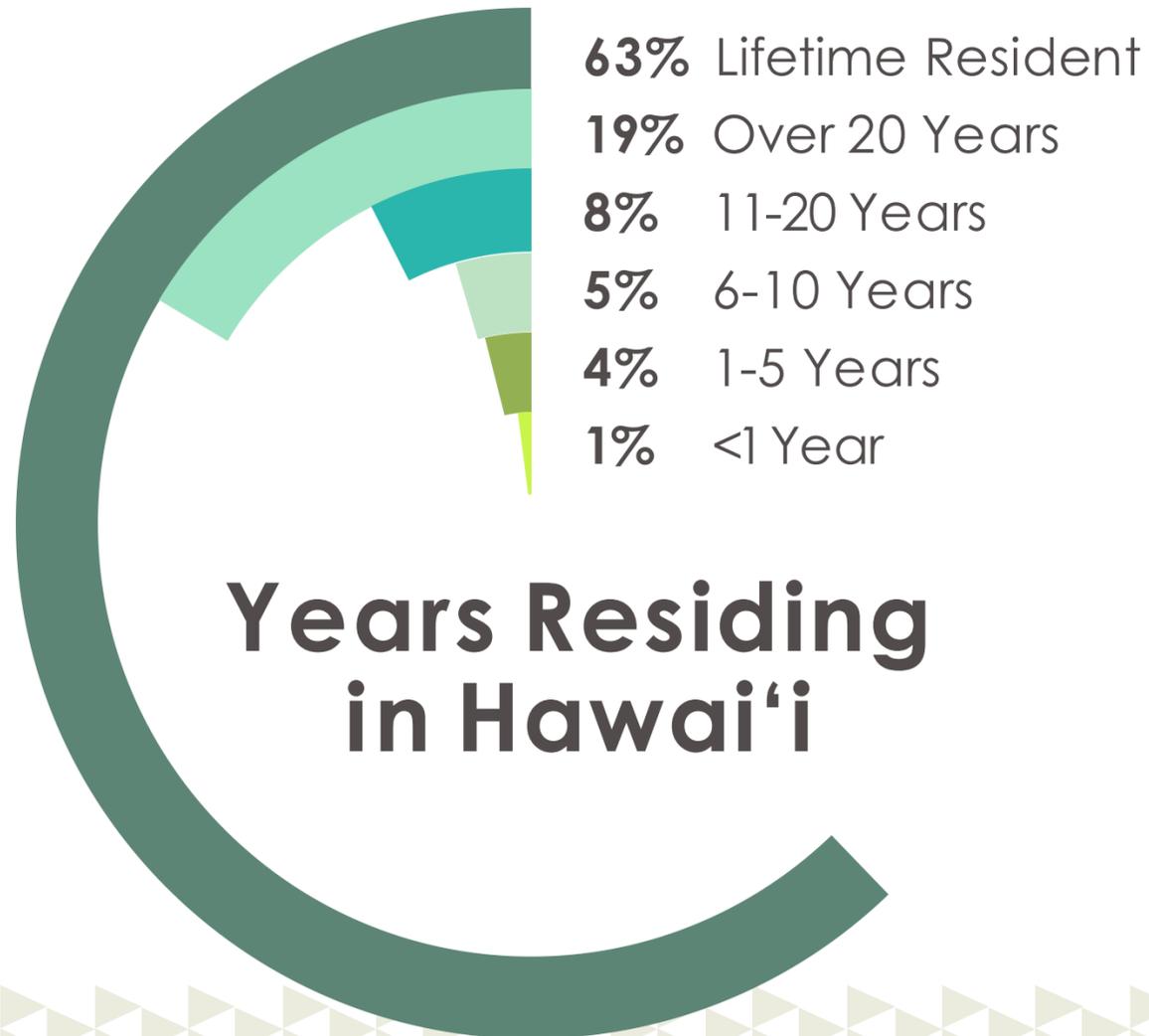








# Household Income Level



## Years Residing in Hawai'i

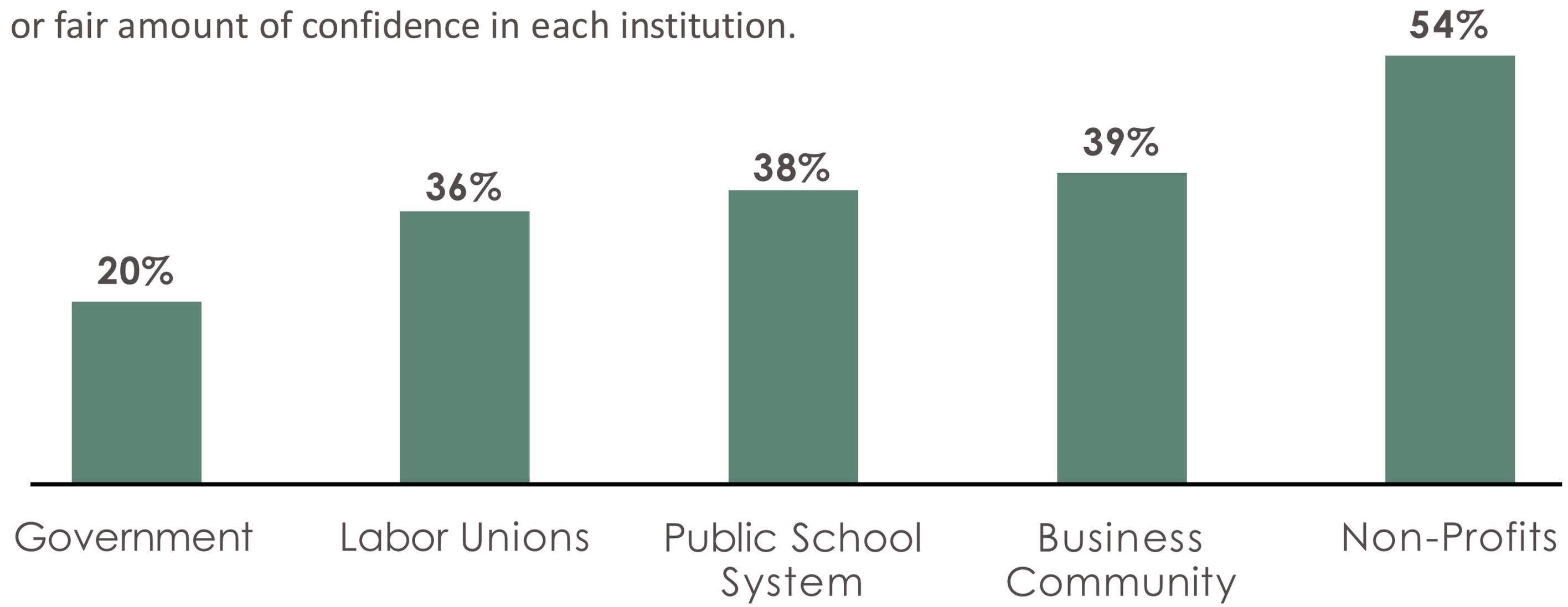


## Job Satisfaction



# Confidence in Institutions

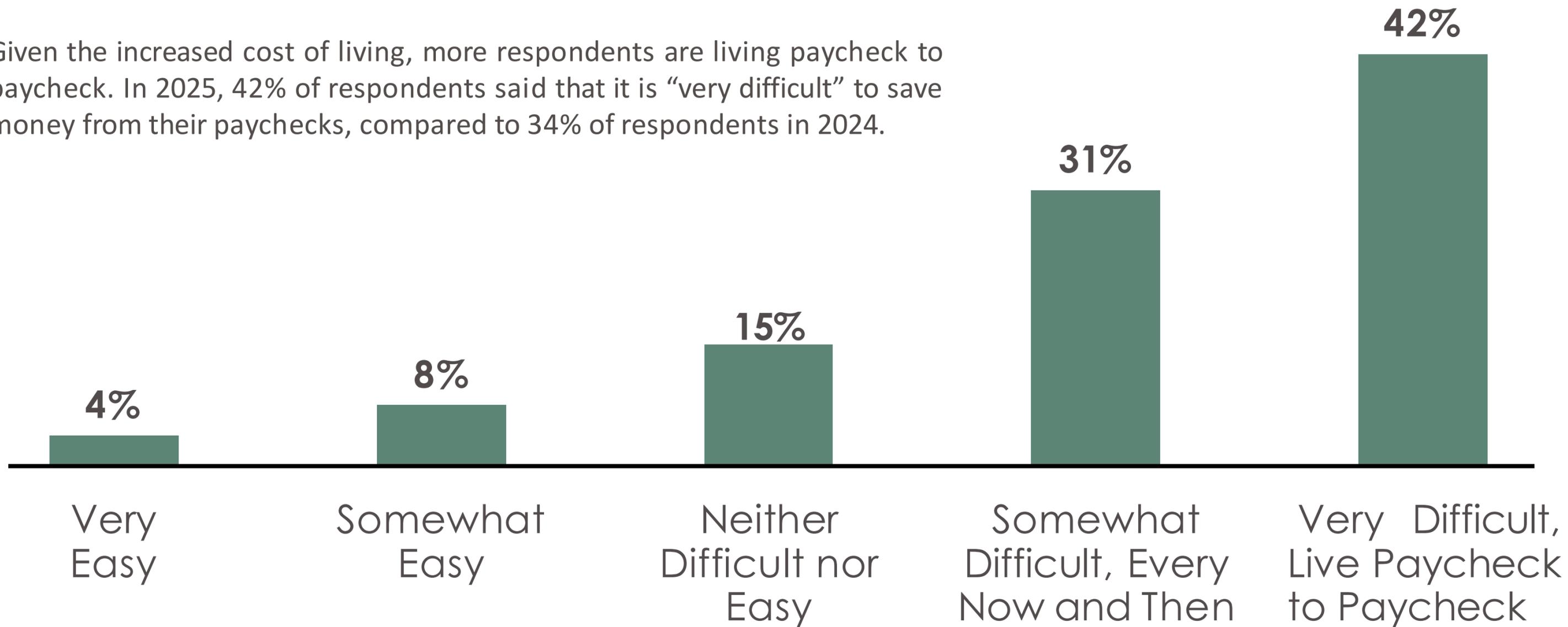
Percentage of respondents saying they have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in each institution.





# Ability to Save Money from Paycheck

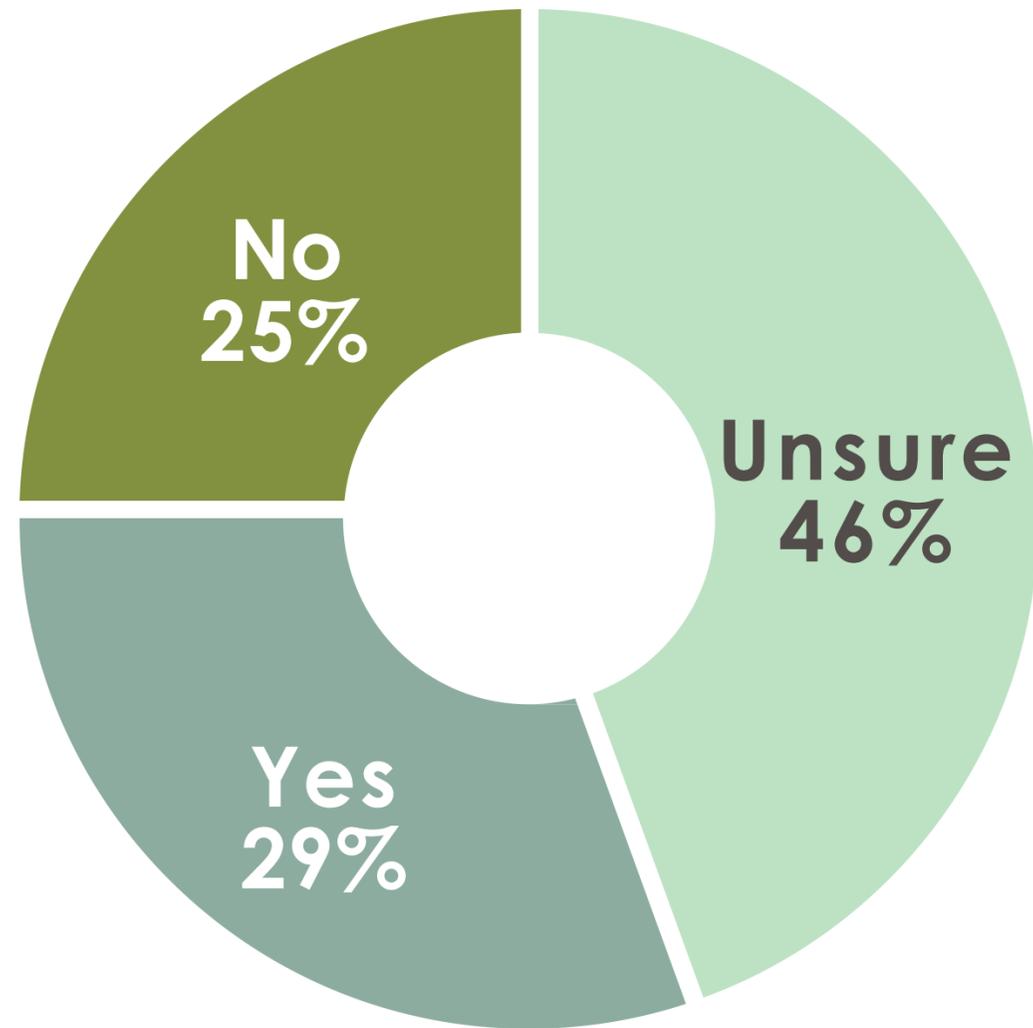
Given the increased cost of living, more respondents are living paycheck to paycheck. In 2025, 42% of respondents said that it is “very difficult” to save money from their paychecks, compared to 34% of respondents in 2024.



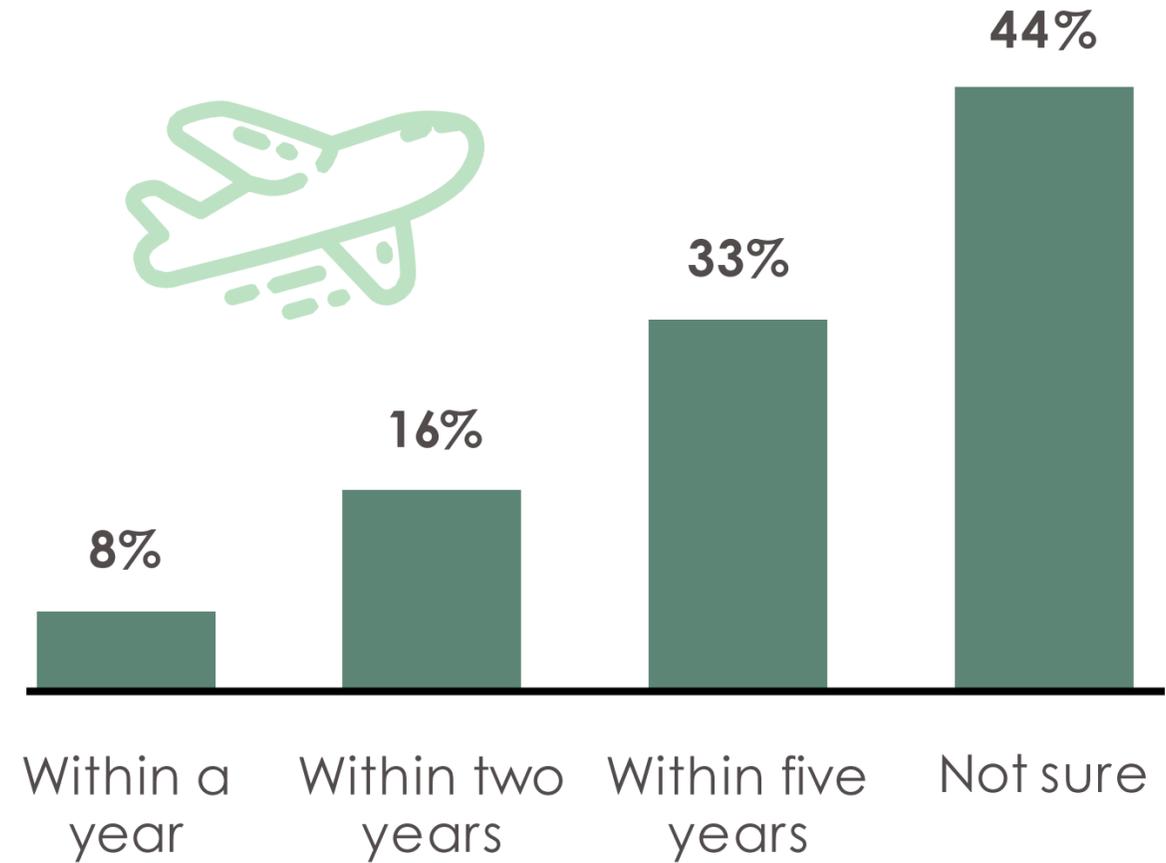
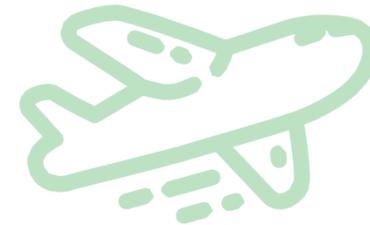


# To Leave or Stay?

Hawai'i's Middle-Income Workers Weigh Leaving



## Timeline to move





“

**I stay because I was born and raised here. This is my home, my heart. Right now I cannot rip out my heart, so I endure.”**





SKILLS-BASED EMPLOYERS

UPSKILLING & RESKILLING

TAX AND FEE RELIEF

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT

SUPPORT FOR HIGH-WAGE

STREAMLINED PERMITTING

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS & SHARED EQUITY MODELS

**DEDICATED LOCAL HOUSING MARKET**

INCENTIVES FOR BUILDING AFFORDABLE UNITS

BUY LOCAL INITIATIVES

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

SUPPORT FOR RENTERS

LOWERING FOOD COSTS

TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

**STRONGER SCHOOL-TO-JOB PIPELINES**

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES



# Over 80% of the respondents agree that Hawai'i needs to...



**Do more to  
recruit and retain  
critical workforce  
members**



**Build housing  
dedicated for  
local residents**



**Increase access  
to childcare and  
education for  
children ages 0-5**

# Biggest Costs



**1. Cost of Housing**



**2. Wages**



**3. Taxes**



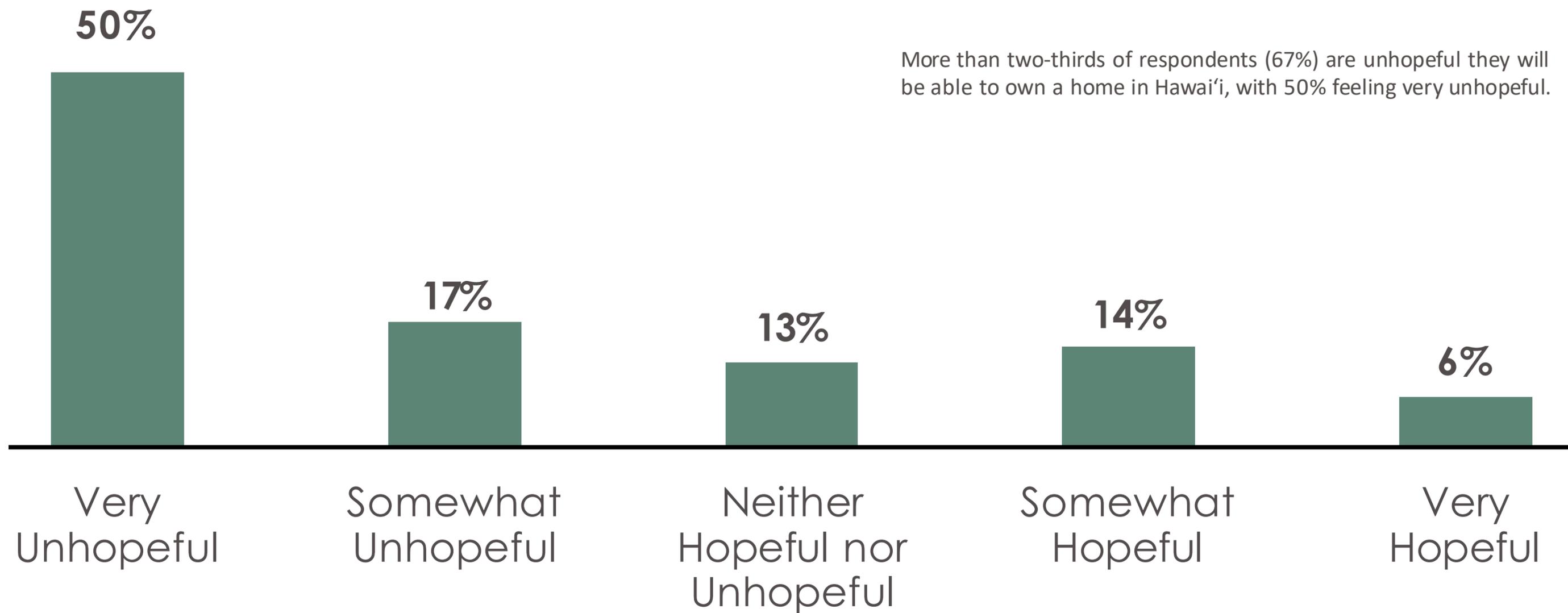
**4. Food**



**5. Education**



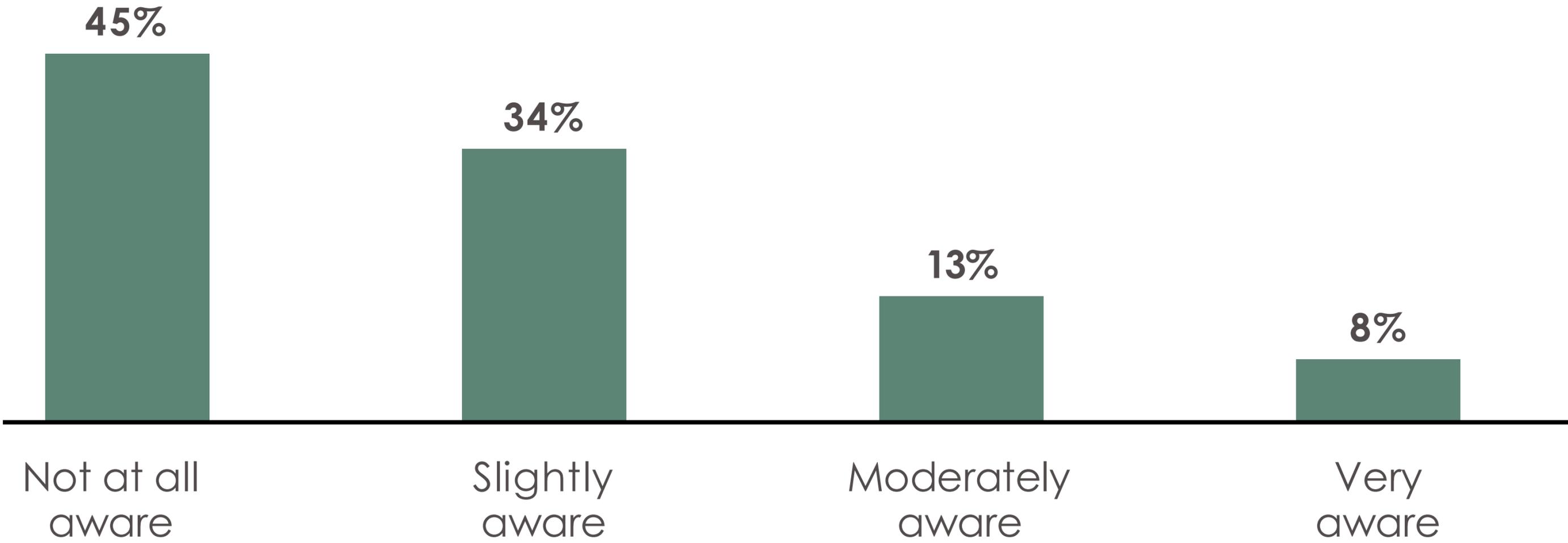
# Hope for Homeownership in Hawai'i



More than two-thirds of respondents (67%) are unhopeful they will be able to own a home in Hawai'i, with 50% feeling very unhopeful.



# Awareness of Workforce Development Programs in Hawai'i





# Flagship Initiatives



**Building a dedicated  
housing market for  
local families**



**Creating economic  
opportunity and improving  
the workforce development  
pipeline**

# MAHALO



holomua  
COLLECTIVE

[HolomuaCollective.org](https://HolomuaCollective.org)

# Workforce Pell

## HAWAII WORKFORCE PELL GRANT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

For Presentation to the WDC Board on February 18, 2026

### I. Background on Workforce Pell Grants

Congress amended the Higher Education Act of 1965 to create the Workforce Pell Grant Program. Beginning with the award year that starts on July 1, 2026, and for each subsequent award year, the Secretary of Education shall award grants, known as Workforce Pell Grants, to eligible students who are enrolled in an eligible workforce program.

These amendments take effect on July 1, 2026 and apply to the 2026–2027 award year and all succeeding award years.

#### Key Statutory Design Features

The Workforce Pell statute establishes several core requirements:

- The Workforce Pell program is administered by the US Department of Education.
- Program eligibility standards. Eligible workforce programs must meet specific federal criteria, including program length of at least 150 clock hours and less than 600 clock hours, or the equivalent in credit hours, and a duration of at least 8 weeks and less than 15 weeks. Programs may not be offered as correspondence courses.
- Governor and State board role. A workforce program is eligible for Workforce Pell only if the Governor determines, after consultation with the State workforce development board, that the program meets the statutory requirements related to workforce alignment, credential quality, and credit transferability or “stackability”.
- Definition of State board. The statute defines “State board” by reference to section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Under Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 202, the State board is the State Workforce Development Council.
- Governance Implication

The Workforce Pell statute creates a joint workforce and higher education governance model. Program eligibility requires action by the Governor informed by consultation with the State Workforce Development Council, while program delivery occurs through eligible postsecondary institutions.

This structure ensures that Workforce Pell is both labor market driven, and education system based, rather than solely an education finance program.

## **II. Implementation Considerations**

- A. A preliminary review of the current University of Hawai'i Community Colleges curriculum indicates that only a limited number of courses may initially meet the requirements for Workforce Pell eligibility. There is also an anticipated challenge in validating and certifying programs, as some of the required performance and outcome data are either not yet available or difficult to obtain. These factors, combined with the rigorous federal standards, may result in a relatively small number of programs qualifying for Pell funding in the early stages. Nonetheless, the State has an obligation to implement this program as effectively as possible to advance its objectives and to support job seekers for whom this financial assistance could make a meaningful difference in achieving successful employment outcomes.
- B. The Governor has designated the Workforce Development Council as the lead for the convening of a Workforce Pell Implementation Working group.
- C. The National Governors Association is convening a Workforce Pell Academy for the next six months to provide technical assistance to all the states. Each state is entitled to three representatives to the NGA Academy, and they have been identified as Keala Monaco (UH Community College), Judy Oliveira (UH Finance Office) and Bennette Misalucha (Workforce Development Council).

## **III. Actions Required for Workforce Pell Implementation**

### **Operational Readiness (January–June 2026)**

The State will initiate a preliminary Workforce Pell operational framework while the rule making at the US Department of Education is still proceeding.

## OPERATIONAL READINESS TIMELINE

	TIMELINE	Agency/org Responsible	Additional Notes
<b>STEP 1 — Establish State Governance for Workforce Pell</b>			
A. Creates a Workforce Pell Implementation Working Group  <i>(Please see Page 13 for details)</i>	<b>January/February 2026</b>		
B. During the February 18 <sup>th</sup> board meeting, the Council, through a resolution, formally acknowledges its statutory role as the certifying authority for Workforce Pell programs.	<b>February 18, 2026</b>  (WDC Quarterly Board Meeting)	Workforce Development Council	
C. The Council adopts a certification process (delegation, review standards, timelines).	<b>February 18, 2026</b>  (WDC Quarterly Board Meeting)	Workforce Development Council	
<b>STEP 2 — Program Development and Submission</b>	<b>February -May 2026</b>	University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Community Colleges	What this agency does NOT do:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It does not replace the State board’s certification role.</li> </ul> It does not independently approve Workforce

			Pell programs for federal purposes
<p>A. Identify or design short-term career pathway programs that meet federal criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minimum clock hours and weeks</li> <li>○ Industry-recognized credential</li> <li>○ Alignment to high-value occupations</li> </ul>		<p>University of Hawaii</p> <p>University of Hawaii Community Colleges</p>	<p>Colleges do not self-certify for Workforce Pell.</p> <p>The goal is to present these programs to the Working Group... and the working group can send the recommendation to the Council at its May 20, 2026 Board Meeting.</p>
<p>Assess that programs are aligned with real world environment</p>		<p>Workforce Pell Implementation Working Group</p>	<p>The goal is to present these programs to the Working Group for consideration... and the working group can send the recommendation to the WDC at its next board meeting (the target for this first reiteration will be the May 20, 2026 Board Meeting.)</p> <p>It does not replace the State board's certification role.</p> <p>It does not independently approve Workforce Pell programs for federal purposes.</p>
<p>B. Submit programs through:</p>		<p>University of Hawaii</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ State ETPL process (if not already listed)</li> <li>○ Workforce Pell certification application to the State board</li> </ul>		University of Hawaii Community Colleges	
<b>STEP 3 — Fiscal Coordination</b>	<b>February to July 1, 2026</b>	University of Hawaii	
A. Coordinates financial aid administration readiness.			
B. Ensures institutions understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pell disbursement rules</li> <li>○ Student eligibility requirements</li> <li>○ Reporting obligations</li> </ul>			
C. Aligns Workforce Pell with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Existing state financial aid systems</li> <li>○ Accreditation and academic policies</li> </ul>			
<b>STEP 4 — State Board (Workforce Development Council) Certification</b>	<b>May 30, 2026</b>  (WDC Board Meeting)		What certification means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State board is affirmatively stating that the program:</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets federal statutory requirements</li> <li>• Is workforce-aligned and credible</li> <li>• Is appropriate for Pell eligibility</li> </ul>
A. Certifies submitted programs	<b>May 20, 2026</b> (WDC Board Meeting)		
B. Issue a formal certification (approval or denial).			
C. Maintain documentation and board action records			
<b>STEP 5 — Federal Submission and Approval</b>	<b>May 21 to June 1, 2026</b>		The courses certified by the Council at its May 20, 2026 meeting will be sent to the Governor, and the Governor will send the request to the US Department of Education for further action.
US Department of Education receives:  Program application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State board certification</li> <li>• ED has a 60-day window to determine eligibility.</li> </ul>	<b>May 21 to June 1, 2026</b>	U.S. Department of Education	The US Department of Education will determine the Workforce Pell eligibility and will notify the Governor of the action on the requests.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US ED approval enables Pell disbursement beginning July 1, 2026 (or later, if approved later).</li> </ul>			Ideally, the response from the Department may take maximum of 60 days so this has to be taken into account when submitting requests.
Community Outreach	<b>June 1, 2026 to July 30, 2026</b>	All	
<b>STEP 6— Program Launch</b>	<b>July 1, 2026</b>	<p>Community colleges (delivery)</p> <p>State Department of Education (aid administration)</p> <p>Workforce Development Council (oversight)</p>	
<b>STEP 7: Program Oversight</b>			
<p>Ongoing responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor outcomes and compliance.</li> <li>Update certifications if programs materially change</li> <li>Respond to federal guidance updates.</li> </ul>		<p>Community colleges (delivery)</p> <p>State Department of Education (aid administration)</p> <p>Workforce Development Council (oversight)</p>	

**SUMMARY**

Entity	Role
WDC	Sets Workforce Pell criteria and certifies programs
Governor	Certifies eligibility, upon “consultation” with the WDC
UH	Delivers programs and administers Pell
DOE	Prepares and refers students
Labor agency (WDD/DLIR)	Provides labor market data, referrals, employer connections
Labor Unions/Businesses	Validate which credentials matter; Confirm wage and hiring demand
Local Boards	Validate demand, refer students, report results

---

## RESEARCH MATERIALS

### I. [From the Bipartisan Committee on Education: Workforce Pell Act Section by Section](#)

[https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/bipartisan\\_workforce\\_pell\\_act\\_section\\_by\\_section\\_final.pdf](https://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/bipartisan_workforce_pell_act_section_by_section_final.pdf)

*“In order to be an eligible program, **a state workforce board authorized under WIOA** must first determine if a program provides education aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, meets the hiring requirements of potential in-demand industry or sector employers, and satisfies any applicable educational prerequisite requirement for professional licensure or certification in the state or states in which the program is offered, as applicable.”*

### 2. [Workforce Pell Is Coming. Are State Legislatures Ready?](#)

<https://www.ncsl.org/resources/details/workforce-pell-is-coming-are-state-legislatures-ready>

*“States are responsible for identifying which short-term programs qualify for Workforce Pell based on criteria set in federal law. **Governors, in coordination with state workforce boards,** will review programs to confirm they prepare students for in-demand jobs, confer a recognized credential, and verify that they build toward, or “stack into,” further education or training”*

### 3. [Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act \(H.R. 6585\) Fact Sheet](#)

[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/bipartisan\\_workforce\\_pell\\_act\\_fact\\_sheet1.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://democrats-edworkforce.house.gov/imo/media/doc/bipartisan_workforce_pell_act_fact_sheet1.pdf)

### **3. Implementing Workforce Pell**

<https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/implementing-workforce-pell/>

### **4. Workforce Pell Is (Finally) Law. Now What**

<https://www.richmondfed.org/region-communities/regional-data-analysis/community-college-survey/community-college-insights/2025/workforce-pell-finally-law-now-what#:~:text=Under%20the%20legislation%2C%20the%20governor's,70%20percent%20each%20award%20year.>

*“Under the legislation, the governor's office in each state is responsible for consulting with their **state workforce boards** to determine which programs are "aligned with the requirements of high-skill, high-wage" occupations or focus on jobs for in-demand industries. Programs must also meet accountability thresholds designed to ensure funding yields positive educational and labor market outcomes. An institution must demonstrate that 70 percent of their students complete the course (within 150 percent of the normal time for completion) and the job placement rate is at least 70 percent each award year.”*

### **5. Fulfilling the Promise of Workforce Pell: Why We Need State Leadership**

<https://all4ed.org/state-policy-center-fulfilling-the-promise-of-workforce-pell-why-we-need-state-leadership/>

### **6. Preparing for Workforce Pell: How colleges can lead the way**

<https://achievingthedream.org/preparing-for-workforce-pell/77/>

### **7. Workforce Pell Rules Take Shape; States to Play a Major Role in Implementation**

<https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/workforce-pell-is-coming-are-state-legislatures-ready#:~:text=These%20performance%20standards%20apply%20only,satisfy%20federal%20program%20performance%20requirements.>

### **8. Workforce Pell Rules Take Shape; States to Play a Major Role in Implementation**

<https://whiteboardadvisors.com/workforce-pell-rules-take-shape-states-to-play-a-major-role-in-implementation/>

### **9. Preparing to Implement Workforce Pell Grants: States Should Legislate to Solidify Student Protections**

<https://ticas.org/accountability/workforce-pell-state-model-legislation/>

### **10. Workforce Pell is moving Forward: Advocates must help shape what comes next**

<https://nationalskillscoalition.org/blog/higher-education/workforce-pell-is-moving-forward-advocates-must-help-shape-what-comes-next/#:~:text=States%20have%20a%20lot%20to,needed%20to%20meet%20hiring%20requirements>

### **11. Preparing for Workforce Pell: The Role of States and Governors**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Illxnr3r5CE>

### **12. Workforce Pell, State Roles, and Implications for Digital Learning**

<https://wcet.wiche.edu/frontiers/2025/12/18/ahead-week-one-recap/#:~:text=Governor%20and%20State%20Responsibilities,necessary%20to%20implement%20Workforce%20Pell.>

### **13. Eight Steps States Should Take to Get Workforce Pell Right for Students and Workers**

<https://tcf.org/content/commentary/eight-steps-states-should-take-to-get-workforce-pell-right-for-students-and-workers/#:~:text=States'%20actions%20in%20the%20coming,states%20are%20set%20out%20below.>

### **14. Making Workforce Pell Deliver for Workers, Local Businesses, and Shared Prosperity**

<https://nationalskillscoalition.org/blog/news/making-workforce-pell-deliver-for-workers-local-businesses-and-shared-prosperity/>

### **15. Key Issues for Governing Boards**

<https://agb.org/news/agb-alerts/agb-policy-alert-consensus-reached-on-new-workforce-pell-grant-program/>

### **16. Workforce Pell Grants for Short-Term Programs: A Primer and Update from Negotiated Rulemaking**

<https://upcea.edu/workforce-pell-grants-for-short-term-programs-a-primer-and-update-from-negotiated-rulemaking-consensus-reached-whats-in-the-draft-regulations/>

### **17. Unpacking Workforce Pell: Learning from the States**

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/article/unpacking-workforce-pell-learning-from-the-states/>

### **18. Workforce Pell Grants Create New Opportunity: A Preliminary Guide to Micro-Credential Eligibility**

<https://mcclintockcpa.com/workforce-pell-grants-create-new-opportunity-a-preliminary-guide-to-micro-credential-eligibility/>

### **19. Workforce Pell: A Potential Game Changer for Adult Learners and the Economy**

<https://www.cael.org/resouces/pathways-blog/workforce-pell-a-potential-game-changer-for-adult-learners-and-the-economy>

### **20. Workforce Pell Rules Take Shape; States to Play a Major Role in Implementation**

<https://whiteboardadvisors.com/workforce-pell-rules-take-shape-states-to-play-a-major-role-in-implementation/>

### **21. Six steps community colleges can take now to prepare for Workforce Pell**

[ab.com/resources/blog/community-college-blog/six-steps-community-colleges-can-prepare-for-workforce-pell/](https://www.ab.com/resources/blog/community-college-blog/six-steps-community-colleges-can-prepare-for-workforce-pell/)

### **22. Preparing for Workforce Pell: Leveraging the Data**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kwJjNf27wo>

### **23: America's Workforce: Implementing Workforce Pell**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kwJjNf27wo>

### **24. Workforce Pell: Learning from Virginia's G3 Program**

<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/implementing-workforce-pell-g3.html>

### **25. Preparing for the Workforce Pell-funded workforce**

<https://intelliboard.net/blog/preparing-for-the-new-pell-funded-workforce-development-era-how-intelliboard-supports-compliance-and-accountability/>

### **26. Implementing Workforce Pell**

[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/WorkforcePell\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Nov\\_2025.pdf](https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/WorkforcePell_Fact_Sheet_Nov_2025.pdf)

### **27. ED Releases Draft Workforce Pell Regulations**

<https://www.ccdaily.com/2025/12/ed-releases-draft-workforce-pell-regulations/>

### **28. Congress OK'd Pell Grants for Workforce Training. Now, It's Up to the States**

<https://www.the74million.org/article/congress-okd-pell-grants-for-workforce-training-now-its-up-to-the-states/>

**29. Why Implementation Matters: Ensuring Quality in the New Workforce Pell Program**

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/events/why-implementation-matters-ensuring-quality-in-the-new-workforce-pell-program/>

**30. The latest Workforce Pell Resources**

<https://eddesignlab.org/news-events/updated-weekly-the-latest-workforce-pell-resources/>

**31. Education Outlines Workforce Pell Regulations**

<https://www.highereddive.com/news/education-department-outlines-potential-workforce-pell-regulations/807224/>

**32. JFF Offers Guidance on Workforce Pell Implementation**

<https://www.jff.org/blog/jff-offers-guidance-on-workforce-pell-implementation/>

**33. Workforce Pell Resources**

<https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/workforce-pell/>

**34. Building Pathways: How Pell Grants Are Transforming Continuing Education and Workforce Development**

<https://entrinsic.com/enrole/workforce-pell-grants-continuing-education-workforce-development/>

**35. How States Can Use Short-Term Workforce Pell Grants to Help Students Succeed**

<https://thefga.org/research/how-states-can-use-short-term-workforce-pell-grants/>

*Note: this resolution was vetted by the National Governor’s Association.*



**RESOLUTION NO. WDC-2026-01**

***(For action during the February 18, 2026 WDC Quarterly Board Meeting)***

**Establishing the State Planning and Implementation Framework  
for the Federal Workforce Pell Grant Program**

**Purpose and Intent**

This Resolution establishes an **interim** State Workforce Pell Implementation Framework for Hawai'i to guide statewide planning, interagency coordination, and system readiness activities associated with the federal Workforce Pell Grant Program, with the objective of supporting a target implementation date of July 1, 2026.

This Resolution is intended to:

- Affirm the Workforce Development Council’s role in early-stage policy guidance and system alignment.
- Establish an initial coordination structure, including a Workforce Pell Implementation Working Group; and
- Preserve flexibility for the State to determine, at a future date and consistent with federal guidance and state law, the formal program approval, certification, and governance mechanisms for Workforce Pell.

**WHEREAS**, The U.S. Congress has authorized the Workforce Pell Grant Program, expanding federal Pell Grant eligibility to support short-term, high-value postsecondary and workforce training programs aligned with in-demand occupations; and

**WHEREAS**, Workforce Pell is intended to expand access for working adults, low-income individuals, and career-changing workers to credentials that lead directly to employment; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Education is still finalizing rules and guidance for the Workforce Pell Grant Program, creating uncertainty for states, even as the target implementation date of July 1, 2026, requires immediate planning and system readiness efforts.

**WHEREAS**, many states are adopting interim frameworks to support coordination, reduce implementation risk, and prepare their workforce and education systems, making it both reasonable and necessary for Hawai'i to establish an interim State Workforce Pell Implementation Framework.

**WHEREAS**, the establishment of an interim State Workforce Pell Implementation Framework is necessary to support strategic alignment, administrative preparedness, and responsible governance while federal rulemaking remains in progress.

**WHEREAS**, the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council (WDC) is the Governor-designated State Workforce Development Board under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), responsible for statewide workforce strategy, policy alignment, and system oversight; and

**WHEREAS**, the University of Hawai'i system serves as the State's primary public postsecondary education and workforce training provider; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Unified Workforce Development Plan calls for sector-aligned, employer-validated credential pathways that advance equity, economic mobility, and workforce resilience;

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Development Council, as directed by the Governor, intends to convene a Workforce Pell Implementation Working Group to provide technical input, stakeholder engagement, and coordination support during the initial phase of implementation

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Development Council recognizes the need for structured coordination among workforce, education, employer, and labor partners to support the initial design, planning, and readiness activities associated with the implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant Program;

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Development Council acknowledges that the formal program approval, certification, and governance mechanisms for Workforce Pell in Hawai'i may require further determination and alignment with federal guidance, gubernatorial authority, and/or state legislative action, and that such mechanisms will be established at a future date consistent with applicable law;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Workforce Development Council hereby establishes the State of Hawai'i interim Workforce Pell Framework to govern the design, approval, and implementation of Workforce Pell with a target launch date of July 1, 2026.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Workforce Development Council shall serve as the State’s Workforce Pell policy and certification authority, and that the University of Hawai’i system shall serve as the primary postsecondary delivery system for Workforce Pell-eligible programs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** a working group be established which will be composed of representatives from the University of Hawaii system, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Workforce Development Division, the Hawaii Department of Education, no more than two members of the Workforce Development Council, and other relevant stakeholders.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Workforce Development Council hereby establishes the interim Workforce Pell Program Approval Framework, under which Workforce Pell-eligible programs must:

1. Align with State-identified priority industry sectors.
2. Lead to industry-recognized or employer-validated credentials.
3. Demonstrate labor market demand and wage-earning potential.
4. Meet or exceed federal duration, clock-hour, and quality standards.
5. Include employer engagement in program design or validation; and
6. Meet access, and performance benchmarks established by the Council.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Workforce Development Council enlist the support of the University of Hawai’i, in coordination with employers and partners, to submit specific Workforce Pell-eligible programs for Council approval at its **May 20, 2026** quarterly board meeting, consistent with this framework.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Department of Education, including adult education and career pathway programs, shall serve as a pipeline and referral partner to support learner readiness and transitions into Workforce Pell-eligible post-secondary training.

*ADOPTED this 18th day of February, 2026, by the Hawai’i Workforce Development Council at its quarterly board meeting.*

# **Governor's Update**

Dan Kouchi, Policy Advisor and Designee

# Labor Director's Update

David Rodriguez, Designee

# Fiscal Reports

Hong “Julie” Radke, ASO

Bennette Misalucha, WDC Executive Director

**WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT**  
**Grants Summary As of 12/31/2025**

**PY23: 04/01/2024-06/30/2026**

County	Allocated	Expenditures	Balance	
			As of 12/31/2025	Lapsed 6/30/26
Honolulu	4,816,645.00	3,465,879.00	1,350,766.00	
Hawaii	1,697,603.00	1,104,907.00	592,696.00	
Maui	1,039,013.00	719,455.00	319,558.00	
WDD-Kauai	537,493.00	204,202.00	333,291.00	
<b>Subtotal By County</b>	<b>8,090,754.00</b>	<b>5,494,443.00</b>	<b>2,596,311.00</b>	
Rapid Response	511,366.00	259,362.00	252,004.00	
WIOA State Level	1,518,020.45	1,145,759.00	372,261.45	
<b>Total by County</b>	<b>10,120,140.45</b>	<b>6,899,564.00</b>	<b>3,220,576.45</b>	-

**PY23-Unexpended Funds-07/01/25-06/30/2026**

Unexpended Funds	Unexpended Funds	Expenditures	Balance As of 12/31/2025	Encumbrances	Unexpended/Unencumbered Balance
WIOA Adult	895,299.52	145,561.91	749,737.61	592,630.09	157,107.52
WIOA Youth	1,036,501.12	112,891.57	923,609.55	617,049.43	306,560.12
WIOA DW	854,946.51	129,441.02	725,505.49	366,745.98	358,759.51
<b>Subtotal By County</b>	<b>2,786,747.15</b>	<b>387,894.50</b>	<b>2,398,852.65</b>	<b>1,576,425.50</b>	<b>822,427.15</b>
WIOA RR	511,366.00	259,362.00	252,004.00		
WIOA State Level	1,518,020.45	1,145,759.00	372,261.45		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,816,133.60</b>	<b>1,793,015.50</b>	<b>3,023,118.10</b>	<b>1,576,425.50</b>	<b>822,427.15</b>

Encumbrances (07/01/25-06/30/2026)	Budgeted	Expenditures	Balance
Ready to Work Program			
Castle HS - PO 00104985	285,230.00		285,230.00
Konawaena HS - PO 00104991	157,260.00		157,260.00
Kapolei HS - PO 00104986	318,570.00	112,329.82	206,240.18
Leilehua HS - PO 00104987	311,550.00	44,778.46	266,771.54
Maui HS - PO 00104988	284,930.00	45,597.82	239,332.18
Waiakea HS - PO 00104990	295,230.00		295,230.00
Roosevelt HS - PO 00104989	311,550.00	54,509.43	257,040.57
	<b>1,964,320.00</b>	<b>257,215.53</b>	<b>1,707,104.47</b>

**PY24-LAPSE 06/30/2027**

County	Budgeted	Training/Career	Salaries/Fringe	Other Expenses	Total Expenditure
Honolulu	4,485,627.00	633,686.93	732,454.65	375,586.42	1,741,728.00
Hawaii	1,409,305.00	450,604.67	186,761.12	(78,536.79)	558,829.00
Maui	1,024,734.00	56,615.00	164,118.00	191,302.00	412,035.00
WDD-Kauai	516,204.00	8,347.05	82,449.71	12,727.24	103,524.00
<b>Subtotal By County</b>	<b>7,435,870.00</b>	<b>1,149,253.65</b>	<b>1,165,783.48</b>	<b>501,078.87</b>	<b>2,816,116.00</b>
Rapid Response	506,828.00				0.00
WIOA State Level	1,401,653.00				517,419.11
<b>Total by County</b>	<b>9,344,351.00</b>	<b>1,149,253.65</b>	<b>1,165,783.48</b>	<b>501,078.87</b>	<b>3,333,535.11</b>

**PY24 TRAINING/CAREER EXPENDITURES**

	Training/Career	Salaries/Fringe	Balance as of 12/31/2025
Honolulu			
Youth	232,334.01	286,765.53	519,099.54
Adult	378,320.48	290,553.32	668,873.80
DW	23,032.44	155,135.80	178,168.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>633,686.93</b>	<b>732,454.65</b>	<b>1,366,141.58</b>
Hawaii			
Youth	152,202.71	45,470.67	197,673.38
Adult	228,673.65	100,949.59	329,623.24
DW	69,728.31	40,340.86	110,069.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>450,604.67</b>	<b>186,761.12</b>	<b>637,365.79</b>
Maui			
Youth	12,936.00	92,664.00	105,600.00
Adult	34,623.00	45,049.00	79,672.00
DW	9,056.00	26,405.00	35,461.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,615.00</b>	<b>164,118.00</b>	<b>220,733.00</b>
Kauai			
Youth	-	8,696.49	8,696.49
Adult	4,097.05	38,105.98	42,203.03
DW	4,250.00	35,647.24	39,897.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,347.05</b>	<b>82,449.71</b>	<b>90,796.76</b>

**GRANT SUMMARY DETAILS  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025**

		PY23/FY24 EXPENDITURES					PY24/FY25 EXPENDITURES				
		Expenditures		PY23	PY23		Expenditures		PY24	PY24	
		PY23	PY23 Exp	Funds Avail.	% Expended	PY23	PY24	PY24 Exp	Funds Avail.	% Expended	PY24
		Budget	12/31/2025	12/31/2025	12/31/2025	Participants	Budget	12/31/2025	12/31/2025	12/31/2025	Participants
Adult Program:	Hawaii	698,272.00	482,270.84	216,001.16	69%	103	550,121.00	249,274.46	300,846.54	45%	
DW Program:	Hawaii	254,277.00	200,853.07	53,423.93	79%	18	252,020.00	90,287.56	161,732.44	36%	
Local Admin:	Hawaii	169,760.00	60,440.11	109,319.89	36%		140,931.00	25,965.88	114,965.12	18%	
Youth Program:	Hawaii	575,294.00	361,342.39	213,951.61	63%	49	466,233.00	193,300.68	272,932.32	41%	
Rapid Response	Hawaii	86,932.00	31,424.15	55,507.85	36%		86,161.00		86,161.00	0%	
	<b>Hawaii Total</b>	<b>1,784,535.00</b>	<b>1,136,330.56</b>	<b>648,204.44</b>		<b>170</b>	<b>1,495,466.00</b>	<b>558,828.58</b>	<b>936,637.42</b>		<b>0</b>
Adult Program:	Honolulu	1,687,490.00	1,413,112.46	274,377.54	84%	32	1,545,579.00	729,350.01	816,228.99	47%	
DW Program:	Honolulu	777,787.00	412,256.35	365,530.65	53%	11	756,060.00	217,687.28	538,372.72	29%	
Local Admin:	Honolulu	481,665.00	258,988.46	222,676.54	54%		448,563.00	177,994.34	270,568.66	40%	
Youth Program:	Honolulu	1,869,703.00	1,381,521.40	488,181.60	74%	26	1,735,425.00	616,696.20	1,118,728.80	36%	
Rapid Response	Honolulu	265,910.00	160,926.41	104,983.59	61%		258,482.00		258,482.00	0%	
	<b>Honolulu Total</b>	<b>5,082,555.00</b>	<b>3,626,805.08</b>	<b>1,455,749.92</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>4,744,109.00</b>	<b>1,741,727.83</b>	<b>3,002,381.17</b>		<b>0</b>
Adult Program:	Kauai	145,473.00	85,554.53	59,918.47	59%	7	154,648.76	43,505.05	111,143.71	28%	
DW Program:	Kauai	194,447.00	72,881.19	121,565.81	37%	2	181,395.84	41,163.41	140,232.43	23%	
Local Admin:	Kauai	53,749.00	22,709.78	31,039.22	42%		40,204.93	9,562.83	30,642.10	24%	
Youth Program:	Kauai	143,824.00	23,055.87	120,768.13	16%	2	139,954.47	9,292.39	130,662.08	7%	
Rapid Response	Kauai	66,478.00	24,747.64	41,730.36	37%		60,819.00		60,819.00	0%	
	<b>Kauai Total</b>	<b>603,971.00</b>	<b>228,949.01</b>	<b>375,021.99</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>577,023.00</b>	<b>103,523.68</b>	<b>473,499.32</b>		<b>0</b>
Adult Program:	Maui	378,230.00	276,682.44	101,547.56	73%	53	366,747.00	140,117.48	226,629.52	38%	
DW Program:	Maui	269,234.00	142,637.97	126,596.03	53%	26	296,494.00	87,856.62	208,637.38	30%	
Local Admin:	Maui	103,902.00	71,201.86	32,700.14	69%		102,474.00	42,507.75	59,966.25	41%	
Youth Program:	Maui	287,647.00	228,932.30	58,714.70	80%	18	259,019.00	141,553.13	117,465.87	55%	
Rapid Response	Maui	92,046.00	42,263.05	49,782.95	46%		101,366.00	0.00	101,366.00	0%	
	<b>Maui Total</b>	<b>1,131,059.00</b>	<b>761,717.62</b>	<b>369,341.38</b>		<b>97</b>	<b>1,126,100.00</b>	<b>412,034.98</b>	<b>714,065.02</b>		<b>0</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8,602,120.00</b>	<b>5,753,802.27</b>	<b>2,848,317.73</b>		<b>347</b>	<b>7,942,698.00</b>	<b>2,816,115.07</b>	<b>5,126,582.93</b>		<b>0</b>

YOUTH PROGRAM		PY23	PY23	PY23	PY23	PY24	PY24	PY24	PY24
12/31/2025		% EXPENDED	OSY	ISY	WE	% EXPENDED	OSY	ISY	WE
HONOLULU		74%	61%	13%	23%	36%	34%	2%	4%
HAWAII		63%	42%	21%	10%	41%	31%	10%	8%
MAUI		80%	60%	20%	1%	55%	41%	14%	3%
KAUAI		18%	16%	2%	0%	7%	7%	0%	0%

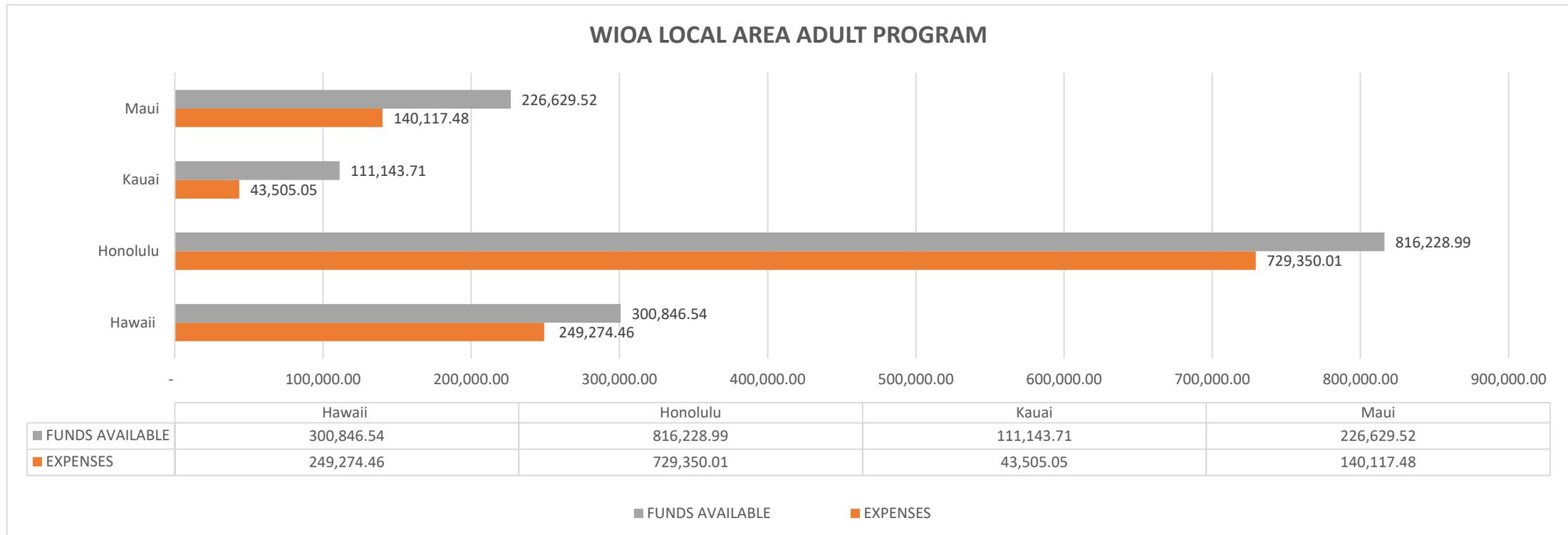
\* WIOA YOUTH REQUIREMENT 75% OUT OF SCHOOL/25% IN SCHOOL - 20% WORK EXPERIENCE

**\*\* Participant Report is as of 12/31/25**

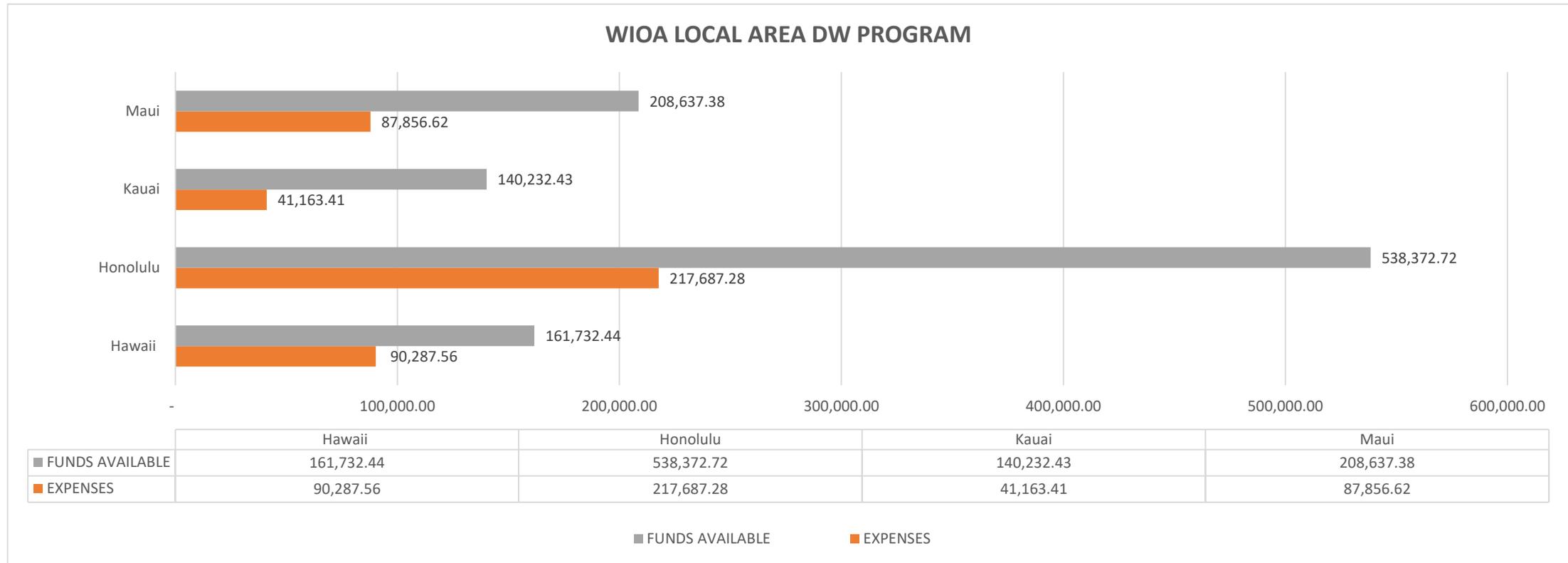
KAUAI WDD-TOTAL ADMIN PY24	
PY 22 State Level Funds	1,545,051.00
PY 23 State Level Funds	1,518,020.00
PY 24 State Level Funds	1,401,652.00
	ADULT 4,416.28
	DW 4,134.96
	YOUTH 1,011.59
	TOTAL 9,562.83

**WIOA LOCAL AREA EXPENSES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025**

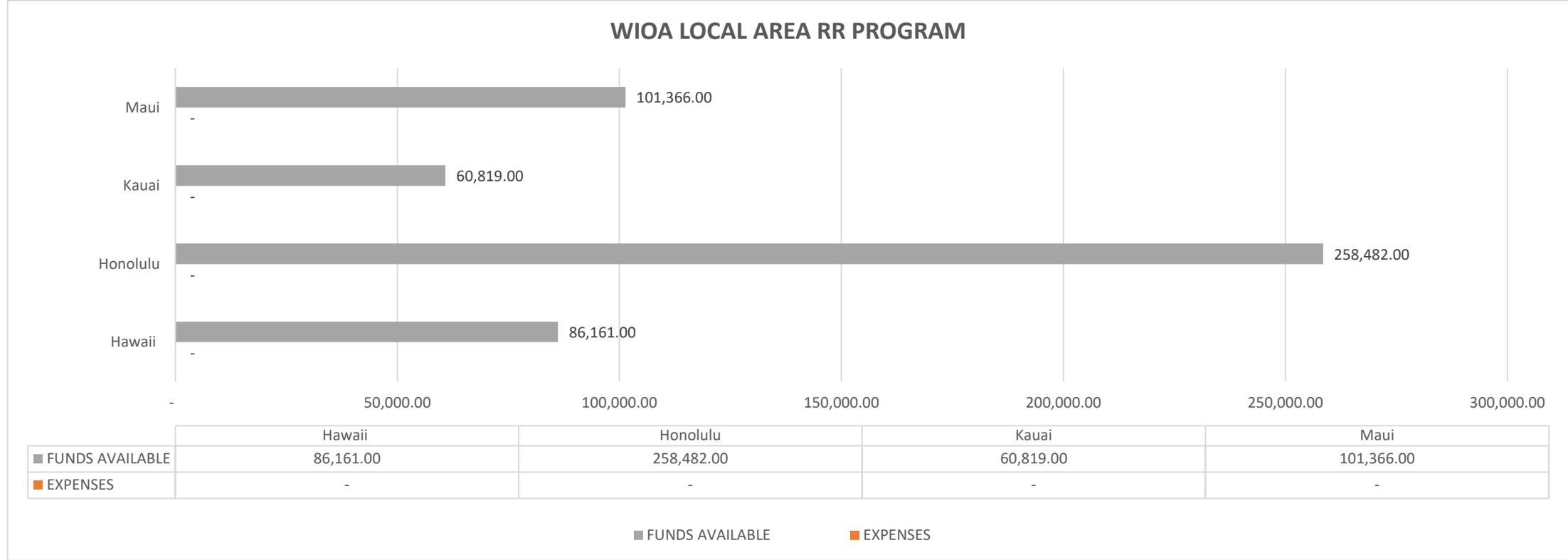
Adult Program	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2027						PY23/FY24 : 07/01/2023-06/30/2026					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY23	PY23		
	PY24 Budget	PY24 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY24 Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY23 Budget	PY23 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY23 Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	550,121.00	249,274.46	300,846.54	45%	0	#DIV/0!	698,272.00	482,270.84	216,001.16	69%	103	\$ 4,682.24
Honolulu	1,545,579.00	729,350.01	816,228.99	47%	0	#DIV/0!	1,687,490.00	1,413,112.46	274,377.54	84%	32	\$ 44,159.76
Kauai	154,648.76	43,505.05	111,143.71	28%	0	#DIV/0!	145,473.00	85,554.53	59,918.47	59%	7	\$ 12,222.08
Maui	366,747.00	140,117.48	226,629.52	38%	0	#DIV/0!	378,230.00	276,682.44	101,547.56	73%	53	\$ 5,220.42
<b>Total Adult</b>	<b>2,617,095.76</b>	<b>1,162,247.00</b>	<b>1,454,848.76</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>2,909,465.00</b>	<b>2,257,620.27</b>	<b>651,844.73</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>195</b>	



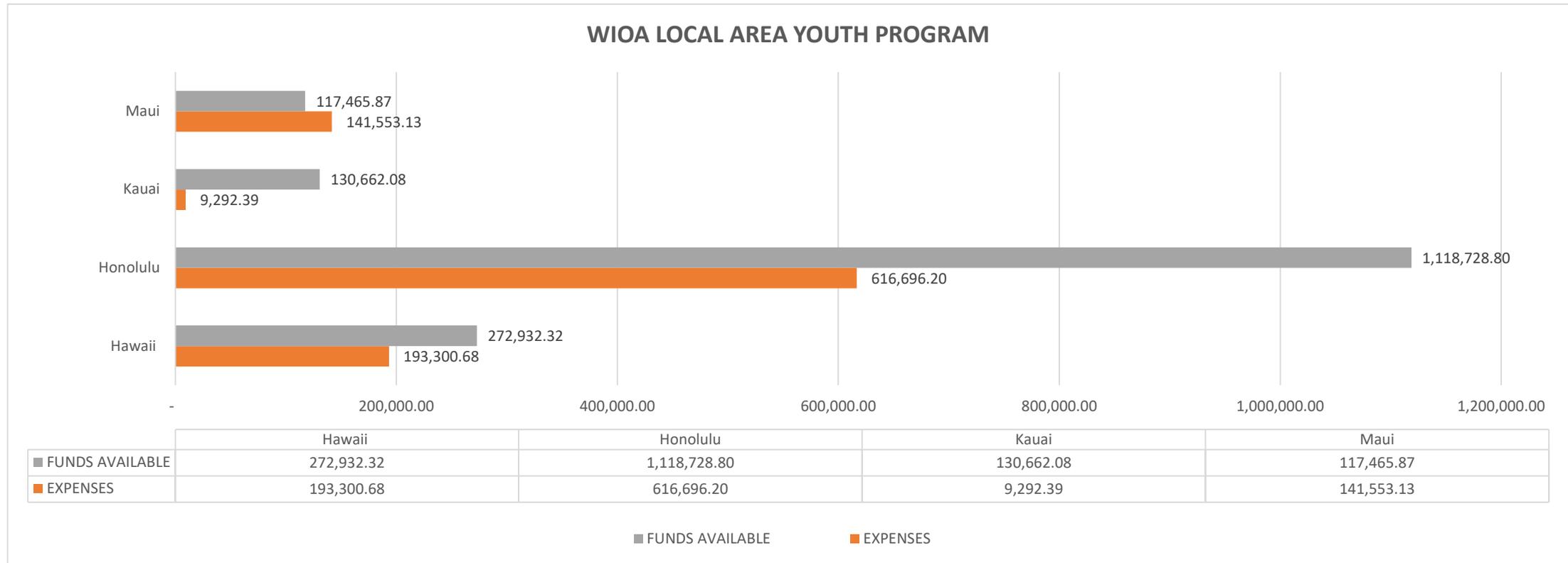
DW PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2027						PY23/FY24 : 07/01/2023-06/30/2026					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY23	PY23		
	PY24 Budget	PY24 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY24 Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY23 Budget	PY23 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY23 Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	252,020.00	90,287.56	161,732.44	36%	0	#DIV/0!	254,277.00	200,853.07	53,423.93	79%	18	\$ 11,158.50
Honolulu	756,060.00	217,687.28	538,372.72	29%	0	#DIV/0!	777,787.00	412,256.35	365,530.65	53%	11	\$ 37,477.85
Kauai	181,395.84	41,163.41	140,232.43	23%	0	#DIV/0!	194,447.00	72,881.19	121,565.81	37%	2	\$ 36,440.60
Maui	296,494.00	87,856.62	208,637.38	30%	0	#DIV/0!	269,234.00	142,637.97	126,596.03	53%	26	\$ 5,486.08
<b>Total DW</b>	<b>1,485,969.84</b>	<b>436,994.87</b>	<b>1,048,974.97</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>1,495,745.00</b>	<b>828,628.58</b>	<b>667,116.42</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>57</b>	



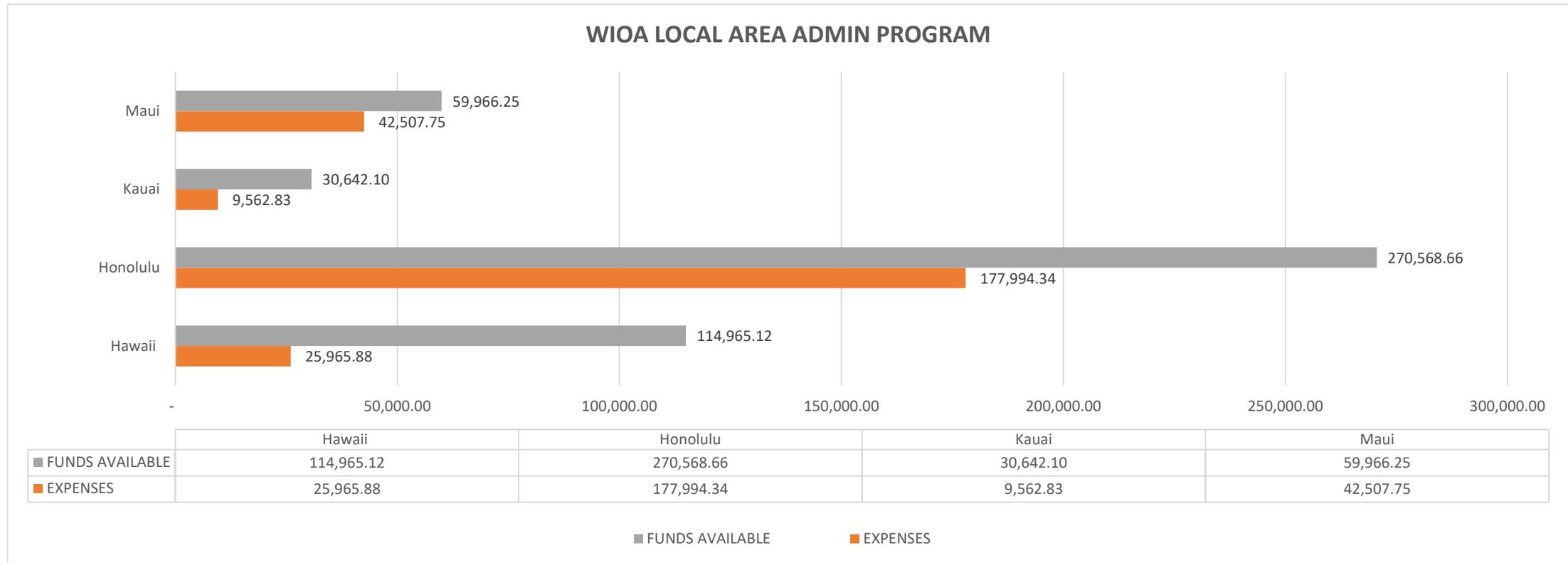
RR PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2027						PY23/FY24 : 07/01/2023-06/30/2026					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY23	PY23		
	PY24 Budget	PY24 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY24 Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY23 Budget	PY23 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY23 Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	86,161.00	-	86,161.00	0%	0	#DIV/0!	86,932.00	31,424.15	55,507.85	36%	0	#DIV/0!
Honolulu	258,482.00	-	258,482.00	0%	0	#DIV/0!	265,910.00	160,926.41	104,983.59	61%	0	#DIV/0!
Kauai	60,819.00	-	60,819.00	0%	0	#DIV/0!	66,478.00	24,747.64	41,730.36	37%	0	#DIV/0!
Maui	101,366.00	-	101,366.00	0%	0	#DIV/0!	92,046.00	42,263.05	49,782.95	46%	0	#DIV/0!
<b>Total RR</b>	<b>506,828.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>506,828.00</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>511,366.00</b>	<b>259,361.25</b>	<b>252,004.75</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>0</b>	



YOUTH PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2027						PY23/FY24 : 07/01/2023-06/30/2026					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY23	PY23		
	PY24 Budget	PY24 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY24 Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY23 Budget	PY23 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY23 Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	466,233.00	193,300.68	272,932.32	41%	0	#DIV/0!	575,294.00	361,342.39	213,951.61	63%	49	\$ 7,374.33
Honolulu	1,735,425.00	616,696.20	1,118,728.80	36%	0	#DIV/0!	1,869,703.00	1,381,521.40	488,181.60	74%	26	\$ 53,135.44
Kauai	139,954.47	9,292.39	130,662.08	7%	0	#DIV/0!	143,824.00	23,055.87	120,768.13	16%	2	\$ 11,527.94
Maui	259,019.00	141,553.13	117,465.87	55%	0	#DIV/0!	287,647.00	228,932.30	58,714.70	80%	18	\$ 12,718.46
<b>Total Youth</b>	<b>2,600,631.47</b>	<b>960,842.40</b>	<b>1,639,789.07</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>2,876,468.00</b>	<b>1,994,851.96</b>	<b>881,616.04</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>95</b>	



ADMIN PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2027						PY23/FY24 : 07/01/2023-06/30/2026					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY23	PY23		
	PY24 Budget	PY24 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY24 Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY23 Budget	PY23 Exp 12/31/2025	Funds Avail. 12/31/2025	% Expended 12/31/2025	PY23 Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	140,931.00	25,965.88	114,965.12	18%	0	#DIV/0!	169,760.00	60,440.11	109,319.89	36%	0	#DIV/0!
Honolulu	448,563.00	177,994.34	270,568.66	40%	0	#DIV/0!	481,665.00	258,988.46	222,676.54	54%	0	#DIV/0!
Kauai	40,204.93	9,562.83	30,642.10	24%	0	#DIV/0!	53,749.00	22,709.78	31,039.22	42%	0	#DIV/0!
Maui	102,474.00	42,507.75	59,966.25	41%	0	#DIV/0!	103,902.00	71,201.86	32,700.14	69%	0	#DIV/0!
<b>Total Youth</b>	<b>732,172.93</b>	<b>256,030.80</b>	<b>476,142.13</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>809,076.00</b>	<b>413,340.21</b>	<b>395,735.79</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>0</b>	



# **Kauai American Job Center**

Certification



**\*PROPOSED BOARD ACTION ON KAUAI AMERICAN JOB CENTER CERTIFICATION**

**\*REQUIRES FULL BOARD ACTION**

*Status: As of February 18, 2026*

The Workforce Development Council will need to act upon the recommendation of its Executive Committee to extend the current American Job Center (AJC) certification period for the Kauai American Job Center, from the originally scheduled end date of January 31, 2026, to **May 30, 2026**.

The primary reason for this requested extension is to allow the Workforce Development Council (WDC) adequate time to continue working with the Kaua'i American Job Center to support the implementation of its corrective action plan. The additional time will enable staff to provide focused technical assistance, monitor progress, and ensure that corrective actions are fully addressed prior to final certification. This approach is intended to strengthen outcomes and ensure that the certification process results in meaningful and sustainable improvements.

In addition, the timing required to complete the certification review, finalize supporting documentation, and align the process with the Executive Committee's meeting schedule presented practical constraints that limited the ability to complete the process within the original timeframe. Extending the certification period will allow for a more deliberate and comprehensive review consistent with the Council's oversight role.

WDC staff anticipate completing the certification report in time for the (Executive) Committee meeting on April 23, 2026. Based on the Executive Committee's recommendation., the full Council will then be asked to consider and take formal action on the AJC certification at its May 20, 2026 meeting.

This extension is procedural in nature and is intended to ensure that the certification process is conducted thoroughly, responsibly, and in a manner that supports continuous improvement across the system.

*(Background information is included in this packet)*

## **Background**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the certification of an American Job Center (AJC) at least once every three years to ensure the delivery of high-quality services. The certification process evaluates the AJC across a set of federal and state-defined criteria, including customer service, integration of services, responsiveness to employer needs, and continuous improvement. The local workforce development board usually undertakes the role of certifier, but because Kauai local area does not have a local board, the Workforce Development Council (as the State Board) was tasked with this assignment.

## **Action Taken**

**April 10, 2025:** the WDC staff conducted the on-site visit.

**April 16, 2025:** the WDC staff filed its report. A copy is attached.

The recommendations were as follows:

### **Certification Status:** *Provisionally Certified – With Conditions*

The Kauai AJC satisfies baseline certification criteria but would benefit from targeted improvements in several key areas. As part of the next phase, the center is encouraged to develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) within 60 days that outlines steps to:

- Evaluate staffing needs and explore options to fund an outreach/community engagement position using WIOA resources.
- Enhance engagement with the Kauai Department of Economic Development and other key partners
- Strengthen processes for capturing and utilizing customer feedback.
- Expand employees' professional development opportunities based on identified service gaps.
- Re-establish routine coordination meetings among core partners.
- Develop and implement written policies specific to this AJC to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While the State has overarching policies in place, the EEOC has indicated that each AJC must establish its own localized written ADA policy. According to the designated EEOC Officer, monitoring visits will soon be conducted to assess compliance at the local area level.

**June 24, 2025:** the full Board voted to conditionally certify Kauai AJC pending receipt of the Corrective Action Plan.

**September 30, 2025:** Response letter was received with the Corrective Action Plan.

**October 22, 2025:** Communication was sent and based on the initial review by WDC staff on the Corrective Action Plan, we noted the following:

1. AJC needs to submit a **detailed timeline** of each planned action so that we can effectively monitor progress and milestones.
2. Please note that since the certification was previously signed off by the full Board at its June 24, 2025 board meeting, this new document will need to be placed on the Executive Committee agenda at its October 29, 2025 meeting and subsequently on the full Board meeting agenda on November 19, 2025.
3. Action plan with timelines will need to be submitted by November 7, 2025, so the **updated** document can be included in the November 19 Board packet.
4. While the Corrective Action Plan is still in the process of being fully implemented and documented, we recommend extending the provisional certification to **January 30, 2026, which will allow additional time to demonstrate progress and conduct a thorough assessment.**

**October 29, 2025:** This item was presented to the Executive Committee. Proposed Action: Extend the provisional certification until January 30, 2025. Executive Committee voted in favor of motion.

**November 7, 2025:** Updated Corrective Action Plan was submitted to WDC with timelines. Please see attachment.

**November 19, 2025:** The Full Board will vote to ratify the Executive Committee's recommendation on the provisional certification of the Kauai American Job Center.

**January 22, 2026:** The subject of extending the recertification of the Kauai AJC will be presented to the Executive Committee. Proposed Action: Extend the provisional certification until January 30, 2025

**February 18, 2026:** The full board will vote to ratify the Executive Committee's recommendation on the provisional certification of the Kauai American Job Center.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MARICAR PILOTIN-FREITAS  
ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 329  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
<http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdd/>  
Phone: (808) 586-8877 / Fax: (808) 586-8822  
Email: [dliir\\_workforce\\_develop@hawaii.gov](mailto:dliir_workforce_develop@hawaii.gov)

November 7, 2025

VIA EMAIL & HAND-DELIVERED: [Bennette.E.Mishalucha@hawaii.gov](mailto:Bennette.E.Mishalucha@hawaii.gov)

Ms. Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director  
Workforce Development Council  
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Ms. Misalucha

**SUBJECT:** Corrective Action Plan in response to Kauai American Job Center Certification Determination – Revised Action Plan with Timeline

The enclosed revised Action Plan to the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that was originally submitted by the Workforce Development Division on September 30, 2025, is in response to your request via email dated October 22, 2025.

This revised Action Plan includes a timeline for each corrective action listed.

For clarification, we have attached the June 24, 2025, WDC Quarterly Board Meeting Packet, which includes the original Kauai American Job Center Certification Determination dated April 16, 2025. In this Certification Determination, the due date for our Corrective Action is listed as September 30, 2025. However, the Certification Determination attached to your October 22, 2025, email indicates a due date of June 16, 2025.

We would like to confirm that we submitted our Corrective Action Plan on September 30, 2025, in accordance with the due date provided in the original Certification Determination we received, which was also included in the June 24, 2025, WDC Quarterly Board Meeting Packet.

Ms. Bennette Misalucha

November 7, 2025

Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact me at [Maricar.R.Pilotin-Freitas@hawaii.gov](mailto:Maricar.R.Pilotin-Freitas@hawaii.gov) or  
Jaimee Tabangay at [Jaimee.N.Tabangay@hawaii.gov](mailto:Jaimee.N.Tabangay@hawaii.gov).

Sincerely,



Maricar Pilotin-Freitas,  
Administrator

Enclosures

**Corrective Action Plan:  
Action Plan Revision**

November 7, 2025

**IV. Action Plan (REVISED)**

Area of Improvement	Corrective Action(s)	Timeline
<b>1. Staffing &amp; Outreach</b>	Continue state recruiting process to fill current vacant position; Conduct analysis of current staff duties and responsibilities; Create staff schedule for outreach.	Conduct analysis of current staff duties and responsibilities and create schedule for outreach by January 30, 2026
<b>2. Partner Engagement</b>	Schedule quarterly meetings with Kauai Department of Economic Development; identify joint initiatives; formalize collaboration.	Schedule first meeting for quarter ending March 31, 2026
<b>3. Customer Feedback</b>	Develop and implement customer satisfaction survey; establish review process; integrate feedback into service planning.	Develop survey by December 30, 2025
<b>4. Staff Development</b>	Conduct training needs assessment; create training calendar; partner with WDC and other providers for workshops.	Assessment by January 30, 2026
<b>5. Coordination Meetings</b>	Re-establish quarterly meetings among core partners; rotate facilitation; document outcomes.	Schedule first meeting for quarter ending March 31, 2026
<b>6. ADA Compliance</b>	Draft localized ADA policy; train staff; prepare for EEOC monitoring.	Policy by February 27, 2026; training by March 31, 2026

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MARICAR PILOTIN-FREITAS  
ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 329  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
<http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdd/>  
Phone: (808) 586-8877 / Fax: (808) 586-8822  
Email: [dlir.workforce.develop@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlir.workforce.develop@hawaii.gov)

September 30, 2025

**VIA EMAIL & HAND-DELIVERED:** [Bennette.E.Misalucha@hawaii.gov](mailto:Bennette.E.Misalucha@hawaii.gov)

Ms. Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director  
Workforce Development Council  
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Ms. Misalucha:

Subject: Corrective Action Plan in response to Kauai American Job Center Certification Determination

The enclosed Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is the Workforce Development Division's (WDD) response to the Kauai American Job Center Certification Executive Summary received on April 16, 2025.

The Executive Summary indicates that the Kauai American Job Center has been *Provisionally Certified – With Conditions*. In alignment with the Workforce Development Council's determination, this CAP addresses each of the areas outlined in the Certification Determination section of the report.

The WDD acknowledges the areas identified for improvement and appreciates the Council's thoughtful review and recommendations. We remain committed to strengthening service delivery and ensuring that the Kauai American Job Center continues to provide quality client-centered services to the Kauai County community.

Ms. Bennette Misalucha  
September 30, 2025  
Page 2

If you have any questions, please contact me at [Maricar.R.Pilotin-Freitas@hawaii.gov](mailto:Maricar.R.Pilotin-Freitas@hawaii.gov) or  
Jaimee Tabangay of my staff at [Jaimee.N.Tabangay@hawaii.gov](mailto:Jaimee.N.Tabangay@hawaii.gov).

Sincerely,



Maricar Pilotin-Freitas  
Administrator

Enclosure

# Corrective Action Plan

September 30, 2025

## I. **Introduction**

This Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is in response to the Kauai American Job Center Certification report received on April 16, 2025. The Workforce Development Division acknowledges the Kauai AJC's certification status as *Provisionally Certified – With Conditions* and is committed to addressing the areas identified for improvement.

This CAP outlines specific actions, responsible parties, and timelines to ensure full compliance with WIOA requirements and to strengthen the delivery of quality, client-centered services in Kauai County.

## II. **Background**

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), American Job Centers (AJCs) must be certified at least once every three years to ensure the delivery of high-quality workforce services. In the absence of a local workforce development board for Kauai, the Workforce Development Council (WDC), serving as the State Board, conducted the certification evaluation on April 9, 2025, using a combination of self-assessment, stakeholder interviews, and site observations.

Following the decision by the Mayor of Kauai County not to be the grant recipient of the WIOA Title I funds, the Workforce Development Division (WDD) became the fiscal agent and assumed responsibility for the Kauai AJC. The AJC is currently operated by WDD's Kauai Branch, which provides WIOA Title I services along with other federal and state workforce programs administered by WDD.

WDC's evaluation recognized the dedication of the Kauai AJC team and its consistent delivery of essential services. However, the review also identified several areas where targeted improvements could enhance service integration, outreach, accessibility, and continuous improvement.

## III. **Summary of Certification Conditions**

The following areas were identified as requiring corrective action in WDC's Kauai American Job Center Certification Executive Summary:

1. Evaluate staffing needs and explore options to fund an outreach/community engagement position or agency using WIOA resources.

2. Enhance engagement with the Kauai Department of Economic Development and other key partners.
3. Strengthen processes for capturing and utilizing customer feedback.
4. Expand employees' professional development opportunities based on identified service gaps.
5. Re-establish routine coordination meetings among core partners.
6. Develop and implement written policies specific to this AJC to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**IV. Action Plan**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Corrective Action(s)</b>
<b>1. Staffing &amp; Outreach</b>	Continue state recruiting process to fill current vacant position; Conduct analysis of current staff duties and responsibilities; Create staff schedule for outreach.
<b>2. Partner Engagement</b>	Schedule quarterly meetings with Kauai Department of Economic Development; identify joint initiatives; formalize collaboration.
<b>3. Customer Feedback</b>	Develop and implement customer satisfaction survey; establish review process; integrate feedback into service planning.
<b>4. Staff Development</b>	Conduct training needs assessment; create training calendar; partner with WDC and other providers for workshops.

<b>5. Coordination Meetings</b>	Re-establish monthly meetings among core partners; rotate facilitation; document outcomes.
<b>6. ADA Compliance</b>	Draft localized ADA policy; train staff; prepare for EEOC monitoring.

**V. Conclusion**

WDD and its Kauai Branch staff remain fully committed to the continuous improvement of the Kauai American Job Center and to delivering high-quality, accessible, and client-centered workforce services to the community.

To ensure the successful implementation of this Corrective Action Plan, WDD’s Administrative Office and Kauai Branch leadership will collaborate closely to monitor progress, address challenges, and adjust strategies as needed. Regular check-ins, documentation of milestones, and transparent communication with the Workforce Development Council will support accountability and alignment with WIOA goals.

This plan represents not only a response to the certification determination but also an opportunity to strengthen the Kauai AJC’s role as a vital hub for workforce development. With shared commitment and strategic investment, the Kauai AJC is well-positioned to expand its impact and better serve jobseekers, employers, and community partners across the island.

**DR. JOSH GREEN**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



**JADE BUTAY**  
DLIR DIRECTOR

**WILLIAM KUNSTMAN**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**KEN LOUI**  
CHAIRPERSON

**BENNETTE E.MISALUCHA**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**  
**Department of Labor and Industrial Relations**  
830 Punchbowl Street, Suite 317, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Phone: (808) 586-8815 Web: <http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/>

April 16, 2025

**TO:** Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator  
Workforce Development Division

**FROM:** Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director  
Workforce Development Council

**RE:** **Kauai American Job Center Certification Executive Summary**

**Date of Site Visit/Review:** April 9, 2025

**Certifying Body:** Workforce Development Council

---

## **Background**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the certification of an American Job Center (AJC) at least once every three years to ensure the delivery of high-quality services. The certification process evaluates the AJC across a set of federal and state-defined criteria, including customer service, integration of services, responsiveness to employer needs, and continuous improvement. The local workforce development board usually undertakes the role of certifier, but because Kauai local area does not have a local board, the Workforce Development Council (as the State Board) was tasked with this assignment.

This narrative provides the certification status for the Kauai AJC based on the most recent site review and self-assessment conducted in accordance with WIOA Bulletin No. 13-16 Change 2 issued in October 2023.

## **Methodology**

The methodology for this certification relied on a self-assessment process. The Kauai AJC

Branch Manager was asked to complete the official assessment tool to the best of her ability. Most of the responses provided were within reasonable bounds and appeared to reflect genuine understanding of local operations. In a few instances, responses may have leaned toward an optimistic characterization of service delivery. This is not unusual in self-assessments, especially when staff must balance reporting duties with ongoing service delivery.

Due to time constraints, the certification team was unable to fully validate every response.

However, the self-assessment was accepted for the purpose of certification. Self-assessment is a commonly used approach; for instance, the Maui AJC used it successfully for its 2020 certification. That said, when comparing Kauai's scoring to Maui's, some differences—particularly around coordination of services—suggested that further exploration and clarification of the assessment scores, might be warranted.

To complement the self-assessment, we conducted interviews with AJC staff, one core partner agency, the Kauai County office of economic development, the Department of Labor and Industrial relations Equal Employment Opportunity Officer and several AJC past clients. A summary of the client interviews is attached to this report.

These conversations with Kauai stakeholders confirmed that staff are often deeply engaged in operational and administrative duties, leaving limited bandwidth for broader outreach or routine coordination with other WIOA partners. While these conditions reflect systemic resource limitations, they also point to opportunities for strategic investment and support.

---

## **Evaluation Summary**

The Kauai AJC meets several baseline WIOA requirements and reflects a dedicated effort by a small but hardworking team to serve the community. The center, currently staffed by three individuals under the Workforce Development Division, provides essential services in a responsive and client-centered manner.

However, several opportunities exist to strengthen the AJC's service model. Staffing limitations continue to constrain the center's capacity to conduct proactive outreach, engage with employers, and fully integrate local partnerships. These are not reflections of individual shortcomings, but rather indicators of a system stretched to deliver on a broad mandate with limited resources.

Deeper collaboration with the very pro-active Kauai County Department of Economic Development could offer significant benefits. At present, engagement between the two entities is minimal, albeit the county office is considered the AJC's landlord. Exploring ways to align efforts could help elevate the AJC's visibility and strengthen its impact. The use of WIOA funds

to support a dedicated outreach or community engagement position is one practical strategy that merits consideration.

### **Key Observations:**

- **Customer Service and Feedback:** The AJC has systems in place to collect feedback, and formalizing the way that data is analyzed and applied would enhance continuous improvement efforts.
- **Continuous Improvement:** While training does occur on a limited basis, a more intentional approach to staff development aligned with service priorities would be beneficial.
- **Participant Services:** Basic services are being delivered consistently, though some enhancements could be made to support individualized career planning and soft skills development.
- **Employer Engagement:** There is potential to expand relationships with the local business community, particularly the Kauai Chamber of Commerce, through more consistent outreach and customized services.
- **Integration of Services:** Increasing the visibility of the “American Job Center Hawaii” brand and strengthening coordination with partners would support a more seamless customer experience.
- **Facility and Accessibility:** The center is clean and welcoming, with opportunities for improvement in signage and ADA-related resources.

---

### **Certification Determination**

**Certification Status:** *Provisionally Certified – With Conditions*

The Kauai AJC satisfies baseline certification criteria but would benefit from targeted improvements in several key areas. As part of the next phase, the center is encouraged to develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) within 60 days that outlines steps to:

- Evaluate staffing needs and explore options to fund an outreach/community engagement position using WIOA resources.
- Enhance engagement with the Kauai Department of Economic Development and other key partners
- Strengthen processes for capturing and utilizing customer feedback.
- Expand employees’ professional development opportunities based on identified service gaps.
- Re-establish routine coordination meetings among core partners.
- Develop and implement written policies specific to this AJC to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While the State has overarching policies in

place, the EEOC has indicated that each AJC must establish its own localized written ADA policy. According to the designated EEOC Officer, monitoring visits will soon be conducted to assess compliance at the local area level.

WDC and the Workforce Development Division will continue to work in partnership to provide guidance and technical assistance as the CAP is developed and implemented.

This certification determination will be presented to the Workforce Development Council for formal action at its next quarterly meeting on **June 19, 2025** where it will appear as an agenda item for board consideration.

---

### **Next Steps**

1. **Corrective Action Plan Due:** September 30, 2025
  2. **Technical Assistance Support to Staff:** To be coordinated by WDC in collaboration with WDD
  3. **Follow-Up Review:** A check-in will be conducted within six months to assess progress and provide further support as needed
  4. **Board Review and Certification:** WDC will review and certify the results at its June 19 board meeting
- 

### **Conclusion**

This certification exercise has served as a valuable opportunity for the Workforce Development Council to gain foundational insight into the current landscape on Kauai, in preparation for assuming the responsibilities of the local board as mandated by WIOA. A US Department of Labor technical assistance training, to be facilitated by Safal Partners, on this very topic is scheduled to be conducted during the Quarterly Board meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

It should be made clear that WDC does not seek to manage the day-to-day operations of the AJC, as it does not have the staffing or resources to do so. Instead, its focus will be on providing stronger policy and governance support for the local Kauai workforce system.

The Kauai American Job Center continues to provide essential workforce services under challenging conditions, thanks to the dedication of its staff and leadership. This certification process has surfaced opportunities not only for improvement but also for greater alignment, collaboration, and support at the state and local levels. With thoughtful investment and shared commitment, the Kauai AJC is well-positioned to enhance its role as a central workforce hub in the county of Kauai.

---

## CLIENT FEEDBACK INTERVIEWS/ CONDUCTED 4/15/2025

### **Client A:**

Enrollment: Client A was referred by Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and co-enrolled in WIOA Title I Adult and Wagner-Peyser (WP) programs. The client participated in the Hele Imua and Quest Internship Programs.

Work Experience:

- Successfully completed three 89-day temporary work periods within one department.
- Completed two additional 89-day periods in a second department.
- Reported an overall positive experience, finding the process easy to navigate.
- Noted a delay of about one year between placements in the two departments.

Service Experience:

- Participated in a work environment and interest survey, and felt his placements were well-matched to his preferences.
- Did not receive individualized services such as pre-employment training or skills assessments.
- Found the American Job Center (AJC) accessible, with services that met his needs.
- Valued on-the-job feedback and instruction, reporting positive support at his worksites.

Next Steps:

- Client is scheduled to meet with Kaua'i AJC staff to explore permanent job opportunities.

### **Client B:**

Enrollment: Client B was referred to the AJC by a staff member from EAH Housing. She enrolled in WIOA Title I Adult, WP, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

She was familiar with the AJC from having used its services when she moved to Kaua'i 15 years ago.

Service Experience:

- Received support completing SCSEP enrollment paperwork and updating her resume, noting her limited digital literacy.
- Reported the enrollment process as easy and well-supported, noting staff were patient and encouraging.
- Currently has a job placement she enjoys, sharing that it brings meaning and enjoyment to her weekly routine and much needed income.
- Maintains regular contact with AJC staff through biweekly paycheck pickups.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Reported a communication gap during enrollment when follow-up was delayed due to her case worker being on vacation.
- Recommended greater outreach to other low-income senior housing residents, as some may also be interested in working but need help overcoming barriers.

Next Steps:

- Client plans to continue with SCSEP for the full 4-years possible.

### **Client C:**

Enrollment: Client C was referred to the AJC by an Instructor at Kaua'i Community College (KCC) from her Medical Assisting Certificate Program. She was enrolled in WIOA Title I Adult and WP services.

Service Experience:

- Reported that the AJC process was easy to navigate and very helpful.

- Expressed high satisfaction with the support and services received.
- Received financial assistance for tuition, books, and uniforms, which allowed her to reduce work hours and focus more on her studies.
- Shared that services were well-coordinated, and staff responded quickly and effectively when she encountered an issue purchasing her uniform.

Education:

- Enrolled in a one-year Medical Assisting Certificate program, which will be fully covered through WIOA support.
- She is on track to complete the program in May 2025.

Suggestions:

- Suggested that posting WIOA opportunities on school bulletin boards could help more students access support.

Next Steps:

- Upon graduation, she plans to transition to full-time employment at the clinic where she currently works.

**Client D:**

Enrollment: Client D is an Out-of-School Youth (OSY) who was referred to the Kaua'i AJC by a family member working at a Neighbor Island AJC. She participated in the Hele Imua internship program and is currently enrolled in the Quest internship program.

Service Experience:

- Reported the enrollment process was fairly easy, taking approximately 2–3 weeks.
- Expressed high satisfaction with the support received.
- Received resume-building assistance and access to training videos to prepare for her clerical internship role.
- Enjoyed participating in Hele Imua monthly team check-in meetings and has since transitioned into a QUEST internship.
- Currently receives follow-up support from AJC staff every 2–3 weeks.

Next Steps:

- Client D plans to seek a permanent clerical position within the Department of Education with the assistance of the Kauai AJC staff.

# 2026 Legislative Update

Keith DeMello, WDC Chair



RESOLUTION NO. WDC-2026-02

**AUTHORIZING BACKUP REPRESENTATION BY WDC STAFF  
FOR LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

---

**PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this resolution is to ensure continuity of representation of the Workforce Development Council (“WDC”) in legislative hearings and related matters when the Council’s deputized legislative representatives are unavailable. This authority is intended as a backup mechanism only and does not replace or diminish the role of the Council members previously authorized to serve as the WDC’s legislative representatives.

---

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Development Council is established pursuant to Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 202 and is responsible for providing leadership, coordination, and oversight of the State’s workforce development system; and

**WHEREAS**, effective execution of the Council’s responsibilities requires timely communication and representation in legislative and workforce policy matters; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 21, 2024, the Workforce Development Council approved the delegation of authority to two private-sector Council members to serve as the Council’s legislative representatives in accordance with HRS §92-2.5; and

**WHEREAS**, circumstances may arise in which one or both deputized Council members are unable to attend a legislative hearing, briefing, or related proceeding; and

**WHEREAS**, delegating limited backup authority to WDC staff is consistent with best practices in organizational governance and enables the Council to function efficiently while preserving Board oversight and accountability; and

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Development Council retains ultimate authority and oversight over all positions, testimony, and representations made on its behalf.

---

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Workforce Development Council authorizes the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council, or the Executive Director's designee, to represent the Council in legislative hearings or related matters only when the deputized Council members authorized to serve as the Council's legislative representatives are unavailable; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that such representation shall be limited to communicating positions, testimony, or intent that have been approved by the Workforce Development Council, the Executive Committee, or the Board Chair, as appropriate; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this authority is supplemental and does not supersede or alter the delegation of authority previously granted to the deputized Council members; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Executive Director shall report to the Workforce Development Council on any representation undertaken pursuant to this resolution; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Workforce Development Council retains full oversight responsibility and may amend, suspend, or revoke this delegation of authority at any time; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption and remain in force unless amended or revoked by the Workforce Development Council.

*Adopted on February 18, 2026 during the Quarterly Board Meeting.*

# **Executive Director's Report**

Bennette Misalucha, WDC Executive Director

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Workforce Development Council Q1 Meeting

February 18, 2026

Bennette E. Misalucha

Executive Director



**WORKFORCE** DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL

# ANNUAL REPORT

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Strategic Planning meeting in December 2025
- First Hawaii Internship Summit
- Internship Excellence Awards
- Modification of the Unified Plan/Due March 2026
- Implementation of the State Unified Plan
- Webinar series on the Transformation Journey of other states: Maine, North Dakota, and North Carolina
- Workforce Pell Grant working group
- Eligible Training Provider List Task Force

# QUARTERLY REPORT

## Q 2 & Q3 FOCUS

- Workforce Pell Grant Implementation Preparation
- Building Staff Capacity
- Establishing parameters for WDC Grants and Procurement of services
- Maximizing relevance of standing committees
- Clarifying roles/responsibilities and operational transition between WDD and WDC
- ETPL Task Force
- State Board Acting as the Local Board on Kauai
- State and Local Board Member Training
- Implementation of Unified State Plan
- Continuing improvement and commitment for WDC growth and effectiveness



- Acceptance of Core Partner Written Reports

*WIOA Title I and Title III*

Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Workforce Development Division

*WIOA Title II – AEFLA*

Wanelle Kaneshiro, Hawaii Department of Education,  
Workforce Division

*WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation*

Lea Dias, Department of Human Services

# Acceptance of Local Workforce Development Board Written Reports

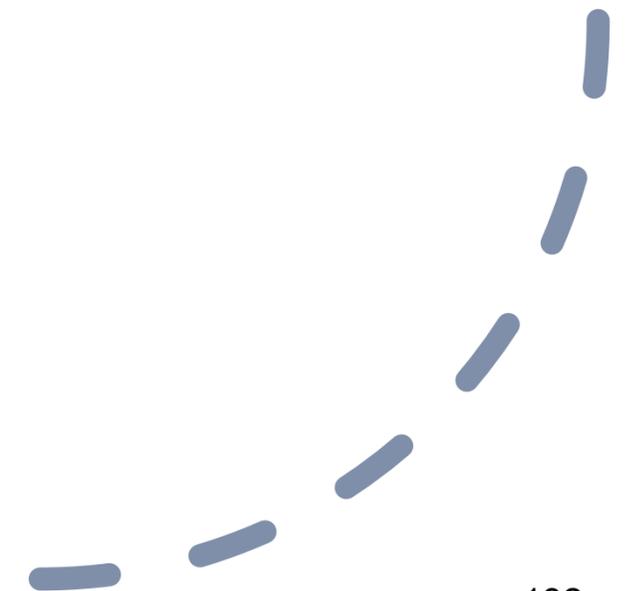
*Oahu Workforce  
Development Board*  
Harrison Kuranishi,  
Executive Director

*Maui Workforce  
Development Board*  
Chentelle Rowland,  
Executive Director

*Hawaii County  
Workforce  
Development Board*  
Clinton Mercado,  
Executive Director

# Acceptance of Written Reports from WDC Standing Committees

- Sector Strategies & Career Pathways
- Special Projects
- Youth Services
- Employer Engagement
- Performance Management and Finance



# MAHALO

Executive Director's Report  
Bennette E. Misalucha



# Written Reports

WIOA Core Partners



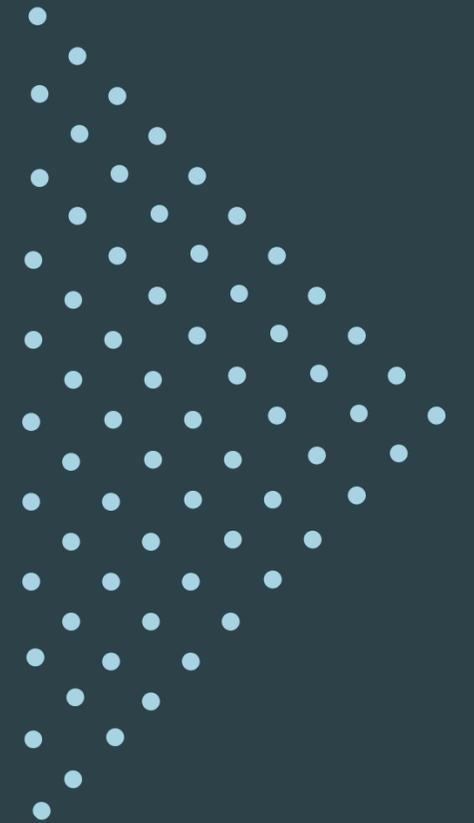
# Workforce Development Division Update

October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025





# PERFORMANCE



# PERFORMANCE MEASURE WAGNER-PEYSER PY2025

Report Period: 2nd Quarter  
October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS SERVED	TOTAL REPORTABLE INDIVIDUALS	EMPLOYMENT RATE (Q2)	PY25 PERFORMANCE GOAL (NEGOTIATED LEVEL)	EMPLOYMENT RATE (Q4)	PY25 PERFORMANCE GOAL (NEGOTIATED LEVEL)	MEDIAN EARNINGS	PY25 PERFORMANCE GOAL (NEGOTIATED LEVEL)
1,642	4,673	62.6%	57%	61.9%	61%	\$10,166.21	\$8,300.00
		EXCEEDED		EXCEEDED		EXCEEDED	

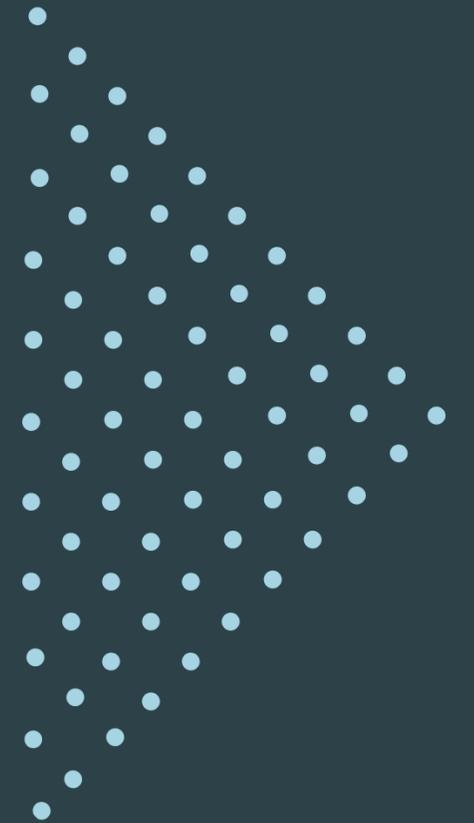
# STATEWIDE WIOA TITLE I PERFORMANCE

October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

	PARTICIPANTS	EMPLOYMENT RATE (Q2)	EMPLOYMENT RATE (Q4)	MEDIAN EARNINGS	CREDENTIAL RATE	MEASURABLE SKILLS GAINS
ADULT	408	73.24%	61.98%	\$8,451	53.85%	34.48%
DISLOCATED WORKER	66	75.00%	60.00%	\$10,307	0.00%	31.03%
YOUTH	215	68.18%	50.00%	\$5,616	50.00%	28.24%



# HELE IMUA INTERNSHIP UPDATE



# HELE IMUA UPDATE



**NUMBER OF INTERNS  
PLACED**

**1,200**



# HELE IMUA UPDATE



**NUMBER OF INTERNS HIRED**

**130**

**“My Hele Imua Internship lasted 6 months and was truly amazing! The training and work experience I received from my host site helped me qualify for a full-time position at the very office I interned at. I’m now working as an Administrative Specialist – Professional Trainee I as of August 15th, and I’m so grateful for everything this internship program has done for me. It truly helped launch my career, and I’ll always look back on this experience as a meaningful steppingstone.”**

# Inaugural Ka Liko LaweLawe Award

Recognizing an emerging professional from each county who exemplified exceptional promise and professionalism during their public sector internship.

## Kiani Aburamen

Hawai'i County

Currently employed as an Administrative Assistant to the Chief Human Resources Officer at Hilo Benioff Medical Center. Her dedication, collaborative spirit, and unwavering work ethic make her an exemplary employee and a valued member of the organization.



## Justin Silva

Maui County

Currently employed as an Office Assistant in the Unemployment Insurance Division in the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. He is a positive, kind, friendly, and cheerful team member who conveys the aloha spirit and a desire to help others as a public servant.

## Juliet Madrid

Kaua'i County

Currently employed as an Office Assistant III at the Kaua'i District Health Office in the Department of Health. She demonstrates strong collaboration, excellent customer service, and exemplifies a commitment to public service.



## Angela Lindberg

Honolulu County

Currently employed as a Substance Abuse Counselor at the Waiawa Correctional Facility in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Her dedication and commitment to the department is truly remarkable, and her service truly embodies the aloha spirit, both cultural philosophy and a way of life deeply rooted in Hawaiian values, and treats her clients with love, respect, and compassion.



## Ho'okele Award

Recognizing a host agency that has utilized Hele Imua to facilitate the recruitment for hard-to-fill and vacant positions.

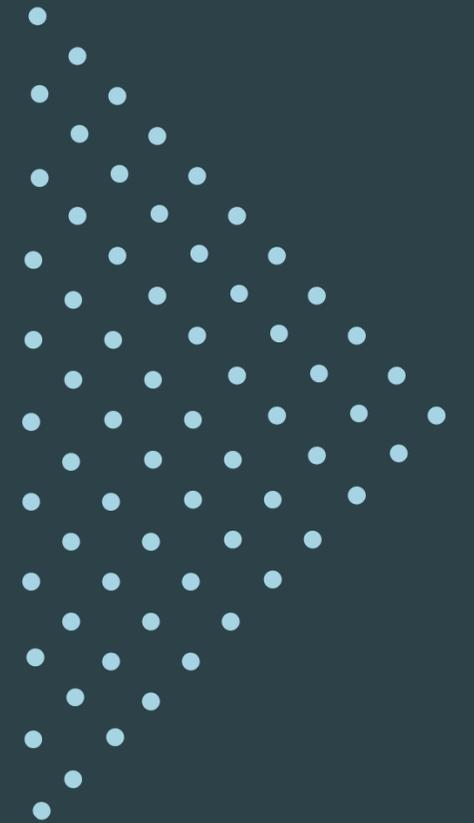


### Hilo Benioff Medical Center

Members present Senate certificate recognizing and celebrating the Hilo Benioff Medical Center for receiving the Ho'okele Award for Outstanding Host Agency with the Hele Imua Program. Since becoming a host agency, the Hilo Benioff Medical Center has hosted four interns and has hired three of those interns into State positions.



# APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



# APPRENTICESHIP DATA REPORT

January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

STATUS	2025
REGISTERED	1,572
CANCELLED	860
COMPLETED	463
TOTAL NO. OF REGISTERED APPRENTICES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025	5,520



# REGISTERED APPRENTICES IN CONSTRUCTION TRADE PROGRAMS

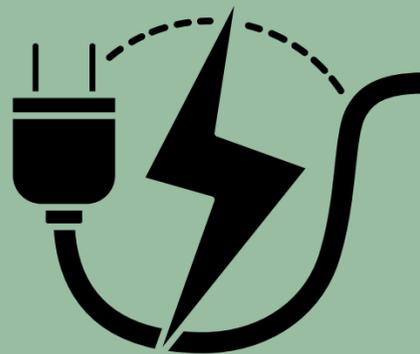


Top Five (5) Occupations:

**CARPENTER**



**ELECTRICIAN**



**PLUMBER**



**PAINTER**



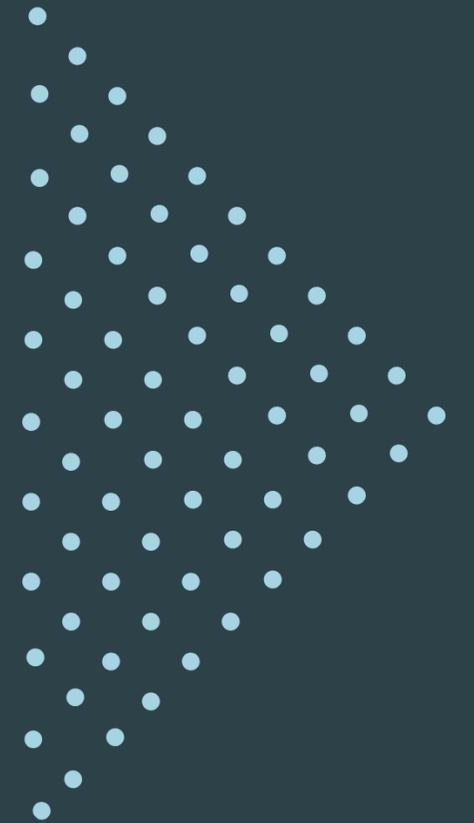
**ROOFER**



One (1) new registered program, **High Regard Arborist Apprenticeship Program**, was approved.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## WDD Resume Workshops at AJC O'ahu

October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

Date	Attended	Survey Ratings/Expectations
10/8/25 10/21/25	16 (8 Veterans) 18 (5 Veterans)	<p>Every participant found the information valuable. While 70% felt the topics were thoroughly addressed, 50% were eager to dive deeper into interviewing skills. 80% were inspired to enhance their résumés and put those updates to work in new job applications.</p>
11/7/25 11/21/25	12 (2 Veterans) 12 (4 Veterans)	
12/4/25 12/17/25	8 (1 Veteran) 10 (1 Veteran)	
<p><b>Total: 76 (21 Veterans)</b></p>		

# RECRUITMENT EVENTS - OCTOBER 2025



	LOCATION		RESULTS
<b>O'AHU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UH Career Fair</li><li>• BYU – Hawai'i Career &amp; Graduate Fair</li><li>• HPU Career Fair</li><li>• UHWO Career &amp; Internship Fair</li><li>• Shidler Fall 2025 Internship &amp; Career Expo</li><li>• WCC Career Fair</li><li>• HCC Career Fair</li><li>• UHM Internship Fair</li><li>• KCC Career Fair</li></ul>		<p>A total of 157 individuals received information about the internship program, and 67 submitted applications or expressed interest online.</p>
<b>HAWAI'I ISLAND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ka'u High School hosted an on-campus Career Fair designed to support students in exploring a wide range of career opportunities and pathways.</li></ul>		<p>Held during the school day to ensure maximum participation, the event helped students explore career options, connect directly with employers, learn about required skills and qualifications, and plan for future education and employment. It successfully increased awareness of career pathways and long-term opportunities.</p>

# RECRUITMENT EVENTS - NOVEMBER 2025



	LOCATION		RESULTS
<b>O'AHU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UHM College of Social Sciences ACCESS- Engagement Information Session</li><li>• Central O'ahu/OHHI Recruitment Event</li><li>• UHM Information Session: MKT 321 Research &amp; Data Analysis (Professor Zheng)</li><li>• Virtual and in-person presentations for multiple UHM information sessions, including SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology taught by Professor Edwards</li><li>• Waipahu Civic Center Job Fair</li><li>• Shidler College of Business Internship and Career Expo</li></ul>		<p>As most of the presentations were conducted virtually for various classes, we reached nearly 300 college students. As a result, we received about 48 online applications during the month of November.</p>
<b>HAWAI'I ISLAND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual High School Career Expo - event designed to expose students to a wide range of career pathways, employment opportunities, and workforce development resources.</li></ul>		<p>The expo welcomed over 800 students, offering direct engagement with employers, training providers, and community organizations to explore career and education options. The WDD collaborated with the American Job Center to showcase services like career counseling, job placement, and training opportunities. The event successfully increased awareness of workforce resources to support students' transition from school to employment.</p>

# RAPID RESPONSE EFFORTS

## WARN Notices Received

October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

Month	Company	Efforts
Oct 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panda Restaurant Group</li> <li>Paradise Cove Luau</li> </ul>	<p>Rapid Response services were offered to employers who submitted Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices to the state. Although most declined these services, all received information about re-employment resources.</p>
Nov 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queens Medical Center Pathology Operations</li> <li>Zetton Inc (dba Camado Ramen Tavern)</li> </ul>	
Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autocraft Hawaii LLC</li> <li>5 Minute Pharmacy LLC</li> <li>Ninja Hawaii, Inc. (dba Jinya Ramen Bar Honolulu)</li> </ul>	



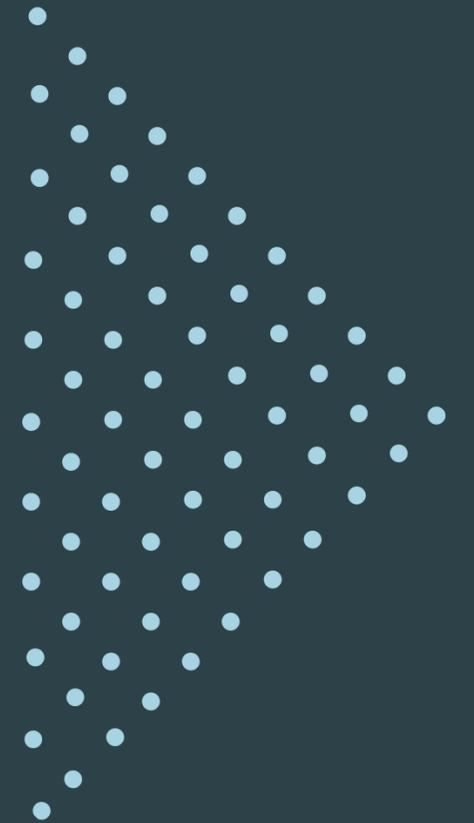
In October 2025, the team supported the Paradise Cove displaced worker events in October 2025.

In November 2025, the Rapid Response Coordinator organized a veteran suicide prevention workshop for Workforce Development Division (WDD) and American Job Center (AJC) partners, which was delivered by a Veterans Affairs (VA) counselor specializing in mental health and well-being.





# SUCCESS STORIES





# REGINALD K.

**Program:** Internship Program – O‘ahu

**Employer:** DBEDT-OPSD

Reginald is a veteran who is currently enrolled at Kapi‘olani Community College as an Information Technology student. Reginald had prior experience as a Systems Analyst and was looking to increase his professional and educational experience to help him land a job that uses his skills to serve his community.

During a hiring event, Reginald learned about the State of Hawai‘i’s internship program, and his passion for community building and desire to serve his community led him to apply. Reginald was placed with the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism’s (DBEDT) Office of Planning and Sustainable Development as an intern, where he created map links to published reports and helped maintain the ERP database.

Reginald showed promise as an intern and was hired as a **Planning Analyst** on December 1st, 2025, where he can now utilize his skills and experience in a full-time position with the State of Hawai‘i’s DBEDT.

# TRINITY W.

**Program:** Internship Program – O‘ahu

**Employer:** DLIR, Workforce Development Division

After earning her Psychology degree, Trinity made Hawai‘i her home following her parents’ military retirement. Driven by a passion for helping others, she sought ways to serve her community and gain experience for a future in local government. However, frequent relocations during her parents’ service made it challenging for her to find steady work.

At a resource fair for military families, Trinity discovered the State of Hawaii’s Hele Imua Internship program, which offered paid, hands-on experience in state agencies to students and recent graduates. Seizing the chance to launch her public service career, she joined the Workforce Development Division as an intern in October 2025.

Building on her internship, Trinity transitioned into an 89-day **Employment Service Specialist** role, where she now supports selected unemployment insurance claimants through the RESEA program. She continues to pursue her goal of a Civil Service appointment with the State of Hawai‘i.



# Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)



Hawai'i Department of Education

# Hawai'i Department of Education



## Leadership:

State Director of HODOE  
Workforce Development  
Branch  
Dr. Wanelle Kaneshiro-Erdmann

Educational Specialist of  
Adult Education  
Dr. Ryan Mandado



## Provider:

McKinley Community  
School for Adults  
Principal Helen Sanpei

### 5 campuses:

- McKinley
- Farrington
- Moanalua
- Maui
- Kauai



## Provider:

Waipahu Community  
School for Adults  
Principal Pat Anbe

### 5 campuses:

- Waipahu
- Wahiawa
- Windward (Kalaheo)
- Hilo
- Kona

# ACTIVITIES

## Key Adult Education & Workforce Development Programs



### Adult Basic Education

Foundational skills development.



### Adult Secondary Education

High school equivalency pathways.



### English Language Acquisition

Proficiency for non-native speakers.



### English Literacy and Civics Education

Language, rights, and responsibilities.



### Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

Combined civics and skills training.



### Integrated Education and Training

Contextualized learning for careers.



### Corrections Education

Educational programs in correctional facilities.

# Adult Education & Workforce Development



## Adult Education

Emphasis on supporting learners to obtain their high school equivalency:



General Education Diploma (GED)



High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)



## Workforce Development

Emphasis on supporting learners to obtain workforce certifications and/or training:



Integrated Education and Training (IET)



Corrections Education (Employable after release)

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation ..... Lea Dias, Administrator,  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Services

1. Performance Measures matrix and graphs
2. Key Metrics and Outcomes
3. Employment Outcomes
4. Agency Updates

### **American Job Centers of Hawaii (AJCH)**

- a. Statewide: Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation collaborates with community, government, and business partners in various work groups to promote competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. These include the statewide American Job Centers (AJCs), the Hawaii Employment First Task Force, the Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE), the organization, Disability: IN, and the Society for Human Resource Management.
- b. Oahu Branch (OB) meets with AJC monthly to discuss referrals, participants, and services. Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRS) are co-located at certain AJCs statewide on scheduled days to complete intakes and assistance.
- c. Services for the Blind Branch (SBB) also known as “Ho`opono”: Stationed at the Oahu AJC twice per month, the Services for the Blind Branch Employment Services Specialist (ESS) is available to assist clients with disabilities in job search and collaborates with other staff in the employment section of the City and Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Ho`opono staff are helping AJC staff assess job seekers’ abilities, capabilities, and, when appropriate, accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- d. DVR staff collaborate on providing an integrated service model at the AJCs.
- e. DVR continues working with AJC staff to find a way to track dual enrollments between programs.
- f. Ongoing support from AJC partners includes providing tours and sharing information with new Vocational Rehabilitation staff assigned to weekly on-site services for Hawaii residents with disabilities eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- g. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) with all counties but Kauai have been signed.

### **Timeliness**

- The timeframe for processing DVR applications (30 days) and eligibility determinations (60 days) for persons with disabilities seeking vocational

rehabilitation services continues to be shortened with DVR's rapid engagement initiatives. DVR's rate complies at or above 90 percent.

### **Vacancies**

- Still working to hire qualified individuals for various positions within DVR. We are currently at a 35% vacancy rate agency-wide, which is an improvement.

### **Administrative**

- VR is working on updates to the Unified State Plan due in March 2026.
- VR continues to be active on the Workforce Development Council; we also have representation on the Workforce Development Boards statewide.

# Written Reports

Local Workforce Development Board

**Oahu Workforce Development Board**  
**Data for 1/27/2026 Monthly Performance Meeting**

as of 11/30	Budget	Expenditures	Variance	Percentage
Adult	1,545,579.00	653,323.35	892,255.65	57.73%
DW	756,060.00	183,910.32	572,149.68	75.68%
Youth	1,735,425.00	535,904.25	1,199,520.75	69.12%
LAC	448,563.00	146,471.38	302,091.62	67.35%

Data (as of 12/31/2025)

**ADULT**

	GOAL	ACTUAL
Employment Q2	76%	73.3%
Employment Q4	76%	58.5%
Median Earnings	\$7,800	\$8,812.48
Credential Rate	65%	62.2%
MSG	65%	36.8%

**DISLOCATED WORKER**

	GOAL	ACTUAL
Employment Q2	75%	75%
Employment Q4	80%	77.8%
Median Earnings	\$10,200	\$10,551.54
Credential Rate	72%	0
MSG	72%	50%

## YOUTH

	GOAL	ACTUAL
Employment Q2	69%	57.1%
Employment Q4	65.5%	50%
Median Earnings	\$5,000	\$7,052.97
Credential Rate	66%	33.3%
MSG	54%	32.4%

### Success Story

#### KIPAS ELIAS – YOUTH

- Began Work Experience with Re-Use Hawaii December 2025 and projected to complete February 2026
  - He has gained meaningful knowledge of warehouse operations, materials processing, and special projects, while developing strong work maturity skills in a real-world reuse and sustainability-focused environment
  - Weekly performance evaluations reflect strong key areas, including attendance, conduct, teamwork, task completion, responsibility, and overall performance
- 
- Participated in 70 activities
  - 7 MSGs recorded
  - 1 Credential
  - 2 Educational Functioning Level for MSG (Reading, Math)

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**  
Managing Director

**JADE ROJAS-LETISI**  
Director



**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 MAIN STREET  
ONE MAIN PLAZA, SUITE 300  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

January 26, 2026

I. Board and Sub-Committee Meetings

A. **Maui County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB)**

- a. MCWDB is scheduled for Friday, January 30, 2026, at 9am.
- b. The County of Maui received a letter dated for December 19, 2025 from DLIR Director, Jade Butay, confirming that the request for clarification regarding compliance requirements for the MCWDB in light of the recent guidance issued by the State Workforce Development Council (WDC) on September 3, 2025 in WIOA Bulletin No. 04-15 Change 2. The letter from Director Butay confirms that the MCWDB remains in compliance and fully certified. The updated MCWDB by-laws is scheduled to be presented and approved at the next full board meeting. The updated by-laws reflect the revised term-limit language and ensure future appointments align with the new State criteria. The updates will be completed as part of our normal certification process, which is due March 31, 2026.

B. **Program Service/Enrollment**

**Total Participants Served PY24 (10/01/25-12/31/25)**

- Adult – 81
- Dislocated Worker – 16
- Youth – 34

**Total Enrollments PY24 (10/01/25-current)**

- Adult – 10
- Dislocated Worker – 2
- Youth – 3
  - o ISY: Three youths have secured unsubsidized employment, Department of Education, Goodwill Retail, and Ohana Pacific Health.
  - o OSY: Fifteen youth have secured unsubsidized employment, and one youth is participating in the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP).

C. **Performance Measures**

a. Please see performance measures below based on the following quarters:  
 Quarter 1 (07/01/25-09/30/25) and Q2 (10/01/25-12/31/25)

<b><u>WIOA Title I Adult Program</u></b>	<b><u>PY25</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 1</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 2</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 3</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 4</u></b>
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.5%	49%	49%		
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	70%	66.7%	50%		
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,000	\$7,790.40	\$7,623.14		
Credential Attainment Rate	51%	N/A	0.00%		
Measurable Skills Gains	51%	18.2%	33.30%		
<b><u>WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program</u></b>	<b><u>PY25</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 1</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 2</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 3</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 4</u></b>
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72%	52%	50%		
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	78%	80%	58.3%		
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$10,000	\$13,319.14	\$13,483.90		
Credential Attainment Rate	51%	N/A	0%		
Measurable Skills Gains	51%	0%	100%		
<b><u>WIOA Title I Youth Program</u></b>	<b><u>PY25</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 1</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 2</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 3</u></b>	<b><u>QTR 4</u></b>
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	68%	83.3%	81.8%		
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	66%	80.0%	100.00%		
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,200	\$12,659.33	\$5,616.00		
Credential Attainment Rate	62%	50.0%	50.00%		
Measurable Skills Gains	53%	25.9%	44.40%		

D. **Staff Technical Assistance (TA) – On-going**

a. Following the most recent data validation report, Hawaii and Maui County Staff are in the process of requesting TA on data validation.

E. **Highlights**

WIOA Youth (Ola I Ka Hana) staff hosted its first Financial Literacy class in partnership with Hawaii USA Federal Credit Union, featuring Sylvia Ho as the presenter. A total of six youth attended the session. Sylvia focused on the basics of budgeting, and the youth enjoyed the class. She is interested in offering another series that will cover credit cards.

Additional highlights include:

- Soft Skills: Enthusiasm and Attitude - Positive Mental Attitude- PMA, being able to maintain the belief that you can transform a tough situation into something better.
  - o Small group activity- discussion about positive attitude and learning that it starts with oneself.
  - o Journaling Activity- Thinking about our attitude and if we are born with it or do we have the power to change it?

- o Extension activity- Log for a week. Each day, write down 50 great things that happened today and how you felt about them.
- JRT: Workplace trends
  - o List trends found in the modern workplace.
  - o Identify factors that influence the labor market.
  - o Evaluate job outlooks when selecting a possible career.

II. Forthcoming Events/Announcements

B. **Maui’s High School Graduating Seniors Event** – Scheduled for 04/24/26, 9am-12pm, venue Fairmont Kea Lani Hotel, Wailea.

- a. In partnership with HIDOE and Goodwill Industries, we will be hosting a hiring event for graduating high seniors in Maui County. Last day to register is 03/13/26.
- b. Purpose: To provide opportunities for graduating seniors to secure full-time or part-time gainful employment that will provide a minimum starting wage of \$21.25/hr, an annual income of \$44,292/yr. This is the income necessary to support a single-person household with no children as determined by the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) calculation.

C. **Success Story – WIOA Youth**

The client is a 21-year-old male who became eligible for enrollment in the Ola I Ka Hana Youth Program in September 2025. He was referred to this program by Good Jobs Hawaii to assist him in obtaining his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The client is a high school graduate and currently underemployed, working part-time. He is also considered to be low-income.

On October 24, 2025, he obtained his Office of the Extended Learning and Workforce Development credential from the University of Maui College after successfully completing the Commercial Motor Vehicle Training for CDL Class A, which consisted of 95 hours of instruction. In the last week of November, the client tested for the operators' union and received his results on December 8, 2025, ranking seventh overall. He is still employed part-time and is awaiting job placement through the operators' union.

Submitted by:

*Chentelle Rowland*

---

Chentelle Rowland  
 Executive Director  
 County of Maui – Office of Economic Development  
 Maui County Workforce Development Board

**HAWAI‘I COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (HCWDB)  
QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
MEETING**

**Period: October 2025 – December 2025**

**Status Updates (October 1 – December 31, 2025)**

**Board Governance and Operations**

1. **Board Action and Membership:** HCWDB held a full board meeting on November 12, 2025.
  - a. **New Appointments:** The Board welcomed new members Austen Drake (SSFM Hawaii) and Kehau Costa (Director, Hawaii County Office of Housing and Community Development).
  - b. **Committees:** The Board moved to activate the Business Engagement Committee to specifically address youth employment barriers and coordinate job fairs.
  - c. **Upcoming Meeting:** The next tentative board meeting will be in March 2026.

**Fiscal Management and Funding Challenges**

1. **Federal Funding Delay:** The County received the bulletin for PY 2025 allocations (covering July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) but was notified of a significant hold. Only 46% (\$652,448) of the expected \$1.22 million was released, leaving a shortfall of approximately \$777,239 due to federal budget uncertainties.
2. **Proactive Mitigation:** To prevent interruptions in service contracts, the Executive Director initiated a B-52 appropriation of \$1.4 million through the County Council. This measure ensures contracts can be executed immediately once the federal balance is released.
3. **Training Budget Constraints:** As of late October, the Adult Program had expended approximately 90% of its training budget due to high demand for high-cost training like CDL. This necessitated close monitoring of the budget for the remainder of the calendar year.

**Workforce Development Partnerships**

1. **One-Stop Operator (OSO) Transition:** Change Makers Community Economic Development Corporation successfully assumed the role of One-Stop Operator in early October 2025.
  - a. **Operational Firewall:** This transition formally removed the County from daily AJCH operations, eliminating previous concerns regarding firewall violations between oversight and operations.

- b. **Initial Progress:** The new OSO has focused on coordinating partner services and managing the American Job Center Hawaii (AJCH) infrastructure. The AJCH telecommunication system was also upgraded from copper lines to a VOIP system to improve public access.

## 2. WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

- a. **Enrollment & Spending:** New enrollments were low during this quarter (e.g., 1 new Adult participant in October) due to the nearly exhausted training funds and participants utilizing other benefits before seeking WIOA services.
- b. **Training Outcomes:** Despite enrollment caps, active participants continued to progress. In October, one participant successfully obtained licensure.
- c. **Challenges:**
  - i. **CDL Testing Backlog:** A critical shortage of CDL examiners continues to prevent participants from obtaining their final licenses, despite completing training. R&D staff are collaborating with the County DMV to address this personnel shortage.
  - ii. **Data Validation:** Staff reported ongoing difficulties obtaining employment verification documents from exited participants, which impacts on the "Exit-to-Follow-Up" data integrity.

## 3. WIOA Title I Youth Program (Ola I Ka Hana)

- a. **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** In October, the youth program focused on Entrepreneurship, utilizing the Banzai.org curriculum. Activities included "Becoming a Young Entrepreneur" and "The Pros and Cons of Owning a Small Business," designed to help youth recognize their strengths and understand business models.
- b. **Complex Area Partnership:** In October, WIOA leadership presented to Hilo-Waiakea Complex Area Principals and Vice Principals to strengthen the referral pipeline between K-12 schools and WIOA youth services.
- c. **Campus Events:** Staff conducted outreach at the PacYES Event at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo library lanai, networking with community service providers and students.

## Strategic Economic and Workforce Development Alignments

- 1. **Department of Research and Development** provided updates on emerging industry sectors that will shape future workforce needs:
  - a. **Film Industry:** A major production (Untamed for Netflix) is scheduled to begin filming at Hawai'i National Park in February 2026. Workforce development staff are

preparing to negotiate internship opportunities for local residents within the production.

- b. Aquaculture:** Strategic planning continues for the "world-class aquaculture hub" at NELHA, with a long-term goal of creating 100 specialized jobs by 2030.
  - c. County Hiring Reform:** The Hawaii County Mayor and Research & Development Director are actively working to remove the one-year minimum experience requirement for entry-level County jobs. This initiative aims to allow WIOA youth and local graduates to gain their first year of professional experience within the County government.
2. **Expansion of Partnership:** The HCWDB Staff continue to work with partners and community organizations to expand their network of available resources. Collaboration efforts are being utilized to reduce the amount of return funds at the end of the program's fiscal year.

#### **Upcoming Focus for the next Quarter (January – March 31, 2026)**

1. **Monitoring:** The HCWDB Staff are preparing for the annual program monitoring of WIOA Title I programs (Adult, DW, Youth) scheduled for February/March 2026.
  2. **Funding Resolution:** Continued advocacy and tracking of the remaining 54% of federal PY 25 funds.
  3. **Digital Literacy:** Implementation of free digital literacy classes in partnership with Waipahu Community School for Adults (WCSA) to address technology gaps identified among AJC visitors.
2. **HCWDB Meeting:** The next tentative board meeting will be in March.

# Written Reports

## WDC Standing Committees



## Executive Committee Report Q1

Committee: Executive  
 Chair: Keith DeMello  
 Vice Chair: Trang Malone  
 Assistant Vice Chair: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz

The Executive Committee met on January 22, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

Primary Focus:	Provide Strategic Oversight and Coordination
Generational Commitment:	Learn/Work/Thrive/Belong
Roles and Responsibilities:	Review and make recommendations to the full Council
	Oversee governance and compliance
	Guide Committee work and delegation
	Act on urgent or interim matters between Council meetings
	Ensure accountability and performance of the Council
Next meeting:	April 23, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

### Summary/Highlights:

- I. Modified State Plan Update – Stakeholders currently working on their areas of responsibility.
- II. WDC is meeting with a working group composed of representatives from the Hawaii Department of Education, University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Community Colleges to establish an approval framework for the Workforce Pell Grant. The Workforce Pell Grant program is scheduled to launch on July 1, 2026, at which time Hawaii must be prepared to accept applications.
- III. Committee passed a motion to extend provisional certification to the American Job Center on Kauai.
- IV. Keith DeMello and Tui Scanlan are following the current bills relating to workforce during the 2026 Legislative Session.
- V. The Inaugural Internship Summit will be held at the Japanese Cultural Center on March 4, 2026.



## Standing Committee Report Q1

Committee: Performance Management & Finance

Chair: Sean Nakamura

Vice Chair: Sean Knox

Vice Chair: Lea Diaz

The Performance Management & Finance Committee met on January 13, 2026, 1:30 p.m.

Primary Focus:	Metrics & accountability
Generational Commitment:	Work/Thrive
Roles and Responsibilities:	Monitor program outcomes and key metrics
	Ensure alignment with statewide strategy
	Oversee Board Financial Protocols
	Monitor Expenditures and Compliance
	Advise the Full Council on Policy Decisions
Next meeting:	April 14, 2026 1:30 p.m.

### Summary:

- I. The committee discussed the roles and responsibilities of the committee.
- II. Financial Reports
  - a. Administrative Services Office Accountant reported on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Grant Summary Details as of 11/30/2025.
  - b. Status report on WDC's GA funds shows a remaining appropriation at \$427,474.00.
- III. Executive Director Update on the 2024-2028 State Unified Plan Implementation Timeline and status of the Modified State Plan.

**Workforce Development Council  
First Quarter Meeting  
Wednesday, February 28, 2026  
Ke'elikolani Building  
830 Punchbowl Street**

**REPORT:**

**SECTOR STRATEGIES & CAREER PATHWAYS COMMITTEE Submitted by:**

Chair - Cary Miyashiro, Quad D Solutions LLC,  
Vice Chair -Lorna Woo, International Union of Painters, and Allied Trades  
Vice Chair – Rona Fukumoto, Lanakila Pacific

**Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee Meeting,  
Thursday, November 6, 2025 1:00pm to 2:30pm.**

**Presentations:**

- **Hawaii Pacific Health (HPH)** partnerships with education  
\*PRESENTATION **RESCHEDULED\***
  - Waipahu HS's Medical Clinic and other programs
- **Olelo Community Media**  
Wes Akamine, Director of Operations & Project Management, Olelo Community Media
  - K-12 Programs, educational partnerships
  - Vision & desired outcomes for future
- **Re-entry program**, Hawaii Pacific University's (HPU)  
Jennifer Merkel, Faculty Facilitator, Hawaii Pacific University  
"Incarceration to Workforce"
  - What HPU is doing to aid re-entry? Challenges?
  - What will be needed to develop a sustainable model?
  - Present interaction with Corrections and Parole & Pardons.
  - Desired Outcomes
- **Executive Directors Report**, Bennette County Misalucha
- **Sector Strategies & Career Pathways Committee Meeting, Monday, January 12, 2026 \* RESCHEDULED to Monday, February 2, 2026**  
1:00pm to 2:30pm.
  - **Nations First Elementary School Awarded NCAC Pre-Academy National Certification - Waikele Elementary**  
Shanell Kagamida, Nuha Tabernero, Michelle Tavares-Yamada
  - **FBI Career Opportunities & FBI Honolulu Citizens Academy**  
Ryan Noonan, Joy VanderVoort
  - **Building Resilient Communities through Multi-Lingual & Multi-Culturalism,**  
Brandon Hill

**Next Strategies & Career Pathways Committee Meeting:**

Monday, April 13, 2026  
1:00pm to 2:30pm.



## Standing Committee Report Q1

Committee: Special Projects

Chair: Dion Dizon

Vice Chair: Pane Meatoga III

Vice Chair: Thomas Chock

The Special Projects Committee met on January 28, 2026, 1:30 p.m.

Primary Focus:	Governance, alignment
Generational Commitment:	Multiple
Roles and Responsibilities:	Monitor and Advise on Legislative and Policy Issues
	Lead Priority Special Initiatives (i.e., Military Spouse & Veteran Workforce)
	Strategic Partnerships and External Relationships
	Address issues outside the purview of other committees
Next meeting:	April 7, 2026 1:30 pm

### Summary/Highlights:

- I. Learning from the past three years, the goal is to ensure timely coordination, consistent communication, and clear roles to advance workforce priorities are aligned with the State Unified Plan.
- II. Create the Military Spouses Permitted Interaction Group (PIG)
- III. Reviewed the current mission, vision, and role of the Special Projects Committee



## Standing Committee Report Q1

Committee: Employer Engagement

Chair: Gina Anonuevo

Vice Chair: Derek Kanehira

Vice Chair: Cheryl Cross

The Employer Engagement Committee met on January 15, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

Primary Focus:	Employer outreach & partnerships
Generational Commitment:	Work/Thrive
Roles and Responsibilities:	Align Workforce Program with Economic Plans
	Use Labor Market Info and Industry Needs Assessments
	Develop sector-based partnerships
	Collaboration in curriculum design
	Offering structured internships and apprenticeships
	Providing feedback and adjusting training programs
	Engaging in public-private partnerships
Next meeting:	April 16, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

### Summary/Highlights:

- I. Guest presenters
  - a. Deniece Thomas, Commissioner, Labor and Workforce Development – Tennessee, a national leader in employer engagement, aligns state resources to the full business life cycle: startup, growth, maturity, contraction, and closure. Employers access training, recruitment services, networking opportunities, and guidance through complex regulatory requirements through a comprehensive Employer Guide.
  - b. Earl Kalani, Workforce Engagement & Recruitment Specialist – The Oahu workforce board has a dedicated outreach team that builds relationships with local employers, creates on-the-job training opportunities, and leverages WIOA funds to meet business and workforce needs.
- II. Strategic discussions on committee priorities for 2026



## Standing Committee Report Q1

Committee: Youth Services

Chair: Tui Scanlan

Vice Chair: Carla Kurokawa

Vice Chair: Amber Akana

The Youth Services Committee met on January 20, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Primary Focus:	Early career pathways
Generational Commitment:	Learn/Belong
Roles and Responsibilities:	Provide strategic direction for youth programs
	Coordinate partnerships across systems
	Elevate youth voice and engagement
	Address barriers to participation
	Report and recommend youth programs to the Council
Next meeting:	April 9, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

### Summary/Highlights:

- I. Daniel Addis, State Director for the Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) in Hawaii presented the vision and status of SkillsUSA Hawaii that currently serves middle and high school students preparing for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations.
- II. Reviewed the mission, vision, and role of the Youth Services Committee

# Next Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026

9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

# Adjournment