

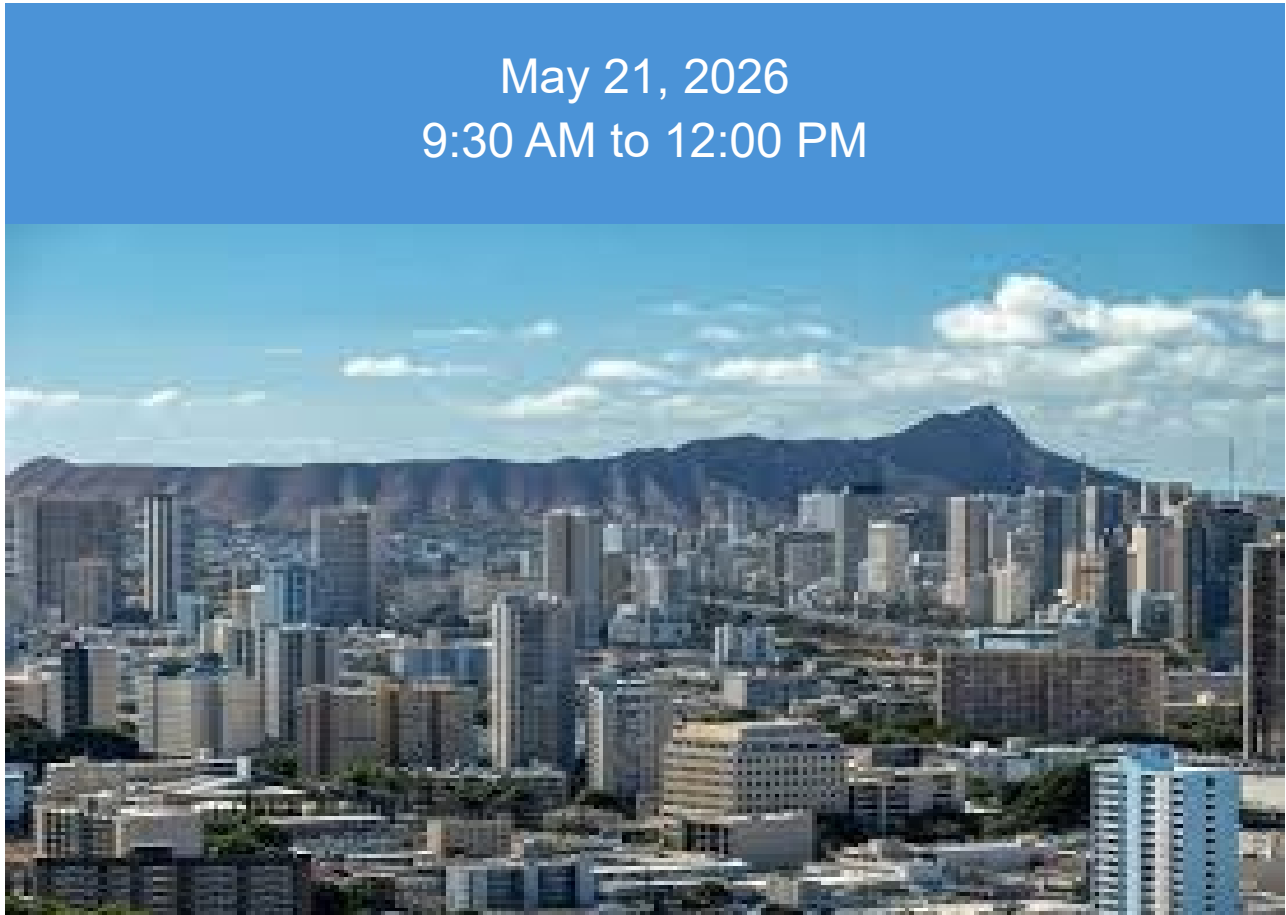


WORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

Quarterly Board Meeting

Board Packet

May 21, 2026
9:30 AM to 12:00 PM



Meeting Agenda

May 21, 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

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

AGENDA

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026
Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon
In-Person Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Building
Meeting Location: 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Virtual Participation: Virtual Videoconference Meeting – Zoom Meeting (Link below)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84276507600?pwd=gq22FlvzGpK6RkQirJLX2m0MUou5Gk.1>

Meeting ID: 842 7650 7600

Passcode: 187878

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. 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

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/).

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 : February 18, 2026 and April 2, 2026 Special Meeting**

III. **Ceremonial Swearing in of New and Returning Board Members by Rep Andrew Garrett (House Designee to the Workforce Development Council)**

1. **Gina Woo Anonuevo**, Vice Chair and Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Human Resources Officer, First Hawaiian Bank (representing private sector)
2. **Jason Benn**, Senior Vice President and Chief Transformation & Administrative Officer at Hawaiian Electric. (representing private sector)
3. **Douglas Chang**, General Manager, The Ritz-Carlton O’ahu, Turtle Bay (representing private sector)
4. **Cheryl Cross**, (returning)Executive Search Consultant, Inkinen Executive Search (representing private sector)
5. **Keith DeMello**, (returning) Current Chair of the Workforce Development Council and Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs, Ulupono Initiative (representing private sector)
6. **George Denise**, Director, Project Management, General Contractors Association (representing private sector)
7. **Rona Fukumoto**, (returning), Chief Executive Officer and President, Lanakila Pacific (representing private sector)
8. **Ashleigh Loa**, Director of Operations, Hawaiian Community Assets (representing private sector)
9. **Trang Malone**, (returning) Vice Chair of the WDC and Workforce Initiatives Manager, CVS Health (representing private sector)
10. **Cary Miyashiro**, (returning) President, Quad D Solutions (representing private sector)
11. **Sean Nakamura**, Corporate Controller and Treasurer, TradeWind Group (representing private sector)
12. **Chris Burnett**, Director of the Committee on Political Education for the Hawaii State AFL-CIO (representing labor sector)
13. **Mark Phongsavath**, Lead Organizer, IBEW Local Union 1186 (representing labor sector)

***Swearing in of New Board Members**

IV. **Recognition of retiring member: Sean Knox (term expires June 30, 2026)**

V. **Presentation: Workforce Challenges in the Defense Industry** Kimberly Lehn, Senior Director, Pacific Forum

This presentation will focus on the growing need to strengthen Hawai’i’s workforce capacity to support military and defense-related projects, particularly as current workforce projections indicate an insufficient number of skilled workers to meet the volume of work anticipated through Department of Defense projects. Representatives from the Pacific Forum will share key strategic recommendations emerging from their recent conference, including potential actions and partnerships that may help address workforce shortages, strengthen talent pipelines, and better position Hawai’i to meet current and future defense workforce demands.

VI. **Presentation: Workforce Development Council’s Strategic and Implementation Plans on Artificial Intelligence Transformation in the Workforce Systems** Nick Winfrey and Gary Albitz, Imua

Onipaa

A presentation on the Workforce Development Council’s implementation strategy for Strategic Plan Goal #5: Enable Responsible Technology Adoption.

The presentation will center on a four-part symposium series under the theme “The AI Transformation: Preparing Hawai’i’s Workforce for the Future,” designed to convene stakeholders over the next year to explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) trends, sector impacts, governance considerations, and strategies to prepare Hawai’i’s workforce for an AI-enabled economy.

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

a) 2026 Legislative Session Wrap Up

The Legislative Session wrapped up on Friday, May 8, 2026. Roughly 300 bills will likely be considered by the Governor for his final approval. Important legislation that passed Conference include:

- HB1800, The Supplemental Budget Bill – Includes approximately \$10.63 billion in general funds and \$1.514 billion in Capital Improvement general obligation funds for FY2027. The supplemental budget also included roughly \$120 million in Green Fee related projects, with roughly 60 percent coming from the initial list that was transmitted by Governor Green and compiled by the Green Fee Advisory Council.*
- SB3125, Tax Credits Bill – This bill would keep in place the tax credits that were passed in 2024 to ensure lower and middle-income Hawai’i residents will continue to benefit from these credits. The bill would also create a new tax bracket for households earning more than \$1 million or more and single filers earning \$500,000 or more. Additionally, this bill would also see some tax credits phased out over time.*
- SB2580, Film Tax Credit Bill – This bill helps to strengthen and modernize Hawai’i’s film tax credit program to support local jobs, attract major productions, and ensures that the state can remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global entertainment industry.*

All bills that pass the legislature will still undergo review amongst Governor Green and the departments prior to the July 15th signing deadline.

b) Western Governors’ Association Annual Policy Forum

On April 20th and April 21st, Governor Green, along with New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, hosted a two-day forum which discussed and highlighted the aftermath of Hawai’i’s response to the 2023 Maui Wildfires. This policy forum convened disaster response experts from around the country to discuss how the people of Hawai’i mobilized in response to the Maui wildfires and highlight the collective efforts to recover and rebuild.

Additionally, Governor Green looks forward to hosting the WGA Winter Meeting this December in Hawai’i.

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

a. *Kona Low Initiatives*

1. *Disaster Unemployment Assistance: Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) funded program operated by the United States Department of Labor as a result the Presidential Disaster Declaration by President Donald Trump on April 7, 2026. Department of Labor and Industrial Relations began accepting applications 5/7, benefits available week beginning 3/15 through week ending 10/10, filing deadline 6/15. Eligibility is for those not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits including workers, business owners, and self-employed individuals in the City and County of Honolulu, County of Hawai'i, and County of Maui who may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits if they became unemployed or had their work hours reduced or interrupted due to the storms, floods, landslides, and mudslides that occurred between March 10, 2026 and March 24, 2026. Further information is available on the Unemployment Division's website.*
2. *National Dislocated Worker Grant: update on the status of application for a WIOA discretionary grant to assist with the economic dislocation caused by the natural disaster.*

b. *2026 Legislature Important Measures*

- o *House Bill 1800 RELATING TO THE STATE BUDGET: 2.5% across the board cuts to the DLIR's general-funded functions, intending to seek flexibility in the application of the ongoing 10% restriction (5% hard, 5% soft) contained in the Executive Memorandum for Fiscal Year Budget Execution Policies and Instructions, and*
- o *House Bill 1800: Loss of a relatively small number of positions, which avoids the time-consuming process of requesting new positions as part of the budget approval process through Budget and Finance, Governor, and the Legislature as well as the time-consuming process of establishing positions and recruitment.*
- o *Senate Bill 3282 RELATING TO THE WORKFORCE PELL PROGRAM: the DLIR offered comments. The structure proposed in the measure did not reflect approaches under consideration in other States, especially as federal rulemaking was in progress with the U.S. Department of Education. The DLIR has extensive experience and expertise in managing federal grants, supported by dedicated staff with specialized knowledge and a proven track record. The Workforce Pell Grants will involve complex compliance, reporting, and audit requirements. Effective administration demands dedicated personnel, specialized expertise, and demonstrated success in managing federal grants. The Department strongly objected to the data sharing provision contained in this measure, which presented legal, operational, and federal compliance challenges for the DLIR's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program.*
- o *House Bill 2468 RELATING TO INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS: failed to pass and was an effort to clarify the responsibilities of the department and explicitly authorize the DLIR to contract with trade organizations or apprenticeship program sponsors to expand the private sector internships. Nonetheless, although reduced, the department still has a significant budget allocation for Hele Imua and seeks WDC members support in connecting interns with internship opportunities, especially for the well-developed public sector portion of Hele Imua.*

c. *Governor's Delegation to Director*

- o *Director's/department's overarching focus continues to be the provision of services to the intended beneficiaries of WIOA funds—the vulnerable Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth populations. Included in that, and with the assistance of the Council, is the goal to increase the quantity and quality of service delivery at the Local Level and the use of WIOA funds.*

- o *The WIOA program continues to encounter challenges, for examples, that have resulted in the development and submission to U.S. DOL of a Performance Improvement Plan for the Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment Rate and continuing dialogue with the U.S. DOL on Corrective Action Plan for Inaccurate Cost Allocation, Insufficient Policies and Procedures for Effective Cost Controls, and Insufficient Budget Controls for Maui County.*
- o *Sustainability of staffing and resources remains a top concern as WIOA funding is cyclical and the State’s unemployment rate, particularly in comparison to the national average, is a key factor in determining how WIOA funds are allocated among the states. As with other federal programs, workforce funding has experienced delays and reductions and, in some cases, temporary elimination (notably the Senior Community Service Employment Program) followed by restoration. Planning amid shifting federal policies and limited fiscal clarity has posed significant challenges and has required the reprioritization of staffing allocations. Sustainability concerns also play a role in the obligation to the U.S. DOL to be a steward of the funding and to meet the grant requirements, regulations, and grant terms and conditions.*
- *Salary Increase for Employees Exempt from Bargaining Unit (BU)13*
- o *Pursuant to an Executive Order in conjunction with BU13 civil service salary increases, effective 7/01/2026 for exempt employees, “Employees not administratively assigned to the salary schedule shall receive a two and ninety-five hundredths percent (2.95%) pay increase; or be adjusted at the discretion of the appointing authority from funds allowed for this purpose provided that the pay increase shall be no less than two and ninety-five hundredths percent (2.95%).”*
- o *Standing DLIR policy is to extend exempt positions only through the next fiscal year. That’s how we handle it across the board, with no exceptions.*
- o *And beyond our internal policy, State fiscal law and DHRD policy don’t let us extend any exempt position past the fiscal biennium unless there’s explicit statutory authority that provides otherwise, like for the Hawaii Labor Relations Board.*

c. *A Report on the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Fiscal Year 2027 Budget*

IX. Update 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.

X. Legislative Update of 2026 Legislative SessionKeith DeMello

A report on the bills that were actively supported by the Workforce Development Council during the 2026 Legislative Session. It will also include a discussion on lessons learned and some preliminary proposals for the next legislative cycle.

BILLS OF INTEREST

Title: RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

[HB1859 HD1](#)

Description: Requires the Workforce Development Council to recommend to the Governor, a comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy to inclusion in the State Unified Plan and be responsible for facilitating the alignment of workforce development efforts and programs conducted by state departments and agencies to achieve the State Unified Plan and the Comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)
Title: RELATING TO STATE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.

[HB2315 HD1](#)

Description: Authorizes the Department of Health to establish a vacation payout pilot program in which eligible Department of Health employees may defer unused vacation leave credits in favor of a pay out to provide home purchase down payment assistance. Requires reports to the Legislature. Requires reports to the Legislature. Sunsets 6/30/2029. (SD1)
Title: RELATING TO THE WORKFORCE PELL GRANT PROGRAM.

[HB2383 HD1](#)

Description: Establishes a statewide framework for the implementation of the federal Workforce Pell Grant Program to provide financial aid for certain short-term workforce education and training programs. Establishes a Workforce Pell Grant Program Approval Committee within the Workforce Development Council. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGES

PASSED ADVISE AND CONSENT HEARINGS

[GM503](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **DOUGLAS CHANG**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM504](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **GEORGE DENISE**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM512](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **JASON BENN**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM626](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **SEAN NAKAMURA**, for a term to expire 06-30-2027.

Description: See Title

[GM627](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **GINA ANONUEVO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2026.

Description: See Title

[GM629](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **TRANG MALONE**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Description: See Title

[GM630](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **CARY MIYASHIRO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Description: See Title

[GM631](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **KEITH DEMELLO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Description: See Title

[GM726](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **GINA ANONUEVO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030

[GM759](#) Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **CHRISTOPHER BURNETT**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title
Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **CHERYL CROSS**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

[GM792](#) Description: See Title
Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **ASHLEIGH LOA**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

[GM793](#) Description: See Title
Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **MARK PHONGSAVATH**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

XI. 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. It granted provisional certification to the Center but with some conditions. The provisional certification will lapse on May 31, 2026. A Corrective Action Plan was submitted. The Workforce Development Council conducted a site visit on April 27, 2026 as part of the certification process. This is an update on the certification process; to request that the provisional certification be extended to December 31, 2026.

The Corrective Action Plan will be part of the Meeting packet.

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**

XII. Restructuring of Employer Engagement Committee and Sector Strategies Committee*

As part of the Council’s continued commitment to strengthen the State’s eco-workforce system, a restructuring of the Employer Engagement and Sector Strategies functions is being advanced to better align with employer needs and labor market realities.

Recognizing that employer engagement has historically been the weakest link in the three-legged stool of job seekers, public sector, and employers, the Council will elevate this priority through several strategic actions over the next year. These tactics were stated in the State Strategic Plan 2026-2027.

These efforts will require a corresponding amendment to the Council’s bylaws to formally reflect the new committee structure to support the objectives.

The Sector Strategies Committee will be renamed the “Education and Career Pathways Committee” to better reflect its focused mission, while the “sector strategies” function, which is associated with employers, will transition as a subcommittee under Employer Engagement Committee.

At its May 8, 2026 meeting, the Executive Committee unanimously voted to amend the by laws and recommends passage by the full Board.

A. PROPOSED BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS ON ARTICLE VI– “COMMITTEES”

Section 6.3: The following are standing committees of the Council:

- Executive Committee
- Employer Engagement Committee
- Performance Management and Finance Committee
- ~~["Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee"]~~ *“Education and Career Pathways Committee”**
- Youth Services Committee
- Special Projects Committee

****Requires Board action***

XIII. Fiscal Reports :Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act GrantsAriel Nault, Administrative Services Office and Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, WDC

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

XIV. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and III Annual Performance Report: Program Year 2024..... Jeanne Ohta, Employment Service Specialist V, and Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, WDC.

Programmatic performance data is important for all workforce system partners, stakeholders such as State and Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), and the public to better understand workforce system operations, enhance services, and pursue continuous improvement for job seekers and employers. Hawaii data will be presented in the context of the national results.

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 held in March 2026*
- *Internship Excellence Awards*
- *Modification of the Unified Plan that was submitted on April 3, 2026*
- *Implementation of the State Unified Plan*
- *Completion of the webinar series on the Transformation Journey of other states: Maine, North Dakota and North Carolina*
- *Workforce Pell Grant: deliberations of the 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:

- *Orientation session for new Council members in April and May*
- *Preparation for the implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant*
- *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 Kaua'i (Training will be conducted to ensure the State Board can fully meet its responsibilities when acting as the Local Workforce Board for Kaua'i)*
- *Certification of the Kaua'i American Job Center*
- *Prepare to conduct a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the operation of the Kauai American Job Center*
- *Mandatory Board Member Training – State and Local Boards (We are planning an in-person statewide joint training session in July, focusing on roles, governance, and compliance).*
- *Symposium Series on Artificial Intelligence, starting with April 30, 2026 event. (Other dates include June 25, September 3, October 29)*
- *Synergy Summit in July 2026*
- *Future of Work Conference in September 23, 2026*
- *Employer Engagement Listening Series (eight sessions) for June, July and August*
- *Research Project in collaboration with the Hawaii Employers Council*
- *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research Project/ How are Hawaii companies preparing for AI?*
- *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.

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

1. WIOA Title I Performance Report
2. Wagner-Peyser (Title III) Performance Report
3. Registered Apprenticeship Status Report
4. Hele Imua Internship Program Update
5. Community Outreach
6. Success Stories

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

Executive Summary

This memorandum provides a summary of the performance results for the Hawaii Workforce and Innovation Act Title II Adult Education program for the reporting period of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. During this period, the program served a total of 3,813 participants. We are pleased to report that the state has successfully met or exceeded all five of its primary negotiated performance metrics.

Performance Against Negotiated Metrics

The following table outlines our actual performance compared to the targets negotiated with the United States Department of Education/Labor. Our results demonstrate consistent success in helping adult learners gain skills and transition into the workforce.

Performance Indicator	Negotiated Target	Actual Performance	Status

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)	37.50%	44.29%	Exceeded
Employment Rate (Quarter 2 Post-Exit)	20.00%	29.48%	Exceeded
Employment Rate (Quarter 4 Post-Exit)	22.00%	38.23%	Exceeded
Median Earnings (Quarter 2 Post-Exit)	\$6,000.00	\$6,195.00	Exceeded
Credential Attainment Rate	17.00%	43.89%	Exceeded

Key Highlights & Participant Demographics

- **Measurable Skill Gains:**
 - A total of 1,689 participants achieved measurable skill gains during the reporting period.
- **Credential Success:**
 - Of the 467 participants in the credential cohort, 205 individuals successfully earned a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma.
- **Participant Diversity:**
 - The program served a diverse population, with the largest ethnic groups being Asian (1,272 participants), Hispanic/Latino (709 participants), and More Than One Race (644 participants).
- **Barriers to Employment:**
 - Our program remains a critical resource for high-need populations, serving 364 low-income individuals and 343 long-term unemployed individuals.

Conclusion

The Program Year 2024 results reflect a robust and effective adult education system in Hawai'i. By exceeding every negotiated target, most notably the Credential Attainment Rate, which outperformed the target by nearly 25 percentage points, we are ensuring that our workforce is better equipped with the skills and credentials necessary for economic self-sufficiency.

Current Status: Forging New Pathways

Beyond the formal reporting period, our real-time data management systems indicate continued momentum. Currently, we have reached 1,739 participants who have already earned 594 Measurable Skill Gains (MSG).

Our current strategic focus centers on delivering statewide learning experiences and building interdependent systems with our partners. Our work is best captured through two transformative initiatives:

- *Holistic Recovery on Maui (Ka La’i Ola):*
- *In response to the Lahaina fires, our adult community schools are partnering with the Department of Human Services to provide learning opportunities directly within temporary housing centers, demonstrating a multi-departmental service model.*
- <https://www.hinowdaily.com/2026/04/14/career-foundations-curriculum-offered-maui-wildfire-survivors-ka-lai-ola-through-state-partnership/>
- *Expanding the Continuum in Mililani:*
- *This partnership redefines the Hawaii Department Of Education as a Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) + Adult Education system, proving that we are a lifelong partner for the community, supporting learners well beyond graduation.*
- <https://www.hinowdaily.com/2026/04/22/mililani-high-school-partners-with-caree-foundations-advance-agriculture-education-aina-kitchen-network/>
These projects, powered by our Career Foundations curriculum (entrepreneurship, workforce, and agriculture), illustrate how Adult Education is sparking community change across Hawai’i. We look forward to continuing to elevate our communities together.

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

1. *Program Year 2024 Performance Tables can be found in the Board Packet.*

Program Year 2025 WIOA Performance Improvement Plan

Between: *The Hawaii Division of Rehabilitation Services (DVR) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).*

Purpose: *Hawaii Division of Rehabilitation Services will avoid Overall State Program Score failure in Program Year 25 thereby averting fiscal sanctions to the Hawaii Governor’s discretionary funds provided under section 128(a) of WIOA.*

Scope: *Division of Rehabilitation Services will engage in technical assistance with RSA and other partners as needed to maximize accurate and complete WIOA performance reporting. Technical assistance will focus on program year 2025 achievement across the five primary indicators of performance. RSA will assist Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehab’s efforts to:*

- *diagnose under-performance in Program Year 24,*
- *identify appropriate steps to maximize Program Year (PY)2025 WIOA Performance,*

- operationalize lessons learned from the experience of PY 24 and PY 25 to improve and sustain future performance outcomes.

Steps: Hawaii DVR and RSA will hold a kick-off meeting on 3/25/2026 for an orientation to the above and to discuss the plan for performance improvement:

1. *Employment Rate in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit*
 - Homework
 - Collaboration – March 17 – 2pm Eastern?
 - Intervention
 - Take-Away
2. *Measurable Skill Gains*
 - Homework
 - Collaboration – April 15 – 2pm Eastern?
 - Intervention
 - Take-Away
3. *Credential Attainment Rate*
 - Homework
 - Collaboration – May 13 – 2pm Eastern?
 - Intervention
4. *Take-Away/ Wrap-Up – June 10 – 2pm?*
 - Final meeting to wrap up loose ends, check in on performance, and determine next steps.

All substantive actions under this plan must be completed by August 15, 2026, the due date for quarter 4 of the RSA-911, to have an impact upon Program Year 2025 Performance.

Staff Vacancy Report	
DVR is actively hiring qualified individuals for various positions	
Staff Vacancies as of 4/28/26	
County	Vacancies
Oahu/Administration and Staff Services Office	5
Oahu Branch	10
Services for the Blind Branch (Ho’opono)	9
Hawaii Branch (Hilo/Kona)	5
Maui Branch (Maui, Molokai/Lanai)	3
Kauai	3.5
Total	35.5/112 (31.5% vacant)

Agency Updates

1. *American Job Centers*
 - a. *Statewide: HDVR collaborates with community, government, and*

business partners in various work groups to promote competitive, integrated employment and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 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), “Disability: IN”, and the Society for Human Resource Management. 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 provide assistance.

- b. Services for the Blind Branch (SBB) aka Ho`opono: Stationed at the Oahu AJC twice per month, the SBB 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 Dept of Labor. Ho`opono staff are helping AJC staff assess job seekers’ abilities, capabilities, and, when appropriate, accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.*
 - DVR staff collaborate on providing an integrated service model at the AJCs.*
 - DVR continues working with AJC staff to find a way to track dual enrollments between programs.*
 - Ongoing support from AJC partners includes providing tours and information sharing with new VR staff assigned for weekly on-site services for Hawaii residents with disabilities eligible for VR services.*
 - Memorandum of Understanding/Infrastructure Funding Agreements with all counties but Kauai have been signed by Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.*

2. Timeliness

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

3. Vacancies

- Still working to hire qualified individuals for various positions within DVR. We are currently at a 31.5% vacancy rate agency-wide, which is an improvement.*

4. Administrative

- VRA continues to be active on the Workforce Development Council; we also have representation on the WDBs 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 last Oahu Workforce Development Board (OWDB) Full Board meeting was called to order at on Thursday, April 27, 2026.

Bylaw Amendments

The Board proposed amendments – following – which were approved.

a. Article III, Section 2(D); Amend to read, “Local Board members and their designees are also required to complete City Ordinance mandated trainings including Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH), and Anti-Bias & Inclusion each biennium. ...”

b. Article III, Section 8; Addition of item C to read, “The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Local Board.”

c. Article III, Section 8; Addition of item D to read, “The Executive Director shall have the sole authority over staffing decisions.”

d. Article IV, Section 2(A); Amend to read, “The OWDB members are expected to attend a majority of the full board meetings and committee meetings of the Local Board.”

e. Article IV, Section 2(B); Amend to read, “The OWDB members who do not provide a minimum of two (2) days advance notice for multiple absences or are absent for a majority of the full board meetings and committee meetings of the OWDB in the twelve (12) month period following their appointment may be asked to tender their resignation.”

f. Article IV, Section 2(D); Amend to read, “... in accordance with WIOA Section 679.110(d)(4). The designee is subject to the same membership requirements as an OWDB member. Each OWDB member shall address his or her...”

Equipment Inventory listing for return or reimbursement from Work Hawaii

a. Request for return or reimbursement for three televisions from the Inventory Equipment List.

Special Projects Request for Proposal (RFP)

Small Project Proposals Approved

a. Youth Workforce Training, LLC dba Pathway to Success Program

b. Boys and Girls Club Nānākuli Workforce Readiness Program

c. Hawai‘i Pacific Health Youth Workforce Development Program

One-Stop Operator Certification and Performance Measures

Colin Inamasu, Planner with Work Hawaii / American Job Center (AJC), provided a presentation referencing WIOA Bulletin 02-23 Terms dated April 2026 and WIOA Bulletin 01-25.

Board Membership and Organizational Updates with new Board members that have recently joined OWDB, including:

- *Bridget Lai, Academy for Healthcare Innovation*
- *Kanui Bell, Institute of Human Services*
- *Steven Bond-Smith, University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization*

OWDB is exploring a future office relocation, although no move is planned at this time.

The Request for Proposal for the One-Stop Operator has officially been posted.

NAWB Conference Update

Daven Kawamura shared that he and Harrison Kuranishi attended the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) conference in Las Vegas. He noted that, for the first time in 40 years, the conference was not held in Washington, D.C.

It was shared that NAWB represents more than 500 workforce boards nationwide and focuses on workforce development issues and WIOA-related matters. OWDB was also recognized with the prestigious Laurie Moran Award.

The next OWDB Full Board Meeting will be held on July 24, 2026.

The Office of Economic Revitalization will begin overseeing OWDB effective May 1, 2026.

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

I. Board and Sub-Committee Meetings

A. Maui County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB)

1. Program Sub-committee Meeting – Held on Monday, March 30, 2026.

- a. *Program Year 2024 Updates and Performance Measures*
MCWDB worked with Program Providers to develop an analysis of areas to improve the credentials attainment rate, specifically for the Dislocated Worker Program.
- b. *Program Monitoring*
Program Monitoring conducted on 03/09/26-03/10/26. The purpose of the review was to ensure that WIOA programs are administered and operated in compliance with all requirements. Monitoring activities included interviews with staff from Goodwill Hawai'i, the service provider for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. The review also included discussions of policies and procedures, an examination

of twelve (12) participant files, and interviews with two (2) program participants.

Best practices: Maui staff demonstrate effective outreach and collaboration within the community. Staff are knowledgeable about available community resources and actively connect participants to supportive services that help address barriers to employment.

Concerns: While one of the best practices is the strength of our community outreach, we sometimes forget that one of our greatest resources is internal.

Recommended Corrective Actions: Strengthen integrated service delivery by enhancing its formal referral protocols and inter-agency referral tracks.

Finance Sub-committee Meeting – Held on Thursday, February 26, 2026.

- c. Program Year (PY) 24 Updates
 - i. On the Job Training (OJT) Program
 - Working on increasing OJT reimbursements from 50% to 90%
 - Discussed budding industries and positions that could benefit from OJT participation
 - i. Construction Industry
 - ii. Agricultural
 - ii. Carpenters Union Pre-Apprenticeship Program
 - Currently postponed with no specific date to begin program
 - i. Challenges Faced
 - 1. Low enrollment numbers
 - 2. Referrals received were facing issues that needed to be addressed before considering employment (i.e. houselessness, substance abuse, mental health challenges, etc.)
 - 3. Location challenges – Difficulty finding a location to be able to provide hands-on training

B. Program Service/Enrollment

Total Participants Served Program Year 24 (07/01/25-05/01/26)

- Adult – 109
- Dislocated Worker – 27
- Youth – 41

Total Enrollments Program Year 24 (01/01/26-05/01/26)

- Adult – 15
- Dislocated Worker – 3
- Youth – 3
 - In-School-Youth (ISY): Three youth have secured unsubsidized employment, Department of Education, Goodwill Retail, and Ohana Pacific Health. One youth has subsidized employment with our Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) with Oshima Surf Co.

◦ Out-of-School-Youth (OSY): Employed: Fifteen youth have secured unsubsidized employment. The employers include Coconuts Restaurant, the Department of Education, Target, Kahului Baptist Preschool, Old Navy, Snorkel Bobs, Kula Hospital, DHX, Hertz Car Rental, Aurum Restaurant, Kahiau Construction, Walmart, Goodwill Hawaii Retail, and Ross Dress for Less.

Performance Measures

a. Please see performance measures below based on the following quarters: Quarter 1 (07/01/25-09/30/25), Q2 (10/01/25-12/31/25) and Q3 (01/01/26-03/31/26)

C. Staff Technical Assistance (TA) – On-going

The Maui County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) continues to work toward full compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements related to board governance, board composition, and recertification.

During the review process, additional clarification and guidance were requested regarding the Board's bylaws, specifically in the areas of staggered terms, term limits, and alignment with current WIOA Bulletin requirements.

As a result, MCWDB is requesting technical assistance to support:

- Review and revision of the Board bylaws to ensure full alignment with WIOA standards and State guidance;
- Clarification of recertification requirements and supporting documentation expectations; and
- Assistance with navigating the board recertification process and timelines.

MCWDB remains committed to addressing all identified concerns and working collaboratively with WDC staff to achieve successful recertification and continued compliance with WIOA governance requirements.

D. Highlights

Activities for this report month focused on the following:

- Soft Skills: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

- *Learning how to solve problems in a variety of ways in the workplace.*
- *Learn how to differentiate between criticism, praise, and feedback and how to react appropriately.*
- *Reviewing strategies to make ethical decisions, solving problems on a team with others, and learn to take in account others' perceptions when assessing statements in the work place.*
- *Examining Your Personality*
 - *Evaluate ways in which personal and work values can guide career choice.*
 - *Assess personal interests.*
 - *Identify aptitudes and abilities and determine how to develop new abilities.*
- *Financial Literacy: Credit Cards and Credit Score*
 - *What is a credit score*
 - *Learning about Debt ratio*
 - *What are credit cards*

II. *Events/Announcements*

A. Maui's High School Graduating Seniors Event – 3rd Annual Event was held on 04/24/26 from 9am-12pm, at the Fairmont Kea Lani Hotel, Wailea.

B. Success Story – WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker

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

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

Period: January 1 – March 31, 2026

Status Updates (January 1 – March 2026)

Board of Governance and Operations

1. *Board Action: The full board meeting tentatively scheduled for March 2026 was not held as the board did not meet the necessary quorum.*
2. *Committee Activity: Board staff continued their focus on addressing youth employment barriers and coordinating community-wide recruitment efforts.*
3. *Upcoming Meeting: The board is looking to reschedule the missed session in May to ensure continuity of governance for the upcoming fiscal year.*

Fiscal Management and Funding Challenges

- 1. Federal and Contract: The County received its full allocation amount and its signed contracts for Program Year 2025.*
- 2. Training Budget Constraints: After the Adult Program Service Provider training budget reached 90% expenditure late in the previous year, staff maintained strict oversight of remaining funds to prioritize high-demand certifications such as Commercial Driver's License (CDL).*

Workforce Development Partnerships

- 1. One-Stop Operator (OSO) Transition: Change Makers Community Economic Development Corporation completed its first full quarter as the OSO, maintaining the operational firewall between County oversight and daily American Job Center Hawaii activities.*
- 2. Prince Kuhio Plaza Hiring Event: The American Job Center Hawaii (AJCH) partnered with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) Workforce Development Division (WDD) to host a major hiring event at Prince Kuhio Plaza. The event was highly successful, featuring significant attendance from local job seekers and diverse employers.*

WIOA Title I Program Updates

- 1. Annual Program Monitoring: Department of Labor and Industrial Relations staff conducted the scheduled annual monitoring of the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs during February and March 2026 to ensure compliance and performance standards.*
- 2. Youth Outreach (Ola I Ka Hana): Building on the Hilo-Waiakea Complex Area partnership, staff continued strengthening the referral pipeline for K-12 students entering the workforce.*

Strategic Economic and Workforce Development

Alignments/Internships: Workforce staff are engaged in negotiations to secure local internship opportunities for Department of Education high school students within the County of Hawaii's various departments.

- 1. County Hiring Reform: The Mayor and the Department of Research & Development continued efforts to remove the one-year minimum experience requirement for entry-level positions, a move designed to create immediate career paths for WIOA youth graduates and high school graduates.*
- 2. Aquaculture Hub: Long-term strategic planning for the National Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority aquaculture hub continues, focusing on the specialized training required for the 100 projected jobs by 2030.*
- 3. Expansion of Partnership: The Hawaii County Workforce Development Board 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 (April - June 2026)

1. HCWDB Meeting: The next tentative board meeting will be in April.

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 – Rona Fukumoto, Lanakila Pacific

<i>Meetings</i>	<i>April 13, 2026 and Monday, May 11, 2026</i>
<i>Goal/s:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify Priority Industry Sectors</i> • <i>Develop and Maintain Sector Partnerships</i> • <i>Map and Strengthen Career Pathways</i> • <i>Align Training and Education with Industry Requirements</i> • <i>Integrate Labor Market Data into Decision Making</i> • <i>Support Eligible Training Provider List and Workforce Pell Alignment</i> • <i>Facilitate Employer Participation in Training Design and Delivery</i> • <i>Promote Inclusive Talent Pipeline</i> • <i>Strengthening Regional Collaboration</i> • <i>Monitor Progress and Report Outcomes</i>
<i>Focus and Objectives:</i>	<i>Improving coordination across education, training, and workforce systems.</i>
<i>Next meeting:</i>	<i>Monday, August 3, 2026</i>
<i>Summary/Highlights:</i>	<p><i>April 13 Committee Meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Presentations highlighted two statewide initiatives advancing Hawai'i's economy and workforce. The Maui Food Innovation Center supports economic diversification by training entrepreneurs in food processing and packaging, generating about \$1 million annually in small-business revenue and contributing to global product scaling and disaster-recovery efforts. Hawai'i P20 Partnership for Education strengthens the education-to-career pipeline through initiatives such as Gear Up Hawai'i, college readiness and scholarships, Career Technical Education (CTE) and career pathway development, counseling, work-based learning, and a statewide data system that supports longitudinal reporting and planning.</i>

May 11 Committee Meeting:

- *Presentation on the Pacific Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) provided an overview of the organization, including its vision and mission. It also outlined who PAAC serves, the partners it collaborates with, and how it contributes to strengthening Hawai'i's workforce.*
- *The committee announced a restructuring that shifts sector strategy responsibilities to the Employer Engagement Committee and renames this committee the Education and Career Pathways Committee. Its updated role focuses on improving coordination across education, training, and workforce systems to ensure smoother pathways from learning to employment, alignment with future job needs, and equitable access to career opportunities. The committee will also support local workforce board coordination, modernize the Eligible Training Provider List, and monitor progress through data and outcomes to strengthen Hawai'i's overall workforce and economy.*

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 April 17, 2026

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

- *Keith DeMello reported on several legislative measures, noting that House Bill 1859 House Draft 1 and House Bill 2383 House Draft 1 did not advance, while House Bill 2315 House Draft 1 continues to move forward. All individuals listed in the Governor's Messages were confirmed on April 22, 2026. Keith also suggested the committee revisit the structure of its two-person legislative interaction group due to his role as Workforce Development Council Chair and recognized Executive Director Bennette Misalucha's authorized role in providing testimony.*
- *Cheryl Cross and Trang Malone presented the Military Spouses Virtual Job Fair initiative. The committee approved a motion allowing them to continue developing the Military Spouse Workforce Initiative Virtual Hiring Series, including partner engagement, scope refinement, and preparation of a WIOA aligned funding plan.*

Other Notes:

Bennette Misalucha, Cheryl Cross, Trang Malone, and Carol Kanayama are scheduled to meet on Thursday, May 14, 2026, to further discuss the preliminary information regarding the Military Spouses Workforce Initiative Virtual Hiring Series.

This meeting will review initial details, align expectations, and identify any additional considerations needed to move forward with planning.

C. Youth Services Committee

*YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT Submitted by: Carla Kurokawa, Chair
Vice Chair – Amber Akana*

The Youth Services Committee met on April 9, 2026, 1:30 pm.

Goal/s:

- *Coordinate partnerships across systems*
- *Leverage and aligning resources*
- *Support career pathways for youth*

Focus and Objectives:

- *Continued focus on Hawaii Career and Technical Student Organizations*
- *Encourage collaboration and identify opportunities to promote partnerships to stretch limited funds while improving outcomes*

Next meeting:

Thursday, June 25, 2026, 1:30 pm

Summary/Highlights:

1. *Michael Barros, State FFA (Future Farmers of America) Co-coordinator, presented the history and status of Hawaii FFA, one of five Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) currently serving secondary and post-secondary students statewide. In his presentation, Mr. Barros noted that one of the key challenges is securing industry partners to expand student opportunities for Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs).*
2. *Vincent Kimura, Agriculture and Technology Workforce Development Coordinator, presented on the CDL (Commercial Driver's License) Master Trainer Program and the School Farm and Farm Manager Series offered at Leeward Community College. He also met separately with Mr. Barros to discuss workforce development needs and future collaboration.*

D. Employer Engagement Committee

Employer Engagement Committee Report Submitted by

*Chair: Gina Anunuevo
Vice Chair – Derek Kanehira
Vice Chair – Cheryl Cross*

Plans are afoot to host listening sessions.

From May to September 2026, the Employer Engagement Committee, in partnership with the Hawai'i Employers Council, will host a series of employer listening sessions featuring panels from eight major employment sectors: hospitality, construction, defense, energy, health care, IT/technology, public sector, and general services. These sessions will focus on workforce challenges, Artificial Intelligence preparedness, and ideas for employee retention. A total of eight sessions will be held: two each in June, July, and August, and September. Insights gathered will help shape the agenda for the 2027 Future of Work Conference, scheduled for September 23, 2026.

D. Performance Management and Finance Committee

Performance Management and Finance Committee Report Submitted by:

Chair: Sean Nakamura

Vice Chair – Sean Knox

Vice Chair – Lea Dias

Performance Management and Finance committee met on April 14, 2025

Goals: Meet negotiated performance levels and spend allocated WIOA funds within the first two years.

Focus and Objectives: 1. Statewide Performance Report PY2024, maintain the results that local areas are achieving or exceeding negotiated targets (Adult Q4 employment rate 75.3%, median earnings, credential rate and measurable skill gain); and examine the cause of performances below negotiated rates: low enrollment rates and incorrect data input can affect performance rates.

US DOL will provide technical assistance to avoid failure two years in a row. The consequences will be a loss of funding perhaps 5% of funding.

2. WIOA Financial Report: expenses are being transferred from PY24 to PY23 to spend down the funds that will lapse earlier. Hawaii is requesting a waiver for the youth program funds to waive the requirement that 75% of expenditures must be spent on out-of-school youth. The waiver would allow funds to be spent where needed to serve each youth appropriately.

Design a template for the local areas to use when reporting their WIOA Financial Reports so all areas are reporting the same information.

Next meeting: July 2, 2026

Summary/Highlights:

There are consequences for the state if performance measures are not achieved. USDOL considers any measure under 50% as a failure. Addressing the cause of low performance scores immediately will help avoid multi-year failure.

XIX. Renewal of Executive Director's Contract*

Please note that in prior instances, in prior years and with the prior Executive Directors, when the WDC discussed personnel matters, the Council entered into executive session. However, upon guidance from the Office of Information Practices (OIP), personnel matters for all public boards and commissions must now be conducted in a public session.

The Council will discuss and act on the renewal of the Executive Director's current two-year employment contract, which is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2026. The Chair has consulted with the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Human Resources office to confirm applicable requirements, and the necessary administrative paperwork is in process. This agenda item pertains solely to contract renewal and should not be construed as the formal performance evaluation of the Executive Director. Pursuant to the Council's bylaws, the next scheduled evaluation will occur during the first quarter of 2027, following the prior evaluation completed in fall 2025. The Board's action at this meeting will focus on whether to renew the contract, with the Chair also noting receipt of letters of support for the board's consideration. The letters of support can be found in the Board packet.

The proposed renewal does not include any pay increase connected to the renewal itself. Compensation would remain at the current salary level, with only standard statewide adjustments or negotiated bargaining increases that may apply.

***Requires Board action**

XX. Workforce Development Council's Next Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 9:30 am-12 noon

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

FOURTH QUARTER: Wednesday, November 18, 2026

XXI. 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 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.

Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2026

Hawaii Workforce Development Council
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

9:30 a.m. to 12 noon

- I. Call to Order (00:40)..... Keith DeMello, Chair, Workforce Development Council

Chair DeMello called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. and acknowledged the presence of Vice Chair Trang Malone, and Deputy Attorneys General Lianne Yamashiro and Kelly Ha. The roll call of councilmembers was taken, and quorum was achieved at 18 members present.

- II. Approval of Minutes of November 18, 2025 (11:09)

The spelling of “Lea Dias” will be corrected in the Minutes of November 18, 2025. Dion Dizon motioned to approve the minutes as corrected; Carla Kurokawa seconded the motion; the motion was carried unanimously.

- III. Welcome New Board Members (13:08)

Chair DeMello welcomed new board members who will be going through the senate confirmation process this session and will be given the oath of office at the Q3 WDC meeting. The new members are:

- 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

Chair DeMello also recognized Robert Lietzke from Booz, Allen, Hamilton, who has retired and as such will be stepping down as a board member, and thanked him for his 3 years of service to the Council.

(Board Member Wanelle Kaneshiro arrived at 9:40 a.m., 19 voting members present)

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

Tim Carlton’s presentation was deferred until the next meeting.

- V. Presentation on Hele Imua Internship Program (15:04).....Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator, Workforce Development Division; Denise Yamaguchi, Executive Director, Hawaii Agricultural Foundation (HAF) and, Liz Stanton, HAF

The internship program which was limited to the public sector has been expanded to the private sector. Maricar Pilotin-Freitas and Denise Yamaguchi are here to explain more about the program.

Maricar explained that Act 251 was signed into law which expanded the Hele Imua Program to the private sector. A pilot program was initiated with the Hawaii Agricultural Foundation (HAF) to address the workforce demand of the agriculture sector. They were able to place three interns.

Denise Yamaguchi yielded her time to Liz Stanton of the Hawaii Agricultural Foundation who worked more directly with the internship program.

Liz Stanton explained that the program was a 12-week internship opportunity, \$1.8 million was secured to expand the program into the private sector. The first thing that was needed was to get the word out. The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations sent out a press release, so did the Hawaii Agricultural Foundation. The announcement was sent to 19,000+ members of the HAF listserve, applications were available on the HAF website, seeking prospective small farms and interns. Eligibility for small farms were: 5 or fewer full-time employees, Hawaii Compliance Express clearance, and have sufficient insurance to meet State of Hawaii requirements. Eligibility for interns: 18 years of age or older, current or recent graduate of high school or college, and demonstrate an interest in agriculture. Applications were received from 42 farms, and 36 potential interns.

Of the 42 farm applicants, 25 were qualified. All four counties were represented. Of the 34 applicants, 34 met the requirements. All counties except Kauai were represented. The three farms chosen and matched with interns were: Deep Dirt Farms from North Hilo, Kumano I Ke Ala at Kukuiloloa from Haleiwa, and Flower Farm Hawaii from Wahiawa.

The interns gained a variety of experiences depending on the farm. For instance, irrigation system basics, tree care and orchard maintenance, cacao propagation and processing, cultivation of kalo, site restoration, pest identification and management, and business overview.

Early successes (there are still one month remaining), mentorship from working farmers, practical, skill-based training, paid, accessible internships, strengthening Hawaii's agricultural talent pipeline, administrative support for small farm partners. Administrative paperwork took longer than expected. We hoped to have a larger statewide recruitment, but we did not have intern applicants on Kauai even though there were farm applicants. So, we need to examine how we can better market the program across the state.

Chair DeMello asked, "how will this information be shared for the future?" Denise Yamaguchi answered, "the best steps moving forward will be to work with DLIR because it is a state program. The State could provide information on how to fill out the paperwork and make the process more efficient."

Board member Dion Dizon thanked Maricar and the Workforce Development Division (WDD) staff; there is an intern in the center where she works and the staff at WDD was very easy to work with and the process was very smooth.

VI. Presentation: 2024-2028 State Unified Plan Modification (24:39)

Executive Director Bennette Misalucha and representatives of the core partners Titles I, II, III, and IV provided information on the State Unified Plan which is being modified. The Modified Unified Plan is the primary workforce strategy under WIOA. It is a roadmap to align programs, priorities, and investments across the workforce system in the state. The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) requires the Plan for us to continue to receive federal funds. It is a healthy exercise for us to go through because it sets directions, making sure that our workforce efforts are coordinated rather than working in silos. It guides our policy priorities, our funding priorities, our system designs, and sets expectations for performance.

The role of WDC, as the State Board is to develop, modify, and implement the Unified State Plan. Two years into each four-year State Plan we are required to modify the plan because circumstances change, economies change, and there may be extenuating circumstances that may need for us to pivot them to a new direction. It's a normal process. A timeline of the submission process was presented. The process started in November. Each of the titles and agencies worked together, and at the same time, also within their own work group, to produce their portion of the plan. Today we are asking the Council to approve the Plan for release for public comment. The public comment period will be from February 19 to March 23, 2026. The public comment period is required for submittal. The board will have a final opportunity to "bless" the plan at a special meeting on April 2nd or 3rd. The Plan will then be submitted to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education and other attendant agencies.

The WIOA partners shape the strategy, and this collaboration is essential to make sure that we are addressing workforce challenges effectively. The Plan being presented today is a shared product of our work together for the same goals.

When our workforce strategy started in 2024 four pillars were identified. Pillar I: alignment with economic growth, work; Pillar II: strengthening alliances with education and training, learn; Pillar III: removing barriers to employment, thrive; Pillar IV: creating system synergy/integration, belong. Over the course of two years, through many convenings, the effort culminated in the development of Hawaii's North Star. It was crystallized into our generational commitment. Matt Stevens and Keala Peters are here today to share about the movement that has evolved into something amazing and collaborative. The values of the generational commitment can be summed up into four values: learn, work, thrive, and belong. What it underscores is that the community is now at the center, and this is not a short-term solution, there's a long-term perspective. Each of our core partners will now share their parts of the plan.

Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Workforce Development Division, highlighting the changes and what's important in the Plan. Our part of the plan is Title I, the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth

programs, mainly serving low-income individuals. Dislocated workers have been laid off from their jobs because of closings or downsizing. Services are provided through the American Job Centers (AJC), using a no-wrong door approach so that potential participants can be served by functional teams and co-enrolled so there's a braiding of funds from different programs. We are asking for a waiver for Kauai so the State Board will act as the local workforce board for Kauai. Memoranda of Understanding were signed, WDD is providing Title I services and USDOL has approved the partnership. We are asking for a waiver for the Youth Program so that the In-School Youth expenditures are not limited to 50%. This waiver will not affect services to the Out-of-School Youth. Older youth 18 years of age to 24 may be served by the Adult Program. We are also asking for a waiver for the On-the-Job Training program. The reimbursement of wages to the employer is currently limited to 50%. We are asking to be allowed to increase the reimbursement to 90%. Hopefully this increase will encourage employers to take advantage of hiring the adult and dislocated population.

This is not a change, but I wanted to emphasize that for our federal grants, veterans and their spouses receive priority of service. There is also the Jobs for Veterans State Grant which provides help to those transitioning from the military to civilian life. The AJC has dedicated veteran staff to provide individualized counseling.

Wagner-Peyser is Title III, known as the labor exchange system, that is funded by the USDOL and was established in 1933. This program provides equal access to employers and jobseekers to have access to services to help with finding jobs in the workplace.

I wanted to highlight Act 214, which was signed into law in July, that the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment focus on Unemployment Insurance claimants. Now, under Act 214 when they file for unemployment benefits, they are automatically registered in the program. The program helps into the workforce.

Under Title III, we will be asking for two waivers. One is to allow flexibility for merit staffing, which would allow for quicker hiring so that needed services can be provided and to avoid gaps in services. We are also asking for flexibility with the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) program. The regulation requires that we have dedicated staff to provide outreach to that program. Right now, there are zero MSFW under the program definition in Hawaii. It would not be beneficial to have dedicated staff when there are no participants to serve. So, we are requesting a waiver for the program.

Registered apprenticeships are a proven model that provides sustainable wages. During Program Year 2024 the department served almost 1,500 apprentices statewide; 480 program completions; and over 5,000 active apprentices across industries. We are expanding the program to non-traditional apprenticeships, such as education (Teacher Apprenticeship) and healthcare (Pharmacy Technician). We need more partnerships to ensure that program becomes a success. We have also purchased virtual reality goggles that are available at the AJCs to allow jobseekers to explore different types of jobs before committing to training.

(Jade Rojas-Letisi, designee for Maui Mayor Richard Bissen, arrived at 10:12 a.m., 20 voting members present)

Ryan Mandado, Education Specialist, Adult Education, Hawaii Department of Education, represents Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AFLA) programs in Hawaii. He explained that Title II funding is managed by the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, Workforce Development Branch. Dr. Wanelle Kaneshiro-Erdman is our State Director, and he is the Program Manager. The program operates 10 strategic sites statewide, serving a diverse population of over 3,700 students or adult learners. Our reach is broad, but our focus is centered on transforming lives through foundational and functional literacy. Our core activities focus on adult basic and secondary education for people wanting to obtain their high school equivalency. We have English language acquisition courses serving most learners from the Asia-Pacific region.

We also have education opportunities in corrections, ensuring that those in our criminal justice system are prepared for reentry. In the upcoming years, there will be a strong emphasis on integrated education and training programs where academic learning is paired directly with skilled vocational development. Moving forward our strategy is built on alignment. We are elevating our commitment to ensure every learner is workforce ready. We hope to expand the number of people taking GED and High School Equivalency (HiSET) exams, expand Integrated Education and Training (IET), and move towards a model where learning and earning happen in tandem. We are actively seeking to bridge the gap between our classroom and industry by partnering with local employees, unions, and community organizations. GEDs and HiSET are springboards to earn a living wage; and our adult learners are employable and essential to our state's economy.

Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Department of Human Services, explained that Title IV is a full WIOA Core Partner, accountable for measurable outcomes and dedicated to our generational commitment. The mission of DVR is competitive integrated employment, real careers and real wages. DVR serves youth and adults with an expectation of independence and full participation in our workforce. Our work is not short-term. Accountability means outcomes for employment and good wages.

Our progress and accountability so far. Over the last 2 years, we have focused on strengthening the foundation of our program. Our employment outcomes are more than triple over the year before, and we filled some of the long-term vacancies in our department. Staffing stabilization has helped with improving our performance. We've also been focusing on engagement, earlier, rapid, and ongoing engagement with our participants as well as our partners. We are also continuing to enhance the accuracy of our data because performance transparency builds trust, both federally and statewide.

We've been able to close out a couple of corrective action plans that we have been under with our federal funder, the U.S. Department of Education. This modification plan reflects a program that is stable and accountable. We hope to continue to collaborate with other core

partners, agencies, and businesses to have our students engage in summer youth employment, Hele Imua, apprenticeships, and other initiatives; and ensuring our training services will lead to credentials. We also included Workforce Pell in the modification. We are looking forward to seeing what will become available to benefit our participants and benefit our economy as well.

We are examining career pathways within our own agency. One part of the State Plan is called the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD). That part asks to describe how we will enhance recruitment, retention, and ensure excellence of our staff. So, in this modification, I am proposing a revision to our minimum qualifications for our positions, which I believe will make them more attractive and keep standards high. We want to have the ability to attract good people into our field, retain them in our field and have a clear pathway for them to move up within DVR.

We want to hear from employers, to have more employer-driven engagement. What do employers need? How can we expand work-based learning and sector partnerships to enable individuals with disabilities are able to compete for job openings in growth industries?

I believe that when we talk about workforce strategy, a large part of the role of Title IV is making sure that individuals with disabilities always have a seat at the table. I want to reiterate that disability is not a separate workforce issue. It is embedded in every sector and every labor market strategy.

Chari DeMello asked for a motion for the board to act on the first draft of the Plan. Council Vice Chair Trang Malone motioned to ratify the first draft of the plan and to release this version for public comment, to be posted on the WDC website starting on February 19, 2026, and finishing the public comment period on March 23, 2026. The motion was seconded by Member Cheryl Cross. Chair DeMello suggested that we proactively proceed with seeking public comment for the purpose of gathering authentic feedback on the State Plan. After asking if there were further discussions, he asked for a roll call vote. The motion was passed with 20 aye votes, zero noes, and no abstentions.

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

Chair DeMello explained that the implementation of the plan has evolved into one that is community driven. Members of the workforce community have coalesced toward a common goal. Matt Stevens of the Hawaii Workforce Funders Collaborative and Keala Peters of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii are here to share some of those efforts and next steps.

Keala Peters explained that they will provide an update on the Learn, Work, Thrive Hui. A group of stakeholders from throughout the state met 5 times over 10 months. Keala and Matt led the Workforce Synergy Pillar for the Unified State Plan. Along with guidance from the National Governors Association, it became clear that establishing a statewide North Star goal is a best

practice for states who are doing similar work to Hawaii. That North Star goal quickly became Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment. The stakeholders recognized that while the North Star is a goal, the generational commitment is a promise, so the transition was made from the North Star to Hawaii's Generation 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. The Learn, Work, Thrive Hui is a statewide group of workforce stakeholders, and this Hui is growing as we move towards statewide adoption. The Hui is focused on alignment, implementation, and shared learning across workforce stakeholders.

Two flows of work: 1) getting the goal adopted (HB 1859), advancing the Commitment through policy, executive action, and public alignment. 2) Beginning to deliver toward the goal (everyday) by advancing job quality, youth pathways, and work-based learning across sectors; strengthening island specific strategies; aligning and not duplicating the work already happening across agencies, employers, schools, and communities.

The generational commitment is an umbrella that stakeholders that efforts of individual workforce agencies sit under, where various organizations can see their work represented. The structure of the Hui is comprised of four lands of work: 1) Government and non-profit 2) Employers and Industry 3) Education and training 4) Funders

This is an evolving group we hope to add labor to group.

Matt Stevens explained that the Hui is a place where we can coordinate the conversations about the work that we all have been doing. It will also be able to publicly tell the story of the great work and progress we make on aligning workforce systems. The Hawaii Workforce Funders Collaborative put out a report about a month ago, "From Crisis to Coalition: A 2026 Roadmap for Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment (2026)", [From Crisis to Coalition: A 2026 Roadmap for Hawai'i's Generational Workforce Commitment — Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative](#) This follows the first report, "From Crisis to Opportunity: Building Hawaii's Workforce Resilience, (2025)" [From Crisis to Opportunity: Building Hawai'i's Workforce Resilience — Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative](#)

We're hoping with the codification of the generational workforce commitment that all the work can align around the commitment going forward. How can we continue to set shared milestones? What are the foundational things we want to see across education, economic development, across equity and alignment in the coming years? Is our work continuing to move the needle incrementally forward. After approximately 3years our work will be expanding what works and institutionalizing standard practice and normalizing what it looks like to plan on a generational 20-year cycle.

There were 20 organizations providing testimony for the first hearing for HB1859. Hearing 20 different stakeholder voices shows that the coordination is already happening. The governor and 30 organizations endorsed the Generational Commitment which was announced with a

press release. There will be other bills that ask the state to make further investment in some of the foundational items: internships, apprenticeships, upskilling, lifelong learning that will help make progress in building the foundation. We will be presenting the Generational Commitment with different audiences, continuing to gain support from a wider audience. Feel free to refer other organizations to join the Hui.

Keala Peters underscored that the State Unified Plan is going to be the vehicle to guide the Hui and vice versa. Every four years, as the Plan is update, it will reflect the input of the Hui and this broad statewide coalition.

The presence of Cheryl Cross and Chris Lum Lee was acknowledged by Bennette Misalucha, 22 voting members present.

VIII. Presentation: Holomua Collective (1:22:09)Joshua Wisch, Holomua Collective

Joshua Wisch explained that the Holomua Collective is a non-profit organized around four years ago with the mission of making sure that all local working families in Hawaii could afford to stay. They are focused on cost of living, housing, groceries, also economic revitalization and workforce development. The organization was built on a belief that we don't just have to react to crisis, but we can build a hopeful future where working families have a chance to thrive. To have hope there first needs to be trust. Here, progress moves at the speed of trust. Holomua Collective invests a lot of time in bring people from different backgrounds together. They have convened almost 250 cross sector leaders from for-profit and non-profit organizations and county and state government, and labor unions in 60 in-person sessions so far; working to build trusting relationships.

Where there has been an impact is at the legislature, where there has been a 40% success rate of Holomua's priority bills. Much of the work has been done in person because that is one of the strongest ways to build trust. Their work is also grounded in data, for instance Aloha United Way's report on the challenges of the ALICE families. Less visible has been the "missing middle." Which has been pulled out by the annual employee affordability survey. The survey participants are either lifetime residents or have lived here more than 20 years, almost all are registered voters, 61% earn more than \$100,000 per year. They are working hard but still have some challenges. The overall sense is that people have lost faith in local institutions. Only non-profit organizations have a net positive rating over 50%.

In 2025, 42% of respondents said that it is "very difficult" to save money from their paychecks. Compared to 34% in 2024. These respondents are making \$100,000 a year or more, on paper they should be feeling okay, but they are not feeling like it. One of the slides that get the most attention is the "to leave or stay?" The survey shows about 75% of residents when asked are thinking that they are not sure, but they say that they are thinking about moving within 5 years. The people who have enough money to leave are seriously looking to leave for a lower cost of living location. It would be a huge hit to our tax base if those residents leave.

The survey also asked people for their own ideas of what can be done. Some of their responses were: dedicated local housing market, supporting high wage, streamlining permitting, upskilling, reskilling, skill-based employees, entrepreneurship reports, stronger school-to-job pipelines, all the things that WDC is focused on are the same things that the 3,200 locally employed residents are telling us they think we need to focus on. It shows alignment between what people need; what people think needs to happen, and what you're doing.

There is alignment between businesses and residents in the belief that Hawaii is a difficult place to do business. Other areas of consensus between respondents: 91% think more should be done to recruit and retain critical workforce members; 90% said build housing for residents, and 80% said that we need to increase access to childcare and education for children aged 0-5.

The hope for home ownership is incredibly low, 67% of people are somewhere between very and somewhat unhopeful that they're ever going to be able to own a home. Josh recommended the book, "Homelessness is a Housing Problem," which shows that the major differences between cities with large unsheltered populations and those without is that more housing was built.

This next slide speaks to why this generational commitment is important is that even with the array of workforce programs across the state, 45% of the respondents are not at all aware of workforce development programs. Which underscores the need to do continued public education about what is available. We are continuing to push HB 1859 the Generational Commitment Bill which has passed the House Labor Committee.

Based on the information gathered, we spend most of our time on two main initiatives: building a dedicated housing market for local families and creating economic opportunity and improving the workforce development pipeline.

IX. Presentation on Workforce Pell.....Bennette Misalucha, Keala Monaco

Pell grants have always been tied to long-term degrees, associate or bachelor's degrees. Workforce Pell expands federal grant eligibility to high-quality, short-term training programs. Primarily, it's to bridge the gap between the traditional academic degree and the urgent training needs of Hawaii's labor market. Three pillars define the program: the skills gap, economic mobility, cost efficiency.

Skill Gap: The program was created to meet the increasing demand for skilled workers in various sectors.

Economic mobility: by providing financial assistance, the program helps reduce barriers to education for the underserved populations.

Cost Efficiency: Lower the financial barrier for essential credentials that do not require a full degree.

Targeted at shorter programs of 150 to 600 clock hours, so trainees earn credentials in months rather than years in high demand and high wage careers where there is a shortage of workers.

The Workforce Pell focuses on intensifying the training, not shortening it, so that the credentials will hold the same weight as the traditional credentials. In essence it funds a direct pipeline into Hawaii's workforce through the program.

The first step in the process is determination of criteria. WDC will be using recommendations from a working group and will formally determine the criteria, hopefully at the May 20th board meeting. Then the University takes the lead, and they will review their existing programs using their benchmarks, once they identify the fit, they will submit those programs to the working group for initial vetting. In the third phase, the working group will make a recommendation to WDC for certification of the programs. Once the certification is made, the package moves to the governor's office because under the law, the governor, upon the advice of the State Workforce Board, will certify those programs. The governor will then submit the certified list to the U.S. Secretary of Education. The department will validate the certification, and the programs can be activated. We want to be sure to meet the July 1st deadline.

Keala Monaco from the University of Hawaii Community College explained that the UH will be submitting a spreadsheet to the working group a list of courses that they believe are eligible. They held workshops on Workforce Pell and have asked the campuses to list the courses they believe are eligible. They do not believe that a lot of their courses meet the criteria of 599 hours and 16 weeks and a minimum of 8 weeks and 150 hours.

Bennette Misalucha, Keala Monaco, and Judy Olivera are working closely with the National Governors Association.

Carrie Price read a statement on behalf of Jade Butay, Director, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. In response to the statement of concern that federal Pell grants carry complex compliance and audit requirements, Executive Director Misalucha explained that the program will not be administered by WDC, it will be administered by the University of Hawaii. Keala Monaco added that the university financial aid offices administer the Pell Grants to UH students. Council Member Lui Hokoana added that the UH administers hundreds of millions of dollars in Pell Grants and they conduct compliance audits regularly. UH will work out the details of the Workforce Pell grants and wants to be good partners to meet the training needs for the State of Hawaii.

Chair De Mello asked for a motion to ratify the WDC Resolution, "Establishing the State Planning and Implementation Framework for the Federal Workforce Pell Grant Program," noting that this is an interim step since the U.S. Department of Education has not yet released the final rules. Lui Hokoana motioned to ratify the resolution, Dion Dizon seconded the motion.

Chair De Mello asked the staff to conduct the roll call vote. The motion was approved with 20 aye votes, 0 no votes, and 0 abstentions.

- X. Governor’s Time (2:01:39) Dan Kouchi, Policy Advisor and Designee for Governor Josh Green

Dan Kouchi referred to the reports provided in the board packet. During the Governor’s State of the State Address, he touched on priorities that have remained in place, such as: lowering the cost of living, building housing, reducing homelessness, strengthening healthcare and protecting Hawaii’s environment. He also talked about the need to expand the state’s film and tax credits to boost local hiring and to keep creative industries alive; the need to diversify and grow investments with career pathways such as healthcare, conservation, construction; strengthening public-private partnerships in healthcare, energy and education sectors. He was asked to continue to serve as national president for the Council of State Governments. He will be the incoming chair of the Western Governors Association. As chair he will have a chair initiative, which will be access to mental health care. Dan will work with the Council to collaborate on national opportunities that he may work on.

- XI. Labor Director’s Update (2:05:48) David Rodriguez, Designee for Department of Labor Director Jade Butay

Carrie Price provided an update on the department’s legislative priorities, including a measure to update the workers' compensation statute to conform to the new automated system and a measure to repeal the Hoisting Machine Operators Advisory Board. There is still uncertainty for certain federal funds and grants.

- XII. Fiscal Reports: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Grants (2:08:20).....Ariel Nault, Administrative Services Office and Bennette Misalucha

Ariel presented the WIOA Grant Summary Report which is included in the board packet pages 98-104. The report provides an overview of grant balances, expenditure progress, and spending forecasts for the current and prior program years. For program year 2023, as of June 30, 2025, approximately \$6.9 million has been expended; leaving \$2.8 million in lapsed funds. Also as of June 30, 2025, \$1.9 million was encumbered on high school ready-to-work programs. In 2024 a similar amount was available as of June 30, 2025, \$6.9 million has been spent with \$2.8 million projected to lapse by June 30, 2026. \$1.9 million is contracted to the Department of Education for the Ready-To-Work program; the remaining \$822,000 is planned to be encumbered in the coming months. In addition, Rapid Response funds remain unspent.

- XIII. Certification of the Kauai American Job Center (2:11:44).....Bennette Misalucha

Usually, the certification of the American Job Centers is a responsibility of the local workforce boards. Since Kauai doesn’t have a local board, the certification rests with the Workforce Development Council (State Board). The certification process was conducted earlier last year;

it granted provisional certification with conditions. WDC is asked to ratify the recommendation of the Executive Committee recommendation to extend the certification from January 31, 2026, to May 30, 2026. The extension will allow more work on the corrective action plan.

Chair De Mello asked more a motion to extend the conditional certification of the Kauai American Job Center to May 30, 2026. Lui Hokoana made the motion, Lea Dias seconded the motion, a roll call vote was taken; the motion passed with 20 ayes, 0 noes, and 0 abstentions.

XIV. Legislative Plans for 2026 Legislative Session (2:17:00).....Keith De Mello

Chair De Mello reported that the WDC provided testimony on two measures: in support of HB 1859 which strengthens the Hawaii Workforce Governance framework by requiring WDC to recommend a comprehensive workforce strategy in the State Unified Plan; and HB 2383 previously mentioned on the Pell Grant. WDC provided comments on that bill.

The next item is a resolution for this Council to consider. Currently, two private sector council members represent WDC in testimony before the legislature. However, sometimes both members may not be available. This resolution would allow the Executive Director or a designee to step in and represent the position approved by the Chair or the executive committee.

Chair De Mello asked for a motion to approve the resolution authorizing a backup representation by WDC staff for legislative matters as stipulated in Resolution 2026-2. Dion Dizon made the motion; Trang Malone seconded the motion. After a roll call vote, the motion was carried with 20 ayes, 0 noes, and 0 abstentions.

XV. Executive Director’s Report (02:25:10).....Bennette Misalucha

Bennette Misalucha announced that the United State Secretary of Labor will be attending the Hawaii Internship Summit on March 4.

XVI. Acceptance of Written Reports from Core Partners

Chair De Mello noted that the written reports are in the Board Meeting Packet.

XVII. Acceptance of Written Reports from Local Workforce Development Boards

The written reports are included in the Board Meeting Packet.

XVIII. Acceptance of Written Reports from the Workforce Development Council Standing Committee

The written reports are included in the Board Meeting Packet.

Chair De Mello asked for comments or announcements. Leslie Wilkins, Chair of the Maui Workforce Development board announced that MEDB STEMWorks Innovation Internship Applications are open on STEMWorkshawaii.org and they are looking for employer hosts and intern applicants. They are planning to place 150 paid interns this summer statewide.

XIX. Workforce Development Council's Next Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 9:30 am-12 noon. Virtual videoconferencing via Zoom and in-person at 830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317, Honolulu, HI 96813

XX. Adjournment

Noting the end of the agenda and no further business to conduct, Chair De Mello adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

April 2, 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 HAWAI'I
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

HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Minutes

Date: Thursday, April 2, 2026

Time: 9:30 am to 10:30 am

In-Person Meeting Location: Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Building
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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/>

Attendees:

- Members Present:

Pane Meatoga III, Deputy Political Director, Operating Engineers Local 3, Present in the deliberations but was unable to cast a vote.

Keith DeMello, Workforce Development Council (WDC) Chair, Senior Vice President of Communication & External Affairs, Ulupono Initiative

Trang Malone, WDC Vice Chair, Manager, Workforce Initiatives, CVS Health

Rona Fukumoto, President & CEO, Lanakila Pacific

Shelli Ihori, Director, Workforce Development, Hawaii Pacific Health

Derek Kanehira, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Alexander & Baldwin

Sean Knox, President, Hawaii Employment Services, Inc.

Sean Nakamura, Corporate Controller and Treasurer, TradeWind Group

Amber Akana, Union Representative, Seafarers International Union of North America

Scott Collins, Field Services Officer, MSC/Advocacy, Hawai'i Government Employees Association
Dion Dizon, Director, UH West Oahu Center for Labor Education and Research
Carla Kurokawa, Employment and Training Manager, Alu Like, Inc.
Rossella Guardascione, Chair, Hawai'i County Workforce Development Board
Dan Kouchi, Policy Advisor – Office of the Governor, State of Hawai'i
Andrew Garrett, Representative, State House of Representatives
Benson Medina (*Designee-Mayor of Hawaii County*), Director, County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development
Jade Rojas-Letisi (*Designee-Mayor of Maui County*), Director, County of Maui Office of Economic Development
Nalani Brun (*Designee-Mayor of Kauai County*), Director, County of Kauai Office of Economic Development
David Rodriguez (*Designee-Director of Department of Labor and Industrial Relations*), Equal Opportunity Officer, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Wanelle Kaneshiro (*Designee-Superintendent of Hawai'i Department of Education*), Director, Workforce Development Branch, Hawai'i Department of Education
Thomas Chock, (*Designee-Director of Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism*) Program Specialist, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

- Guests & Staff:

Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, WDC
Jeanne Ohta, Employment Specialist, WDC
Margaret Miura, Program Specialist, WDC
Tyrone Apolar, Program Specialist, WDC
Jung Yun Ha, Deputy Attorney General, Labor Division, State of Hawai'i
Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Carey Price, Program Specialist, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Scott Wheeler, Research Statistician, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Leelynn Brady, Systems Advocacy Coordinator, Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i
Jason Benn, WDC appointee
Doug Chang, WDC appointee
Ashleigh Loa, WDC appointee
Keala Monaco, UH Community Colleges
Judy Oliveira, UH Community Colleges
Jaimee Tabangay, WDD
Lei Ana Green, WDD
Faustino Dagdag
Greenlee Ann M
Chris Wiecking
Linda Weiland
Christine Beaulé
Jayson
Carol K

- Excused:

Donovan Dela Cruz, WDC Assistant Vice Chair, Senator, Hawai'i State Senate

Gina Woo Anonuevo, Vice Chair and Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Human Resources Officer, First Hawaiian Bank

Manu Bermudes, Vice President of Human Resources, Hawai'i Gas

Cheryl Cross, Executive Search Consultant, Inkinen Executive Search

Cary Miyashiro, President, Quad D Solutions

Tui Scanlan, President, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 665

Christopher Lum Lee, President and CEO of TriSec, Inc. and CEO of Hawai'i Coffee Works

Kehaulani Kukahiko (*Kauai Mayor's Representative to WDC*), Manager of Education and Workforce Development for the Kauai Economic Development Board

Leslie Wilkins, Chair, President, Maui Economic Development Board

Andrew T. Kawano, Director, Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, City & County of Honolulu

Lea Dias, Administrator, Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Division

Lui Hokoana (*Designee-President of Hawai'i System*)

- I. [Video 00:09:54] The meeting was called to order by Keith DeMello, Workforce Development Council (WDC) Chair, at 9:40 am. Following roll call, Chair DeMello confirmed that 17 board members were present and 16 board members were needed for quorum. Chair DeMello recognized that Deputy Attorney General Kelly Ha was also present.

Thomas Chock signed into the meeting at 9:40 am and increased quorum to 18 board members.

Jade Roja-Letisi signed into the meeting at 9:41 am and increased quorum to 19 board members.

Pane Meatoga III signed on at 9:34 am but indicated he was at a Council hearing. There were now 20 board members present.

- II. [Video 00:11:51] Approval of the 2024-2028 Modified Workforce Development Unified State Plan (Plan)
 - [Video 00:12:35] At 9:42 am, Executive Director Bennette Misalucha, presented the highlights of the Plan.
 - [Video 00:24:04] At 9:52 am, Chair DeMello opened the meeting to questions.
 - Department of Labor and Industrial Relations designee David Rodriguez inquired about the plan to integrate Perkins V plan into the WIOA Plan. Executive Director Misalucha provided a historical context on the push from the national government to integrate the two plans for greater efficiency. She said that the efforts are underway to align and integrate the two plans and that the goal is to have that effort fully executed by 2028 which is when the next iteration of the workforce Plan is due. Director Misalucha pointed to the most recent effort by WDC to fund P20s intermediaries and career navigators. She asserted that details of these efforts can be found in the Plan.

- [Video 00:28:33] At 9:57 am, Chair DeMello opened the meeting to the public to ask questions or to testify.
 - Leelynn Brady, Systems Advocacy Coordinator, Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i proposed 2 amendments to the Plan:
 - 1) **“This includes individuals with diverse disabilities.”** To be included in Goal 4, Priority Tactic 1 in the rationale section on page 122, after the sentence: “Several population groups possess workforce potential but encounter structural barriers to participation.”
 - 2) **“This includes supporting remote and hybrid work for people with diverse disabilities.”** To be included in Goal 4, Priority 1, after the sentence: “WDC and workforce partners will support targeted outreach strategies for populations with barriers to employment.”
 Executive Director Bennette Misalucha assured Chair DeMello that the amendments would be incorporated into the Plan.

- [Video 00:32:15] At 10:02 am, Chair DeMello entertained a motion to approve the Plan. Dion Dizon first motioned followed by a second motion from Sean Knox. Chair DeMello requested WDC staff to initiate a roll vote.

- [Video 00:37:44] At 10:06 am, motion to approve the plan was carried forward with 19 Yea 0 Nay votes. Because of a scheduling conflict dealing with work matters, Council member Pane Meatoga III had to be excused and was unable to cast a vote during the meeting.

III. [Video 00:37:56] Certification of the Local Boards was deferred to the next board meeting which is on May 21, 2026.

IV. [Video 00:38:56] Next Quarterly Board Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2026, from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm.

V. [00:39:17] Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 am.

Presentation: Defense Workforce Challenges

Kimberly Lehn

Senior Director, Pacific Forum

May 14, 2026

PACIFIC FORUM
INTERNATIONAL

HONOLULU DEFENSE FORUM

Workforce Development as a Strategic Imperative for Hawai'i and the Indo Pacific

KIMBERLY LEHN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PACIFIC FORUM

PACIFIC FORUM
INTERNATIONAL

HONOLULU DEFENSE FORUM





You cannot operationalize readiness without workforce capacity

Manufacturing: A National Workforce Challenge



800,000

Open defense manufacturing jobs today

4 Million

Projected manufacturing vacancies in the next decade

250,000

Additional shipbuilders needed in next 10 years

8+

Major workforce/industrial executive orders since 2025

The issue is no longer whether money exists—it is whether regions can absorb and operationalize investment.

Federal Momentum & Investment

\$145 M

Apprenticeship expansion

\$13.8 M

Shipbuilding workforce grants

\$35 M

Shipyard modernization grants

\$150 B+

Federal maritime/Shipbuilding/maintenance push

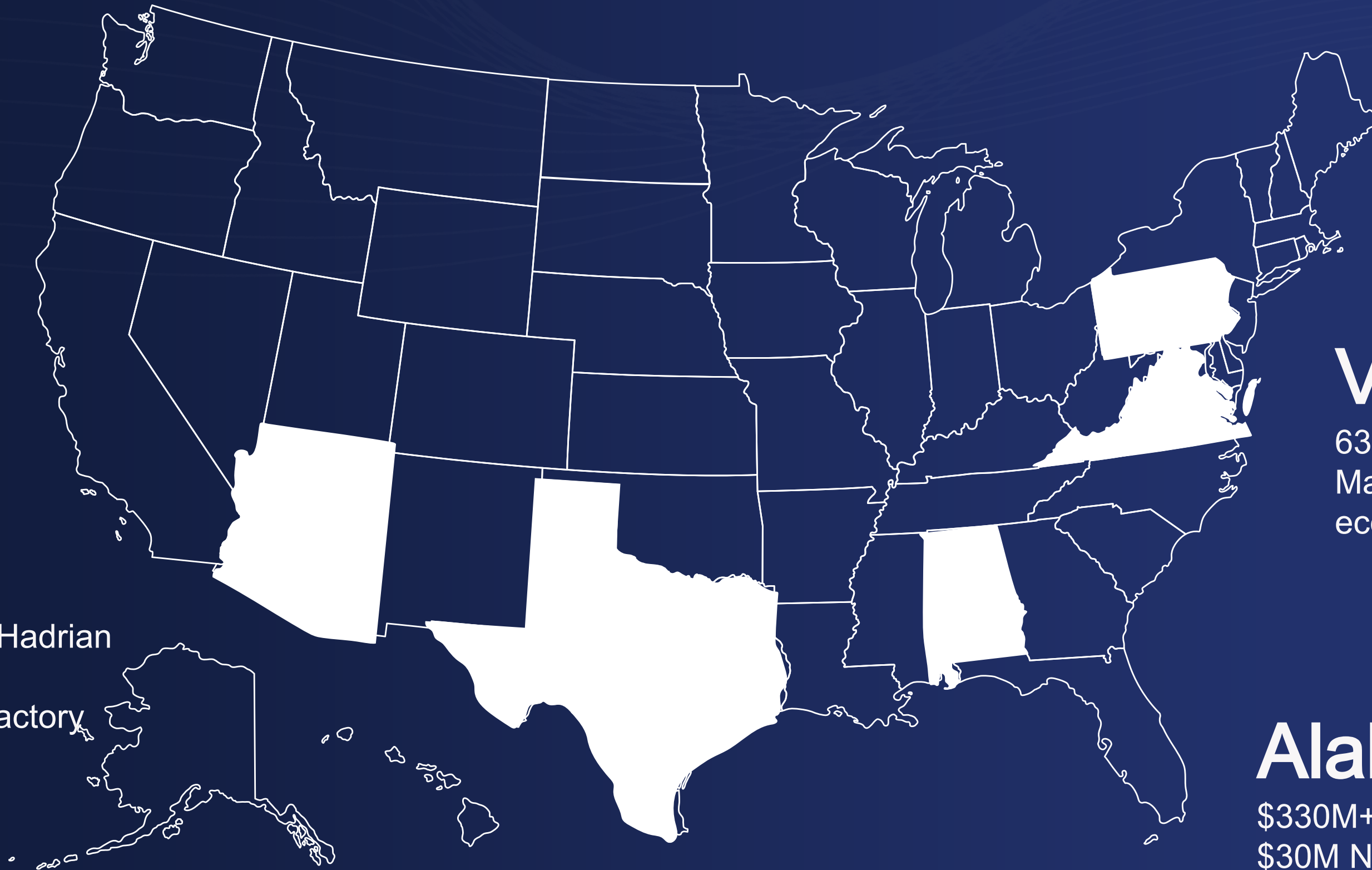
\$66 B - 1.5 T

Projected maritime security trust fund mechanisms

Maritime Prosperity Zones

Federal initiative linking:

- workforce
- Shipbuilding/Ship maintenance
- infrastructure
- logistics
- private investment



Arizona

\$260M AI enabled Hadrian factory
Robotics-enabled factory

Texas

\$1B+ maritime ecosystem investment
2,400 projected jobs

Pennsylvania

\$5B Hanwha Philly Shipyard investment
Robotics, smart shipyard, workforce expansion

Virginia

63,000+ shipbuilding jobs
Mature apprenticeship ecosystem

Alabama

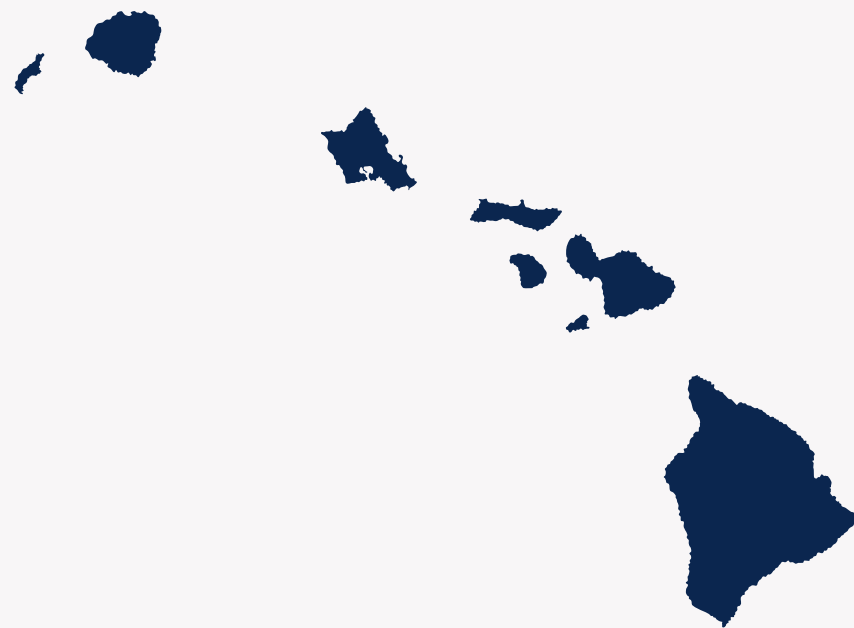
\$330M+ shipbuilding expansion
\$30M Navy funded workforce training
\$900M automated submarine production in “Factory 4”
Workers trainable in <30 days

FORGE: advanced manufacturing & expeditionary sustainment



Pearl Harbor

Schofield Barracks



INDOPACOM



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII®
HONOLULU
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Manufacturing & trades pipeline

PACIFIC INTELLIGENCE
INNOVATION
INITIATIVE

AI, cyber & defense workforce

Near Term Solutions Already Working



ALLIED + INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

AUKUS

- Allied workforce mobility
- Australia importing shipbuilding and submarine manufacturing expertise



Hanwha/Philly Shipyard

- \$5B planned investment
- Robotic smart shipyard technologies
- Production scaling from <2 to 20 vessels a year

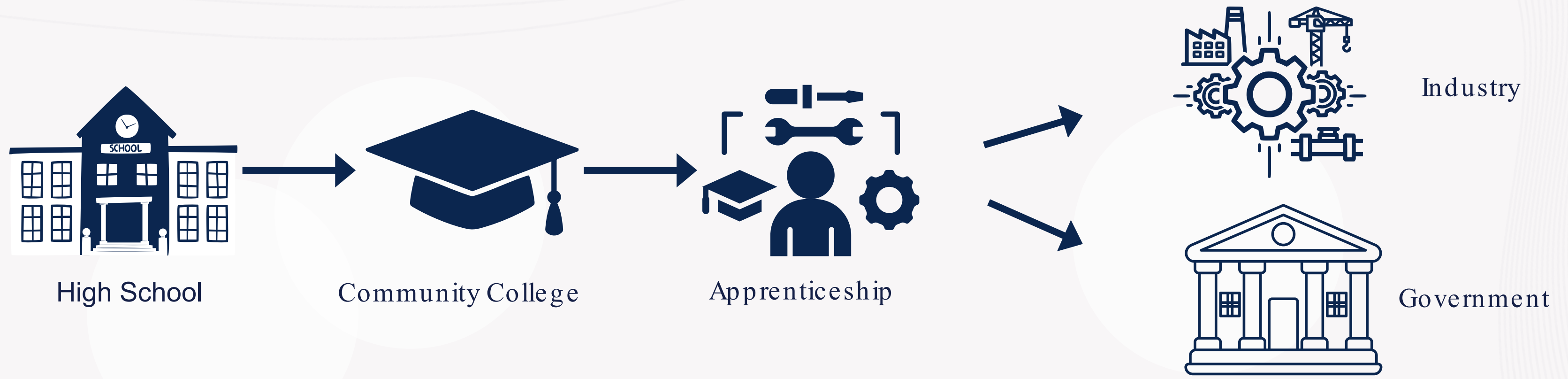
Workforce Acceleration

- Short-term certifications
- Fast-track apprenticeships
- Targeted recruitment

AI + Automation

- Robotic Welling
- Autonomous inspection
- accelerated workforce training

Building the Long-Term Solutions



Education + Training

- Community colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Scholarships

Cultural Shift

- Rebrand trades and manufacturing careers
- STEM + trades integration

Re-skilling

- Mid-career re-training
- Transition pathways



You are not just building workers –
You are building resilient communities.

The Opportunity for Hawaii

The Challenge

Workforce is a limiting factor

The Opportunity

Historical federal investment + industrial alignment

The Decision Point

Will Hawaii become:

- a leader in Indo-pacific workforce development
- a bystander to investment flowing elsewhere



HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: TALENT PIPELINE STRATEGY

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Deployable within 1–3 years



Vocational & Apprenticeship Investment

Expand vocational ed and apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing, shipbuilding and maintenance, and skilled trades. Partner with community colleges and technical schools to build pipeline capacity quickly.



Surge & Senior Talent Strategy

Attract near-term capacity from the mainland and allied nations. Launch a 'RenewedGen' program to re-engage senior and retired professionals — leveraging their expertise as mentors and practitioners.



Restore Social Capital in the Trades

Run public awareness campaigns restoring pride in defense manufacturing and shipbuilding. If society doesn't value these careers, young people won't pursue them — regardless of pay.



Targeted Hiring & Retention Incentives

Introduce signing bonuses, housing support, and career progression clarity for hard-to-fill roles. Reduce time-to-hire for cleared positions and streamline credentialing for skilled trades.



LONG-TERM ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

Structural investments over 3–10+ years



NextGen STEM-to-Career Pathways

Build integrated 9-12 through college pipelines in STEM, management, and advanced manufacturing. Include scholarships, internships, and seamless transitions to full-time defense roles.



Full Community Ecosystem Development

Build the communities, schools, housing, and services that attract and retain defense workers long-term. Workforce follows quality of life — invest in the zip codes, not just the jobs.



Advanced Manufacturing & Robotics Integration

Leverage robotics and automation to handle routine manufacturing tasks, freeing humans for critical thinking, oversight, innovation, and relationship management at the center of operations.



Public-Private Talent Exchange

Create incentivized rotational programs that move talent between industry and government. Cross-sector experience builds trust, shared language, and a more resilient national security workforce.

**Presentation: Workforce Development
Council's Strategic and Implementation
Plans on Artificial Intelligence
Transformation in the Workforce systems**

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN COLLABORATION WITH IMUA ONIPAA

Presents

AI WORKFORCE READINESS SYMPOSIUM SERIES *The AI Transformation: Preparing Hawai'i's Workforce for the Future*

DRAFT AS OF MAY 18, 2026

ABOUT THE SERIES

The Workforce Development Council (WDC), in partnership with Imua Onipaa, is launching a four-part symposium series in 2026 entitled *“The AI Transformation: Preparing Hawai'i's Workforce for the Future.”*

The series began with an April 30, 2026 symposium, *“Where is AI and Where Is It Going?”* in collaboration with the AI Safety Awareness Project. The inaugural session was intended to provide participants with a foundational understanding of current AI capabilities, emerging policy considerations, and the broader workforce and societal implications of technological change.

Subsequent sessions scheduled throughout June, September, and October will expand on these discussions and deepen engagement among employers, educators, policymakers, and workforce stakeholders.

The overall objective of the symposium series is to better understand the impact of AI and identify ways Hawai'i can strategically harness its potential to strengthen workforce development and economic resilience. Beyond raising awareness, the initiative aims to equip key stakeholders with practical knowledge and tools needed to prepare for and successfully navigate an AI-driven future.

Each event builds directly on the prior one, advancing three interdependent pillars simultaneously: the **workers** who need to understand and use AI, the **employers and institutions** who need to build organizational capacity to deploy it responsibly, and the **data infrastructure** that must underpin every AI deployment safely and securely.

01

Workers

- AI literacy & safe use
- Career pathway clarity
- Human-in-the-loop training
- Data stewardship basics

02

Employers

- Business case for AI adoption
- Role & career redesign
- Governance & risk frameworks
- Manager & leadership readiness

03

Data & Infrastructure

- AI Data Architecture design
- Trusted Data Environments
- IT infrastructure readiness
- Cybersecurity & AI defense

SERIES OBJECTIVES

- 1 Establish a shared understanding of AI and its implications for Hawai'i's workforce and economy.
- 2 Identify sector-specific opportunities and risks across hospitality, healthcare, government, construction, and small business.
- 3 Align workforce stakeholders — education, employers, and public agencies — around a unified readiness framework.

4 Build employer capacity to adopt AI responsibly, including governance, career redesign, and data infrastructure.

5 Move forward with actionable strategies, pilot programs, and cross-sector partnerships.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This symposium series is designed for individuals and organizations who are helping shape Hawai'i's workforce future, including:

- **Employers and business leaders** seeking to understand how AI may affect operations, productivity, workforce needs, and competitiveness.
- **Human resource professionals, managers, and organizational leaders** who are interested in building AI readiness and responsibly integrating AI into the workplace.
- **Educators and training providers**, including K–12, community colleges, universities, and workforce trainers, working to prepare students and workers for an evolving labor market.
- **Workforce development professionals**, including American Job Center staff, workforce board members, economic development practitioners, and career counselors.
- **Government leaders and policymakers** who interested in understanding the implications of AI for public policy, workforce systems, and economic resilience.
- **Technology, data, and information professionals** responsible for infrastructure, data governance, privacy, and implementation considerations.
- **Workers and job seekers** who want to better understand how AI may affect occupations, skill requirements, and future career opportunities.
- **Community organizations and nonprofit leaders** which support workforce access and economic opportunity for all.

Whether you are just beginning to explore artificial intelligence or are already actively working in the field, this series is intended to provide practical knowledge, foster meaningful dialogue, and support Hawai'i's readiness for an AI-enabled future.

SERIES AT A GLANCE

#	Date	Theme	Location / Format
1	April 30, 2026	Where Is AI and Where Is It Going?	State Capitol Auditorium, O'ahu · In-Person
2	June 25, 2026	AI and Hawai'i's Workforce: Opportunities and Risks	UH (tentative) - In person
3	September 3, 2026	Building an AI-Ready Workforce in Hawai'i	Hybrid (In-Person + Virtual)
4	October 29, 2026	Hawai'i's AI Workforce in Action	TBD · In-Person

EVENT AGENDAS

EVENT 1 Where Is AI and Where Is It Going? April 30, 2026 · State Capitol Auditorium, O'ahu · In-Person

8:30 – 9:00	Registration & Networking
9:00 – 11:00	Where Is AI and Where Is It Going? <i>Current AI capability, societal forecasting, basic AI policy landscape</i>
11:00 – 12:00	AI, Privacy, and Data <i>How AI interacts with data and privacy; frameworks for future impact</i>
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch (on own)
1:00 – 2:30	The AGI Transition: How AI Affects Work and Life <i>How capable AI systems may affect daily life, work, and social dynamics</i>
2:30 – 4:30	Intro to AI Evaluations — Workshop <i>Hands-on: participants construct basic AI safety evaluations (no technical background needed)</i>
4:30	Adjourn

EVENT 2 AI and Hawai'i's Workforce: Opportunities and Risks June 25, 2026 · TBD · In-Person

8:30 – 9:00	Registration & Networking
9:00 – 10:00	AI and Hawai'i's Economic Impacts <i>This discussion examines how AI may impact Hawai'i's workforce and economy, including its effects on jobs, industries, productivity, and future growth.</i>
10:00 – 11:00	Workforce Risks and Worker Protections <i>What careers are at risk, what skills are growing, employer and policy responsibilities</i>
11:00 – 12:00	What Hawai'i's Education and Training Systems Need to Do <i>Panel: community colleges, DOE, workforce boards, training providers</i>
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch (on own)
1:00 – 3:00	Identifying Hawai'i's Priorities — Working Session <i>Small groups surface top opportunities and risks; priorities feed directly into Event 3</i>
3:00 – 4:00	Synthesis and Preview of Event 3
4:00	Adjourn

EVENT

3

Building an AI-Ready Workforce in Hawai'i

September 3, 2026 · Hybrid — In-Person + Virtual

8:30 – 9:00	Registration / Virtual Room Opens
9:00 – 10:00	Recap of Events 1 & 2 Priorities
10:00 – 12:00	Workforce Alignment Working Groups <i>Parallel sessions by stakeholder type; each group develops 2–3 actionable strategies</i>
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch / Virtual Networking Breakouts
1:00 – 2:30	Strategy Presentations and Cross-Sector Dialogue
2:30 – 4:00	Building the Roadmap <i>Draft commitments recorded for ratification at Event 4</i>
4:00 – 4:30	Preview of Event 4 and Call to Action
4:30	Adjourn

EVENT

4

Hawai'i's AI Workforce in Action

October 29, 2026 · Location TBD · In-Person

8:30 – 9:00	Registration & Networking
9:00 – 10:30	What We Have Built and What We Have Learned <i>Sector spotlights: real outcomes from employers, educators, and agencies</i>
10:30 – 12:00	Workforce Pathways and Career Opportunities <i>AI-adjacent career paths available now in Hawai'i; credentials and training required</i>
12:00 – 1:00	Networking Lunch
1:00 – 2:30	Hawai'i's AI Workforce Commitments — Public Pledge Session <i>Employers, agencies, and training partners announce Year 1 commitments</i>
2:30 – 3:30	Series Outcomes Report and Roadmap Presentation
3:30 – 4:00	Open Discussion and Close
4:00	Adjourn

©2026 Imua 'Onipa'a · All Rights Reserved
Proprietary and Confidential

Imua 'Onipa'a — Lead Convener & Coordinator

Nick Winfrey, Executive Director · Gary Albitz, Managing Director

Participating Partners/confirmed as of 5.18.26

Department of Accounting and General Services
 Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
 Hawaii Department of Education
 Hawaii P-20
 University of Hawaii

Governor's Time

Dan Kouchi

Policy Advisor at the Governor's office

Designee for Governor Josh Green

2026 Legislative Session Wrap Up

The Legislative Session wrapped up on Friday, May 8, 2026. Roughly 300 bills will likely be considered by the Governor for his final approval. Important legislation that passed Conference include:

- HB1800, The Supplemental Budget Bill – Includes approximately \$10.63 billion in general funds and \$1.514 billion in Capital Improvement general obligation funds for FY2027. The supplemental budget also included roughly \$120 million in Green Fee related projects, with roughly 60 percent coming from the initial list that was transmitted by Governor Green and compiled by the Green Fee Advisory Council.
- SB3125, Tax Credits Bill – This bill would keep in place the tax credits that were passed in 2024 to ensure lower and middle-income Hawai'i residents will continue to benefit from these credits. The bill would also create a new tax bracket for households earning more than \$1 million or more and single filers earning \$500,000 or more. Additionally, this bill would also see some tax credits phased out over time.
- SB2580, Film Tax Credit Bill – This bill helps to strengthen and modernize Hawai'i's film tax credit program to support local jobs, attract major productions, and ensures that the state can remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global entertainment industry.

All bills that pass the legislature will still undergo review amongst Governor Green and the departments prior to the July 15th signing deadline.

Director's Time

David Rodriguez

Designee for Department of Labor Director Jade Butay

Director's Time

A. Kona Low Initiatives

1. Disaster Unemployment Assistance

Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) funded program operated by the United States Department of Labor as a result the Presidential Disaster Declaration by President Donald Trump on April 7, 2026. Department of Labor and Industrial Relations began accepting applications 5/7, benefits available week beginning 3/15 through week ending 10/10, filing deadline 6/15. Eligibility is for those not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits including workers, business owners, and self-employed individuals in the City and County of Honolulu, County of Hawai'i, and County of Maui who may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits if they became unemployed or had their work hours reduced or interrupted due to the storms, floods, landslides, and mudslides that occurred between March 10, 2026 and March 24, 2026. Further information is available on the Unemployment Division's website.

2. National Dislocated Worker Grant

Update on the status of application for a WIOA discretionary grant to assist with the economic dislocation caused by the natural disaster.

B. 2026 Legislature Important Measures

- House Bill 1800 RELATING TO THE STATE BUDGET

2.5% across the board cuts to the DLIR's general-funded functions, intending to seek flexibility in the application of the ongoing 10% restriction (5% hard, 5% soft) contained in the Executive Memorandum for Fiscal Year Budget Execution Policies and Instructions, and

- House Bill 1800

Loss of a relatively small number of positions, which avoids the time-consuming process of requesting new positions as part of the budget approval process through Budget and Finance, Governor, and the Legislature as well as the time-consuming process of establishing positions and recruitment.

- Senate Bill 3282 RELATING TO THE WORKFORCE PELL PROGRAM

The DLIR offered comments. The structure proposed in the measure did not reflect approaches under consideration in other States, especially as federal rulemaking was in progress with the U.S. Department of Education. The DLIR has extensive experience and expertise in managing federal grants, supported by dedicated staff with specialized knowledge and a proven track record. The Workforce Pell Grants will involve complex compliance, reporting, and audit requirements. Effective administration demands dedicated personnel, specialized expertise, and demonstrated success in managing federal grants. The Department strongly objected to the data sharing provision contained in this measure, which presented legal, operational, and federal compliance challenges for the DLIR's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program.

- **House Bill 2468 RELATING TO INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS**

Failed to pass and was an effort to clarify the responsibilities of the department and explicitly authorize the DLIR to contract with trade organizations or apprenticeship program sponsors to expand the private sector internships. Nonetheless, although reduced, the department still has a significant budget allocation for Hele Imua and seeks WDC members support in connecting interns with internship opportunities, especially for the well-developed public sector portion of Hele Imua.

C. Governor's Delegation to Director

- Director's/department's overarching focus continues to be the provision of services to the intended beneficiaries of WIOA funds—the vulnerable Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth populations. Included in that, and with the assistance of the Council, is the goal to increase the quantity and quality of service delivery at the Local Level and the use of WIOA funds.
- The WIOA program continues to encounter challenges, for examples, that have resulted in the development and submission to U.S. DOL of a Performance Improvement Plan for the Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment Rate and continuing dialogue with the U.S. DOL on Corrective Action Plan for Inaccurate Cost Allocation, Insufficient Policies and Procedures for Effective Cost Controls, and Insufficient Budget Controls for Maui County.
- Sustainability of staffing and resources remains a top concern as WIOA funding is cyclical and the State's unemployment rate, particularly in comparison to the national average, is a key factor in determining how WIOA funds are allocated among the states. As with other federal programs, workforce funding has experienced delays and reductions and, in some cases, temporary elimination (notably the Senior Community Service Employment Program) followed by restoration. Planning amid shifting federal policies and limited fiscal clarity has posed significant challenges and has required the reprioritization of staffing

allocations. Sustainability concerns also play a role in the obligation to the U.S. DOL to be a steward of the funding and to meet the grant requirements, regulations, and grant terms and conditions.

- Salary Increase for Employees Exempt from Bargaining Unit (BU)13

Pursuant to an Executive Order in conjunction with BU13 civil service salary increases, effective 7/01/2026 for exempt employees, “Employees not administratively assigned to the salary schedule shall receive a two and ninety-five hundredths percent (2.95%) pay increase; or be adjusted at the discretion of the appointing authority from funds allowed for this purpose provided that the pay increase shall be no less than two and ninety-five hundredths percent (2.95%).”

Standing DLIR policy is to extend exempt positions only through the next fiscal year. That’s how we handle it across the board, with no exceptions. And beyond our internal policy, State fiscal law and DHRD policy don’t let us extend any exempt position past the fiscal biennium unless there’s explicit statutory authority that provides otherwise, like for the Hawaii Labor Relations Board.

D. A Report on the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration
San Francisco Regional Office
90 7th Street, Suite 17300
San Francisco, California 94103



August 27, 2025

Jade Butay
Director
Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 417
Honolulu, HI 96818

Grant Numbers: AA-34764; AA-36315;
AA-38525; ES-35340; ES-36750; ES-38726

Dear Mr. Butay:

This letter is in response to the Corrective Action Plan submitted on June 9, 2025, addressing the compliance findings identified during the monitoring review of Hawaii's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and III programs. We appreciate the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)'s continued efforts toward resolving the remaining findings. We acknowledge the resolution of findings 2, 8, and 10. Corrective actions for findings 12, 13, and 14 are described below.

Finding #12: Inaccurate Cost Allocation – Maui County

Corrective Action: To resolve this finding, the state must submit to the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Regional Office documentation demonstrating that the Maui County local workforce development board has:

1. Developed and implemented policies and procedures for staff time distribution to ensure accurate, allowable, and proper labor distribution per cost objective that include reconciliation methods to review after-the-fact interim charges;
2. Developed and implemented policies and procedures for cost allocation;
3. Informed the staff of, or trained staff on, the staff time distribution and cost allocation policies and procedures; and
4. Corrected the salary and wages charged to each of the programs/awards: Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Local Area Administration.

DLIR Response: Staff salary and wages for February 2023-April 2023 have been corrected to reflect actual amount rather than budgeted amount. Explanation of correction has been provided in the description box of the expenditure attachments.

ETA Response: DLIR provided documents to reflect corrected staff salary and wages for February to February 2023 to April 2023. DLIR has resolved the portion of the finding related to the correction of the salary and wages charged to each of the program/awards.

To close the remainder of the finding, DLIR must submit to the Regional Office documentation demonstrating that Maui County has:

1. Developed and implemented policies and procedures for staff time distribution to ensure accurate, allowable, and proper labor distribution per cost objective, which include reconciliation method to review after-the-fact interim charges;
2. Developed and implemented policies and procedures for cost allocation; and
3. Informed the staff of, or trained staff on, the staff time distribution and cost allocation policies and procedures.

DLIR Response: An American Job Center (AJC) Cost Reconciliation and Allocation policy/procedures was developed and appears in the Maui County Policy and Procedures Manual, updated 4/2025. Staff has been trained and notified of this policy, and allocations are reviewed monthly to ensure compliance. Maui County has supplied an expenditures report but has not yet provided the cost reconciliation against the budget. A copy of the AJC Cost Reconciliation and Allocation, Staff training log, and expenditure report has been provided as attachment.

ETA Response: DLIR response provided was insufficient, as it did not include or address the policies and procedures related to staff time distribution. To resolve this finding, DLIR must verify that Maui County has developed and implemented comprehensive policies and procedures for staff time distribution. These must ensure accurate, allowable, and appropriate allocation of labor costs by cost objective and include a reconciliation method to review and adjust interim charges after the fact.

Finding #13: Insufficient Policies and Procedures for Effective Internal Controls – Maui County

Corrective Action: To resolve this finding, the DLIR must submit to the Regional Office for review and concurrence:

1. A copy of the local workforce development board’s updated operation policies and procedures, including financial reporting, cost allocations, and allowable costs; and
2. Verification that staff have been trained on the updated policies and procedures.

DLIR Response: The Maui County local workforce development board has been apprised of the corrections to the findings. The updated policies and procedures, including financial reporting, cost allocations, and allowable costs, will be ratified at the December 2023 board meeting.

ETA Response: DLIR informed the Regional Office that Maui County will update its policy and procedures on financial reporting, cost allocations, and allowable cost. To resolve the finding, DLIR must submit to the Regional Office documentation that Maui County updated its policies and procedures, including financial reporting, costs allocations, and allowable costs.

DLIR Response: The Maui County local workforce development board has policies for financial reporting, cost allocation, and allowable costs that appear in the Maui County Policy and Procedure Manual, updated 4/2025. Staff have been notified of these policies and related updates. A copy of the AJC Cost Reconciliation and Allocation, Staff training log, and expenditure report has been provided as attachment.

ETA Response: DLIR response provided was insufficient, as it did not include documentation related to financial reporting. To resolve this finding, DLIR must verify that Maui County's updated policy and procedures manual incorporates financial reporting requirements.

Finding #14: Insufficient Budget Controls – Maui County

Corrective Action: To resolve this finding, DLIR must submit to the Regional Office documentation demonstrating that the local workforce development board has implemented cost reconciliation and allocation of the one-stop operating budget to actual.

DLIR Response: The One-Stop Center's office assistant and manger are 100% subsidized by the County of Maui, where the partners are co-located in a County-owned facility. This is further explained in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) Allocation Chart of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/IFA, which has been updated to reflect the office dimensions of the new One-Stop Center. The cost allocation methodology is as follows: Square footage was utilized to determine overall Partner Contributions. This was done in an effort to remedy the imbalance on non-physically represented Partners and to comply with the requirements of Partners' contributions having to be in proportion to the Partners' use of the One-Stop Center and relative benefit received.

ETA Response: DLIR provided an updated allocation chart for the Maui MOU/IFA to show that the Maui AJC is 100% subsidized by Maui County. To close this finding, DLIR must submit to the Regional Office documentation demonstrating that Maui County has implemented the cost reconciliation and allocation of the One-Stop-Operating budget to actual as specified in 20 CFR 678.755 (b).

DLIR Response: The One-Stop Center's office assistant and manager are 100% subsidized by the County of Maui, where the partners are co-located in a County-owned facility. See the AJC Cost Reconciliation and Allocation Policy/procedure in the Maui County Policies and Procedures Manual, updated 4/2025, and the IFA Allocation Chart of the MOU IFA, which has been updated to reflect the office dimensions of the new One-Stop Center. The cost allocation methodology is as follows: Square footage was utilized to determine overall Partner contribution. Staff has been notified of the policy/procedure, and allocations are reviewed monthly to endure compliance. A copy of the IFA Allocation Chart within the County of Maui MOU and IFA for Partners of the AJC, AJC cost reconciliation and allocation procedures, and staff training log has been provided as an attachment.

ETA Response: DLIR provided a copy of the AJC cost reconciliation and allocation procedures. In its response to Finding #12, DLIR indicated that Maui County has submitted an expenditures report; however, the cost reconciliation against the approved budget has not yet been provided. To close this finding, DLIR must verify that Maui County is implementing its cost reconciliation policies and procedures.

Please submit documentation addressing the resolution of findings 12, 13, and 14 within 30 days from the date of this letter to the Regional Office at RO6-RA-SF@dol.gov, with a copy to ETA-R06-Hawaii@dol.gov. The Regional Office remains available to provide technical assistance as needed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (415) 625-7900.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony Crouch".

Anthony Crouch
Supervisory Workforce Development Specialist

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration
San Francisco Regional Office
90 7th Street, Suite 17300
San Francisco, California 94103



April 15, 2026

Jade T. Butay
Director
Hawaii State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Mr. Butay:

This letter is to formally request the State of Hawaii submit a performance improvement plan to address the performance failure for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker (DW) Credential Attainment indicator. As previously informed, the Program Year (PY)2024 assessment indicated that the State of Hawaii's performance for the WIOA DW Credential Attainment indicator did not meet this established threshold. Hawaii's PY 2024 adjusted level of performance for the DW Credential Attainment Rate was 38.4%; the threshold is 50%. In accordance with 20 CFR § 677.190(b) a grantee that fails a measure will develop a Performance Improvement Plan to provide the strategy to improve performance.

It is critical to note, as indicated in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 11-19, Change 2: [Negotiations and Sanctions Guidance for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Core Programs](#), that if the same performance failure occurs in two consecutive program years, sanctions will be applied which may include a reduction in Governor's discretionary fund.

ACTION REQUIRED: To ensure that PY 2025 WIOA annual performance for the DW Credential Attainment is not subject to sanction, Hawaii shall submit a detailed performance improvement plan by April 22, 2026. The plan should include the following:

- The steps/strategies the state will take to improve the DW credential attainment rate.
- The due date for when these actions will take place.
- The staff responsible.

The state must include a strategy to ensure that the participants in the "HI DW CRED TA Data Table" spreadsheet provided are contacted and reported accurately. The Regional Office will provide technical assistance to the State of Hawaii. A sample plan format is also included for your reference.

We look forward to receiving your Performance Improvement Plan to ensure prompt action towards achieving WIOA's performance goals.

If you have any questions, please contact Blanca Bonilla, Performance Specialist, at Bonilla.Blanca.E@dol.gov, or Lorraine Jamison, Division Chief, at Jamison.Lorraine@dol.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tamika L. Ledbetter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "L".

Dr. Tamika L. Ledbetter
Regional Administrator

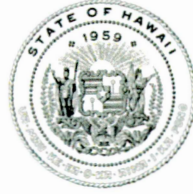
Enclosure

Cc: Keith DeMello, Hawaii State Board Chair

Regional Office Performance Improvement Plan	
1. Provide Technical Assistance	<p>Conduct monthly Technical Assistance calls with HI to review specific issues contributing to the underperformance in the Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment Rate and outline targeted strategies for improvement.</p> <p>This plan should be a collaborative effort between the state agency and the federal agency.</p>
2. Local Areas Technical Assistance	<p>Conduct Technical Assistance in conjunction with the state of Hawaii to the four local areas to provide an overview of the WIOA Credential Attainment performance indicator.</p>
3. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Routinely monitor progress against the revised performance targets and the objectives outlined in HI's CAP. Evaluate Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR) in WIPS, and the accuracy of the PY25 Annual Performance Report.</p>

Hawaii Performance Improvement Plan PY2024 DW Credential Attainment Performance Failure		
Steps/Strategies	Responsible Unit/Staff	Due Date
Technical Assistance (TA) Needs		
List any TA needs:		

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

MAR 02 2026

TO: Dr. Tamika Ledbetter
Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration, Region 6
90 7th Street, Suite 17-300
San Francisco, California, 94103-1516
Email: R06-RA-SF@dol.gov
wioa.plan@dol.gov

FROM: Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

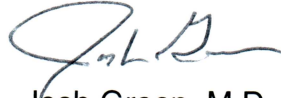
Dear Dr. Ledbetter:

As Governor for the State of Hawai'i, I am delegating responsibility for administering Titles I and III of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to the State of Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR). DLIR Director, Mr. Jade Butay, and DLIR Deputy Director, Mr. William Kunstman, are members of my cabinet. They have been delegated the responsibility and authority to receive and accept the WIOA Title I and III funds and to carry out all facets of the programs on behalf of the DLIR.

In addition, I am designating the DLIR Workforce Development Division Administrator, Ms. Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, as my designee for submitting the WIOA Unified State Plan and its modifications. Her email address is Maricar.R.Pilotin-Freitas@hawaii.gov, and phone number is (808) 586-8817.

Thank you for your continued support in developing Hawai'i's workforce. Should you have any questions, you may contact Director Butay at Jade.Butay@hawaii.gov or call him at (808) 586-8835.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Green".

Josh Green, M.D.

Governor, State of Hawai'i

- c: Anthony Crouch, Federal Project Officer, USDOL Region VI
- Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council
- Keith Hayashi, Superintendent, State DOE
- Lea Dias, Administrator, DHS Vocational Rehabilitation

Update on Workforce Pell

UPDATE ON WORKFORCE PELL

As of May 21, 2026

Background:

The Workforce Pell Grant is a new federal financial aid initiative administered by the United States Department of Education that expands Pell Grant eligibility to include qualifying short-term workforce training programs. The program is intended to increase access to high-quality, workforce-aligned education and training opportunities that lead to in-demand occupations and support economic mobility.

For Hawai'i, Workforce Pell presents an opportunity to strengthen pathways into employment while aligning education and workforce investments with the State's broader workforce priorities and industry needs.

Importantly, Workforce Pell is not a standalone grant fund administered by a state agency. Similar to traditional Pell Grant financial aid, participating institutions will determine student eligibility and coordinate directly with the United States Department of Education for the administration and disbursement of funds. Eligible Title IV institutions will administer the program. **The Workforce Development Council (WDC) will not administer funding nor handle program funds.**

Executive Summary:

Hawai'i continues to make steady progress toward Workforce Pell implementation through coordinated planning and collaboration among education, workforce, and government partners. While many implementation details remain dependent upon forthcoming federal guidance, current efforts are focused on building an appropriate governance structure, establishing program criteria, and ensuring alignment with workforce priorities. Staff will continue to provide updates as implementation activities progress and additional federal guidance becomes available.

Update:

1. A Hawai'i Workforce Pell working group has been established and has convened at least four times to support statewide implementation efforts. The group is composed of representatives from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Director's office, the Workforce Development Division (WDD), Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE), the University of Hawai'i System, University of Hawai'i Community Colleges, and the Workforce Development Council (WDC), with

technical assistance and support through the National Governors Association (NGA) Workforce Pell Academy.

2. From May 6–8, 2026, a Hawai'i delegation attended the NGA Workforce Pell Academy convening in Washington, D.C. Participants included Maricar Pilotin-Freitas (WDD); Judy Oliveira, and Keala Monaco from the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges; Carey Price from the Director's Office; and Bennette Misalucha (WDC). Participation provided Hawai'i the opportunity to engage directly with peer states and exchange information regarding implementation strategies, governance structures, and policy development efforts.
3. Discussions with participating states highlighted that implementation nationwide remains in the early stages. At the time of the convening, only three states— Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Minnesota —reported having completed Workforce Pell policy frameworks. This reinforced that Hawai'i is moving within a similar implementation timeline as many states across the country.
4. While Workforce Pell funding officially becomes available on July 1, 2026, implementation in Hawai'i will require additional planning and policy development. Rulemaking guidance for Workforce Pell is expected to be released by the federal government in the coming weeks. As final regulations become available, Hawai'i's plans and implementation framework will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.
5. Current understanding of the State Workforce Board's role indicates that the WDC will have responsibility for approving the Workforce Pell policy framework, including criteria used to determine program eligibility. Subsequently, the Board will review and approve specific programs that qualify as Workforce Pell eligible under the adopted criteria. The WDC will maintain the list of Workforce Pell eligible programs on its website, similar to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
6. Preliminary vetting suggests that only a limited number of Hawai'i programs may initially qualify under Workforce Pell eligibility requirements. Current estimates indicate approximately three programs may qualify during initial implementation, including one non-credit program and two credit-bearing programs. This assessment remains preliminary and may change pending release of final federal rules and further review.
7. Because the WDC Board does not meet again until September 10, 2026, staff anticipate that a special Board meeting may need to be convened in late July or August to support implementation timelines and avoid delays in achieving program objectives.

8. The working group also anticipates expanding participation to include selected WDC members and private sector representatives. Industry participation will be important in informing eligibility criteria and ensuring Workforce Pell programs align with workforce needs and labor market demand.

Next Steps:

1. Develop a draft Hawai'i Workforce Pell policy framework.
2. Define and document roles and responsibilities among participating agencies and partner organizations.
3. Present proposed eligibility criteria for Board review and approval.
4. Expand working group participation to include industry and private sector representation.
5. Establish an implementation timeline and milestones for all participating entities.
6. Review and revise implementation plans following release of final federal regulations.

Legislative Update

Keith DeMello

BILLS OF INTEREST

Title: RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

[HB1859 HD1](#)

Description: Requires the Workforce Development Council to recommend to the Governor, a comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy to inclusion in the State Unified Plan and be responsible for facilitating the alignment of workforce development efforts and programs conducted by state departments and agencies to achieve the State Unified Plan and the Comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Title: RELATING TO STATE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.

[HB2315 HD1](#)

Description: Authorizes the Department of Health to establish a vacation payout pilot program in which eligible Department of Health employees may defer unused vacation leave credits in favor of a pay out to provide home purchase down payment assistance. Requires reports to the Legislature. Requires reports to the Legislature. Sunsets 6/30/2029. (SD1)

Title: RELATING TO THE WORKFORCE PELL GRANT PROGRAM.

[HB2383 HD1](#)

Description: Establishes a statewide framework for the implementation of the federal Workforce Pell Grant Program to provide financial aid for certain short-term workforce education and training programs. Establishes a Workforce Pell Grant Program Approval Committee within the Workforce Development Council. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

[SCR 139](#)

Title: REQUESTING THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNOR, FOR INCLUSION IN THE STATE UNIFIED PLAN, A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT ALL PEOPLE OF THE STATE HAVE A PATHWAY TO A CAREER THAT ENABLES THEM TO LEARN, WORK, AND THRIVE IN THE STATE AND CONTRIBUTE TO A VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY GROUNDED IN COMMUNITY VALUES BY 2045.

Description: Hawai'i Workforce Development Council; State Unified Plan; Comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGES

PASSED ADVISE AND CONSENT HEARINGS

[GM503](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **DOUGLAS CHANG**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM504](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **GEORGE DENISE**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM512](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **JASON BENN**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM626](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **SEAN NAKAMURA**, for a term to expire 06-30-2027.

Description: See Title

[GM627](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **GINA ANONUEVO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2026.

Description: See Title

[GM629](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **TRANG MALONE**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Description: See Title

[GM630](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **CARY MIYASHIRO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Description: See Title

[GM631](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **KEITH DEMELLO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Description: See Title

[GM726](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **GINA ANONUEVO**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030

Description: See Title

[GM759](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **CHRISTOPHER BURNETT**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM792](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **CHERYL CROSS**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM793](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **ASHLEIGH LOA**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

[GM779](#)

Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council, Gubernatorial Nominee, **MARK PHONGSAVATH**, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Description: See Title

Certification
Kaua'i American Job Center

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
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
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: dliir.workforce.council@hawaii.gov

April 29, 2026

Executive Committee Recommended Action:

Recommend that the provisional certification for the Kaua'i American Job Center, currently set to lapse on May 31, 2026, be extended through December 31, 2026.

Background

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that an American Job Center (AJC) be certified 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 Kaua'i local area currently does not have a local board, the Workforce Development Council (the State Board) was tasked with this assignment.

An initial Kaua'i AJC certification site visit was made on April 9, 2025. The visit established conditions for provisional certification and required corrective actions. The Workforce Development Council voted on the extension of the provisional certification twice, and the latest action will expire on May 31, 2026.

This narrative provides the certification status for the Kaua'i AJC based on the most recent site review conducted on Monday, April 27, 2026 as well as meetings with the Kaua'i AJC leadership, the representatives of WIOA core partners (Title II and Title IV), Kaua'i business community and relevant parties at the Kaua'i Community College.

This write-up also considers the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Follow-up Report dated April 24, 2026, submitted by the Workforce Development Division on April 27, 2026.

Here is a summary of the April 2025 findings, the Corrective Action Plan update (April 2026), and the current observations based on the April 27, 2026 Site Visit.

Finding	Corrective Action Plan Update	Observations/Interviews*
1. Staffing limitations affect outreach and employer engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outreach schedule has been created for WDD Kaua'i staff • WDD Kaua'i staff attend and host outreach and employer engagement events such as High School Career Fairs and WDD Kaua'i Career Fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach efforts are shared by staff members on a rotating basis. • Staff also participate at the Kaua'i Alliance Kiosk • Partner engagement includes cross-event attendance by staff
2. Customer feedback system needs formalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey has been created; staff will be briefed prior to rollout (Attachment 1: AJC Customer Satisfactory Survey Form) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will also be briefed on how to present the survey to participants • Plans are to roll out the survey in May 2026
2. Staff development should be more structured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs assessment is completed, analysis is underway, and the staff continue to attend WDD statewide training. (Attachment 2: WIOA Title I & AJC Training Needs Assessment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination of training resources is used including videos of previous training, training by Adele Manera, other WDD branch managers, Maricar-Pilotin Freitas for budgets, and Jayson Muraki on the Hirenet system.
3. Each AJC must demonstrate ADA compliance readiness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff reviewed statewide DLIR ADA/EEO policies and signed updated acknowledgements; compliance maintained under state policy (Attachment 3 ADA & WIOA EO Policy Review and Acknowledgement Form) 	

**Interview with Adele Manera, WDD Kaua'i Branch Manager and Jaimee Tabangay, WDD Program Specialist on Monday, April 27, 2026*

Other Observations

Challenges in Capacity: The Kaua'i American Job Center currently has a limited staff consisting of Kaua'i Branch Manager Adele Manera, two case managers who support both

Workforce Development Division programs and WIOA Title I programs (Emma – Adult; Paula – Dislocated Worker; Adele – Youth) and a secretary. Given the range of programs administered by the Workforce Development Division, staff capacity to fully address WIOA priorities remains a challenge.

Participant Outreach and Employer Engagement

Current participant outreach and employer engagement are achieved mainly through job fairs. At the last job fair, there were 53 employers and resources and 133 applicants, which is a good result. In PY 24 there were 16 Adult, 7 Dislocated Worker, and 3 Youth participants. (Figure 1) With low enrollment, satisfactory performance results are more difficult to meet. The Kaua‘i AJC is under performing in all Title I WIOA programs.

Comments from Core Partners, and Community members

During talk-story sessions with employers, core partners, community and county partners, it was apparent that there was a general lack of awareness about AJC’s menu of services available to youth, adults, and employers.

Delineation of Roles and Responsibilities

In their response to the Corrective Action Plan, WDD asserts that certain findings were the responsibility of either the local workforce development board (LWDB) or the one stop operator (OSO) of the American Job Center, a role that has never been filled.

With the potential transition of American Job Center operations from the Workforce Development Division to a new one-stop operator, it will be important to clearly define roles and responsibilities. The community outreach functions, for example, would fall under the purview of the new operator, in coordination with the Council.

Lack of Outdoor Signs: the current site of the AJC is almost invisible, lacking signage both outside and inside to identify their presence. Partners suggested that media advertising would be helpful for all programs.

Employer Engagement: there were several suggestions that short surveys of employers might be helpful in determining their familiarity with WIOA services and their workforce needs.

Certification Determination

Certification Status: Provisionally Certified – With Conditions

The Kaua‘i AJC satisfies baseline certification criteria but would benefit from targeted improvements in several key areas.

As part of the next action steps, WDD and WDC staff must collaborate within the next 90 days to achieve the following desired outcomes:

- Analysis of Kaua‘i’s AJC’s WIOA budgets and allocations to determine contractual possibilities
- Procurement of a One Stop Operator contract for Kaua‘i AJC.

- Creation of an informal Kaua‘i advisory council to provide guidance on local matters.
- Monthly coordination meetings with core partners, community partners, education partners, and willing employers
- Establishment of co-enrollment and referral protocols.
- Training/awareness sessions on WIOA for relevant parties including core partner staff, Kaua‘i Community College personnel, high school counsellors, CTE teachers, employers
- Improved AJC signage and identity in Kaua‘i .
- Increased participation in all Title I programs.

Figure 1
Kaua'i Performance Results PY 2024

PY 2024	Program	Participants	Trained Participants Rate	Registered Apprenticeship Rate	Work Experience Rate	Employment Rate Q2 after exit	Employment Rate Q4 after exit	Median Earnings Q2	Credential Attainment Rate	Measurable Skill Gains
Kaua'i	Adult	16	31.20%	0.00%		0.00%	**	NA	NA	0.00%
	Dislocated	7	0.00%	0.00%		**	**	**	0.00%	NA
	Youth	3	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	NA	NA	NA	NA

April 24, 2026

TO: Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director
Workforce Development Council

FROM: Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, Administrator
Workforce Development Division

RE: Kauai WDD (AJC Certification):
Corrective Action Plan – Follow-up Report

Background and Purpose

This report provides an update on the corrective actions identified in the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) revised November 7, 2025, in preparation for the Kauai American Job Center certification follow-up review on April 10, 2026. Certification criteria referenced are contained in Hawaii WDC “WIOA Bulletin 13-16, Change 2” (October 5, 2023).

The CAP aligns directly with the findings from the initial Kauai AJC certification site visit on April 9, 2025, and the resulting Kauai 2025 Certification Narrative issued April 16, 2025, which established the conditions for provisional certification and the required corrective actions.

Because the County of Kauai elected to relinquish its administrative role as the Local Area under WIOA, the State of Hawai‘i Department of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR), Workforce Development Division (WDD) operates the Kauai AJC and provides local workforce services. As a state agency, WDD follows statewide policies, procedures, and compliance systems and cannot independently create local policies separate from State authority.

WDD’s role as the State-operated local area does not include WIOA governance responsibilities. Under federal law:

- The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is responsible for convening partners, developing the local plan, and overseeing the local system (20 CFR 679.370).
- The One-Stop Operator (OSO) coordinates service delivery but may not convene partners, lead governance, or perform LWDB duties (20 CFR 678.620; TEGL 15-16).

These distinctions clarify which CAP items fall under WDD’s operational scope and which remain LWDB/OSO governance functions.

Executive Summary

- Customer Feedback – The CAP required creation of a customer satisfaction survey by December 30, 2025. This requirement has been met. The survey is complete and ready for use. Staff will be briefed prior to rollout to ensure consistent, appropriate implementation.
- Staffing & Outreach – Outreach schedule created; multiple outreach events, employer engagements, and job/career fairs were attended or hosted.
- Staff Development – Training needs assessment completed by three WIOA Title I staff; responses are being reviewed to determine training needs.
- Partner Engagement & Coordination – No meetings were scheduled. Convening partners is an LWDB/OSO responsibility under 20 CFR 679.370 and 20 CFR 678.620.
- ADA/EEO Compliance – Staff re-reviewed DLIR ADA/EEO policies and signed acknowledgments. ADA/EEO training will be coordinated with DLIR’s EEO Officer. As a State agency, WDD follows statewide ADA/EEO policy and does not issue separate local ADA policies.

Alignment to Certification Narrative Findings

Finding: Staffing limitations affected outreach and employer engagement.

CAP Response: Outreach schedule created for WDD Kauai staff; WDD Kauai staff attend and host outreach and employer engagement events such as High School Career Fairs, and WDD Kauai Career Fairs.

Finding: Weak engagement with Kauai County Office of Economic Development (KCED).

CAP Response: Kauai WDD Office Manager communicates and works with County as necessary; No Partner Meetings scheduled as convening Partner Meetings is a LWDB/OSO responsibility.

Finding: Customer feedback system requires formalization.

CAP Response: Survey created; staff will be briefed prior to rollout.

Finding: Staff development should be more structured.

CAP Response: Needs assessment completed; analysis underway; staff continue attending statewide WDD trainings.

Finding: Core partner coordination meetings need to be re-established.

CAP Response: Partners are invited and attend events such as Career Fairs. Kauai WDD staff communicate and work with partners for services/resources and possible referrals. No Partner Meetings scheduled as convening Partner Meetings is a LWDB/OSO responsibility.

Finding: Each AJC must demonstrate ADA compliance readiness.

CAP Response: Staff reviewed statewide DLIR ADA/EEO policies and signed updated acknowledgments; compliance maintained under State policy.

Detailed CAP Status

1. Staffing & Outreach

CAP Activity: Review staff duties and create an outreach schedule (due Jan 30, 2026).

Status: Outreach schedule completed. Staff participated in job fairs, career fairs, and community outreach events.

Next Steps: Continue tracking, attending, and planning outreach activities.

2. Partner Engagement

CAP Activity: Schedule quarterly meetings with Kauai County Office of Economic Development; identify joint initiatives (first by Mar 31, 2026).

Status: No meetings scheduled as convening Partner Meetings is a LWDB/OSO responsibility. Partners are invited to career fairs and communication is made for possible referrals and resources.

Clarification:

- LWDB must convene partners (20 CFR 679.370).
- OSO may not convene partners (20 CFR 678.620; TEGL 15-16).

Kauai WDD will participate when meetings are convened by the responsible entity.

3. Customer Feedback

CAP Activity: Create customer satisfaction survey by December 30, 2025.

Status: Survey is complete and ready for use. Staff will meet before rollout to ensure consistent implementation that encourages—but does not pressure—completion. Survey available electronically and in hardcopy.

4. Staff Development

CAP Activity: Conduct training needs assessment; develop training calendar (Assessment by 30, 2026).

Status: Needs assessment completed by three WIOA Title I staff. Responses are under review to determine training priorities. Staff have continued attending statewide WDD training opportunities.

Next Steps: Develop training topics with WDD Admin Office and staff once analysis is complete. Scheduling will follow.

5. Coordination Meetings

CAP Activity: Re-establish quarterly meetings among core partners; rotate facilitation; document outcomes (first by Mar 31, 2026).

Status: No meetings scheduled as convening Partner Meetings is a LWDB/OSO responsibility. Partners are invited to career fairs and communication is made for possible referrals and services/resources.

Clarification: Convening is an LWDB/OSO responsibility; WDD will participate when meetings are convened.

6. ADA/EEO Compliance

CAP Activity: Develop localized ADA policy; train staff; prepare for monitoring (policy due Feb 27, 2026; training by Mar 31, 2026).

Status:

- Staff reviewed statewide DLIR ADA/EEO policies and signed updated acknowledgments.
- ADA/EEO training requires coordination with DLIR's EEO Officer.

Important Clarification:

As a State of Hawai'i agency, Kauai WDD Branch cannot develop a local ADA policy. WDD follows the official statewide DLIR ADA/EEO policy. WDD Branches do not issue independent policies; compliance occurs through State procedures, staff acknowledgment, and coordination with the DLIR EEO Officer.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – AJC Customer Satisfactory Survey Form
(CAP Item 3: Customer Feedback)
- Attachment 2 – Staff Professional Development – Assessment Tool
(CAP Item 4: Staff Development)
Individual responses maintained on-site only, per 29 CFR Part 1602 (Personnel Records – Confidential).
- Attachment 3 – ADA/EEO Acknowledgment Form
(CAP Item 6: ADA/EEO Compliance)
Original personnel records available on-site only

Attachment 1 –
AJC Customer Satisfactory
Survey Form

Kaua'i American Job Center (AJC) Customer Satisfaction Survey

Your feedback helps us improve our services. Please take a moment to complete this short survey. All responses are confidential.

1. What was the purpose of your visit today? (Select all that apply)

- Unemployment Insurance Assistance
- Job Search Support
- Career Training
- Veterans Services
- Youth Program/Services
- Workshop or Assessment
- Employer Services
- Internship Program or Other Work Experience Opportunities
- Other: _____

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the services you received today?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied



3. Was the staff courteous and helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

4. Did you receive the information or assistance you needed?

- Yes
- No
- Partially

5. How easy was it to access our services (e.g., location, hours, accommodations)?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

6. Have you used HireNet Hawaii (www.hirenethawaii.com) for job search or career services?

- Yes
- No
- I plan to



7. How satisfied are you with HireNet Hawaii services?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

8. Would you recommend the AJC and the services available to others?

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

8. Are you currently enrolled in an AJC program, or do you plan to enroll?

- Yes
- No
- I plan to

9. Do you have any suggestions for improving our services, and/or HireNet Hawaii?



10. Optional Information:

ZIP Code: _____

Employment: Working Not Working Student

Age: Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55+

11. Optional: Would you like someone to follow up with you?

Yes (Please provide contact information below)

No

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____



Attachment 2 –
WIOA Title I & AJC Training
Needs Assessment

WIOA Title I & AJC Training Needs Assessment

Purpose Statement

This assessment is designed to help us identify areas where additional training or resources may be helpful. It is not a performance evaluation—your feedback will guide us in creating a supportive training plan to strengthen WIOA compliance and AJC service delivery.

Section 1: WIOA Knowledge Check

Instructions: Please select the best answer for each question. This section helps us understand which topics may need more focus in training.

1. What does WIOA stand for?

- a) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- b) Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act
- c) Work Incentive and Opportunity Act

2. Which of the following is a core program under WIOA?

- a) TANF
- b) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs
- c) SNAP

3. What is primary purpose of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)?

- a) To track employer performance
- b) To outline a participant's employment goals and steps to achieve them
- c) To determine eligibility

4. Which performance measure focuses on participants' earnings after program exit?

- a) Employment Rate
- b) Median Earnings
- c) Credential Attainment

5. True or False: WIOA requires priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses.

- a) True
- b) False



Section 2: Case Management & Workflow Self-Assessment

Instructions: Rate your confidence in the following areas on a scale of 1=Not Confident to 5=Very Confident.

Skill Area	1	2	3	4	5
1. Conducting intake and eligibility determination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Developing Individual Employment Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Documenting services in case notes accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Understanding WIOA performance measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Providing career counseling and supportive services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Coordinating referrals with AJC network and other partners or services to support participant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Coordinating and working with AJC partners (VR, Adult Ed., etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Using labor market information to guide case management and working with participant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Timely, accurate service and information entries into HNH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Explain what "warm hand-off" means to you when referring participants to other programs and/or services within the AJC partner network and/or other partners					



Section 3: Scenario-Based Questions

Instructions: Please provide the most information in your response that you feel answers the scenarios and questions the best.

1. A participant is eligible for both the Adult and Dislocated Work program. How would you decide which program to enroll them in?

2. A youth participant completed a training but is struggling to find employment. What steps would you take?

Section 4: Open-Ended Feedback

1. What challenges do you face in meeting WIOA performance measures?

2. What additional tools or resources would help you serve participants better?



3. Are there any policy areas you would like more clarity on?

Section 5: Outreach & Recruitment

Instructions: Please select the best answer for each question. This section helps us understand how the outreach and recruitment process works or may not be working.

1. What is the primary purpose of outreach in WIOA?

- a) To meet performance measures
- b) To inform and engage individuals with barriers to employment
- c) To recruit employers for job fairs

2. Which population should be prioritized during outreach?

- a) Individuals with barriers to employment
- b) Anyone seeking employment
- c) Only those already employed

3. What is the difference between outreach and recruitment?

- a) Outreach focused on awareness; recruitment focuses on enrollment
- b) Outreach is for employers; recruitment of for participants
- c) They are the same

4. Instructions: Rate your confidence level in these areas in relation to Outreach & Recruitment (Scale 1=Not confident to 5=Very confident)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Explaining WIOA Programs and Services during/at outreach events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Recruiting participants who meet WIOA eligibility criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Work with and collaborate with community partners for recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



5. Scenario-based: You are attending a community event where attendees are unemployed but unsure about WIOA services. How would you approach the attendees? What would you say?

6. Scenario-based: You need to recruit youth participants for a summer program. What steps would you take to reach the priority populations? How would you recruit participants?

7. Open-ended question: What additional training or resources would help you improve outreach and recruitment?

8. Open-ended question: Are there specific communities or populations you find difficult to engage with and/or to get them engage with the AJC and the programs and services available to them? Please explain why you think this is difficult.



9. Open-ended question: What outreach and recruitment activities have you (you personally, as a case manager of WIOA programs and/or other partner program and services within the AJC) been and are you currently doing?

Section 6: Feedback & Additional Information

Please provide any additional information, questions, or concerns regarding the AJC location you are a part of the AJC network overall, WIOA Title I program and services, partners, etc.

1. Provide any additional comments, questions, concerns, or suggestions to improve WIOA performance measures in your county and the overall impact of the AJC and services to the community.

County/AJC Location:

Staff First & Last Name (Print):

Staff Signature:

Date:



Attachment 3 –
ADA & WIOA EO Policy
Review & Acknowledgement
Form

Kauai American Job Center (AJC)

ADA & WIOA EO Policy Review & Acknowledgement Form

As part of the Kauai AJC Certification Determination issued by the Workforce Development Council, staff are required to review and be familiar with ADA and WIOA Equal Opportunity policies. Please review the documents below before completing this form.

ADA Policies:

DLIR Accessibility & ADA Page: <https://labor.hawaii.gov/website-accessibility/>

DLIR Directive 2011-01 – Reasonable Accommodations: <https://labor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WIA-MOA-Element-2-Exhibit-E1-DLIR-Directive-2011-01-Policy-Statement-on-Reasonable-Accommodations-for-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf>

DLIR Directive 2011-03 – Policy Statement for Persons with Disabilities:
<https://labor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WIA-MOA-Element-2-Exhibit-E3-DLIR-Directive-2011-03-Policy-Statement-for-Persons-with-Disabilities20110805.pdf>

WIOA Nondiscrimination & EO Policy: Please review all components of the plan.
<https://labor.hawaii.gov/wioa-eo/>

Staff Information

Full Name:

Position Title:

Work Email:

Manager/Supervisor Name:

Acknowledgement of Review (check all)

- I reviewed all ADA policy materials listed above.
- I reviewed the WIOA Nondiscrimination & Equal Opportunity Plan.
- I understand these policies apply to all AJC service delivery and WIOA Title I operations.



Understanding & Compliance

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- I have reviewed the ADA and WIOA nondiscrimination policies listed above.
- I understand my responsibility to follow these policies in all program and service activities.
- I will request guidance or reasonable accommodations when needed.

Staff Signature:

Date:

Optional Comments:



2| ADA&EO Acknowledgment



***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: dilir.workforce.develop@hawaii.gov

November 7, 2025

VIA EMAIL & HAND-DELIVERED: 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 or Jaimee Tabangay at 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
1. Staffing & Outreach	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
2. Partner Engagement	Schedule quarterly meetings with Kauai Department of Economic Development; identify joint initiatives; formalize collaboration.	Schedule first meeting for quarter ending March 31, 2026
3. Customer Feedback	Develop and implement customer satisfaction survey; establish review process; integrate feedback into service planning.	Develop survey by December 30, 2025
4. Staff Development	Conduct training needs assessment; create training calendar; partner with WDC and other providers for workshops.	Assessment by January 30, 2026
5. Coordination Meetings	Re-establish quarterly meetings among core partners; rotate facilitation; document outcomes.	Schedule first meeting for quarter ending March 31, 2026
6. ADA Compliance	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

September 30, 2025

VIA EMAIL & HAND-DELIVERED: 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 or
Jaimee Tabangay of my staff at 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

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

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

V. Conclusion

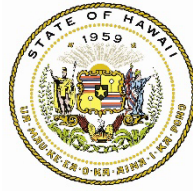
WDD and its Kauai Branch staff remain fully committed to the continuous improvement of the Kauai American Job Center and to delivering high-quality, accessible, and client-centered workforce services to the community.

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 19th.

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.

Committee Restructure

Employer Engagement Committee and Sector Strategies Committee



**PRESENTATION TO THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
May 8, 2026
9:30 am**

Proposed Action Plan for Employer Engagement

Strategic Rationale

Employer engagement is often the most challenging leg of the workforce development tripod:

1. Job Seekers
2. Public Workforce System
3. Employers

Historically, employer participation tends to be the weakest link nationally and locally. Strengthening this pillar is essential if Hawai'i intends to become more demand-driven, agile, and economically competitive.

Background

The recently approved Hawai'i Unified Plan identified employer engagement and sector strategies as central priorities for strengthening the State's workforce system and advancing long-term economic resilience.

Under **Goal 3: Advance Economic Mobility and Sector Resilience**, the Plan specifically calls for stronger sector partnerships in high-demand industries through the following priority tactics:

- Continue supporting sector partnership models convened across industries
- Prioritize sectors demonstrating sustained demand and wage potential

In addition, the Unified Plan emphasizes that employer engagement from a State and local area perspective, must evolve from a supportive activity into a core workforce strategy.

While Hawai'i's workforce system has historically focused appropriately on job seekers and service delivery, **the next phase requires employers to serve as active co-designers of workforce solutions.**

The Plan recognizes that current employer engagement efforts at the local area level have not yet achieved the scale, consistency, visibility, or responsiveness necessary to fully align workforce investments with real-time industry demand. For instance, only Oahu Workforce Development Board has a dedicated business outreach unit.

Accordingly, the Board has already approved a strategic direction that includes:

- Elevating employer engagement as a core governance priority
- Strengthening sector strategies through employer-led models
- Enhancing labor market intelligence and sector analysis
- Conducting structured employer listening sessions
- Exploring intermediary models to support sustained employer outreach and partnership development

Because implementation of this strategy requires adjustments to committee structure and governance processes, the matter is being presented to the Executive Committee in the interest of transparency and orderly execution.

Proposed Committee Realignment

As part of this implementation strategy, the following structural changes are proposed:

1. Reposition Sector Strategies Under Employer Engagement

Sector strategies are inherently employer-facing and require continuous engagement with industry leaders. Accordingly, the "sector strategies" function will transition from the current "Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee" to become the purview of the **Employer Engagement Committee** as a dedicated subcommittee.

2. Rename Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee

The current **Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee** will be renamed the:

Education and Career Pathways Committee

This committee will focus on:

- Alignment between education, training, and workforce needs

- Career pathway development
- Postsecondary and credential strategies
- Coordination with K-12, community colleges, universities, and training providers

This distinction allows employer engagement and career pathway development to operate in complementary but separate lanes.

Proposed Implementation Timeline

May 8, 2026 – Executive Committee Meeting

Discussion and possible action on the proposed Employer Engagement Strengthening Plan, including:

- Moving sector strategies under Employer Engagement Committee
- Renaming Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee to Education and Career Pathways Committee
- Recommending bylaw amendments to the full Board

May 21, 2026 – Full Board Meeting

Board consideration of Executive Committee recommendations.

May–September 2026 – Employer Listening Sessions

Led by the Employer Engagement Committee in partnership with Hawai'i Employers Council, these listening sessions will feature a panel representing each of the following eight top employment sectors:

- a) Hospitality industry
- b) Construction
- c) Defense
- d) Energy
- e) Health Care
- f) IT/Technology
- g) Public sector
- h) General Services (Banks, etc)

The listening sessions will cover such topics as workforce challenges, preparing for AI transformation, creative ideas on employee retention. The eight listening sessions will be spaced as follows:

- Late May 2026: 1 session
- June: 2 sessions
- July: 2 sessions
- August: 2 sessions
- Early September: 1 session

These listening sessions will lead up to the planned agenda for the 2027 Future of Work Conference which is slated for September 23, 2026.

May 2026 – External Support Contracts

Contracts utilizing the Council’s General Funds (already approved by the Executive Committee on October 29, 2025, and by the Board at the November 19, 2025 meetings) for:

- Employer engagement / sector strategy intermediary support
- Research initiative on Artificial Intelligence and future workforce impacts

September 23, 2026 – Future of Work Conference

December 2026 : Unveiling of AI Research Report

Proposed Bylaws Amendment

Article VI – Committees

Section 6.3 Standing Committees

The following standing committees of the Council shall be:

- Executive Committee
- Employer Engagement Committee
- Performance Management and Finance Committee
- ~~[Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee]~~ **Education and Career Pathways Committee**
- Youth Services Committee

- Special Projects Committee

The Executive Committee's recommendation would be forwarded to the full Board for further action at its May 21, 2026 meeting.

Conclusion

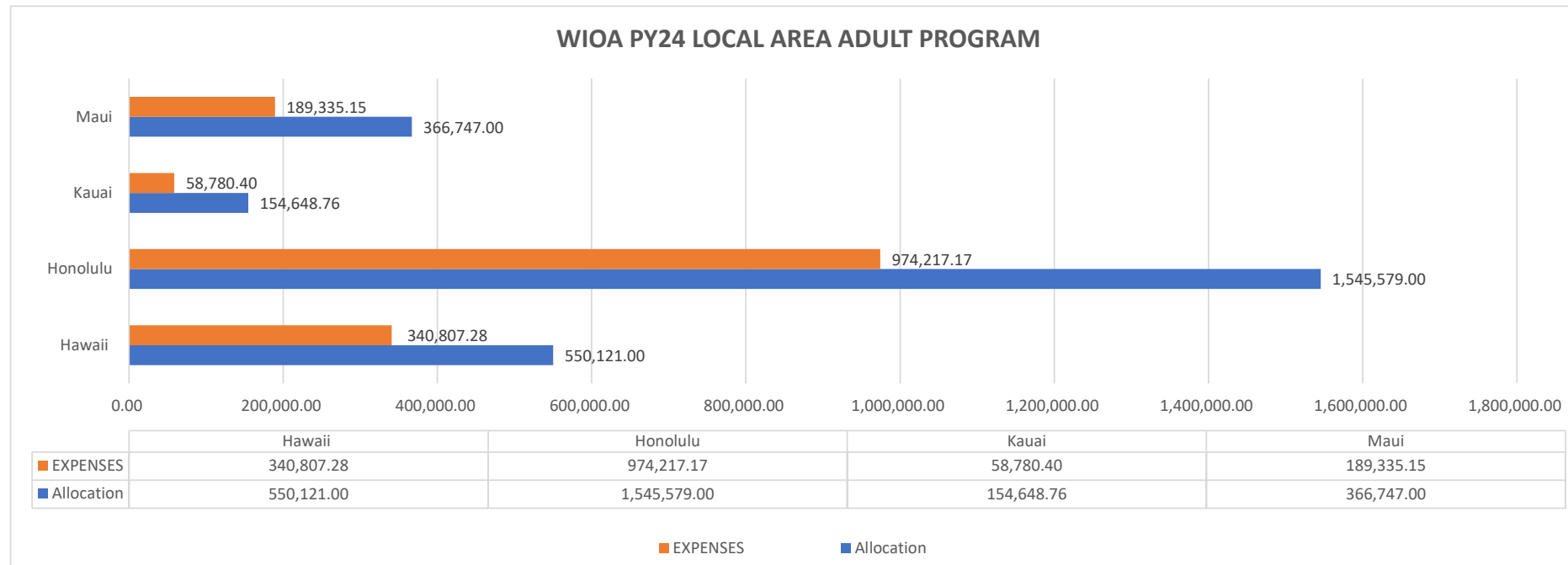
This Plan does not alter the strategic direction already approved within the Unified State Plan. Rather, it operationalizes that direction through clearer governance alignment, stronger employer engagement efforts, and more intentional execution.

By elevating employer engagement, the Council can better position Hawai'i's workforce system to respond to changing labor market needs, support business growth, and create stronger economic pathways for residents.

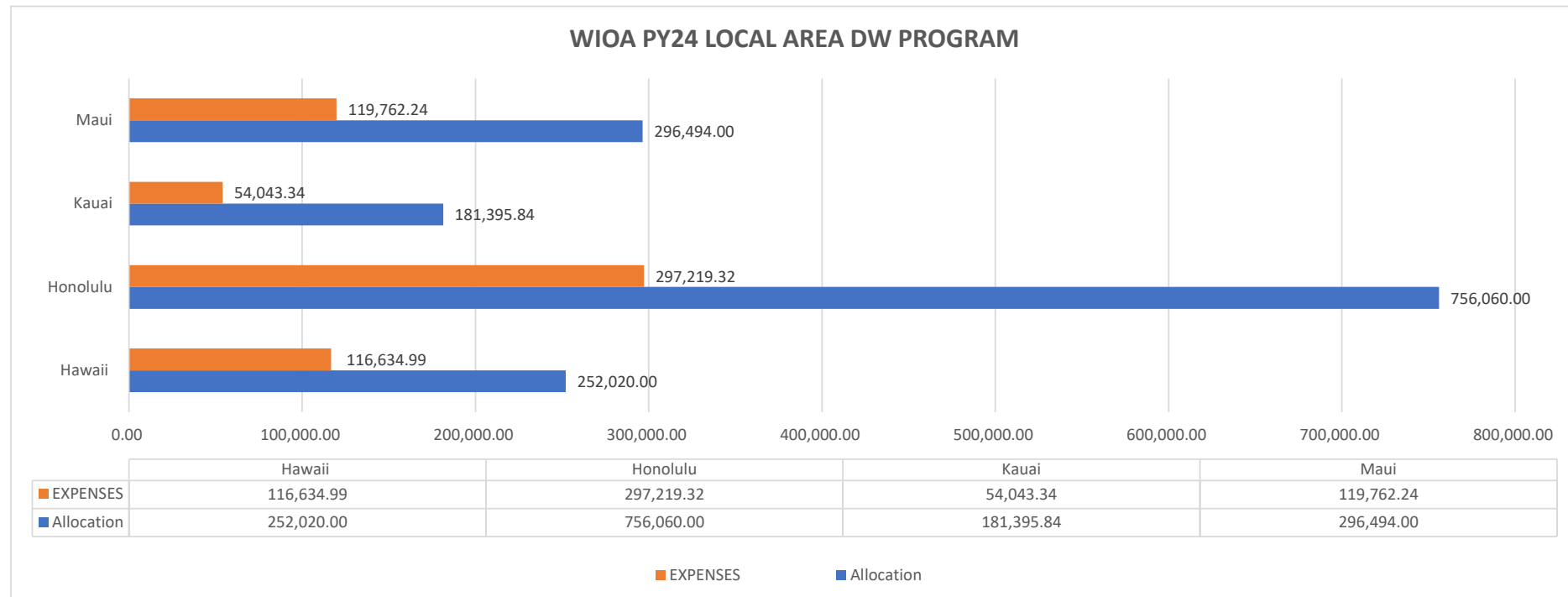
Fiscal Reports
Ariel Nault
Administrative Services Office

**WIOA LOCAL AREA EXPENSES
AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2026**

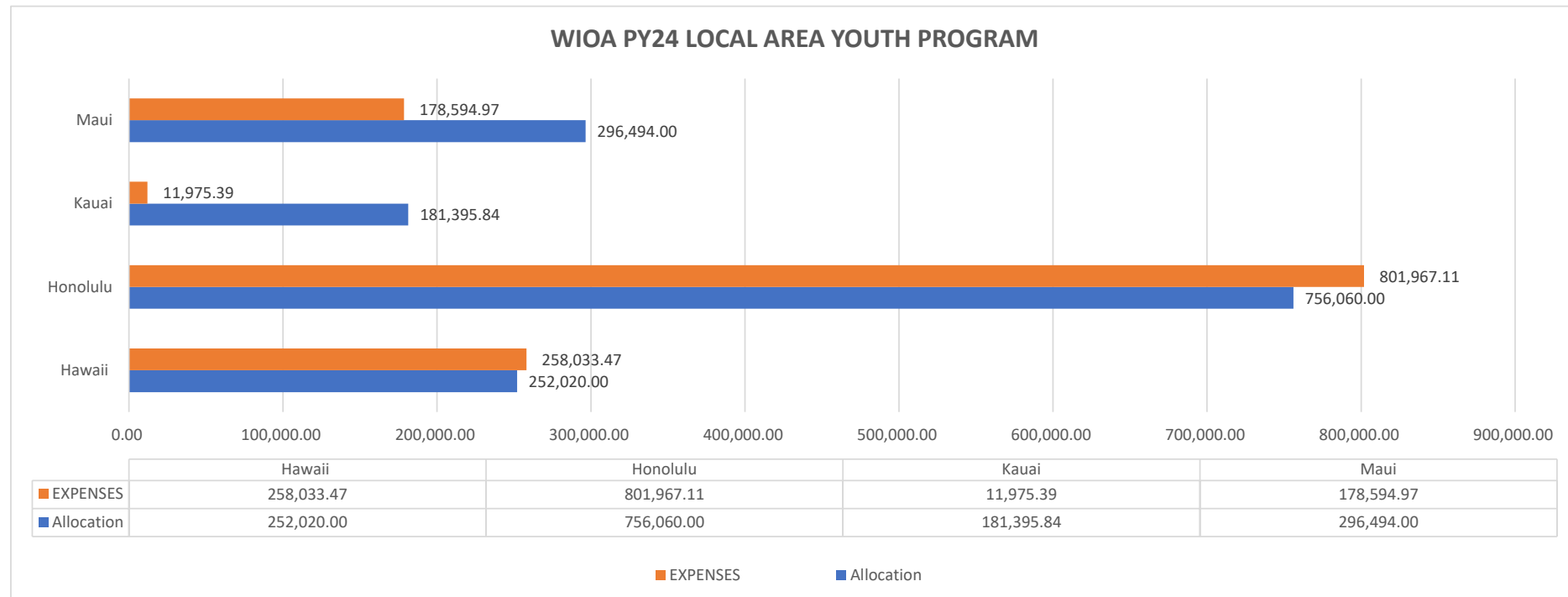
Adult Program	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2026						PY25/FY26: 07/01/2025-06/30/2027					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY25	PY25		
	PY24 Allocation	PY24 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	Current Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY25 Allocation	PY25 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	Current Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	550,121.00	340,807.28	209,313.72	62%	256	\$ 1,331.28	636,607.00	0.00	636,607.00	0%	0	\$ -
Honolulu	1,545,579.00	974,217.17	571,361.83	63%	921	\$ 1,057.78	1,249,637.00	0.00	1,249,637.00	0%	0	\$ -
Kauai	154,648.76	58,780.40	95,868.36	38%	24	\$ 2,449.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%	0	\$ -
Maui	366,747.00	189,335.15	177,411.85	52%	186	\$ 1,017.93	353,670.00	0.00	353,670.00	0%	0	\$ -
Total Adult	2,617,095.76	1,563,140.00	1,053,955.76	60%	1387		2,239,914.00	0.00	2,239,914.00	0%	0	



DW PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2026						PY25/FY26: 07/01/2025-06/30/2027					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY25	PY25		
	PY24 Allocation	PY24 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	Current Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY25 Allocation	PY25 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	Current Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	252,020.00	116,634.99	135,385.01	46%	48	\$ 2,429.90	256,792.00	0.00	256,792.00	0%	0	\$ -
Honolulu	756,060.00	297,219.32	458,840.68	39%	168	\$ 1,769.16	618,303.00	0.00	618,303.00	0%	0	\$ -
Kauai	181,395.84	54,043.34	127,352.50	30%	11	\$ 4,913.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%	0	\$ -
Maui	296,494.00	119,762.24	176,731.76	40%	60	\$ 1,996.04	308,818.00	0.00	308,818.00	0%	0	\$ -
Total DW	1,485,969.84	587,659.89	898,309.95	40%	287		1,183,913.00	0.00	1,183,913.00	0%	0	

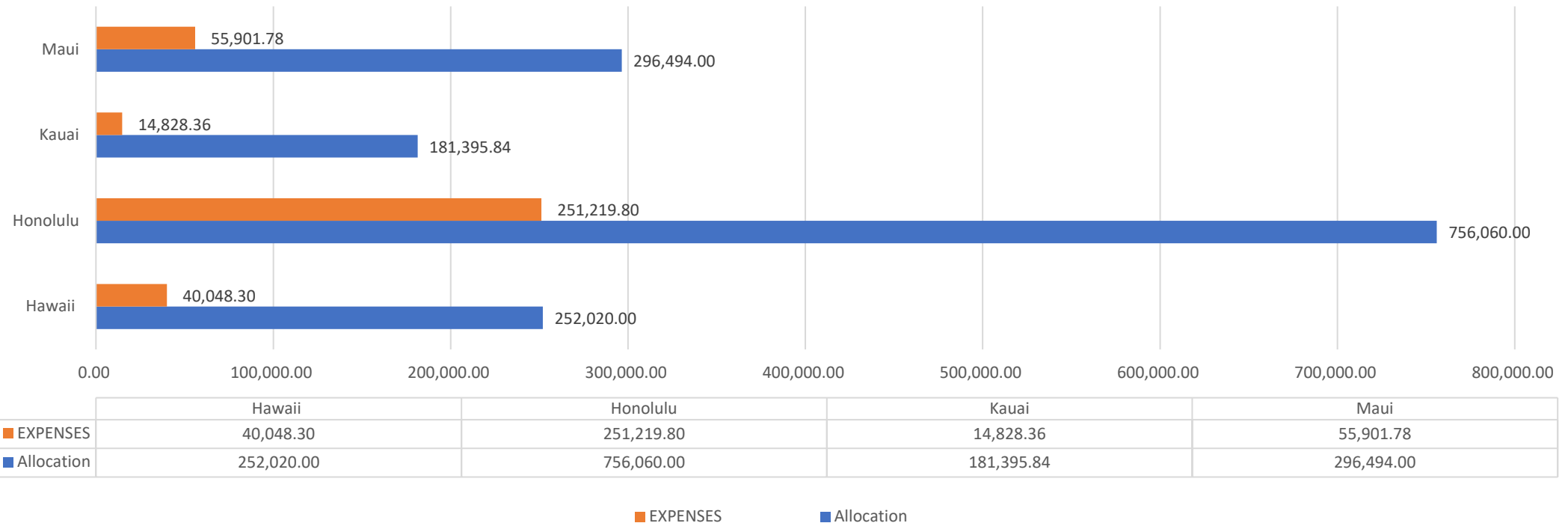


YOUTH PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2026						PY25/FY26: 07/01/2025-06/30/2027					
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24			Expenditures		PY25	PY25		
	PY24 Allocation	PY24 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	PY24 Participants	Cost Per Participant	PY25 Allocation	PY25 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	PY25 Participants	Cost Per Participant
Hawaii	466,233.00	258,033.47	208,199.53	55%	92	\$ 2,804.71	393,319.00	-	393,319.00	0%	0	\$ -
Honolulu	1,735,425.00	801,967.11	933,457.89	46%	230	\$ 3,486.81	1,596,410.00	-	1,596,410.00	0%	0	\$ -
Kauai	139,954.47	11,975.39	127,979.08	9%	4	\$ 2,993.85	0.00	-	0.00	0%	0	\$ -
Maui	259,019.00	178,594.97	80,424.03	69%	53	\$ 3,369.72	231,364.00	-	231,364.00	0%	0	\$ -
Total Youth	2,600,631.47	1,250,570.94	1,350,060.53	48%	379		2,221,093.00	-	2,221,093.00	0%	0	0



ADMIN PROGRAM	PY24/FY25: 07/01/2024-06/30/2026				PY25/FY26: 07/01/2025-06/30/2027			
	Expenditures		PY24	PY24	Expenditures		PY25	PY25
	PY24 Allocation	PY24 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026	PY25 Allocation	PY25 Exp 2/28/2026	Funds Avail. 2/28/2026	% Expended 2/28/2026
Hawaii	140,931.00	40,048.30	100,882.70	28%	142,969.00	-	142,969.00	0%
Honolulu	448,563.00	251,219.80	197,343.20	56%	384,927.00	-	384,927.00	0%
Kauai	40,204.93	14,828.36	25,376.57	37%	0.00	-	0.00	0%
Maui	102,474.00	55,901.78	46,572.22	55%	99,317.00	-	99,317.00	0%
Total Youth	732,172.93	361,998.24	370,174.69	49%	627,213.00	-	627,213.00	0%

WIOA PY24 LOCAL AREA ADMIN PROGRAM



PY 2024 Annual Performance Report

PY25 Q3 Performance Measures

STATE

***Rolling 4 Quarters**

Adult	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	752
Employment Rate (Q2)	72.5%	70.1%
Employment Rate (Q4)	74%	64.8%
Median Earnings	\$7,500	\$7,790
Credential Rate	50.4%	56.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.4%	65.3%

Dislocated Worker	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	134
Employment Rate (Q2)	72%	68.8%
Employment Rate (Q4)	77.5%	71.0%
Median Earnings	\$9,500	\$10,528
Credential Rate	50.5%	63.2%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.5%	65.3%

Youth	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	286
Employment Rate (Q2)	67%	63.3%
Employment Rate (Q4)	64%	72.4%
Median Earnings	\$5,000	\$6,750
Credential Rate	62%	71.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.5%	45.8%

Wagner-Peyser	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	4655
Employment Rate (Q2)	57%	61.6%
Employment Rate (Q4)	61%	62.1%
Median Earnings	\$8,300	\$10,314

JVSG	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	112
Employment Rate (Q2)	40.8%	57.3%
Employment Rate (Q4)	40.7%	58.6%
Median Earnings	\$8,129	\$12,800

HAWAII

*Rolling 4 Quarters		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Adult Participants	-	175
Employment Rate (Q2)	73%	74.4%
Employment Rate (Q4)	76%	75.9%
Median Earnings	\$7,500	\$7,565
Credential Rate	51%	42.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	55%	54.2%
Dislocated Worker		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	33
Employment Rate (Q2)	74%	62.5%
Employment Rate (Q4)	77.5%	60.0%
Median Earnings	\$9,500	\$16,877
Credential Rate	50.5%	50.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	55%	33.3%
Youth		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	85
Employment Rate (Q2)	67.5%	100.0%
Employment Rate (Q4)	65%	75.0%
Median Earnings	\$5,100	\$8,894
Credential Rate	62%	66.7%
Measurable Skill Gains	51%	25.0%
Wagner-Peyser		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	899
Employment Rate (Q2)	57%	57.5%
Employment Rate (Q4)	61%	60.5%
Median Earnings	\$8,300	\$9,412

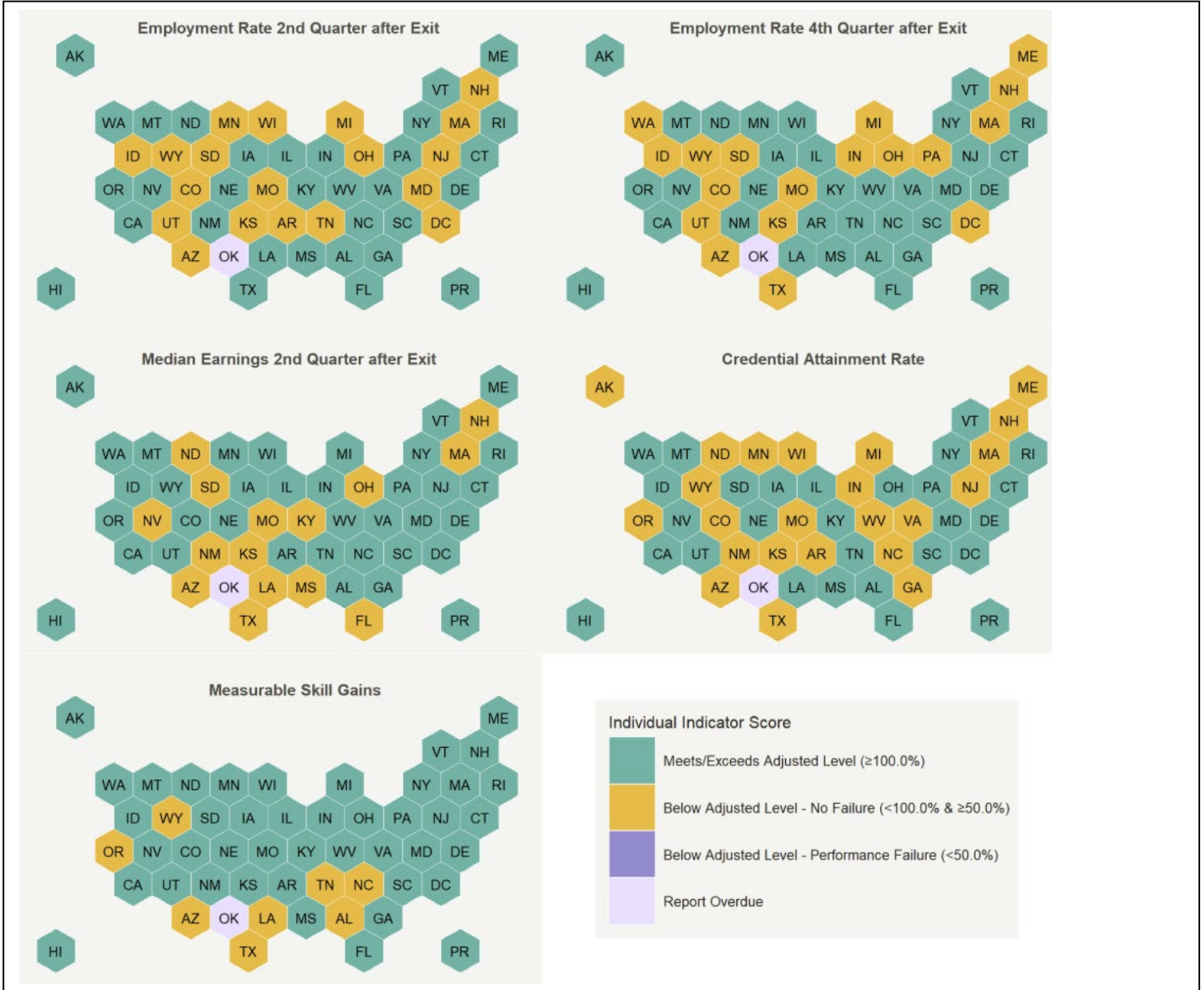
KAUAI

*Rolling 4 Quarters		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Adult Participants	-	15
Employment Rate (Q2)	55%	57.1%
Employment Rate (Q4)	55%	85.7%
Median Earnings	\$6,500	\$8,438
Credential Rate	50.4%	100.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.4%	25.0%
Dislocated Worker		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	9
Employment Rate (Q2)	60%	0.0%
Employment Rate (Q4)	60%	33.3%
Median Earnings	\$8,500	\$0
Credential Rate	50.5%	N/A
Measurable Skill Gains	50.5%	N/A
Youth		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	3
Employment Rate (Q2)	60%	0%
Employment Rate (Q4)	60%	0%
Median Earnings	\$4,300	\$0
Credential Rate	60%	N/A
Measurable Skill Gains	50.5%	N/A
Wagner-Peyser		
	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	338
Employment Rate (Q2)	57%	57.6%
Employment Rate (Q4)	61%	58.2%
Median Earnings	\$8,300	\$9,495

MAUI		
*Rolling 4 Quarters		
Adult	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	118
Employment Rate (Q2)	65%	50.7%
Employment Rate (Q4)	68%	50.8%
Median Earnings	\$7,500	\$8,974
Credential Rate	51%	20.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	51%	43.5%
Dislocated Worker	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	28
Employment Rate (Q2)	72%	51.7%
Employment Rate (Q4)	77.5%	51.7%
Median Earnings	\$9,500	\$13,319
Credential Rate	51%	33.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	51%	66.7%
Youth	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	43
Employment Rate (Q2)	67%	90.0%
Employment Rate (Q4)	65%	83.3%
Median Earnings	\$5,000	\$5,910
Credential Rate	62%	66.7%
Measurable Skill Gains	53%	40.0%
Wagner-Peyser	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	1031
Employment Rate (Q2)	57%	64.2%
Employment Rate (Q4)	61%	60.6%
Median Earnings	\$8,300	\$9,316

OAHU		
*Rolling 4 Quarters		
Adult	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	444
Employment Rate (Q2)	75%	73.0%
Employment Rate (Q4)	75%	65.0%
Median Earnings	\$7,700	\$7,757
Credential Rate	64%	62.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	64%	70.7%
Dislocated Worker	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	64
Employment Rate (Q2)	74%	76.7%
Employment Rate (Q4)	79%	83.9%
Median Earnings	\$10,000	\$10,125
Credential Rate	70%	81.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	70%	82.1%
Youth	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	155
Employment Rate (Q2)	68%	59.4%
Employment Rate (Q4)	65%	72.2%
Median Earnings	\$5,000	\$6,735
Credential Rate	65%	73.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	53%	55.2%
Wagner-Peyser	Negotiated	PY25 Q3
Participants	-	2387
Employment Rate (Q2)	57%	62.7%
Employment Rate (Q4)	61%	64.4%
Median Earnings	\$8,300	\$11,650

ADULT PROGRAM Program Year 2024



DISLOCATED WORKER Program Year 2024

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit



Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit



Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit



Credential Attainment Rate



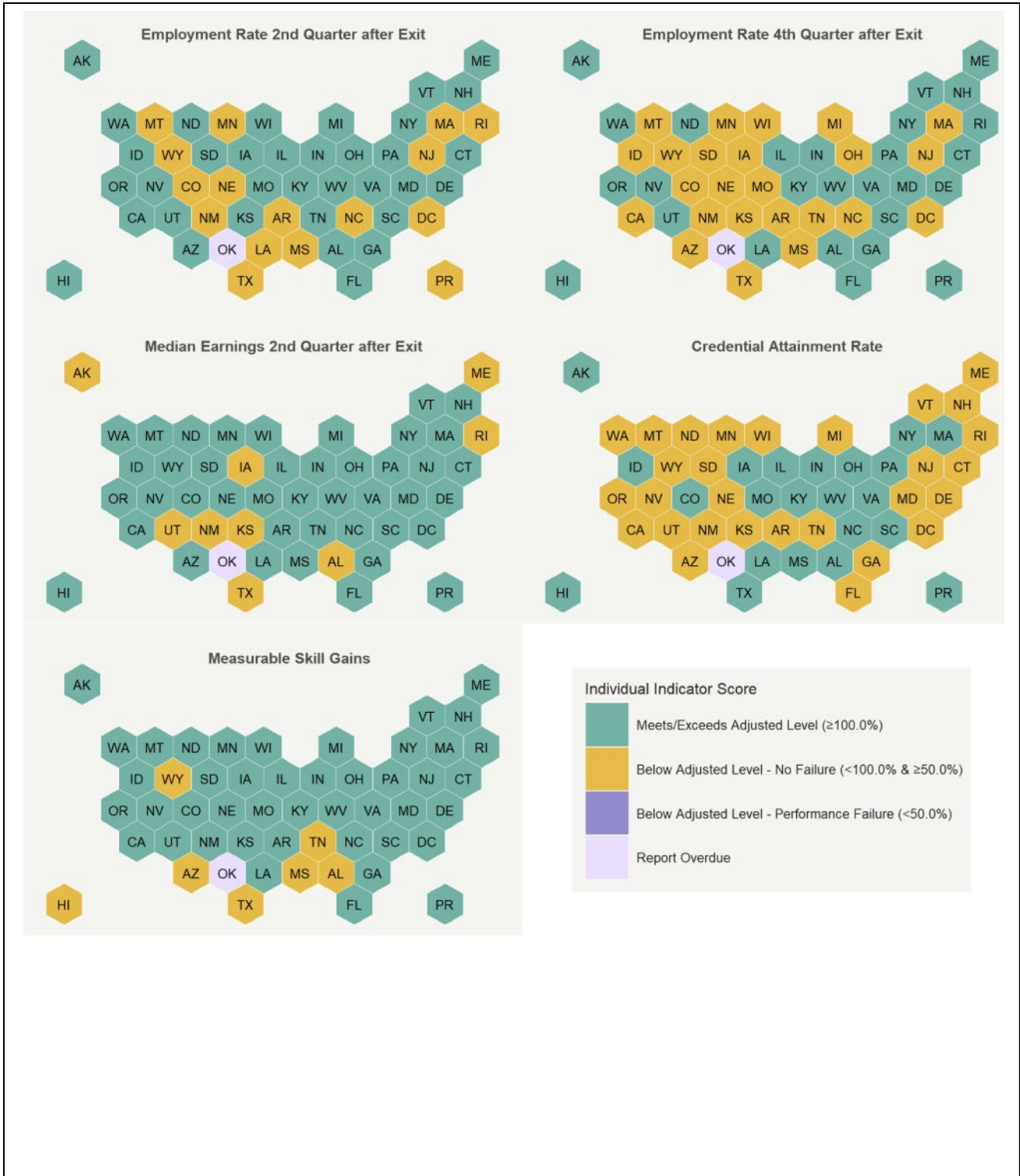
Measurable Skill Gains



Individual Indicator Score

- Meets/Exceeds Adjusted Level ($\geq 100.0\%$)
- Below Adjusted Level - No Failure ($< 100.0\%$ & $\geq 50.0\%$)
- Below Adjusted Level - Performance Failure ($< 50.0\%$)
- Report Overdue

NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAM INDICATOR SCORES Program Year 2024



Executive Director's Report

Bennette Misalucha



WORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

Executive Director's Report

Workforce Development Council
Thursday, May 21, 2026

Bennette E. Misalucha



Agenda

Report on First Quarter 2026 Event and Activities
Focus on Second and Third Quarter

First Quarter 2026 Activities

- *First Internship Summit – March 4, 3036*
- *Internship Excellence Awards*
- *Submission of the modified State Unified Plan – April 3, 2028*
- *Implementation of the State Unified Plan- Planning with Gen. Commitment Leadership Hui*
- *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*
- *Eligible Training Provider Platform Modernization project with University of Hawaii*
- *Restructuring of the Employer Engagement Committee and the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee*

Hawaii State Unified Plan Timeline



Second/Third Quarter Focus

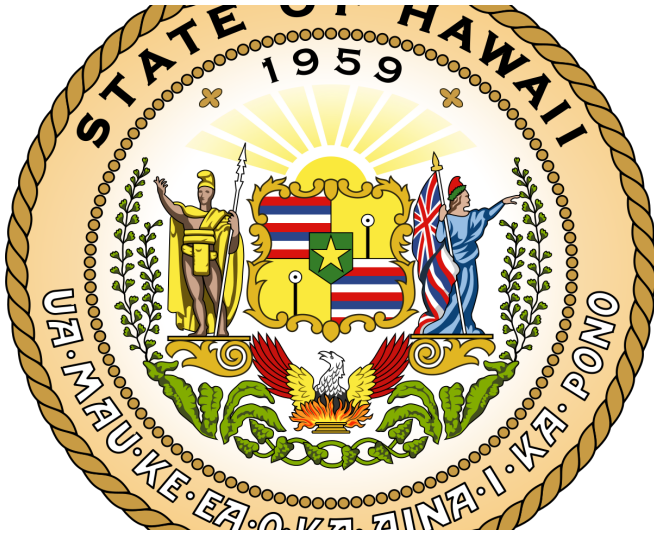
- *Orientation session for new Council members in May*
- *Preparation for the implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant/ NGA Academy*
- *Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Task Force (A specialized task force to streamline and strengthen the process for approving and monitoring eligible training providers.)*
- *State Board Acting as the Local Board on Kaua'i (Training will be conducted to ensure the State Board can fully meet its responsibilities when acting as the Local Workforce Board for Kaua'i)*
- *Certification of the Kaua'i American Job Center*
- *Prepare to conduct a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the operation of the Kauai American Job Center*
- *Mandatory Board Member Training - State and Local Boards (We are planning an in-person statewide joint training session in July, focusing on roles, governance, and compliance).*
- *Symposium Series on Artificial Intelligence, starting with April 30, 2026 event. (Other dates include June 25, September 3, October 29)*

Second/Third Quarter Focus

- *Procurement of contracts using General Funds -Encumbered by June 30, 2026*
- *Synergy Summit in July 2026 (TBD)*
- *Future of Work Conference on September 23, 2026*
- *Employer Engagement Listening Series (eight sessions) for May, June, July, August and September*
- *Research Project in collaboration with the Hawaii Employers Council*
- *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research Project/ How are Hawaii companies preparing for AI?*
- *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.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **April 30, 2026: Symposium 1: Where is AI Today and Where is it Going? 8:30 to 4:30 at Capitol Auditorium**
- **May 21, 2026 - WDC Quarter 2 Board Meeting**
- **May (TBD) - Listening Session 1**
- **June 2026 (TBD) - Listening Session 2 and 3**
- **June 25, 2026: AI Symposium 2**
- **July TBD : Synergy Summit III**
- **July 2026 (TBD) : Listening Sessions 4 and 5**
- **July 27, 2026: Mandatory Board Training**
- **August, 2026 (TBD) : Listening Sessions 6 and 7**
- **September 2026 (TBD) - Listening Session 8**
- **September: Workforce Development Month**
- **September 3, 2026: AI Symposium 3**
- **September 10, 2026: WDC Quarter 3 Board Meeting**
- **September 23, 2026: Future of Work Conference/ Workforce Heroes Awards**
- **October 29, 2026: AI Symposium 4**
- **November 12, 2026: WDC Quarter 4 Board Meeting**



**Workforce
Development Council**

MAHALO!

Workforce Development Division Report



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE



January 1, 2026 through March 31, 2026



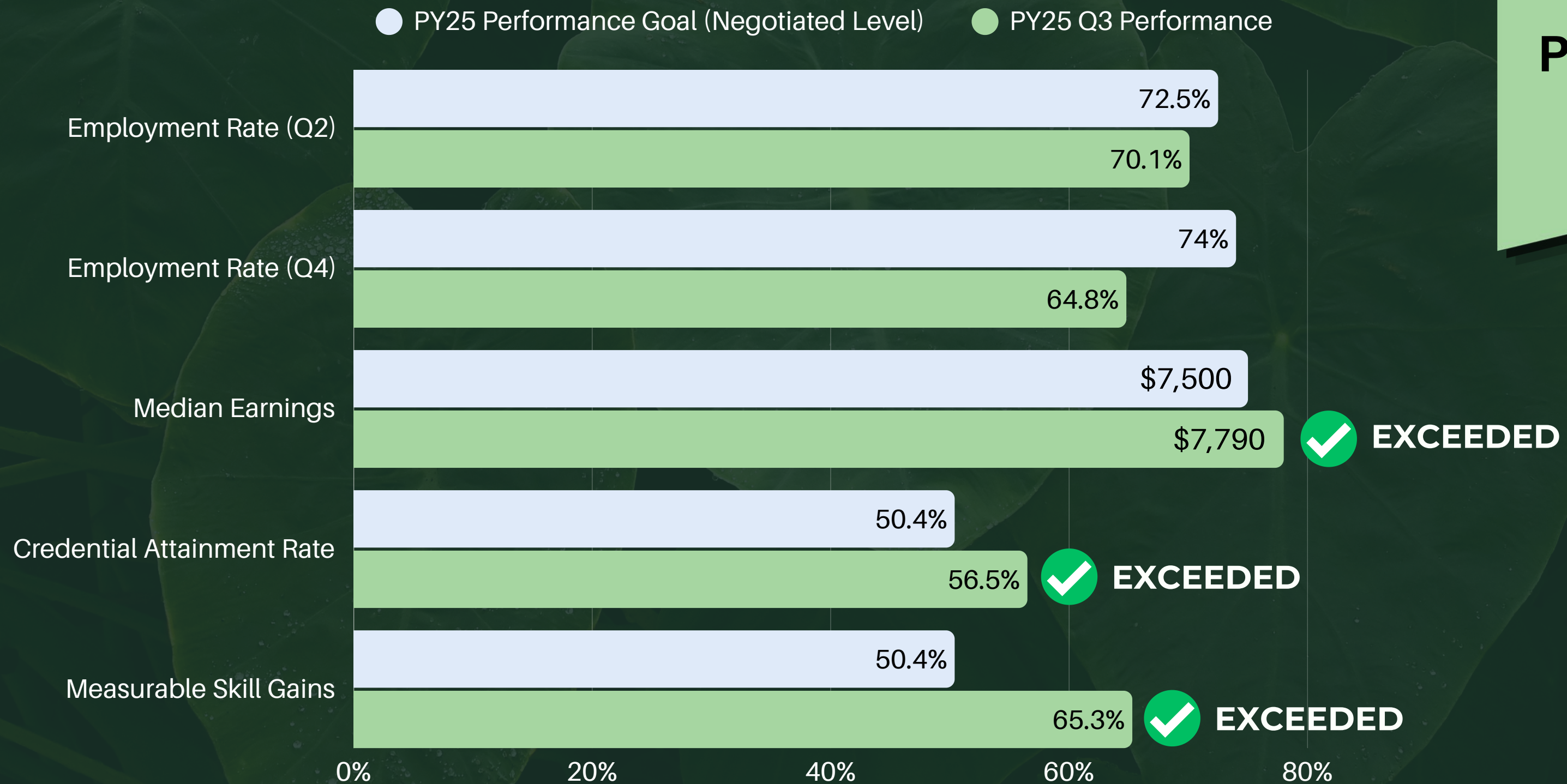
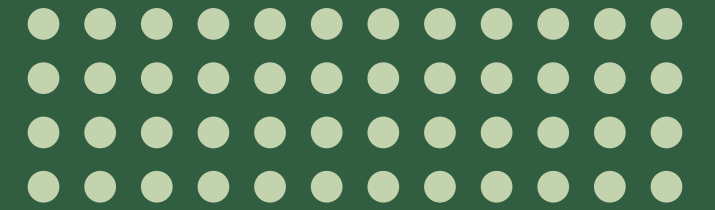


WIOA TITLE I & TITLE III PERFORMANCE



Statewide WIOA Title I Performance

Rolling 4 Quarters: PY25 Quarter 3
Adult Program

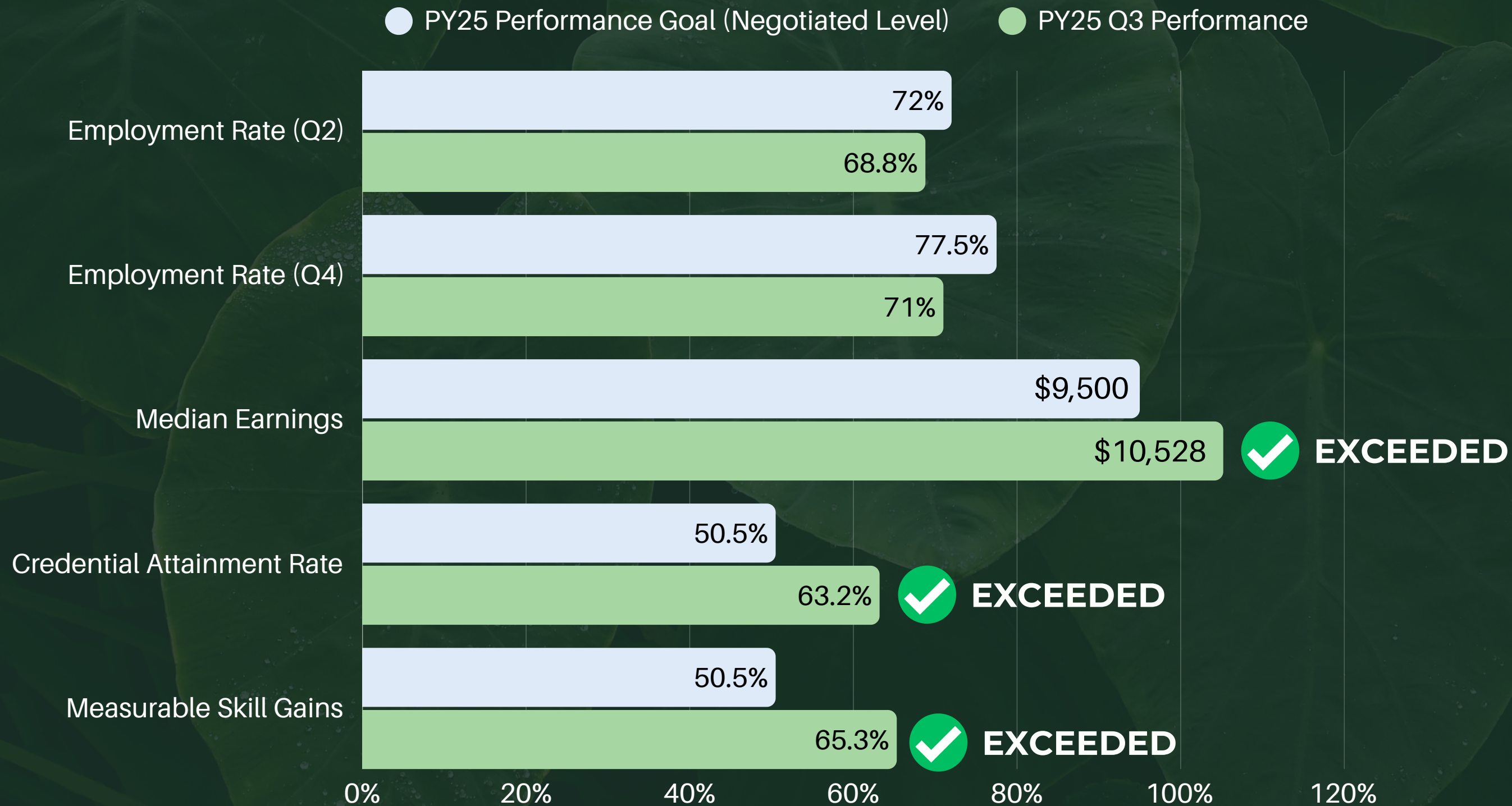
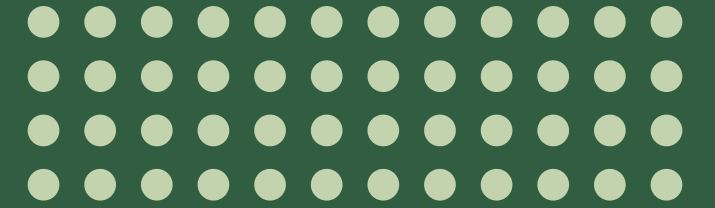


Participants:
752



Statewide WIOA Title I Performance

Rolling 4 Quarters: PY25 Quarter 3
Dislocated Worker Program

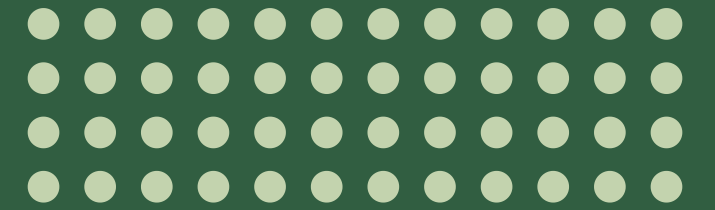


Participants:
134

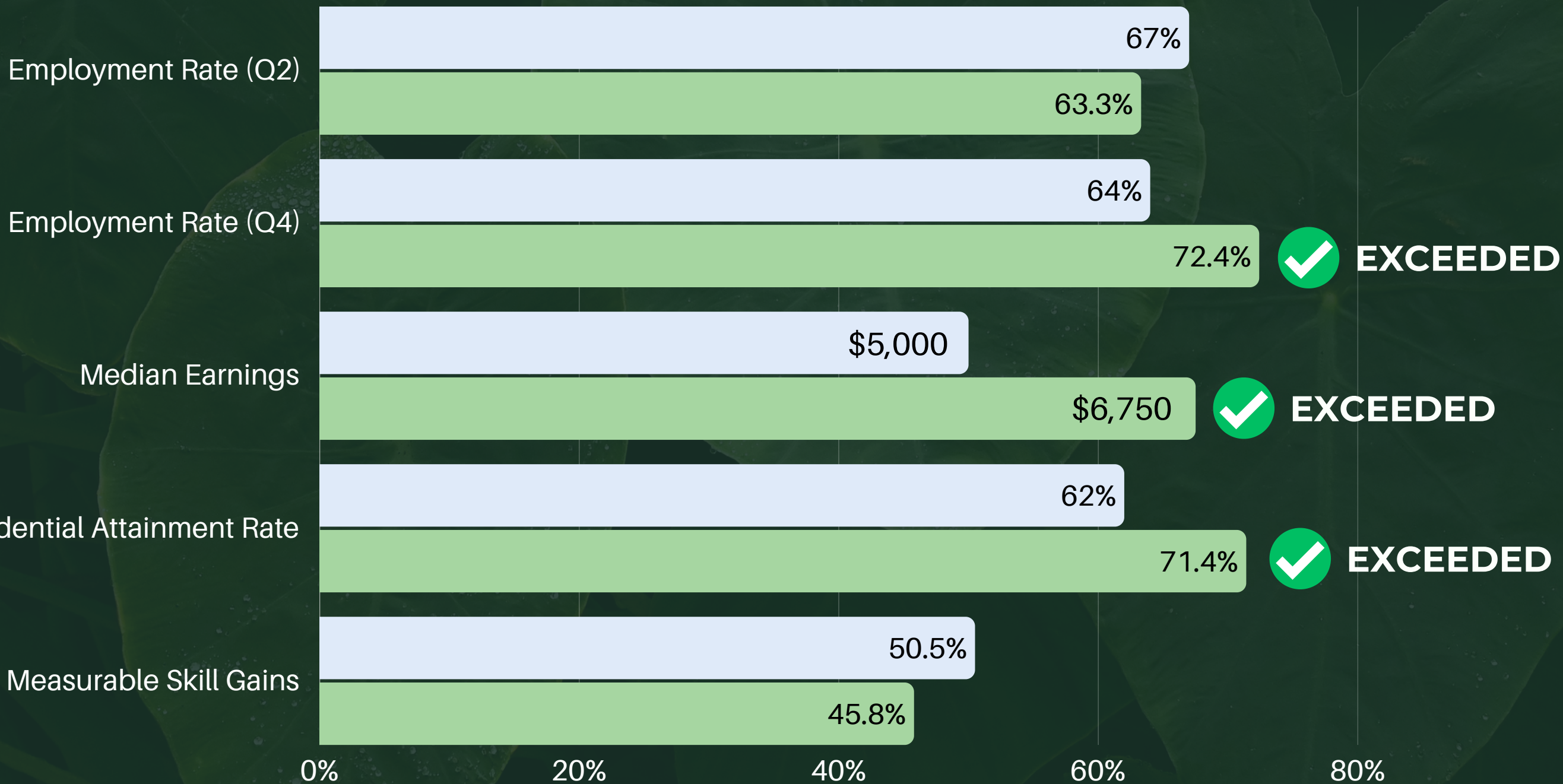


Statewide WIOA Title I Performance

Rolling 4 Quarters: PY25 Quarter 3
Youth Program



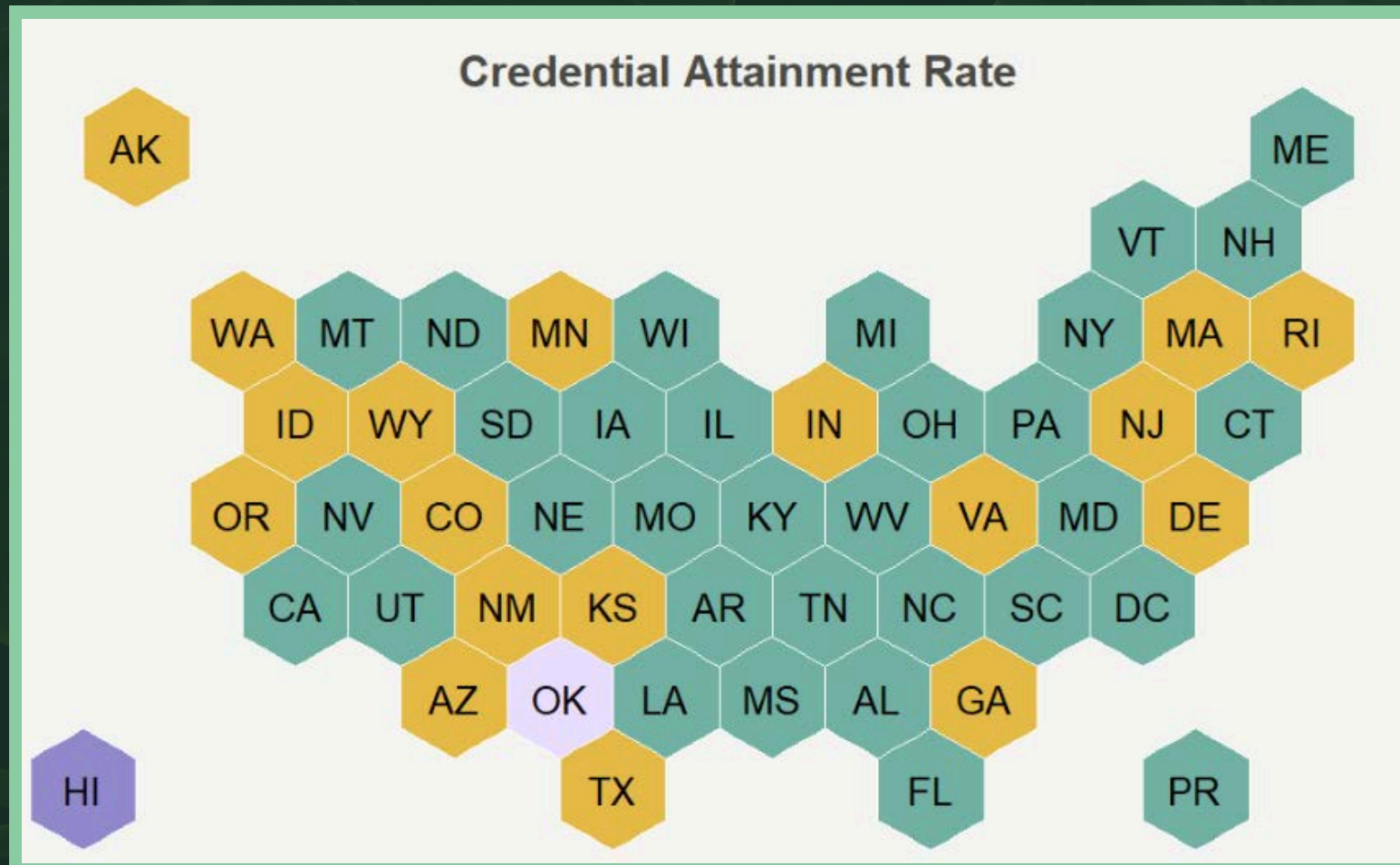
● PY25 Performance Goal (Negotiated Level) ● PY25 Q3 Performance



Participants:
286

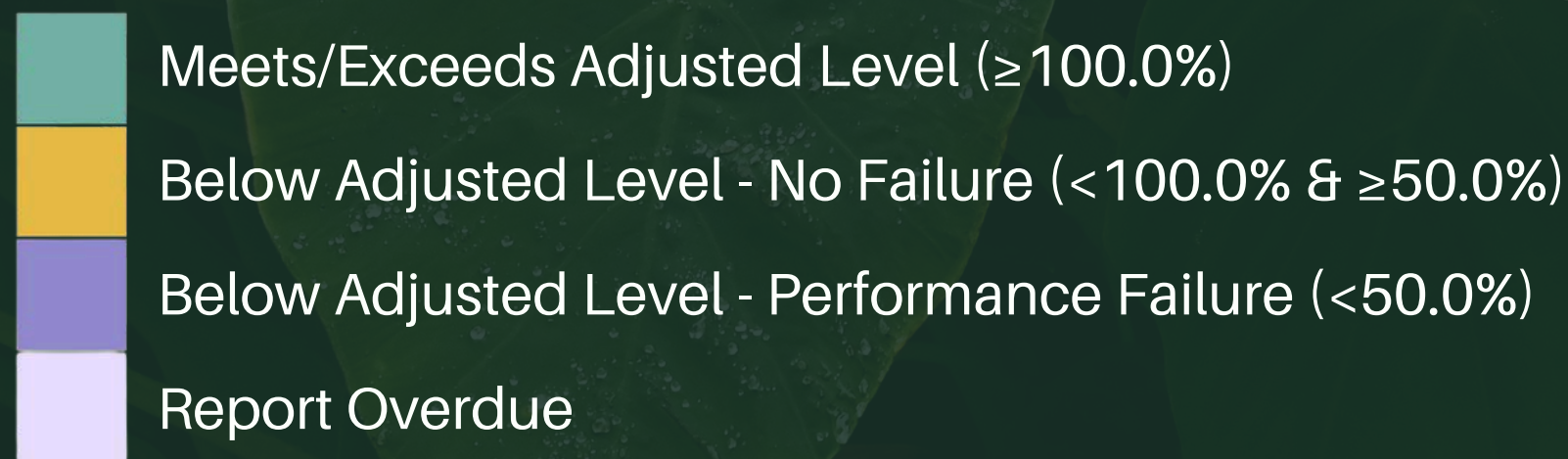


DISLOCATED WORKER CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT (PY 2024): PERFORMANCE FAILURE (<50%)



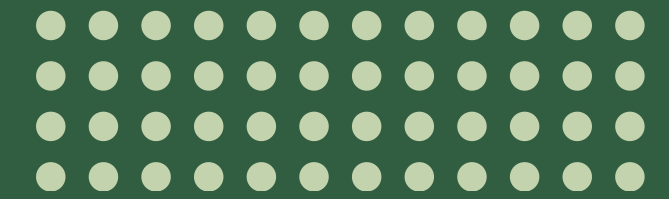
- a) Results in USDOL-mandated technical assistance and required State Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- b) Ongoing risk: a second-year failure may trigger a 5% cut to Governor’s Reserve funds, which are used to provide administrative support and oversight of all WIOA programs.
- c) WDD provided technical assistance to local workforce boards and program providers.
- d) Local Area received letter regarding state performance failure and their negotiated vs. actual rates for this performance measure.
- e) Local Area PIP submissions due May 18.

Individual Indicator Score



Statewide Wagner-Peyser (Title III) Performance

Rolling 4 Quarters: PY25 Quarter 3



Total Participants Served:
4,655



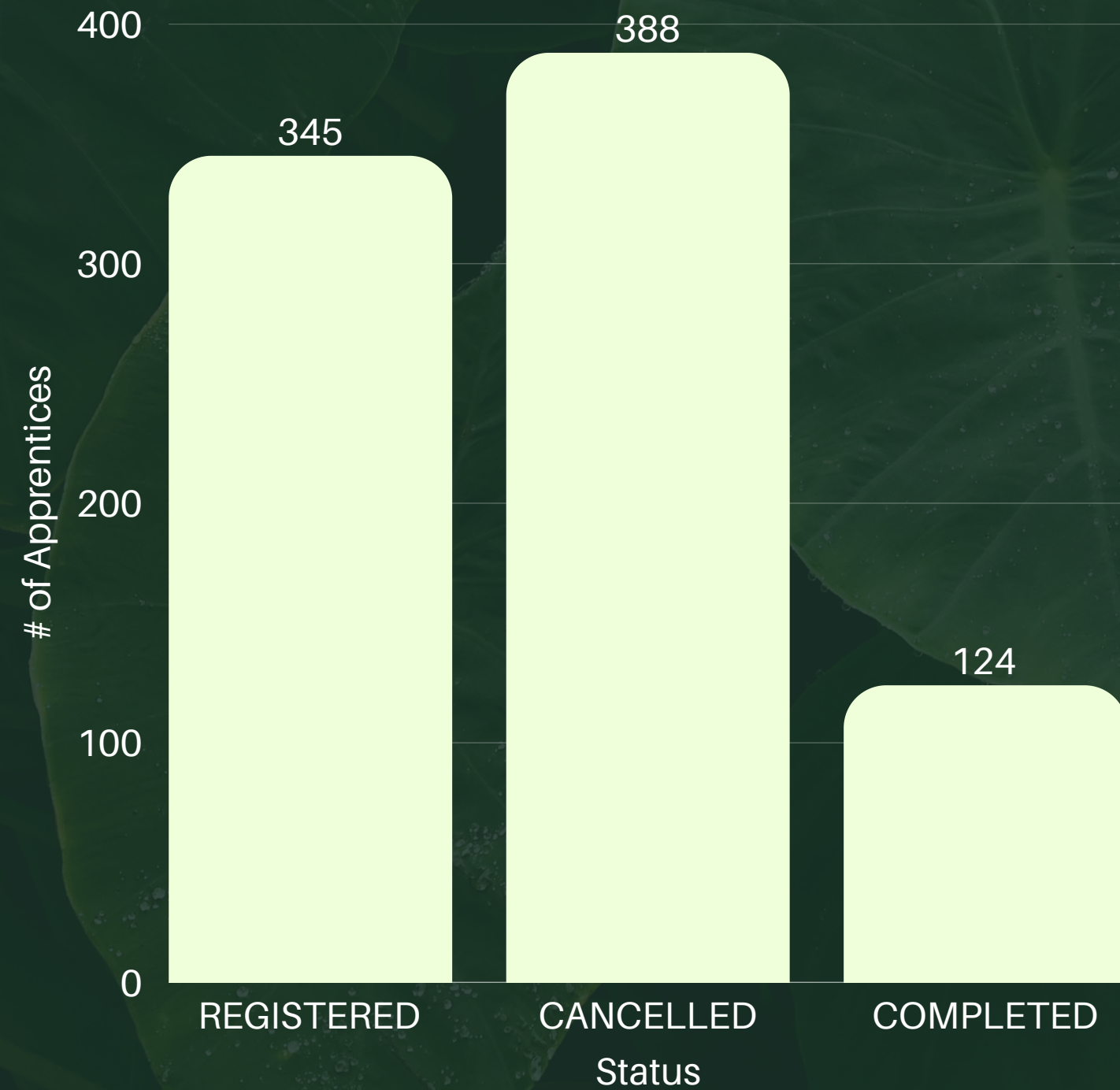
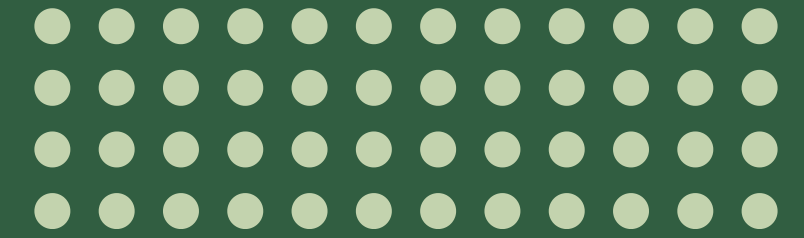


APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



Apprenticeship Data Report

Report Period: 3rd Quarter
January 1 - March 31, 2026



**Total No. of Registered
Apprentices as of
March 31, 2026**

5,257

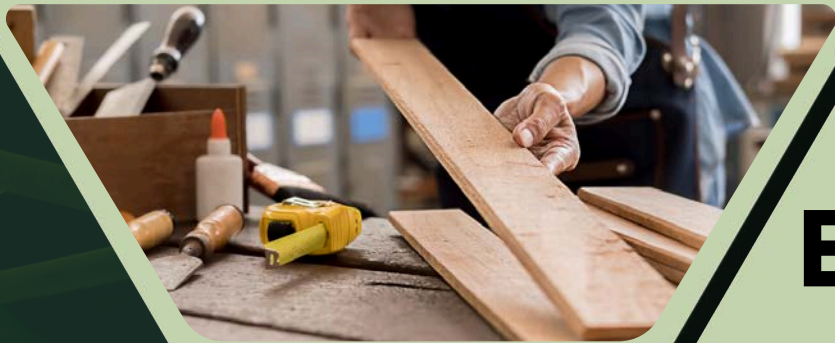


REGISTERED APPRENTICES IN CONSTRUCTION TRADE PROGRAMS



Top Five (5) Occupations/Programs with the highest number of apprentices:

CARPENTER



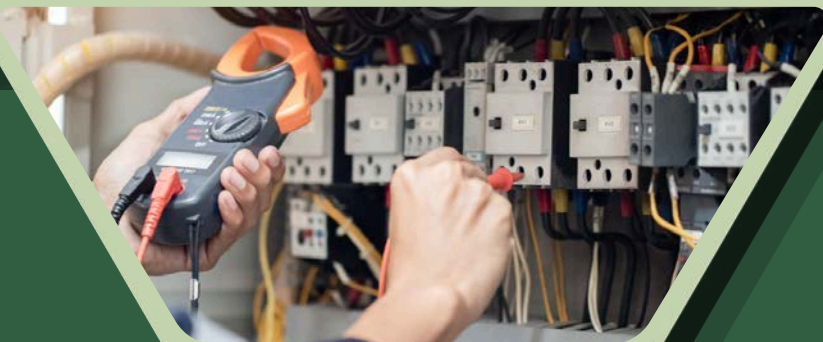
PLUMBER



ROOFER



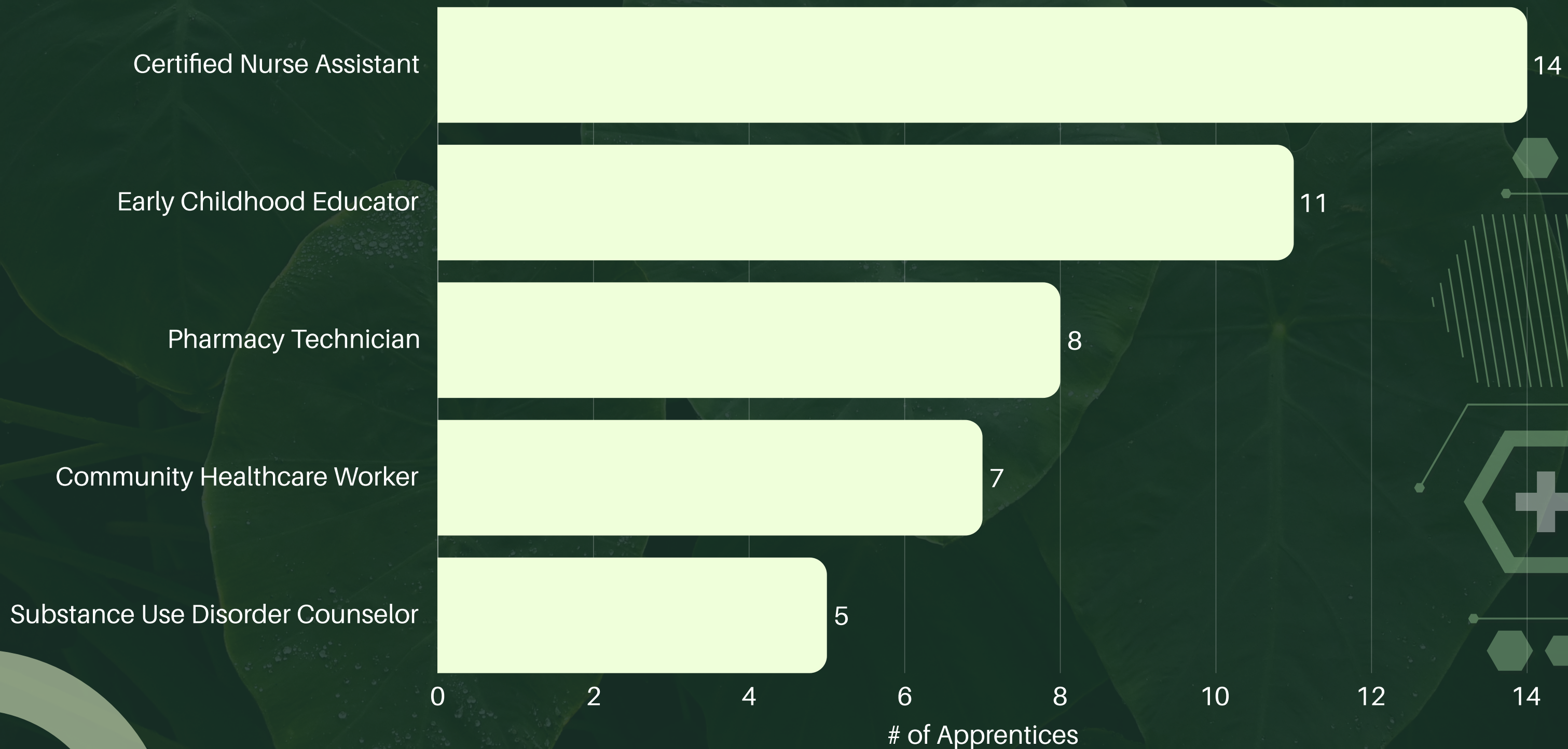
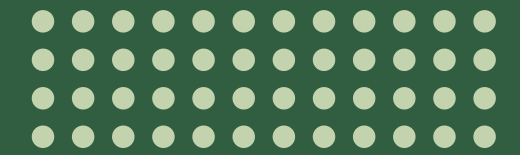
ELECTRICIAN



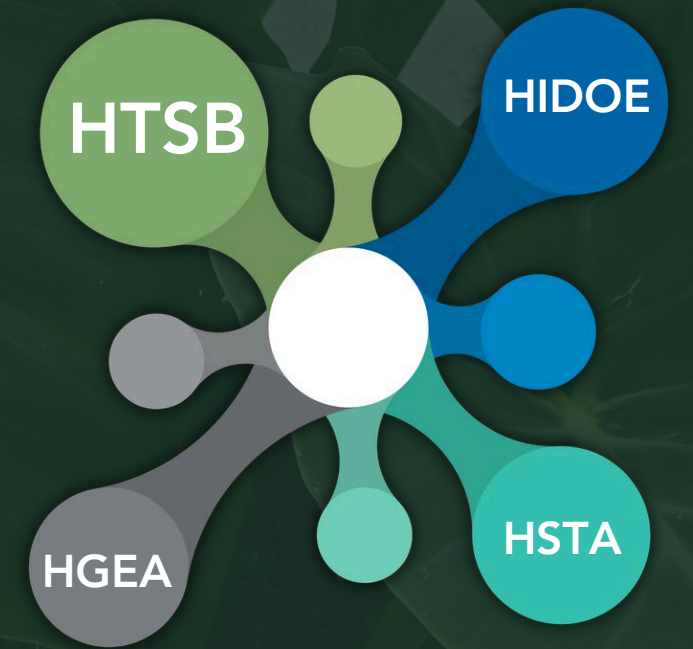
PAINTER



Registered Apprentices in Healthcare and Non-Traditional Occupations as of March 31, 2026:



Teacher Apprenticeship Program Conditional Approval and Ongoing Consultations



Key stakeholders continue collaborative consultations on remaining items related to the Hawaii Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.



Discussion areas include apprentice job classification, bargaining unit scope, mentor (journeyworker) teacher roles, and grant timelines and outcomes.



Multiagency conversations are focused on aligning apprenticeship standards with existing collective bargaining agreements.



If consensus is reached, the revised standards will be submitted to DLIR/WDD for review and any necessary action toward program approval.



WDD continues to provide technical assistance and support to partners as permitted and authorized throughout the consultation and review process.



HELE IMUA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



HELE IMUA INTERNSHIP UPDATE



Number of interns
PLACED since inception:

1,270



Number of interns
HIRED since inception:

207

THE EXPANSION OF HELE IMUA



DLIR, in partnership with the *Hawaii Agricultural Foundation* and *Ulupono Initiative* launched a Hele Imua Internship Program to support Hawaii's Agriculture Industry.

Two interns completed the 12-week internship program through Hawaii Agricultural Foundation. One was hired by his host farm and plans to continue college while working part-time. He described the internship as rewarding and would recommend it to others.





COMMUNITY OUTREACH



HIRING EVENTS - JAN 2026



Resume Workshop (Hawaii Island)

January 14, 2026



Resume workshops were sponsored by the Workforce Development Division in collaboration with Goodwill Industries, serving individuals in West Hawaii who have been justice-impacted and are working toward their workforce goals.



Keehi Lagoon Memorial Hiring Event (Oahu) January 21, 2026



198 Job seekers, which included 33 veterans during the first hour (reserved for veterans and dependents), attended the event along with 39 employers and service organizations. Employers reported 55 on-site interviews were conducted during the event with 21 conditional job offers being extended by the end of January.

HIRING EVENTS - FEB 2026



Career Expo for Youth (Hawaii Island)

February 12, 2026



Career expo for Hawaii Island youth: approximately 600 in attendance.



“Where Talent Meets Opportunity” Event (Hawaii Island)

February 21, 2026



Hiring event in Hilo, Hawaii with 34 employers, 16 community resources, and over 3,000 people in attendance.

HIRING EVENTS - MARCH 2026



Blaisdell Hiring Event (Oahu)

March 7, 2026



WDD also participated in City and County of Honolulu's Hiring Event at Blaisdell on March 7th to share information on WDD services. WorkHawaii reported that over 400 participants attended the event.

WDD PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILY PROMISE OF HAWAII



WDD started a partnership with Family Promise of Hawaii to conduct quarterly information sessions and job skills training workshops for their participants. The 1st session was held on January 15th during their weekly Ohana Nights on Thursdays at their Young Street location. WDD is working on extending the partnership to their Wahiawa facility during the 2nd quarter of 2026.

WDD PARTNERSHIP WITH WORK-4-WATER



Work-4-Water



Newly established partnership on Kauai with Work-4-Water, an 8-week pre-apprenticeship program in the drinking water and wastewater sectors. Staff assisted employers with HireNet Hawaii registration and provided information on OJT and HCE compliance. Aqua Engineers was confirmed as an HCE compliant OJT site, and Work-4-Water will refer its participants to WIOA for additional services.

INTERNSHIP RECRUITMENT EVENTS

JAN 2026

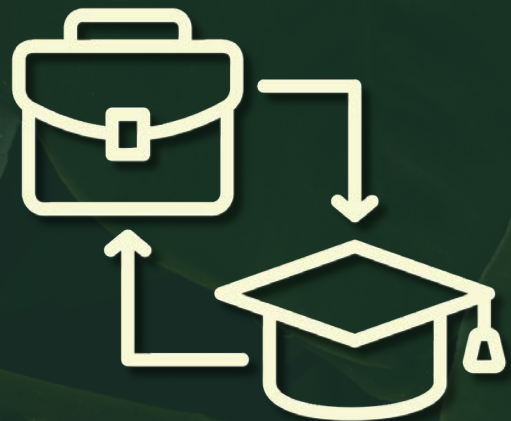
Keehi Lagoon Memorial Hiring Event

A total of 25 individuals submitted the online form, and 5 of them were ultimately placed at a worksite.

FEB 2026

- Virtual UHM Information Session: ANSC 201 Princ & Pract of Animal Sci II (Professor Reichhardt)
- UHM Information Session: Introduction to Accounting II (Professor Guan)
- UHM Information Session: Survey of Psychology (Professor Kim)
- Shidler College of Business Internship & Career Expo
- UHM Information Session: Principles of Macroeconomics 131 (Professor Rojas Bernal)
- UHM Information Session: Principles of Macroeconomics 131 (Professor Rojas Bernal)
- UHM Information Session: Elementary French (Professor Lenglare)
- 2026 Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health Field Education & Career Fair
- Virtual UHWO Information Session: Personal and Public Speech (Prof. San Jose)
- UHM Information Session: Introduction to Biology I (Professor Walguarnery)
- UHM Information Session: Communication and Communities (Professor Kramer)
- Virtual UHM Information Session: Mindfulness Meditation and Stress Reduction (Professor Soetoro)
- UHM Information Session: Intimacy, Marriages and Families (Professor Hardy)
- Virtual UHWO Information Session: Anthropology: Emerging Humanity (Professor Finney)
- UHM Information Session: Adolescence and Early Adulthood (Professor Souza)
- UHM Information Session: Survey of Psychology (Professor Masuda)
- KCC Career & Transfer Fair
- HPU Spring Career Connects - Spring 2026 Career & Hiring Event
- UHM Information Session: Elementary Korean II (Professor Chung)
- UHM Information Session: Human Development (Professor O'Dell)
- UHM Information Session: Introduction to Biology II (Professor Rodrigues-Honda)

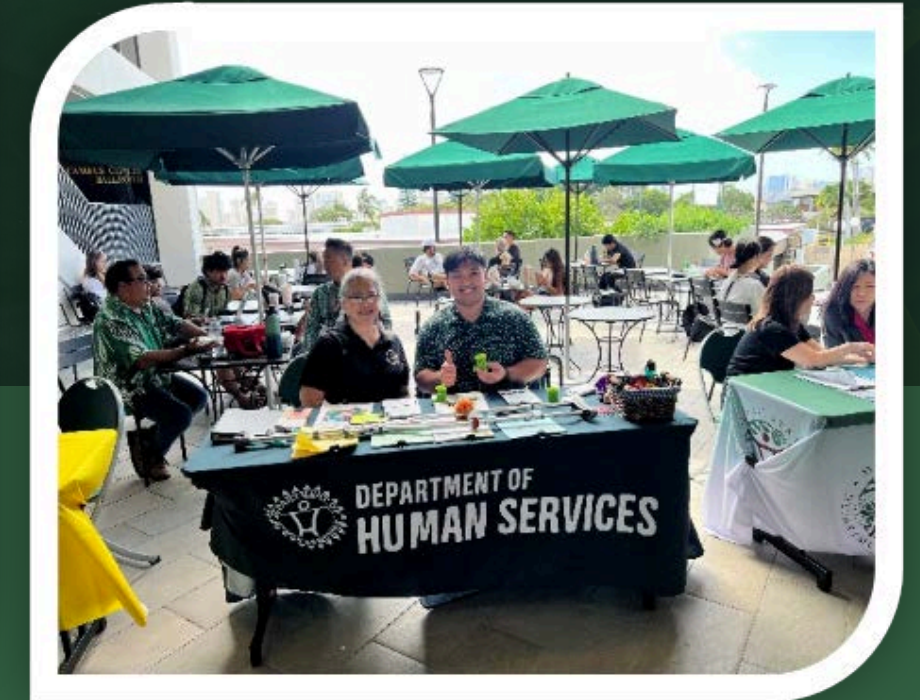
The Internship team, through their diligent efforts in promoting and recruiting potential intern participants, conducted **24 information sessions in college classrooms**, reaching approximately **2,430 students**. The team also attended **12 hiring events** and participated in one Hele Imua Open House, which resulted in one participant enrolling and being placed with DLIR, DCD - a 100% success rate for that event.



INTERNSHIP RECRUITMENT EVENTS (cont.)

MARCH 2026

- Chaminade Spring 2026 Career Fair
- UHM Spring 2026 Career Fair
- Careers in Tech and Intelligence Fair
- WorkHawaii Hiring Event
- UHM Information Session: Biology 101 (Professor Wong)
- UHM Information Session: Communicology 364: Persuasion (Professor Kikut-Stein)
- JBPHH Hiring Event - Skillbridge
- Hele Imua Open House
- UHM Information Session: American Studies: America and the World (Professor Tripp)
- 2026 Hawaii Counseling & Advising Convening
- WCC Koolau Career Expo



RAPID RESPONSE



WARN NOTICES RECEIVED (Statewide)

January 1 to March 31, 2026

MONTH	COMPANY	EFFORTS/RESULTS
JANUARY 2026	Oahu 1. Duty Free Shops (DFS) Kauai 2. Kauai Coffee Company, LLC Maui 3. Wolfgang's Steakhouse	WDD Rapid Response teams reached out to all organizations and companies for which WARN notices were received to offer Rapid Response services and to provide information about general employer services, as well as employment services available to affected individuals.
FEBRUARY 2026	Oahu 1. Honolulu Roofing Company 2. Alaska Airlines	
MARCH 2026	Oahu 1. Cotti Foods Pizza Hawaii dba Pieology Pizzeria 2. Saks & Company LLC 3. The Odom Corporation Kauai 4. Kauai Coffee Company, LLC (Supplemental to January WARN)	



RAPID RESPONSE EVENT FOR DUTY FREE SHOPS (DFS) HAWAII

February 19, 2026



Attended by: **80** DFS employees
5 State and City & County organizations
11 Employers



SUCCESS STORIES





*Intern Today,
Leader Tomorrow*

HELE IMUA

STARTS THE JOURNEY!

Luke

Program: Hele Imua Internship (Oahu)

Employer: Department of Budget and Finance

Luke is a current University of Hawaii student who is pursuing an accounting degree and lacked work experience in the field.

Through the Hele Imua program, Luke was able gain 'real-world work skills' during his internship with the Department of Budget and Finance, which included how to reconcile financial records and journals along with other valuable accounting and finance related skills.

Luke's internship was so successful that his host agency hired him as an Accountant III in January 2026, where he is starting his new career with the State of Hawaii.

*Intern Today,
Leader Tomorrow*

HELE IMUA

STARTS THE JOURNEY!



Nova

Program: Hele Imua Internship (Oahu)

Employer: DLIR Workforce Development Division



Nova joined the internship program at the end of 2025 and continued to participate in the program through January 2026.

Originally a teacher from Washington State, Nova was looking for a career change and has a passion for social services. Nova learned about an opportunity to gain work experience in her desired field and applied for the Hele Imua internship program, where she completed an internship with the DHS Child Welfare Services office.

Nova was able to use her work experience as an intern to gain employment as an Office Assistant with the Workforce Development Division (WDD) in January 2026 and is now a key member of WDD's Punchbowl office operations.

*Intern Today,
Leader Tomorrow*

HELE IMUA

STARTS THE JOURNEY!

Marilou

Program: Hele Imua Internship (Hawaii Island)

Employer: Department of Education



"I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Hele Imua Internship program. My time with the program was truly incredible and I am so thankful for the support I received, the hands-on experience, and trainings they provided. This has helped me successfully secure a position at Connections Public Charter School (under the Department of Education) as an Office Assistant."



*Intern Today,
Leader Tomorrow*

HELE IMUA

STARTS THE JOURNEY!



Raina

Program: Hele Imua Internship (Maui)

Employer: Department of Defense - Office of Veterans' Services



Raina recently graduated from the University of Hawaii at Hilo with a bachelor's degree in history. After developing professional skills at the Nisei Veteran Memorial Center, she began seeking opportunities in state government. After her parents saw a Hele Imua flyer and encouraged her to apply, Raina chose to seek employment through the program at the Department of Labor Industrial Relations-Workforce Development Division American Job Center.

Motivated to learn and serve her community, she successfully completed two 12-week internship terms. During her second term, a Veterans Services Counselor informed her of job openings, leading to an interview in February 2026. She was subsequently hired as an Office Assistant with the Department of Defense, Office of Veterans' Services on Maui. Raina is doing exceptionally well, and WDD continues to receive positive monthly progress updates. The Office of Veterans' Services looks forward to maintaining a strong partnership with WDD for future Hele Imua interns.



Hawai'i Island Community Health Center



Lona

Program: RESEA (Hawaii Island)

Employer: Hawaii Island Community Health Center



Lona enrolled in the RESEA program on February 10, 2026. After S&G Labs Hawaii closed, she sought help transitioning back into the workforce. With her background in overseeing daily laboratory operations and coordinating patient sample intake, she initially explored medical technician and administrative assistant roles. By her second interview, she expanded her search to include Referral Specialist and Medical Records positions.

Her flexibility and determination paid off. On April 6, 2026, Lona informed her Case Manager that she had secured full-time employment as a Referral Specialist with Hawaii Island Community Health Center, beginning work on March 30, 2026. Her new role provides continued opportunities for professional growth while allowing her to apply her healthcare administration and patient coordination experience in a meaningful way.



Kody

Program: RESEA (Hawaii Island)

Employer: Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope



Kody successfully secured employment as a System Administrator with Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope and officially began employment on February 23, 2026.

While participating in the RESEA program, Kody remained fully compliant with all required program activities and consistently demonstrated initiative by independently pursuing employment opportunities within the information technology field. Through persistence, dedication, and the effective use of his technical experience, he was able to successfully transition back into the workforce into a skilled technical role.

Obtaining employment with the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope represents an important milestone in Kody's professional journey. This opportunity not only provides career stability and continued professional growth but also allows him to contribute to technological operations within a respected scientific and research environment.

Kody's success reflects the positive impact of continued engagement, determination, and career-focused job search efforts throughout the RESEA program.



David

Program: General Employment Services (Hawaii Island)
Employer: Ground Transport Inc



After moving from the East Coast to Hawaii, David struggled to adjust and lacked confidence in his social skills. He visited the American Job Center in Hilo, where WDD Employment Specialist, Lesieli, supported him with employment services and training options.

In preparation for a February 2026 hiring event hosted by DLIR WDD, David attended a three-day Job Preparedness Workshop at the AJC hosted by Goodwill Hawaii Industries in collaboration with DLIR WDD, practicing interview and workplace skills. On the final day, he actively participated in first-impression interview activities.

At the hiring event, he connected with Ground Transport Inc., applied, and interviewed. With continued guidance from Lesieli during onboarding, he was hired as a school bus driver and is now building a positive future in his new community. He later shared that the workshop and hiring event "changed my life."





Nicholas

DVOP Client

Program: JVSG (Oahu)

Employer: Hawaiian Electric Company



Nicholas is a veteran with a degree in electrical engineering and experience in the intelligence field while serving in the military. Nicholas was interested in pursuing a career in electrical engineering but was unfamiliar with the job search process in the civilian sector after recently being discharged from the military with a service-connected disability.

Nicholas received resume writing and job search assistance through his DVOP counselor which enabled him to land an entry level electrical engineer position with Hawaiian Electric Company in February 2026.



Espoir

Program: JVSG

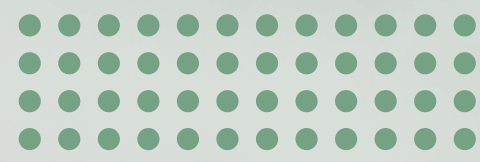
Employer: Climate Pros - Logistics Coordinator



Espoir is a U.S. Army veteran who served as an Automated Logistical Specialist and was referred to the JVSG program through RESEA while he was collecting unemployment. Espoir was interested in leveraging his military experience into a civilian equivalent role, but also has service-connected work limitations regarding heavy lifting and standing for excessive periods.

Espoir also reported having difficulty speaking with strangers and was unfamiliar with contemporary resume writing techniques.

Working with his assigned DVOP, Espoir went through a series of mock interviews to help his confidence speaking with strangers and was provided resume writing assistance to update his resume. With the help of his DVOP counselor, Espoir was able to find a job with Climate Pros as a Logistics Coordinator in March 2026, where he could utilize his military experience and which fit his work limitations.



THANK YOU!



**State of Hawaii
Department of Labor & Industrial Relations
Workforce Development Division**

AEFLA Report

TO: Workforce Development Council

FROM: Ryan Mandado, EdD | Educational Specialist - Adult Education

RE: Program Year 2024 Statewide Performance Results WIOA Title II

Executive Summary

This memorandum provides a summary of the performance results for the Hawaii WIOA Title II Adult Education program for the reporting period of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. During this period, the program served a total of 3,813 participants. We are pleased to report that the state has successfully met or exceeded all five of its primary negotiated performance metrics.

Performance Against Negotiated Metrics

The following table outlines our actual performance compared to the targets negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education/Labor. Our results demonstrate consistent success in helping adult learners gain skills and transition into the workforce.

Performance Indicator	Negotiated Target	Actual Performance	Status
Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)	37.50%	44.29%	Exceeded
Employment Rate (Q2 Post-Exit)	20.00%	29.48%	Exceeded
Employment Rate (Q4 Post-Exit)	22.00%	38.23%	Exceeded
Median Earnings (Q2 Post-Exit)	\$6,000.00	\$6,195.00	Exceeded

Credential Attainment Rate	17.00%	43.89%	Exceeded
----------------------------	--------	--------	----------

Key Highlights & Participant Demographics

- Measurable Skill Gains:
 - A total of 1,689 participants achieved measurable skill gains during the reporting period.
- Credential Success:
 - Of the 467 participants in the credential cohort, 205 individuals successfully earned a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma.
- Participant Diversity:
 - The program served a diverse population, with the largest ethnic groups being Asian (1,272 participants) , Hispanic/Latino (709 participants) , and More Than One Race (644 participants).
- Barriers to Employment:
 - Our program remains a critical resource for high-need populations, serving 364 low-income individuals and 343 long-term unemployed individuals.

Conclusion

The PY2024 results reflect a robust and effective adult education system in Hawai‘i. By exceeding every negotiated target, most notably the Credential Attainment Rate, which outperformed the target by nearly 25 percentage points, we are ensuring that our workforce is better equipped with the skills and credentials necessary for economic self-sufficiency.

Current Status: Forging New Pathways

Beyond the formal reporting period, our real-time data management systems indicate continued momentum. Currently, we have reached 1,739 participants who have already earned 594 Measurable Skill Gains (MSG).

Our current strategic focus centers on delivering statewide learning experiences and building interdependent systems with our partners. Our work is best captured through two transformative initiatives:

- Holistic Recovery on Maui (Ka La‘i Ola):
 - In response to the Lahaina fires, our adult community schools are partnering with the Dept. of Human Services to provide learning opportunities directly within temporary housing centers, demonstrating a multi-departmental service model.
 - <https://www.hinowdaily.com/2026/04/14/career-foundations-curriculum-offered-maui-wildfire-survivors-ka-lai-ola-through-state-partnership/>
- Expanding the Continuum in Mililani:
 - This partnership redefines the HIDOE as a K-12 + Adult Education system, proving that we are a lifelong partner for the community, supporting learners well beyond graduation.
 - <https://www.hinowdaily.com/2026/04/22/mililani-high-school-partners-with-career-foundations-advance-agriculture-education-aina-kitchen-network/>

These projects, powered by our Career Foundations curriculum (entrepreneurship, workforce, and agriculture), illustrate how Adult Education is sparking community change across Hawai'i. We look forward to continuing to elevate our communities together.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Report

Hawaii DVR PY25 Q3 (January 1 – March 31, 2026) Performance Measures Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)		
Participants served (VR)	3795	
Participants exited	64 closed other than rehab & 21 closed with rehab	
WIOA Program Involvement	Adult Dislocated Worker Youth Wagner-Peyser Adult Education Job Corps Youth Build Total	202 4 72 7 13 5 8 311

Indicator	PY25 Q3		PY 2025 Negotiated / Required Level
Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)	61/350	YTD Rate: 17.43%	42%
Credential Attainment Rate (CA)	7/18	YTD Rate: 38.89% as of PY2025-Q2	44%
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	123/328	YTD Rate: 37.50% as of PY2025-Q2	43.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	64/148	YTD Rate: 43.24% as of PY2025-Q2	36.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$7,441		\$5,470

Q1: Successful Closure in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)			
7/1/25 – 9/30/25			
Job Title	Participant	Wage	Hour Worked
Aerospace Engineers	1	45.10	40.00
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1	17.31	20.00
Building Cleaning Workers, All Other	1	14.00	20.00
Cashiers	3	16.54	23.67
Chemical Technicians	1	28.00	40.00
Childcare Workers	1	16.85	40.00
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	1	16.00	25.00
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	1	16.00	15.00
Computer and Information Systems Managers	2	47.08	40.00
Computer Network Support Specialists	1	17.99	40.00
Construction and Building Inspectors	1	20.19	40.00
Cooks, Institution, and Cafeteria	1	27.48	40.00
Customer Service Representatives	2	14.00	31.00
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	1	14.00	40.00
Dishwashers	2	18.00	36.50
Facilities Managers	1	40.00	40.00
First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	1	18.94	40.00
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1	19.62	40.00
Flight Attendants	1	60.02	26.00
Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	2	17.87	40.00
General and Operations Managers	1	100.00	40.00
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other	1	20.00	30.00
Healthcare Social Workers	1	23.08	40.00
Helpers--Painters, Paperhangers, Plasterers, and Stucco Masons	1	30.03	40.00
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	1	40.00	40.00
Human Resources Managers	1	25.96	40.00

Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6	16.56	25.67
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	3	16.40	21.67
Managers, All Other	1	24.48	40.00
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	1	40.00	40.00
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	1	43.10	40.00
Occupational Health and Safety Technicians	1	46.34	40.00
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	2	18.83	40.00
Office Clerks, General	1	17.00	40.00
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1	19.00	30.00
Pharmacists	1	87.08	40.00
Postal Service Mail Carriers	1	28.85	40.00
Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists	1	53.84	40.00
Producers and Directors	1	64.90	40.00
Production Workers, All Other	1	15.50	20.00
Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	1	92.31	10.00
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1	40.00	40.00
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1	17.73	40.00
Shuttle Drivers and Chauffeurs	1	14.00	25.00
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1	14.00	40.00
Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors	1	28.85	40.00
Tax Preparers	1	55.38	10.00
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	1	45.85	18.00
Teaching Assistants, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School, Except Special Education	1	16.50	40.00
Average Total	63	28.63	32.92
Median Total	63	20.19	40.00

Q2: Successful Closure in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)			
10/1/25 – 12/31/25			
Job Title	Participant	Wage	Hour Worked
Adult Basic and Secondary Education and Literacy Teachers and Instructors	1	20.00	40.00
Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	1	27.05	40.00
Bus Drivers, School	1	22.00	20.00
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1	28.85	40.00
Childcare Workers	1	14.00	30.00
Civil Engineers	1	29.50	40.00
Cooks, Restaurant	1	15.00	30.00
Dishwashers	1	14.00	40.00
Electricians	2	45.50	40.00
Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	1	19.23	40.00
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1	43.96	40.00
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	1	41.13	40.00
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1	30.00	35.00
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	1	22.59	30.00
Flight Attendants	1	90.00	10.00
General and Operations Managers	1	69.71	40.00
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	1	14.00	24.00
Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	1	37.95	40.00
Human Resources Specialists	1	26.70	40.00
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	3	14.41	25.00
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	1	18.40	40.00
Nursing Assistants	1	17.94	40.00
Occupational Health and Safety Technicians	1	24.57	40.00
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	1	27.00	40.00
Physicists	1	76.92	40.00
Producers and Directors	1	28.19	40.00

Retail Salespersons	1	14.77	18.00
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1	40.38	40.00
Security Guards	2	23.23	40.00
Social and Human Service Assistants	2	17.25	32.50
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	2	17.85	28.00
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	1	20.00	40.00
Average Total	38	28.55	34.55
Median Total	38	23.90	40.00
Q3: Successful Closure in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)			
1/1/26 – 3/31/26			
Job Title	Participant	Wage	Hours Worked
Agricultural Technicians	1	19.00	40.00
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	1	48.96	40.00
Construction Managers	1	40.00	40.00
Customer Service Representatives	1	16.25	40.00
Dishwashers	1	17.62	18.00
Financial Managers	1	55.92	40.00
Human Resources Managers	1	32.00	40.00
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2	25.18	29.50
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	1	30.00	40.00
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	2	22.00	18.00
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1	26.82	40.00
Managers, All Other	1	72.12	13.00
Office Clerks, General	1	16.60	40.00
Order Clerks	1	26.19	40.00
Purchasing Managers	1	27.12	40.00
Social Workers, All Other	1	38.46	40.00
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1	16.00	25.00
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	1	36.92	15.00

Waiters and Waitresses	1	16.00	21.00
Average Total	21	30.69	32.61
Median Total	21	26.97	40.00

Cumulative Successful Closures in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)			
(7/1/25 to 6/30/26)			
	Participant	Wage	Hours Worked
Average Total	122	30.76	34.10
Median Total	122	24.53	40.00

PY 24 Performance Assessment					
					Indicator Score
WIOA Performance Indicators	Negotiated Level	Adjustment Factor	Adjusted Level	Actual Level	(Actual Level/Adjusted Level)
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	40.0%	5.5%	45.5%	40.0%	87.9%
Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit	42.5%	-1.2%	41.3%	28.9%	70.0%
Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,460	-\$274	\$5,186	\$5,355	103.3%
Employment Rate - 4th Quarter After Exit	34.5%	0.3%	34.8%	27.3%	78.5%
Credential Attainment Rate	43.0%	2.9%	45.9%	29.6%	64.5%
					Overall State Program Score
					(Sum of the Indicator Scores Divided by 5)
					80.80%

Program Year 2025 WIOA Performance Improvement Plan

Between: The Hawaii Division of Rehabilitation Services (DVR) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

Purpose: Hawaii DRS will avoid Overall State Program Score failure in PY 25 thereby averting fiscal sanctions to the Hawaii Governor's discretionary funds provided under section 128(a) of WIOA.

Scope: DRS will engage in technical assistance with RSA and other partners as needed to maximize accurate and complete WIOA performance reporting. Technical assistance will focus on program year 2025 achievement across the five primary indicators of performance. RSA will assist HDVR's efforts to:

- diagnose under-performance in PY 24,
- identify appropriate steps to maximize PY 25 WIOA Performance,
- operationalize lessons learned from the experience of PY 24 and PY 25 to improve and sustain future performance outcomes.

Steps: Hawaii DVRS and RSA will hold a kick-off meeting on 3/25/2026 for an orientation to the above and to discuss the plan for performance improvement:

1. Employment Rate in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit
 - Homework
 - Collaboration – March 17 – 2pm Eastern?
 - Intervention
 - Take-Away
2. Measurable Skill Gains
 - Homework
 - Collaboration – April 15 – 2pm Eastern?
 - Intervention
 - Take-Away
3. Credential Attainment Rate
 - Homework
 - Collaboration – May 13 – 2pm Eastern?
 - Intervention
 - Take-Away

4. Wrap-Up – June 10 – 2pm?

- Final meeting to wrap up loose ends, check in on performance, and determine next steps.

All substantive actions under this plan must be completed by August 15, 2026, the due date for quarter 4 of the RSA-911, to have an impact upon PY 2025 Performance.

Staff Vacancy Report	
DVR is actively hiring qualified individuals for various positions	
Staff Vacancies as of 4/28/26	
County	Vacancies
Oahu/Administration and Staff Services Office	5
Oahu Branch	10
Services for the Blind Branch (Ho’opono)	9
Hawaii Branch (Hilo/Kona)	5
Maui Branch (Maui, Molokai/Lanai)	3
Kauai	3.5
Total	35.5/112 (31.5% vacant)

Agency Updates

1. AJC

- a. Statewide: HDVR collaborates with community, government, and business partners in various work groups to promote competitive, integrated employment and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 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), 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 provide assistance.
- c. Services for the Blind Branch (SBB) aka Ho`opono: Stationed at the Oahu AJC twice per month, the SBB 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 Dept of Labor. Ho`opono staff are helping AJC staff assess job seekers' abilities, capabilities, and, when appropriate, accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
 - DVR staff collaborate on providing an integrated service model at the AJCs.
 - DVR continues working with AJC staff to find a way to track dual enrollments between programs.
 - Ongoing support from AJC partners includes providing tours and information sharing with new VR staff assigned for weekly on-site services for Hawaii residents with disabilities eligible for VR services.
 - MOU/IFAs with all counties but Kauai have been signed by VRA.

2. Timeliness

- The timeframe for processing DVR applications (30 days) and eligibility determinations (60 days) for persons with disabilities seeking VR services continues to be shortened with DVR's rapid engagement initiatives. DVR's rate is in compliance at or above 90 percent.

3. Vacancies

- Still working to hire qualified individuals for various positions within DVR. We are currently at a 31.5% vacancy rate agency-wide, which is an improvement.

4. Administrative

- VRA continues to be active on the WDC; we also have representation on the WDBs statewide.

Oahu

Workforce Development Board

Oahu Workforce Development Board

Report for May 21, 2026 WDC Meeting

as of 03/31/2026	Budget	Expenditures	Variance	Percentage
Adult	1,545,579.00	1,085,164.19	460,414.81	29.79%
DW	756,060.00	337,579.50	418,480.50	55.35%
Youth	1,735,425.00	898,126.01	837,298.99	48.25%
LAC	448,563.00	250,190.23	198,372.77	44.22%

Quarter 1 (07/01/25-09/30/25); Q2 (10/01/25-12/31/25); Q3 (01/1/2026 – 03/31/2026)

As of 03/31/2026:

WIOA Title I Adult	PY25	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4 (Estimated)
Employment Rate Q2 After Exit	76%	73.2%	73.3%	68.2%	60.9%
Employment Rate Q4 After Exit	76%	70.7%	58.5%	66.3%	77.6%
Median Earnings 2 nd Q After Exit	\$7,800	\$6,431.30	\$8,812.48	\$8,750.00	\$7,943.00
Credential Attainment Rate	65%	52.9%	62.1%	66.6%	75.0%
Measureable Skills Gains	65%	20.1%	53.3%	42.1%	
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker					
Employment Rate Q2 After Exit	75%	77.2%	75.0%	50.0%	80.0%
Employment Rate Q4 After Exit	80%	90.0%	77.7%	90.9%	58.3%
Median Earnings 2 nd Q After Exit	\$10,200	\$9,652.41	\$10,551.54	\$24,115.48	\$14,102.00
Credential Attainment Rate	72%	75.0%	33.3%	100.0%	40.0%
Measureable Skills Gains	72%	33.3%	57.1%	63.6%	
WIOA Title I Youth					
Employment Rate Q2 After Exit	69%	100.0%	57.1%	52.3%	72.2%
Employment Rate Q4 After Exit	65.5%	33.3%	50.0%	100.0%	57.1%
Median Earnings 2 nd Q After Exit	\$5,000	\$7,745.41	\$7,052.97	\$6,996.98	\$10,021.00
Credential Attainment Rate	66%	66.6%	33.3%	100.0%	100.0%
Measureable Skills Gains	54%	22.6%	36.0%	22.2%	

The last Oahu Workforce Development Board Full Board meeting was called to order at on Thursday, April 27, 2026.

Bylaw Amendments

The Board proposed amendments – following – which were approved.

- a. Article III, Section 2(D); Amend to read, “Local Board members and their designees are also required to complete City Ordinance mandated trainings including Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH), and Anti-Bias & Inclusion each biennium. ...”
- b. Article III, Section 8; Addition of item C to read, “The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Local Board.”
- c. Article III, Section 8; Addition of item D to read, “The Executive Director shall have the sole authority over staffing decisions.”

- d. Article IV, Section 2(A); Amend to read, “The OWDB members are expected to attend a majority of the full board meetings and committee meetings of the Local Board.”
- e. Article IV, Section 2(B); Amend to read, “The OWDB members who do not provide a minimum of two (2) days advance notice for multiple absences or are absent for a majority of the full board meetings and committee meetings of the OWDB in the twelve (12) month period following their appointment may be asked to tender their resignation.”
- f. Article IV, Section 2(D); Amend to read, “... in accordance with WIOA Section 679.110(d)(4). The designee is subject to the same membership requirements as an OWDB member. Each OWDB member shall address his or her...”

Equipment Inventory listing for return or reimbursement from Work Hawaii

- a. Request for return or reimbursement for three televisions from the Inventory Equipment List.

Special Projects Request for Proposal (RFP)

Small Project Proposals Approved

- a. Youth Workforce Training, LLC dba Pathway to Success Program
- b. Boys and Girls Club Nānākuli Workforce Readiness Program
- c. Hawai‘i Pacific Health Youth Workforce Development Program

One-Stop Operator Certification and Performance Measures

Colin Inamasu, Planner with Work Hawaii / American Job Center (AJC), provided a presentation referencing WIOA Bulletin 02-23 Terms dated April 2026 and WIOA Bulletin 01-25.

Board Membership and Organizational Updates with new Board members that have recently joined OWDB, including:

- Bridget Lai, Academy for Healthcare Innovation
- Kanui Bell, Institute of Human Services
- Steven Bond-Smith, University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization

OWDB is exploring a future office relocation, although no move is planned at this time.

The Request for Proposal for the One-Stop Operator has officially been posted.

NAWB Conference Update

Daven Kawamura shared that he and Harrison Kuranishi attended the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) conference in Las Vegas. He noted that, for the first time in 40 years, the conference was not held in Washington, D.C.

It was shared that NAWB represents more than 500 workforce boards nationwide and focuses on workforce development issues and WIOA-related matters. OWDB was also recognized with the prestigious Laurie Moran Award.

The next OWDB Full Board Meeting will be held on July 24, 2026.

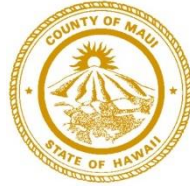
The Office of Economic Revitalization will begin overseeing OWDB effective May 1, 2026.

Maui
Workforce Development Board

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

May 4, 2026

I. Board and Sub-Committee Meetings

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

1. **Program Sub-committee Meeting – Held on Monday, March 30, 2026.**

a. PY24 Updates and Performance Measures

i. MCWDB worked with Program Providers to develop an analysis of areas to improve the credentials attainment rate, specifically for the Dislocated Worker Program.

b. Program Monitoring

i. Program Monitoring conducted on 03/09/26-03/10/26. The purpose of the review was to ensure that WIOA programs are administered and operated in compliance with all requirements.

ii. Monitoring activities included interviews with staff from Goodwill Hawai‘i, the service provider for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. The review also included discussions of policies and procedures, an examination of twelve (12) participant files, and interviews with two (2) program participants.

iii. **Best practices:** Maui staff demonstrate effective outreach and collaboration within the community. Staff are knowledgeable about available community resources and actively connect participants to supportive services that help address barriers to employment.

Concerns: While one of the best practices is the strength of our community outreach, we sometimes forget that one of our greatest resources is internal.

iv. **Recommended Corrective Actions:** Strengthen integrated service delivery by enhancing its formal referral protocols and inter-agency referral tracks.

2. **Finance Sub-committee Meeting – Held on Thursday, February 26, 2026.**

- a. Program Year (PY) 24 Updates
 - i. On the Job Training (OJT) Program
 - Working on increasing OJT reimbursements from 50% to 90%
 - Discussed budding industries and positions that could benefit from OJT participation
 - i. Construction Industry
 - ii. Agricultural
 - ii. Carpenters Union Pre-Apprenticeship Program
 - Currently postponed with no specific date to begin program
 - i. Challenges Faced
 - 1. Low enrollment numbers
 - 2. Referrals received were facing issues that needed to be addressed before considering employment (i.e. houselessness, substance abuse, mental health challenges, etc.)
 - 3. Location challenges – Difficulty finding a location to be able to provide hands-on training

B. **Program Service/Enrollment**

Total Participants Served PY24 (07/01/25-05/01/26)

- Adult – 109
- Dislocated Worker – 27
- Youth – 41

Total Enrollments PY24 (01/01/26-05/01/26)

- Adult – 15
- Dislocated Worker – 3
- Youth – 3

o In-School-Youth (ISY): Three youth have secured unsubsidized employment, Department of Education, Goodwill Retail, and Ohana Pacific Health. One youth has subsidized employment with our Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) with Oshima Surf Co.

o Out-of-School-Youth (OSY): Employed: Fifteen youth have secured unsubsidized employment The employers include Coconuts Restaurant, the Department of Education, Target, Kahului Baptist Preschool, Old Navy, Snorkel Bobs, Kula Hospital, DHX, Hertz Car Rental, Aurum Restaurant, Kahiau Construction, Walmart, Goodwill Hawaii Retail, and Ross Dress for Less.

C. **Performance Measures**

a. Please see performance measures below based on the following quarters:
 Quarter 1 (07/01/25-09/30/25), Q2 (10/01/25-12/31/25) and Q3 (01/01/26-03/31/26)

<u>WIOA Title I Adult Program</u>	<u>PY25</u>	<u>QTR 1</u>	<u>QTR 2</u>	<u>QTR 3</u>
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.5%	49%	49%	50.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	70%	66.7%	50%	50.8%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,000	\$7,790.40	\$7,623.14	\$ 8,974.20
Credential Attainment Rate	51%	N/A	0.00%	20%
Measurable Skills Gains	51%	18.2%	33.30%	43.4%
<u>WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program</u>	<u>PY25</u>	<u>QTR 1</u>	<u>QTR 2</u>	<u>QTR 3</u>
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72%	52%	50%	51.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	78%	80%	58.3%	51.7%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$10,000	\$13,319.14	\$13,483.90	\$13,319.14
Credential Attainment Rate	51%	N/A	0%	33.3%
Measurable Skills Gains	51%	100%	20%	66.6%
<u>WIOA Title I Youth Program</u>	<u>PY25</u>	<u>QTR 1</u>	<u>QTR 2</u>	<u>QTR 3</u>
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	68%	83.3%	90.9%	90.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	66%	80.0%	100.00%	83.3%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,200	\$12,659.33	\$5,616.00	\$ 5,910.36
Credential Attainment Rate	62%	50.0%	50.00%	66.6
Measurable Skills Gains	53%	25.9%	48.1%	40.0%

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

The Maui County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) continues to work toward full compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements related to board governance, board composition, and recertification. During the review process, additional clarification and guidance were requested regarding the Board’s bylaws, specifically in the areas of staggered terms, term limits, and alignment with current WIOA Bulletin requirements.

As a result, MCWDB is requesting technical assistance to support:

- Review and revision of the Board bylaws to ensure full alignment with WIOA standards and State guidance;
- Clarification of recertification requirements and supporting documentation expectations; and
- Assistance with navigating the board recertification process and timelines.

MCWDB remains committed to addressing all identified concerns and working collaboratively with WDC staff to achieve successful recertification and continued compliance with WIOA governance requirements.

E. **Highlights**

Activities for this report month focused on the following:

- **Soft Skills: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking**
 - Learning how to problem solve in a variety of ways in the workplace.
 - Learn how to differentiate between criticism, praise, and feedback and how to react appropriately.
 - Reviewing strategies to make ethical decisions, solving problems on a team with others, and learn to take in account others' perceptions when assessing statements in the work place.

- **JRT: Examining Your Personality**
 - Evaluate ways in which personal and work values can guide career choice.
 - Assess personal interests.
 - Identify aptitudes and abilities and determine how to develop new abilities.

- **Financial Literacy: Credit Cards and Credit Score**
 - What is a credit score
 - Learning about Debt ratio
 - What are credit cards

II. Events/Announcements

A. **Maui's High School Graduating Seniors Event** – 3rd Annual Event was held on 04/24/26 from 9am-12pm, at the Fairmont Kea Lani Hotel, Wailea.

1. In partnership with HIDOE and Goodwill Industries, the County of Maui hosted a hiring event for graduating HS seniors in Maui County. We had over 60 employers/resources and nearly 200 HS seniors from across Maui County.
2. 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.

- B. **County of Maui's Career Expo** – In-Person Hiring Event scheduled for Thursday, May 14, 2026 from 10am-2pm at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center
1. Individuals can either apply now at www.governmentjobs.com/careers/maui or at the event.

C. **Success Story – WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker**

A participant's success this month reflects persistence and the impact of continued program support despite significant delays outside of the participant's control. The participant remained engaged and committed to the goal of obtaining a Class A CDL.

Through continued coordination, advocacy, and training assistance, the participant was successfully enrolled into CDL training. This milestone represents meaningful progress toward entering a high-demand industry and demonstrates how sustained support can help overcome barriers and move participants forward on a viable career pathway.

Submitted by:

Chentelle Rowland

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

Hawaii County
Workforce Development Board

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

Period: January 1 – March 31, 2026

Status Updates (January 1 – March 31, 2026)

Board of Governance and Operations

1. **Board Action:** The full board meeting tentatively scheduled for March 2026 was not held as the board did not meet the necessary quorum.
2. **Committee Activity:** Board staff continued their focus on addressing youth employment barriers and coordinating community-wide recruitment efforts.
3. **Upcoming Meeting:** The board is looking to reschedule the missed session in May to ensure continuity of governance for the upcoming fiscal year.

Fiscal Management and Funding Challenges

1. **Federal and Contract:** The County received its full allocation amount and its signed contracts for Program Year 2025.
2. **Training Budget Constraints:** After the Adult Program Service Provider training budget reached 90% expenditure late in the previous year, staff maintained strict oversight of remaining funds to prioritize high-demand certifications such as CDL.

Workforce Development Partnerships

1. **One-Stop Operator (OSO) Transition:** Change Makers Community Economic Development Corporation completed its first full quarter as the OSO, maintaining the operational firewall between County oversight and daily AJCH activities.
2. **Prince Kuhio Plaza Hiring Event:** The American Job Center Hawaii (AJCH) partnered with the DLIR Workforce Development Division (WDD) to host a major hiring event at Prince Kuhio Plaza. The event was highly successful, featuring significant attendance from local job seekers and diverse employers.

WIOA Title I Program Updates

1. **Annual Program Monitoring:** DLIR staff conducted the scheduled annual monitoring of the **Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs** during February and March 2026 to ensure compliance and performance standards.
2. **Youth Outreach (Ola I Ka Hana):** Building on the Hilo-Waiakea Complex Area partnership, staff continued strengthening the referral pipeline for K-12 students entering the workforce.

Strategic Economic and Workforce Development Alignments

1. **Internships:** Workforce staff are engaged in negotiations to secure local internship opportunities for DoE high school students within the County of Hawaii's various departments.
2. **County Hiring Reform:** The Mayor and the Department of Research & Development continued efforts to remove the **one-year minimum experience requirement** for entry-level positions, a move designed to create immediate career paths for WIOA youth graduates and high school graduates.
3. **Aquaculture Hub:** Long-term strategic planning for the **NELHA aquaculture hub** continues, focusing on the specialized training required for the 100 projected jobs by 2030.
4. **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 (April - June 2026)

1. **HCWDB Meeting:** The next tentative board meeting will be in April.

Committee Report

Education and Career Pathways

SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS COMMITTEE

Highlights of the April 13 Committee Meeting

- Presentations highlighted two statewide initiatives advancing Hawai'i's economy and workforce. The Maui Food Innovation Center supports economic diversification by training entrepreneurs in food processing and packaging, generating about \$1 million annually in small-business revenue and contributing to global product scaling and disaster-recovery efforts. Hawai'i P20 Partnership for Education strengthens the education-to-career pipeline through initiatives such as Gear Up Hawai'i, college readiness and scholarships, Career Technical Education (CTE) and career pathway development, counseling, work-based learning, and a statewide data system that supports longitudinal reporting and planning.

Highlights of the May 11 Committee Meeting

- Presentation on the Pacific Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) provided an overview of the organization, including its vision and mission. It also outlined who PAAC serves, the partners it collaborates with, and how it contributes to strengthening Hawai'i's workforce.
- The committee announced a restructuring that shifts sector strategy responsibilities to the Employer Engagement Committee and renames this committee the Education and Career Pathways Committee. Its updated role focuses on improving coordination across education, training, and workforce systems to ensure smoother pathways from learning to employment, alignment with future job needs, and equitable access to career opportunities. The committee will also support local workforce board coordination, modernize the Eligible Training Provider List, and monitor progress through data and outcomes to strengthen Hawai'i's overall workforce and economy.

Next meeting to be held on August 3, 2026

Committee Report Special Projects

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Highlights of the April 17, 2026, Committee Meeting

- Keith DeMello reported on several legislative measures, noting that House Bill 1859 House Draft 1 and House Bill 2383 House Draft 1 did not advance, while House Bill 2315 House Draft 1 continues to move forward. All individuals listed in the Governor’s Messages were confirmed on April 22, 2026. Keith also suggested the committee revisit the structure of its two-person legislative interaction group due to his role as Workforce Development Council Chair and recognized Executive Director Bennette Misalucha’s authorized role in providing testimony.
- Cheryl Cross and Trang Malone presented the Military Spouses Virtual Job Fair initiative. The committee approved a motion allowing them to continue developing the Military Spouse Workforce Initiative Virtual Hiring Series, including partner engagement, scope refinement, and preparation of a WIOA aligned funding plan.

Other Notes:

Bennette Misalucha, Cheryl Cross, Trang Malone, Carol Kanayama, and Jamie Tabangay met on Thursday, May 14, 2026, to further discuss the preliminary information regarding the Military Spouses Workforce Initiative Virtual Hiring Series. This meeting reviewed initial details, align expectations, and identify any additional considerations needed to move forward with planning.

Next meeting to be held on July 21, 2026

Committee Report

Youth Services

YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

Highlights of April 9, 2026, Committee Meeting

- Michael Barros, State FFA (Future Farmers of America) Co-coordinator, presented the history and status of Hawaii FFA, one of five Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) currently serving secondary and post-secondary students statewide. In his presentation, Mr. Barros noted that one of the key challenges is securing industry partners to expand student opportunities for Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs).
- Vincent Kimura, Agriculture and Technology Workforce Development Coordinator, presented on the CDL (Commercial Driver's License) Master Trainer Program and the School Farm and Farm Manager Series offered at Leeward Community College. He also met separately with Mr. Barros to discuss workforce development needs and future collaboration.

Next meeting to be held on June 25, 2026

Committee Report Employer Engagement

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Highlights

- Plans are afoot to host listening sessions.

From May to September 2026, the Employer Engagement Committee, in partnership with the Hawai'i Employers Council, will host a series of employer listening sessions featuring panels from eight major employment sectors: hospitality, construction, defense, energy, health care, IT/technology, public sector, and general services. These sessions will focus on workforce challenges, Artificial Intelligence preparedness, and ideas for employee retention. A total of eight sessions will be held: two each in June, July, August, and September. Insights gathered will help shape the agenda for the 2027 Future of Work Conference, scheduled for September 23, 2026.

Next meeting to be held on July 23, 2026

Committee Report
Performance Management and
Finance

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Highlights of the April 14, 2026, Meeting

- There are consequences for the state if performance measures are not achieved. USDOL considers any measure under 50% as a failure. Addressing the cause of low performance scores immediately will help avoid multi-year failure.

Focus and Objectives

1. Statewide Performance Report PY2024, maintain the results that local areas are achieving or exceeding negotiated targets (Adult Q4 employment rate 75.3%, median earnings, credential rate and measurable skill gain); and examine the cause of performances below negotiated rates: low enrollment rates and incorrect data input can affect performance rates. US DOL will provide technical assistance to avoid failure two years in a row. The consequences will be a loss of funding perhaps 5% of funding.
2. WIOA Financial Report: expenses are being transferred from PY24 to PY23 to spend down the funds that will lapse earlier. Hawaii is requesting a waiver for the youth program funds to waive the requirement that 75% of expenditures must be spent on out-of-school youth. The waiver would allow funds to be spent where needed to serve each youth appropriately. Design a template for the local areas to use when reporting their WIOA Financial Reports so all areas are reporting the same information.

Next meeting to be held on July 2, 2026

Renewal of Executive Director's Contract



Agenda Item: Renewal of Executive Director’s Employment Contract

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Executive Committee to discuss and take appropriate action regarding the renewal of the Executive Director’s employment contract, which is currently scheduled to expire on **June 30, 2026**.

Background

The Chair has consulted with the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Human Resources Office to confirm applicable requirements related to contract renewal. Necessary administrative paperwork is currently in process to ensure timely action.

Proposed Timeline

- May 8, 2026 – Executive Committee discussion and recommendation to the full Workforce Development Council
- May 21, 2026 – Full Council consideration and appropriate action
- By May 30, 2026 – Submission of required paperwork, including Request for Action and supporting board minutes, to DLIR Human Resources

Clarification Regarding Scope of Agenda Item

This agenda item pertains solely to the question of contract renewal and should not be construed as the formal annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director.

Pursuant to the Council’s bylaws, the next formal annual performance review is scheduled to occur during the first quarter of 2027.

Relevant By-laws Provision

Under Article VII, Section 9 of the Council’s bylaws;

The Council shall conduct an annual performance review of the Executive Director. The review shall be coordinated by the Executive Committee and completed within the first quarter of each fiscal year;

Per the approved addendum on Page 7, the next annual evaluation cycle was deferred until the **first quarter of 2027**, as a full evaluation had recently been completed in 2025.

Executive Committee Action

At its May 8, 2026 meeting, the Executive Committee unanimously voted for a four-year contract for the following reasons:

1. **Stability and Continuity of Leadership:** The Workforce Development Council is responsible for long-range workforce planning, interagency coordination, and implementation of major initiatives that extend across multiple years. A four-year term provides leadership continuity necessary to advance complex priorities without disruption caused by frequent contract renewal cycles.

2. **Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Work** Many of the Council's core responsibilities operate on multi-year timelines, including: • Implementation of the State Unified Plan under WIOA (the development of the Unified Plan is every four years) • Workforce Pell and emerging federal opportunities • Employer engagement and sector strategy efforts • Long-term performance improvement goals since a longer contract term better aligns executive leadership with these planning and implementation cycles.

3. **Annual Performance Review Provides Accountability** A four-year term does not reduce accountability. Under the Council's bylaws, the Executive Director remains subject to a formal annual performance review, coordinated by the Executive Committee and presented to the full Council. This creates an ongoing mechanism to assess performance outcomes, provide feedback, establish annual priorities, address concerns in a timely manner and ensure leadership remains aligned with Council expectations.

4. **Stronger Positioning for Recruitment and Retention**

However, after consultations with state HR, the recommendation is to renew the exact terms of the current two year contract, subject to annual performance review requirements and completion of all applicable administrative processes.

No Pay Increase

The proposed renewal does not include any pay increase connected to the renewal itself. Compensation would remain at the current salary level, with only any standard statewide adjustments or negotiated bargaining increases that may apply.

Rationale for a Four-Year Term

1. **Stability and Continuity of Leadership** The Workforce Development Council is responsible for long-range workforce planning, interagency coordination, and implementation of major initiatives that extend across multiple years. A four-year term provides leadership continuity necessary to advance complex priorities without disruption caused by frequent contract renewal cycles.
2. **Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Work** Many of the Council's core responsibilities operate on multi-year timelines, including:
 - Implementation of the State Unified Plan under WIOA (the development of the Unified Plan is every four years)
 - Workforce Pell and emerging federal opportunities
 - Employer engagement and sector strategy efforts
 - Long-term performance improvement goalsA longer contract term better aligns executive leadership with these planning and implementation cycles.
3. **Annual Performance Review Provides Accountability** A four-year term does not reduce accountability. Under the Council's bylaws, the Executive Director remains subject to a formal annual performance review, coordinated by the Executive Committee and presented to the full Council. This creates an ongoing mechanism to assess performance outcomes , provide feedback, establish annual priorities , address concerns in a timely manner and ensure leadership remains aligned with Council expectations.
4. **Stronger Positioning for Recruitment and Retention**

LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRACT RENEWAL
OF
WDC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BENNETTE MISALUCHA
Executive Committee
May 8, 2026

1) Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Vice Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Hawai'i State Senate

2) Senator Glenn Wakai

State Senator
Hawai'i State Senate

3) Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett

Chair, House Committee on Higher Education
Hawai'i State House of Representatives

4) Representative Jackson D. Sayama

Chair, Labor Committee
Hawai'i State House of Representatives

5) Derek S. K. Kawakami

Mayor
County of Kaua'i

6) Randy Perreira

Executive Director
Hawai'i Government Employees Association
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

7) Keith T. Hayashi

Superintendent
State of Hawai'i, Department of Education

8) Benson Medina

Director
Department of Research and Development
County of Hawai'i

9) Sherry Menor

President & CEO
Chamber of Commerce Hawaii

10) Lui Hokoana

Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i

11) Sarah Guay

President and CEO
Hawaii Employers Council

12) Lea Dias, M.Ed.
Administrator
Hawai'i Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)

13) Matthew Stevens
Executive Director
Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative

14) Leyton Torda
Interim Business Manager/Financial Secretary
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1186

15) Jason Chang
President and CEO
The Queen's Health Systems

16) Derek Kanehira
Senior Vice President, Human Resources
Alexander & Baldwin

17) Alan Hayashi
Owner
Consult 808

18) Gina Anonuevo
Chief Administrative Officer
First Hawaiian Bank

19) Carla Kurokawa
Employment & Training Manager
Alu Like, Inc.

20) David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

21) Manu Bermudes
Vice President, Human Resources
Hawai'i Gas

22) Kendi Ho, Ph.D.

23) Sierra Whiteside
Chair
Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities

24) Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities

25) Peter Ganaban

Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 368

26) Josh Wisch

President and Executive Director

Holomua Collective

27) Matt Prellberg

Policy and Communications Director

Holomua Collective

28) Susan M. Gonsalves, O.D.

Curriculum Coordinator

'Aiea High School

29) Stephen Schatz

Executive Director

Hawai'i P-20

30) Paul Chen

Vice President & Talent Acquisition Manager

First Hawaiian Bank

31) Roseann Freitas

CEO

Building Industry Association of Hawai'i

32) Kehaulani Kukahiko

Manager, Education & Workforce Development

Kaua'i Economic Development Board

33) Denise Yamaguchi

Executive Director

Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation

34) Kazu Hayashida

Workforce Development Manager

Hawaiian Electric

35) Carl W. Hinson

Retired Director

Workforce Development

Hawai'i Pacific Health

36) Amber Akana

Safety Director

Seafarers International Union

37) Rosella Guardascione

Director of Human Resources
King Kamehameha Kona Beach Resort

38) Benjamin Ancheta
President
Inkinen Executive Search

39) Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President & CEO
Lanakila Pacific

40) Helen Sanpei
Principal
McKinley Community School for Adults

41) Brian Miyamoto
Executive Director
Hawaii Farm Bureau

42) Dane Wicker
Deputy Director
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

43) Rosalee Agas Yuu
President
Hawaii Nurses Association

44) Christine Beale
Director of Workforce Development
University of Hawaii

45) Shelli Ihori
Hawaii Pacific Health
Associate Director
Hawaii Pacific Health

46) Mimi Sroat
Director
Hawai'i Electricians Joint Apprenticeship Committee



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

April 13, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council
State of Hawai'i

Re: Renewal of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I write to express my strong support for the renewal of Bennette Misalucha as executive director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC).

Having served in the Hawai'i State Senate as former chair and current member of the Senate Labor Committee, I have seen how the WDC has thrived since Ms. Misalucha was appointed as its executive director. It is clear that she understands and has been able to lead the WDC to effectively carry out its role in workforce policy development and system coordination in advancing economic opportunity and community well-being.

Ms. Misalucha brings a deep understanding of workforce policy and the practical realities of implementation. Her leadership has strengthened the WDC's role as a strategic partner to the workforce stakeholders ensuring greater alignment between policy priorities and on-the-ground execution.

She has also demonstrated a strong commitment to collaboration. Previously, the WDC did not empower members from diverse sectors —government, education, non-profit, philanthropic, business and labor. Now, they are strong partners addressing Hawai'i's workforce challenges in a coordinated and thoughtful manner. This systems-level approach is essential as we continue to navigate issues such as workforce shortage, economic transitions, and the need for sustainable career pathways for our residents.

Equally important, Ms. Misalucha has provided steady and principled leadership during a time of significant change. Her ability to maintain continuity in advancing key initiatives has strengthened the credibility and effectiveness of the WDC.

Given the importance of experienced leadership, I urge the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's contract as executive director. Her continued service will ensure Hawai'i's workforce system is responsive, aligned, and well-positioned to meet the changing needs of our communities and economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Y. Moriwaki

OFFICE OF SENATOR SHARON MORIWAKI
Hawaii State Senate, District 12 - Ala Moana, Kakaako, McCully, Moiliili, Sheridan, Waikiki
415 South Beretania Street, Room 223 | Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813
Phone: (808) 586-6740 | Fax: (808) 586-6829 | Email: senmoriwaki@capitol.hawaii.gov



SENATOR GLENN WAKAI
HAWAII STATE SENATE

April 30, 2026

Dear Mr. DeMello,

I am thrilled to support my former colleague and friend Bennette Misalucha. I have witnessed her exemplary work for the people of Hawaii. The community would greatly benefit from Ms. Misalucha's continual work with the Workforce Development Council.

I have known Ms. Misalucha since our days as reporters for KHON2. Over the decades I have been able to assess her work ethic and output. More recently, I had the pleasure of working with her when she was appointed to the State Senate in 2020.

Ms. Misalucha became a Senator in the middle of the COVID epidemic. The world was figuring out how to function in a new normal. I recall how Ms. Misalucha aggressively chased down wifi access for economically challenged residents in her district. She saw how providing internet access was imperative to accessing education, healthcare, and working from home.

At the same time, she reached out to assist small businesses in her district, by collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary clubs to educate entrepreneurs about federal and local programs aimed at keeping their doors open. I have been awestricken with Ms. Misalucha's innovative thinking and tenacity to create meaningful outcomes. That is exactly the type of leadership needed at WDC.

During the state budget process over the past three years, I have observed Ms. Misalucha's efforts to uplift Hawaii's workforce. She works well with the WDC's 25 board members. The results show in Hawaii's 2.3% unemployment rate - one of the lowest in the nation and a testament to her good work.

Ms. Misalucha has a passion for helping others. She carries herself with dignity and puts the public's interests first. I highly encourage you to extend Ms. Misalucha's contract with WDC. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Warmest Aloha,

Glenn Wakai
Senator
Senate Majority Floor Leader



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hale o nā Luna Maka'āinana

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

April 13, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello, Chair
State Workforce Development Council
State of Hawai'i

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued service of Bennette E. Misalucha as Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council (WDC).

Over the past few years, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Ms. Misalucha in my capacity as the House of Representatives' designee to the WDC. During this time, I have come to appreciate her thoughtful leadership, collaborative approach, and deep commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's workforce pipeline. She has consistently worked to bring together stakeholders across education, industry, and government to address workforce challenges and advance meaningful solutions.

Ms. Misalucha brings extensive experience in both the public and private sectors, including service as a state senator and leadership roles in banking and community engagement. Her background, combined with her strong relationships across sectors, has helped position the WDC to effectively respond to Hawai'i's evolving workforce needs.

Continuity in leadership is especially important as we continue our work to align workforce training, education, and economic development priorities. I have valued the opportunity to work alongside Ms. Misalucha and hope to continue doing so in the years ahead.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Takuva Garrett".

Andrew Takuva Garrett
Chair, House Committee on Higher Education
Hawai'i State House of Representatives



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hale o nā Luna Makaāinana

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Mr. Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council
State of Hawai'i

April 16, 2026

Re: Renewal of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to express my support for renewing Ms. Bennette Misalucha as executive director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC).

As Chair of the House Labor Committee, it has been a pleasure to see WDC thrive under Ms. Misalucha's leadership. She has effectively led the WDC in developing workforce policy and coordinating with stakeholders to advance economic opportunity and community well-being.

Ms. Misalucha brings to the WDC a deep understanding of workforce policy and the practical realities of implementation. Her leadership has strengthened the WDC's role as a strategic partner to workforce stakeholders ensuring greater alignment between policy priorities and on-the-ground execution.

She also demonstrated a strong commitment to collaboration. Previously, the WDC did not empower members from diverse sectors—government, education, non-profit, philanthropic, business, and labor. Now, they are strong partners addressing Hawai'i's workforce challenges in a coordinated and thoughtful manner. In particular, our committee appreciates her collaboration and support for a comprehensive statewide workforce strategy to provide career pathways for the people of Hawai'i. This systems-level approach is essential as we continue to navigate issues such as workforce shortage, economic transitions, and the need for sustainable career pathways for our residents.

Ms. Misalucha has provided steady and principled leadership during a time of significant change. Her ability to maintain continuity in advancing key initiatives has strengthened the credibility and effectiveness of the WDC.

I urge the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's contract as executive director. Her continued service will ensure Hawai'i's workforce system is responsive, aligned, and well-positioned to meet the changing needs of our communities and economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

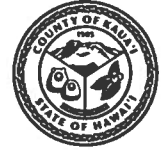
Jackson Sayama

Representative Jackson D. Sayama

District 21 – St. Louis Heights | Palolo Valley | Maunalani Heights | Wilhelmina Rise | Kaimuki
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 443 | Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 586-6900 | Email: repsayama@capitol.hawaii.gov

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



April 14, 2026

Workforce Development Council Chair Keith DeMello
830 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing on behalf of the County of Kaua'i to express our strong support for the continued leadership of Ms. Bennette E. Misalucha as Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council.

Over the past several years, Bennette has proven to be an exceptional partner to Kaua'i. She brings not only a deep understanding of workforce challenges across the state but also a genuine appreciation for the unique barriers faced by our island communities. Her ability to listen, communicate clearly, and work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders, from government agencies to private sector partners, has been instrumental in advancing workforce solutions that are both practical and impactful.

Bennette has been especially supportive in helping Kaua'i navigate ongoing challenges related to WIOA and Workforce Development Division matters. She approaches complex issues with professionalism, persistence, and a solutions-oriented mindset, while skillfully navigating the broader political landscape. Her leadership style builds trust and fosters meaningful progress.

Beyond her professional capabilities, Bennette has been a true ally to our island, consistently demonstrating her commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's workforce and improving opportunities for our residents. Her passion for this work is evident, and her continued leadership would be a tremendous asset to the state.

For these reasons, we strongly support the renewal of Bennette's contract and respectfully urge the Council to continue to entrust her with this important role.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

With warmest aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek S.K. Kawakami", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Derek S.K. Kawakami
Mayor, County of Kaua'i



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

April 15, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
Hawaii Workforce Development Council
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
State of Hawaii

Dear Chair DeMello,

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the extension of Bennette Misalucha as the Executive Director of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

Ms. Misalucha has been an advocate for government employees her entire career. Her collaboration and efforts to address workforce challenges especially within State government has been tremendous. Whether working with government agencies, educators, or employers, she focuses on creating pathways that lead to meaningful employment and long-term growth. We believe that Ms. Misalucha has been a valuable asset to the Council as it plays a vital role in aligning workforce programs with the state's economic development strategies and addressing unmet workforce and economic development needs.

We offer our full support and endorsement of Ms. Misalucha and would respectfully urge the Hawaii Workforce Development Council to extend her contract as Executive Director.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

April 13, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello
Chairperson, Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair DeMello,

Ms. Bennette Misalucha, the current Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council, has been a strong supporter of the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) and our role in workforce development. She has engaged HIDOE in a number of workforce development initiatives and ensures that we have a seat at the table when workforce-related discussions take place. Ms. Misalucha understands that building pipelines to workforce requires public and private sector collaboration and has intentionally included various stakeholders across state agencies and private industry to facilitate a robust conversation on how to address the Hawai'i's workforce needs. This is evident in the State Unified Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant (WIOA State Plan) and in the Generational Commitment, Hawai'i's Workforce North Star and collective agreement to enable all people of Hawai'i to learn, work, and thrive here at home.

Ms. Misalucha has prioritized workforce development and advocated for stronger pipelines to needed industry fields, such as healthcare, transportation, and innovative technology. She has exhibited a passion for this work and continues to see through the establishment and implementation of initiatives set forth in the WIOA State Plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our support for Ms. Misalucha.

Sincerely,


Keith T. Hayashi
Superintendent

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

April 29/2026

Via email: KDeMello@ulupono.com

Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council
State of Hawai'i

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to offer my strong support for the continued appointment of Bennette E. Misalucha as Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council.

In my capacity as a member of the Workforce Development Council Board, serving as Mayor Alameda's designee for the County of Hawai'i, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Bennette and observe her leadership firsthand. I can state without hesitation that her contributions to workforce development across our state—and particularly her engagement with Hawai'i Island—have been both impactful and meaningful.

Bennette's leadership style reflects the Hawaiian values of *laulima* (many hands working together) and *pilina* (building meaningful relationships). She takes a participatory approach that actively engages stakeholders across education, industry, and the nonprofit sector, ensuring that decisions are inclusive, grounded, and aligned with real community needs. This ability to bring people together is one of her greatest strengths.


A significant example of her leadership is the establishment of the first County of Hawai'i Workforce Development Summit, scheduled for May 6th. This convening will bring together leaders from education, industry, and nonprofit sectors to align resources and opportunities in support of the State's Generational Commitment to workforce development. Bennette's guidance and support have been instrumental in making this milestone possible.

In addition to her collaborative approach, Bennette brings a high level of organization and professionalism to her role. She manages complex initiatives with clarity and purpose, ensuring that efforts remain focused, coordinated, and outcomes-driven.

For these reasons, I strongly recommend that Bennette E. Misalucha be retained as Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council. Her leadership is not only effective—it is essential to the continued progress of workforce development efforts across Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Benson Medina
Director

Cc: Bennette E. Misalucha



Chamber of Commerce
HAWAII

LETTER OF SUPPORT

April 14th, 2026

Aloha Workforce Development Chair DeMello and Board of Directors,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a Letter of Support for the reconfirmation of Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, Workforce Development Council.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii supports the confirmation of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director for the Workforce Development Council. The Chamber and its Education and Workforce Development team have had the privilege of partnering closely with Ms. Misalucha on a number of critical workforce initiatives aimed at strengthening Hawaii's economic future. Through efforts such as Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment, the State Unified Plan, Future of Work initiatives, and the advancement of Sector Partnerships, Ms. Misalucha has demonstrated a commitment to aligning workforce development with the evolving needs of Hawaii's employers and communities.

Ms. Misalucha's leadership is both strategic and deeply collaborative. She has consistently shown an ability to engage stakeholders across the full spectrum of Hawaii's workforce system—including business leaders and employers, educators, government agencies, and community-based organizations. Her inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are not only heard but meaningfully incorporated into policy and program development.

Equally important is Ms. Misalucha's genuine passion for the people of Hawaii. She approaches her role with a deep sense of purpose and commitment to improving opportunities for local residents, strengthening career pathways, and supporting businesses in building a skilled and sustainable workforce.

For these reasons, the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii strongly supports Ms. Misalucha's reconfirmation. Her continued leadership will be vital to advancing the state's workforce development goals and ensuring a prosperous future for Hawaii's economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for Ms. Misalucha's confirmation.



Chamber *of* Commerce

HAWAII

Best regards,

Sherry Menor, President & CEO, Chamber of Commerce Hawaii



**UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII***
SYSTEM

'Ōnaehana Kulanui o Hawai'i

Lui Hokoana
Interim Vice President for Community Colleges

April 15, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello
Chairperson
Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair DeMello:

I would like to express my appreciation for the work that Bennette Misalucha has been doing in support of workforce development for the state of Hawai'i. She has been an effective leader in bringing stakeholders to the table to update the State Unified Plan and develop Hawai'i's Workforce North Star. She has been an enthusiastic partner to the University, specifically in regards to our current efforts to implement the new Workforce Pell program, the development of stronger connections between our campuses and the statewide WIOA teams, and the modernization of our statewide training database.

Most importantly, Bennette has shown critical leadership in convening and coordinating efforts between government, industry, and education. Her thorough and thoughtful dedication to promoting a "one team" effort will surely benefit our young people, and our entire community, as we all work towards creating a thriving workforce environment for our state.

Sincerely,

Lui Hokoana
Interim Vice President for Community Colleges

2444 Dole Street, Bachman Hall 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
Telephone: (808) 956-7038
Fax: (808) 956-5286
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution



HAWAII EMPLOYERS COUNCIL

April 20, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council
Department of Labor & Industrial Relations
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 417
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am pleased to offer my support for Bennette Misalucha's continued service as Director of the Workforce Development Council. I have had the opportunity to work directly with Bennette and observe her leadership up close—both in how she engages partners and how she moves important work forward.

Bennette brings a rare combination of thoughtfulness, discipline, and genuine commitment to this work. She listens carefully, brings people together in a meaningful way, and then ensures that the work translates into action.

In my interactions with her, I've been particularly impressed by her commitment to collaboration among stakeholders. She shows up prepared, open, and focused on solutions. Bennette creates an environment where voices are heard—but also where there is a clear expectation that we move forward together. That balance between input and action is critical, and it's been my observation that she handles it with professionalism and consistency.

I've also seen firsthand the level of effort Bennette puts into advancing the state's unified workforce plan. She has been intentional about ensuring alignment across systems and key stakeholders, while also reinforcing that this work requires a long-term, generational commitment.

At a time when Hawai'i needs collaborative leadership in workforce development, Bennette provides both continuity and forward momentum. Based on my experience working with her, I strongly support her continued service in this role. Mahalo for the opportunity to share my perspective and support for her continued leadership.

Sincerely,

Sarah Guay, President & CEO
Hawaii Employers Council

Ms. Misalucha has championed key priorities such as employer engagement, career pathway development, and deeper system integration—areas that are critical to improving outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities and other groups facing barriers to employment. Her leadership reflects both strategic vision and a commitment to practical, forward-moving solutions.

Equally important is how she leads. She fosters a culture of partnership, respect, and shared purpose. She recognizes the strengths each core partner brings and creates space for collaboration that is authentic and results-driven. Under her leadership, Hawai'i's workforce system is positioned to move forward in a coordinated and impactful way.

Strong, collaborative leadership at the Council level is essential to the success of our statewide workforce system. I am confident that Ms. Misalucha will continue to guide the Workforce Development Council with integrity, clarity of vision, and a deep commitment to improving outcomes for the people of Hawai'i.

For these reasons, I respectfully and strongly encourage the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's contract as Executive Director. Continuity in her leadership will be critical to sustaining the momentum that has been built and to advancing a more aligned, effective, and responsive workforce system for our state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lea Dias". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lea Dias, M.Ed.
Administrator
Hawai'i Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)



HAWAII ELECTRICIANS TRAINING FUND

Joint Apprenticeship Committee • Joint Training Committee • Joint Safety Committee

1935 HAU STREET, SUITE 400 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819-5003 • PHONE (808) 847-0629 • FAX (808) 843-8818

April 17, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Recommendation for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to strongly support the continued employment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). As a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, we have had the opportunity to work with Bennette and have experienced firsthand the impact of her leadership.

Bennette brings a unique ability to translate workforce strategy into practical, coordinated action. She understands both policy and execution, and her leadership has strengthened alignment between workforce programs and the evolving needs of employers, particularly as industries navigate rapid change and increasing competition for talent.

She is highly collaborative, engages meaningfully with the private sector, and ensures that employer perspectives are reflected in statewide strategies. I have also been particularly impressed with her focus on data and modernization to improve workforce outcomes—an approach that aligns closely with how leading organizations operate today.

Just as importantly, Bennette has built strong trust and credibility among partners. She leads with professionalism, integrity, and a clear commitment to expanding opportunities for the people of Hawai'i.

Given the importance of continuity and experienced leadership, we strongly encourage the Council to renew her contract. Her continued leadership will help ensure the WDC remains effective and well-positioned to support Hawai'i's workforce and economic priorities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mimi Sroat

Director

For the Hawaii Electricians Joint Apprenticeship Committee



4/14/2026

Dear Chair DeMello and Members of the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative to express our support for Bennette Misalucha's continued leadership as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council.

Over the past three years, we have had the opportunity to work alongside Bennette and the Workforce Development Council on several key efforts. We have directly engaged in convenings she has helped lead, including the Workforce Synergy Summits, Future of Work conferences, and webinar series that have brought forward promising practices from other states. These efforts have created important space for cross-sector dialogue and alignment.

We have also observed the development and implementation of Hawai'i's 2024-2027 State Unified Plan for Workforce Development. This work has helped establish a shared direction across agencies and partners, including the articulation of Hawai'i's Generational Workforce Commitment—a long-term goal to ensure that by 2045, all people in Hawai'i have a path to a career that enables them to learn, work, and thrive locally, contributing to a vibrant economy grounded in community values. This commitment has begun to serve as a unifying North Star for the system, with many organizations and agencies aligning their efforts around this shared direction.

As this work moves from planning into implementation, continuity of leadership will be important to sustain momentum, maintain alignment across partners, and support ongoing coordination across the system. The Workforce Development Council plays a critical role in this effort.

We support Bennette Misalucha's continued service in this role and appreciate the Council's consideration.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Stevens", is positioned above the typed name.

Matt Stevens
Executive Director
Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

LOCAL UNION NO. 1186 **Affiliated with AFL-CIO**

1935 HAU STREET, ROOM 501 • HONOLULU, HI 96819-5003
TELEPHONE (808) 847-5341 • FAX (808) 847-2224

April 16, 2026

To: Keith DeMello, Chair

Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

In my role as a representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 1186 (IBEW 1186), I have worked directly with Bennette Misalucha and have seen firsthand the impact of her leadership on Hawai'i's workforce system. Representing more than 3,000 members across electrical construction, telecommunications, Spectrum, motor and marine, civil service, and professional educators at Kamehameha Kapālama and Mid-Pacific Institute, I value leadership that delivers coordination, accountability, and results—qualities Ms. Misalucha consistently demonstrates.

I am writing to express my strong support for the continuation of Ms. Misalucha's service as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). With her contract set to expire on June 30, maintaining her leadership is critical to ensuring stability and continuity at a time when Hawai'i's workforce system is in transition.

Ms. Misalucha has strengthened the WDC's role as a statewide convener and policy leader, ensuring alignment across partners while maintaining a clear strategic direction. She brings a deep understanding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), federal compliance requirements, and the day-to-day realities faced by workforce partners. Her ability to connect policy with practical implementation has kept Hawai'i's workforce system both compliant and responsive to local needs.

Her leadership is grounded in collaboration and transparency. She has built strong, lasting relationships with state agencies, county partners, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations—relationships that are essential to the effectiveness of the workforce system. Through this approach, she has improved communication, strengthened alignment, and supported more coordinated service delivery statewide.

She has also advanced key initiatives that position Hawai'i for long-term success, including sector-based workforce strategies, modernization of workforce data systems, and closer alignment with statewide economic development priorities. Her

professionalism, integrity, and solutions-oriented approach have earned the trust of partners across the state and enhanced the credibility of the Council.

Just as important, Ms. Misalucha demonstrates a genuine commitment to the people of Hawai'i, working to expand opportunities for jobseekers, employers, and communities statewide.

At a time when experienced leadership and continuity are essential, I respectfully urge the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's contract as Executive Director. Her continued leadership will help sustain momentum, provide stability, and ensure the WDC remains an effective and trusted leader in Hawai'i's workforce system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Leyton Torda

Interim Business Manager/Financial Secretary

IBEW Local 1186



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND CEO • 1301 Punchbowl Street • Honolulu, HI 96813 • PH: 808-691-4688

Aloha,

I am writing to express my support for the reappointment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council. In her role as Director, Bennette has provided steady, thoughtful leadership at a time when Hawai'i's workforce system faces both significant challenges and important opportunities. Her service reflects a clear commitment to aligning workforce development strategies with the real needs of employers, workers, and communities across the state. Bennette has developed deep institutional knowledge and a practical understanding of how policy, funding, and implementation intersect to strengthen Hawai'i's workforce pipeline.

Bennette's leadership style is collaborative and outcomes oriented. She consistently works across agencies and sectors to ensure that workforce programs are responsive, data-informed, and aligned with the needs of private employers. This is particularly important as Hawai'i continues to address workforce shortages by preparing participants for high-demand, high-need careers. The work of the WDC has been to build pathways that support economic mobility and resilience.

Bennette's integrity has built credibility among stakeholders. She is widely respected for her collaborative nature and ability to navigate complex issues with professionalism and clarity. These qualities are essential for the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council, whose work requires balancing diverse perspectives to steward the connection between the Federal and local programs.

I support the reappointment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council. I am confident that her continued leadership will serve Hawai'i well and contribute meaningfully to a stronger, more resilient workforce system.

Sincerely,



Jason Chang

President and Chief Executive Officer
The Queen's Health Systems

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.



ALEXANDER & BALDWIN
PARTNERS FOR HAWAII

April 10, 2026

To: Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am pleased to offer my endorsement of Bennette Misalucha's continued service as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council. In my roles as a WDC Council Member representing the Private Sector and Vice Chair of the Employer Engagement Committee, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Ms. Misalucha and to observe her leadership and impact firsthand.

Since assuming the role of Executive Director, Ms. Misalucha has strengthened the WDC's capacity to serve as a statewide convener and strategic leader, advanced employer engagement, and promoted stronger alignment between workforce programs and industry needs. Her understanding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), paired with a practical, solution-oriented approach, has helped ensure that policy priorities translate into meaningful outcomes.

Ms. Misalucha leads with professionalism, integrity, and a clear focus on long-term system improvement. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to transparency, accountability, and partnership, which have strengthened the Council's work and enhanced its credibility among stakeholders statewide. As Vice Chair of the Employer Engagement Committee, she consistently encourages thoughtful dialogue and supports our efforts to strengthen employer participation across the workforce system.

For these reasons, I strongly support Ms. Misalucha's continued service as Executive Director and believe her leadership remains an important asset to the Council's ability to advance effective, employer-responsive workforce strategies for Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Derek Kanehira

Senior Vice President, Human Resources

Workforce Development Council Member and Vice Chair, Employer Engagement Committee

From: Alan S. Hayashi alan.hayashi2@gmail.com
Subject: Bennette Misalucha extension of her tenure as Executive Director of the WDC
Date: April 10, 2026 at 10:10 PM
To: Kdemello@ulupono.com
Cc: Bennette Misalucha Bennette.e.misalucha@hawaii.gov, Cheryl Cross ccross@inkinen.com



ALAN HAYASHI
446 KAWAIHAE STREET
APARTMENT M255
HONOLULU, HAWAII , 96825

To: Chair Keith Demello, and members of the Workforce Development Council (WDC).

I am writing this letter in support of Ms Bennette Misalucha, and another term in her role as Executive Director of the WDC.

During Ms Misalucha's first term as executive director of the WDC, she faced many challenges including: no funding line for WDC; strained relations at the legislature and DLIR, and a depleted WDC staff. I know these assertions to be true because I was the incoming Chairman of the WDC at the time. Together with key members of the WDC we managed to restore the funding line, and Bennette began rebuilding legislative relationships, the staff, and began strategic planning with the WDC executive committee.

While I believe the WDC is in an ascending position of respect and competence, more organizational and relationship work needs to be done.

Since Ms Misalucha has indicated a strong desire to continue in her role as the Executive Director of the WDC, I am respectfully writing this letter in support, as I believe her management record is deserving of continuation.

My sincere best wishes to you and the WDC, as there are great opportunities and workforce needs in Hawaii's future. A hui hou. Aloha, Alan Hayashi 808-255-6699

Sent from my iPhone



Gina Woo Anonuevo
Chief Administrative Officer
First Hawaiian Bank
April 10, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Recommendation for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to strongly support the continued employment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). In my role as Chief Administrative Officer for a \$25 billion financial institution, I have worked with Bennette and experienced firsthand the impact of her leadership.

Bennette brings a unique ability to translate workforce strategy into practical, coordinated action. She understands both policy and execution, and her leadership has strengthened alignment between workforce programs and the evolving needs of employers, especially as industries navigate rapid change and growing competition for talent.

She is highly collaborative, engages meaningfully with the private sector, and ensures employer perspectives are reflected in statewide strategies. I have also been particularly impressed with her focus on data and modernization to improve workforce outcomes, an approach that aligns closely with how leading organizations operate today.

Just as important, Bennette has built strong trust and credibility across partners. She leads with professionalism, integrity, and a clear commitment to improving opportunities for the people of Hawai'i.

Given the importance of continuity and experienced leadership, I strongly encourage the Council to renew her contract. Her continued leadership will ensure the WDC remains effective and well-positioned to support Hawai'i's workforce and economic priorities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Gina Woo Anonuevo
Chief Administrative Officer
First Hawaiian Bank



*E alu like mai kākou, e nā 'ōiwi o Hawai'i
Let Us Work Together, Natives of Hawai'i*

04/10/2026

To: Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued employment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). With her contract set to expire on June 30, I believe her continued leadership is essential to maintaining stability, strategic direction, and systemwide coordination during a period of significant workforce transition for our state.

Ms. Misalucha has strengthened the WDC's role as a statewide convener, collaborator, and policy leader. She brings a deep understanding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), federal compliance requirements, and the operational realities faced by local workforce partners. Her ability to balance policy vision with practical implementation has ensured that Hawai'i's workforce programs remain aligned with federal expectations while responsive to the unique needs of our islands.

Her leadership has been marked by transparency, partnership, and a commitment to systemwide coordination. She has built and maintained strong relationships across state agencies, county partners, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations—relationships that are foundational to the Council's work and not easily replicated. Her collaborative approach has improved communication, increased alignment, and supported more coordinated service delivery across the workforce system.

Ms. Misalucha has also guided the Council through key initiatives that advance Hawai'i's long-term workforce and economic goals, including sector strategies, workforce data modernization, and improved alignment with statewide economic development priorities. Her professionalism, integrity, and solutions-oriented mindset have earned the trust of partners statewide and strengthened the Council's credibility.

Equally important, Ms. Misalucha has demonstrated a deep commitment to the people of Hawai'i. She approaches her work with a genuine desire to elevate opportunities for jobseekers, employers, and communities statewide. Her continued leadership will ensure that the WDC maintains momentum on priority initiatives and remains a strong, effective leader for Hawai'i's workforce system.

Given the importance of continuity and experienced leadership at this critical time, I respectfully urge the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's contract as Executive Director. Her continued service will provide the stability and strategic direction needed to support Hawai'i's workforce system during this period of transition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carla Kurokawa
Employment & Training Manager II, ALU LIKE, Inc.
WDC Board Member | Youth Services Committee Chair

*Hawai'i Island Center: 32 Kino'ole Street, Suite 102 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Phone: 808.961.2625 • Fax: 808.935.6084 • Email: info@alulike.org • Website: www.alulike.org*



HAWAIIKIDSCAN

david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro
Executive Director

April 14, 2026

Keith DeMello
Chair
Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl St
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Mr. DeMello,

I am writing to offer my strong support for Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council (WDC).

As a member of the WDC's Youth Services Committee and supporter of Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment, I've directly seen the impact of Bennette's leadership. She has demonstrated a consistent ability to build partnerships across sectors, align stakeholders around shared goals, and deliver results that strengthen both workforce systems and community well-being. Under her vision and leadership, WDC is in a position of statewide influence to move Hawaii in a positive direction that provides greater economic outcomes for our residents and communities.

Bennette has an inclusive and proactive approach, and she is constantly looking for opportunities to build bridges, connect partners, and share best practices. She has invited me to present at various WDC convenings, and she has also consulted me on opportunities to bring national partners like the Strada Education Foundation to share what is happening around the country on workforce development.

I am confident that Bennette Misalucha will continue to serve with integrity, vision, and a deep sense of responsibility to the people of Hawaii. At a time when Hawaii is working to diversify its economy and invest in a resilient, future-ready workforce, her leadership is more important than ever.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro
Founding Executive Director
HawaiiKidsCAN

Ms. Manu Bermudes
Vice President Human Resources
Hawaii Gas
1140 Waimanu St.
Honolulu, HI 96814

April 14, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
State of Hawaii
Workforce Development Council

RE: Written Testimony in Strong Support of Ms. Bennette Misalucha

Aloha Chair DeMello,

I am honored to offer my heartfelt support for Ms. Bennette Misalucha's reappointment to serve a second term as Executive Director of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council. In my role as Vice President of Human Resources for Hawaii Gas, and as a proud member of the Council, I have had the privilege of witnessing Bennette's leadership, integrity, and deep commitment to advancing the state's workforce priorities firsthand.

Bennette is an extraordinary leader whose strength lies not only in her experience and insight but in her authenticity and compassion. She leads with both heart and purpose — ensuring that every voice on the Council is heard, valued, and guided toward meaningful impact. Bennette's calm and steady presence in meetings and discussions fosters collaboration, even in challenging times, and her thoughtful leadership has been instrumental in aligning our objectives around the shared goal of growing Hawaii's workforce and opportunities for our residents.

Her leadership style embodies integrity and empathy, setting a tone that reflects the very best of public service. Bennette brings stability, transparency, and unity to every initiative she touches, inspiring confidence across the Council and among community partners. She elevates those around her through encouragement, mentorship, and genuine support — qualities that have strengthened our collective work tremendously.

As both a Council member and workforce advocate, I have seen the lasting impact of Bennette's leadership. Her reappointment will ensure continuity, vision, and the continued advancement of Hawaii's workforce development goals. I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support Ms. Misalucha's second term and am confident she will continue to lead with the same grace, wisdom, and dedication that have defined her service thus far.

Respectfully Submitted,



Manu Bermudes
Vice President, Human Resources
Council Member, Hawaii Workforce Development Council

April 13, 2026

State Workforce Development Council

Hawai'i Department of Labor Industrial Relations

Dear Workforce Development Council,

I am writing to support Ms. Bennette E. Misalucha's re-appointment as Executive Director for the State Workforce Development Council because of her impact on workforce development for vulnerable populations like adult immigrants and our kupuna, convening a broad range of stakeholders, and pursuing innovative strategies from other states.

As the co-chair of Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society's (HPGS) Workforce Development Committee, I worked with Ms. Misalucha as she facilitated stakeholder efforts in the Council of State Government's Long-Term Care Summit in collaboration with the Executive Office of Aging and Senator Sharon Moriwaki.

Ms. Misalucha has shown she is a hard-working leader in her support of vulnerable populations in Hawai'i by her convening a variety of stakeholders from public and private sectors to complete the State Unified Plan for WIOA. I want to applaud her efforts on inviting key successful states from the National Governor's Association to highlight different strategies implemented to create a coherent and innovative workforce infrastructure for newcomers and incumbent workers.

Moreover, as a member of the UH's Curriculum Research Design Group evaluation team that completed the 2021 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment to inform Hawai'i's Perkins V Planning, I believe Ms. Misalucha will be key in aligning WIOA funded outcomes with Perkins V funded secondary and post-secondary programs of study. For example, as a former ESL instructor at McKinley Community School for Adults, I witnessed how our English Language Learners, Adult Basic Education, and GED students benefitted from two C3 workforce grants that promoted college and career readiness within the WIOA funded ecosystem. Much work is needed to braid funding for our underemployed residents like adult immigrants, and Ms. Misalucha's has already shown she can bring both public and private funders to the table.

Sincerely,

Kendi Ho, Ph.D.

From: Bartoldus, Daintry Daintry.Bartoldus@doh.hawaii.gov
Subject: Letter of support for Ms. Misalucha
Date: April 11, 2026 at 5:07 PM
To: dliir.workforce.council dliir.workforce.council@hawaii.gov, kdemello@ulupono.com
Cc: Sierra Whiteside sierrawhiteside13@gmail.com

DB

Dear Chair DeMello,

On behalf of the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities, I am writing to express our strong support for the renewal of Ms. Bennette Misalucha's contract.

We first worked with Ms. Misalucha during her time in the Senate, and from the very beginning she demonstrated a rare and meaningful commitment to individuals with disabilities and the organizations that serve them. She proactively reached out to us, asked directly what we needed, and invited our advocates to share their priorities in their own voices. Too often, decisions affecting individuals with disabilities are made for them, not with them. Ms. Misalucha has always chosen the collaborative, person-centered path, even when it requires more time and thoughtful engagement, because she understands that this is how real, lasting progress is made.

Over the past three years as the Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council, Ms. Misalucha has brought that same philosophy and practice into her leadership. She has consistently demonstrated her aspiration to strengthen and uplift Hawai'i's workforce, and she has done so by ensuring that diverse stakeholders, including individuals who experience barriers to employment, are heard, respected, and included in the solutions. Her convenings have been meaningful, intentional, and grounded in the realities and needs of our community.

A clear example of this commitment was her support of our Mock Hearing during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month at the State Capitol. Ms. Misalucha worked one-on-one with self-advocate Mr. Kaili Swan to help him prepare for giving testimony, coaching him on managing nervousness, understanding the legislative process, and presenting his message with confidence. That experience had a lasting impact; to this day, Mr. Swan proudly and actively advocates for others through the legislative process. Moments like these demonstrate not only her leadership, but her genuine care for empowering individuals with developmental disabilities to speak for themselves.

Ms. Misalucha's leadership has helped strengthen partnerships, improve communication across systems, and advance efforts that are crucial for individuals with developmental disabilities to access meaningful employment. Her steady commitment to inclusion, her deep understanding of the challenges facing our workforce, and her ability to bring people together have made her an invaluable leader during a period of change and rebuilding.

Because she has demonstrated this dedication so clearly over the past three years and because there is still important work ahead, we strongly support her continued service as the Executive Director. Her vision, integrity, and collaborative approach are assets to the Council and to the State of Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sierra Whiteside, Chair, State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Olga Whiteside, Chair, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
and

Daintry Bartoldus, Executive Administrator
Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Princess Victoria Kamamalu Building
1010 Richards Street, Room 122
Honolulu, HI 96813

Office Ph.: (808) 586-8100 Fax: (808) 586-7543

<https://hiddcouncil.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Hawaii-State-Council-on-Developmental-Disabilities-107220501051848>



LIUNA!

April 15, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawaii

Re: Support for Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to offer my support for Bennette Misalucha and her continued service as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council. As Business Manager of the Laborers International Union of North America, Local 368, I have come to know Bennette through both professional collaboration and personal interaction, and I value the steady and thoughtful leadership she brings to her role.

In my experience, Bennette has a strong ability to bring people together around shared goals. She understands the importance of balancing policy direction with the realities faced by workers and employers on the ground. From the labor perspective, her openness to listening and engaging in meaningful dialogue has helped strengthen relationships and ensure that workforce efforts remain grounded in real needs.

She approaches her work with professionalism and consistency, and she has earned the respect of many across different sectors. Whether working with labor, business, or community partners, she demonstrates a practical and cooperative style that helps move initiatives forward without unnecessary complication.

At a time when continuity is important, I believe her ongoing leadership provides value to the Council and the broader workforce system. For these reasons, I support the continuation of her role as Executive Director.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Ganaban

Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer
LiUNA, local 368

PETER A. GANABAN
*Business Manager
Secretary-Treasurer*

MARTIN ARANAYDO
President

JOBY NORTH II
Vice President

RYAN MARTIN
Recording Secretary

EDWARD MEDEIROS
Executive Board

RUSSELL NAPIHAA
Executive Board

DOMINGO PERALTA JR.
Executive Board

MARIANO AGBAYANI JR.
Auditor

ESTHER AILA
Auditor

MICHAEL LOZANO
Auditor

KALA ASATO
Sergeant-At-Arms

LIUNA Local 368
1617 Palama Street
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 841-5877
Fax: (808) 847-7829
www.local368.org



Feel the Power



holomua

COLLECTIVE

OUR MISSION

Keep all local working families in Hawai'i by creating cross-sector solutions and executing sustainable pathways to make sure they can afford to stay.

OUR VISION

A flourishing local economy that is diverse, sustainable, and inclusive where all working families thrive, those who have left can return, and local businesses prosper.

BOARD MEMBERS

Jason Fujimoto
Meli James
Micah Kāne
Brandon Kurisu
Brad Nicolai
Mike Pietsch, *Board Chair*
Sunshine Topping

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Josh Feldman
Brittany Heyd
Alicia Moy
Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

827 Fort Street Mall, 2nd Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

+1 (808) 542-4089
info@holomuacollective.org

HolomuaCollective.org

Page 1 of 1

April 15, 2026

Aloha Chair DeMello, Vice Chair Malone, and Councilmembers,

We write to support Executive Director Bennette Misalucha reappointment as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC), based on our experience working with her.

Holomua Collective and its related organization, Holomua Collaborative, are dedicated to working toward solutions that keep local working families in Hawai'i by making sure they can afford to stay. Much of our time involves convening leaders from the government, non-profit, for-profit, and labor sectors to identify areas for collaboration in reducing the high cost of living and expanding economic opportunity. We then work to translate these discussions into tangible, actionable solutions.

In her role as Executive Director, Ms. Misalucha has been a key partner in our efforts to align workforce development with the broader economic needs of our community.

A primary focus of our work is ensuring Hawai'i's economy can support its people. Data from the Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative indicates that over the next decade, about 170,000 young residents will enter the local workforce, but current projections show a deficit of nearly 70,000 living-wage job openings. Without intervention, over 40% of our next generation will face a market that cannot support their desire to remain in Hawai'i.

Ms. Misalucha has been instrumental in building and amplifying the coalition behind the "Generational Commitment"—a 2045 vision to ensure every person in Hawai'i has a path to a career that allows them to thrive locally. Over the past year, we have seen her elevate this issue, creating the awareness necessary for sustained action. Her success in integrating this goal into the Modified State Unified Plan demonstrates the kind of leadership required to address our state's workforce gap.

The Generational Commitment is now moving from planning to implementation. Retaining Director Misalucha would maintain the momentum, coordination, and alignment that has been established system-wide among the stakeholders, and we support her reappointment as Executive Director of the WDC.

Sincerely,

Josh Wisch
President and Executive Director

Matt Prellberg
Policy and Communications Director



'Aiea High School
98-1276 Ulune Street
Aiea, HI 96701

April 13, 2026

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing in support of Ms. Bennette Misalucha's role within the Workforce Development Council. Our high school's commitment to career pathways is enhanced by the informative and insightful council convenings. Ms. Misalucha helps bring together stakeholders from industry, K-12 schools, and higher education to forge alliances leading to all students finding meaningful careers after graduation.

In addition to coordinating communication for the meetings and webinar offerings, her participation during the sessions help clarify complex discussions. She also helps ensure there are actionable next steps to follow. I am deeply appreciative of her inclusivity and efforts to ensure we are invited to participate in the virtual meetings.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Gonsalves, O.D.
Curriculum Coordinator
susan.gonsalves@k12.hi.us
(808) 305-6499



April 15, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello
Chairperson
Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair DeMello,

Ms. Bennette Misalucha has demonstrated a proactive commitment to collaborating across the education, workforce development, and economic development sectors. Her leadership in integrating Hawaii's Generational Workforce Commitment into the Council's strategic framework reflects a deliberate effort to ensure broad stakeholder engagement. By facilitating a process where diverse voices are heard, she has helped align workforce priorities with established initiatives, such as the Hawai'i P-20 Council's Hawaii Graduates for Hawaii's Future goal.


A central component of Ms. Misalucha's work involves leading strategic conversations with the State Office of Career and Technical Education. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between Hawaii's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) plan. Achieving synergy between these two areas is essential for a truly integrated system where the educational pipeline and workforce requirements operate in tandem.

We are currently at a pivotal juncture where stakeholders across the education, workforce development, and economic development sectors are successfully harmonizing their visions and investments. Ms. Misalucha's professional relationships and cross-sector leadership have been key drivers in this progress, helping to transform individual departmental goals into a cohesive statewide strategy.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Schatz", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Stephen Schatz
Executive Director

From: Paul Chen pchen@fhb.com 
Subject: Re: Letter of Support for Bennette Misalucha
Date: April 15, 2026 at 1:23 PM
To: kdemello@ulupono.com

PC

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to offer my strong and unequivocal recommendation for Bennette Misalucha to continue serving as Executive Director of the State of Hawai'i Workforce Development Council.

In my role as Vice President of Talent Acquisition as First Hawaiian Bank, I work closely with workforce leaders, employers, educators, and policymakers to address Hawai'i's most pressing workforce challenges. Over the past couple of years, I have had the privilege of working closely with Ms. Misalucha on a range of initiatives, including the Hale Imua State Internship Program, the American Job Center Youth Hawai'i Program, and the numerous Talent Summits she has produced. Few leaders I have encountered bring the depth of experience, credibility, strategic clarity, and passion that Ms. Misalucha brings to the Workforce Development Council.

As Executive Director, Ms. Misalucha has demonstrated a steady and thoughtful approach to strengthening Hawai'i's workforce system. She consistently brings the right stakeholders together to align education and training pathways with labor market demand, while elevating employer engagement across sectors. She leads with both urgency and respect—fostering collaboration while maintaining a clear focus on outcomes and accountability. Under her leadership, the Council has remained focused on long-term system alignment while responding effectively to immediate workforce disruptions and opportunities, as reflected in the Hawai'i State Unified Plan.

What I especially value is Ms. Misalucha's ability to translate policy into practice. She understands that successful workforce development is not theoretical—it is measured by whether employers can fill critical roles, whether residents can access quality jobs, and whether our economy can sustain and grow local talent. Her leadership consistently reflects this practical, results-oriented perspective.

For these reasons, I strongly support Bennette Misalucha's continued appointment as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Workforce Development Council. She is exceptionally qualified, widely respected, and uniquely positioned to lead the Council's work forward in service of Hawai'i's workers, employers, and communities.

Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful. I am confident the State will continue to benefit from Ms. Misalucha's leadership.

Sincerely,

Paul Chen

Paul Chen | Vice President & Talent Acquisition Manager
Human Resources Group
999 Bishop Street, Honolulu, HI 96813 | P (808)525-6248 | F (808)525-5798 | pchen@fhb.com

 **First Hawaiian Bank**  **First Hawaiian Bank.**



Keith DeMello
Chair
Workforce Development Council

April 14, 2026

Aloha Keith,

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of recommendation for Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council. In her role, Ms. Misalucha has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, collaboration, and a deep commitment to advancing workforce development across Hawaii.

Throughout her tenure, Bennette has been a strong and effective partner to organizations throughout the state, bringing together public, private, nonprofit, and industry stakeholders to strengthen workforce pathways and align training with real-world employment needs. Her ability to collaborate across sectors and foster productive relationships has been instrumental in promoting sustainable workforce solutions that serve both employers and workers.

At BIA Hawaii, we have especially valued Bennette's leadership and engagement. She approaches workforce development with clarity, purpose, and a genuine understanding of industry needs, including the construction sector's critical role in Hawaii's economy. Her openness to dialogue, willingness to listen, and strategic perspective have helped create meaningful opportunities for partnership and progress.

Bennette is widely respected for her professionalism, integrity, and forward-thinking approach. She brings both vision and practical execution to her work, ensuring that programs and initiatives are not only well-designed but also impactful and inclusive.

I am confident that Bennette Misalucha's leadership will continue to have a lasting positive impact on workforce development in Hawaii. She has our highest recommendation and our sincere appreciation for her continued collaboration and service.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roseann Freitas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roseann Freitas

CEO

Building Industry Association of Hawaii



KAUAI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

04/14/2026

To: Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Support for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued employment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council. As her contract approaches expiration, her continued leadership is essential to maintaining stability and momentum across Hawai'i's workforce system.

Ms. Misalucha brings a strong understanding of workforce policy and the workforce innovation and opportunity Act (WIOA), federal requirements, and system coordination. She has strengthened partnerships across state, county, education, and community organizations, improving alignment and collaborations statewide.

Her leadership has advanced key priorities, including sector strategies, data-informed decision-making, and alignment with economic development goals. She leads with professionalism, integrity, and a clear commitment to serving the people of Hawai'i.

I strongly encourage the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's contract to maintain momentum and effective leadership.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kehaulani Kukahiko

Manager, Education & Workforce Development, Kaua'i Economic Development Board
WDC Board Member



April 14, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello
Chair
Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha Chair DeMello:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation, I am writing to express our strong support for the reappointment of Bennette E. Misalucha as Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council.

Through our partnership on the Hele Imua program, we have seen firsthand Bennette's ability to bring together government, industry, and community partners to deliver meaningful workforce solutions. Her leadership is collaborative, thoughtful, and grounded in a clear understanding of Hawai'i's workforce needs.

Bennette brings over 30 years of experience across business, public service, and community leadership. As a former State Senator and senior banking executive, she has demonstrated both strategic vision and a deep commitment to serving our communities. Her many recognitions reflect not only her professional accomplishments, but her dedication to making a difference.

At a time when workforce development is critical to Hawai'i's economic future—including sectors like agriculture—Bennette's continued leadership provides the consistency and credibility needed to move this work forward.

We respectfully urge your support for her reappointment.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Denise Yamaguchi
Executive Director



04/10/2026

To: Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued employment of **Bennette Misalucha** as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). As her current contract approaches its June 30 expiration, I believe her continued leadership is critical to maintaining stability, strategic focus, and systemwide coordination during a pivotal period of workforce transition for the State of Hawai'i.

Under Ms. Misalucha's leadership, the WDC has strengthened its role as a statewide convener, collaborator, and policy leader. She brings a deep understanding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), federal compliance requirements, and the operational realities facing local workforce partners across the islands. Her ability to translate policy into action understanding our local businesses and community has ensured that Hawai'i's workforce system remains federally compliant while being responsive to the unique economic, geographic, and cultural needs of our communities.

Ms. Misalucha's leadership is grounded in transparency, partnership, and a strong commitment to systemwide alignment. She has cultivated and sustained meaningful relationships across state agencies, county partners, educational institutions, employers, and nonprofit organizations — relationships that are foundational to the effectiveness of the workforce system and not easily replicated. Through her collaborative approach, communication has improved, silos have been reduced, and service delivery has become more coordinated and impactful statewide.

Importantly, Ms. Misalucha has advanced a vision centered on **Hawai'i's Generational Commitment**—a long-term, shared responsibility to prepare current and future generations for meaningful employment and economic stability. This commitment is reflected in her work to strengthen career pathways, expand work-based learning opportunities, modernize workforce data, and better align workforce strategies with Hawai'i's broader economic development priorities.

She has also demonstrated exceptional leadership in convening high-impact, forward-looking workforce events that bring stakeholders together around shared challenges and solutions. These include statewide conversations on the **Future of Work** and the successful launch of the **inaugural Hawai'i Internship Summit**, which elevated the importance of internships and early career experiences as critical components of Hawai'i's talent pipeline. These efforts have helped shift the workforce dialogue from short-term solutions to sustainable, long-term strategies.

Throughout her tenure, Ms. Misalucha has led with professionalism, integrity, and a solutions-oriented mindset. She has earned the trust of partners across the state and strengthened the credibility and effectiveness of the Workforce Development Council. Equally important, she brings a genuine commitment to the people of Hawai'i, consistently centering jobseekers, employers, and communities in her work.

Given the importance of continuity and experienced leadership at this critical juncture, I respectfully urge the Council to renew Ms. Misalucha's appointment as Executive Director. Her continued service will ensure momentum on priority initiatives and provide the stability and strategic direction necessary to advance Hawai'i's workforce system and uphold our shared generational commitment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kazu Hayashida

Kazu Hayashida
Workforce Planning Manager
Hawaiian Electric

April 14, 2026

Letter of Recommendation for Bennette Misalucha.

WDC Chair, Keith DeMello,

It is my distinct pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Bennette Misalucha to continue as the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council of Hawaii. As a former member of the Council, retired - co-chair of the HAH Workforce Development Committee, and the first recipient of the Workforce Heros award, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the extraordinary leadership and vision that Bennette brings to our state's workforce initiatives.

She consistently demonstrates an inclusive approach, engaging a diverse array of stakeholders from government, industry, education, and community organizations. Through creative and innovative strategies, she addresses workforce challenges with determination and foresight, ensuring that solutions are both practical and forward-thinking. Her ability to foster collaboration and harness the collective strengths of Hawaii's workforce partners has resulted in measurable progress and renewed optimism for our state's economic future.

Under her guidance, the Council has not only adapted to the evolving needs of Hawaii's workforce but has also proactively identified opportunities for growth and development. Bennette's commitment to inclusivity, creativity, and excellence sets a high standard for leadership and inspires all those who work alongside her.

I wholeheartedly endorse the reappointment of Bennette Misalucha as the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council. Her dedication and impact on workforce development in Hawaii are truly exceptional.

Sincerely,



Carl W. Hinson,

Retired Director, Workforce Development, Hawaii Pacific Health



Seafarers

International Union

Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters

606 Kalihi Street, Honolulu, HI 96819-4061 - (808) 845-5222
WWW.SEAFAREERS.ORG

April 15, 2026

DAVID HEINDEL
PRESIDENT

Keith DeMello, Chair
Hawaii Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 329
Honolulu, HI 96813

AUGUSTIN TELLEZ
EXECUTIVE
VICE-PRESIDENT

TOM ORZECZOWSKI
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Re: Letter of Support for Bennette Misalucha

GEORGE TRICKER
VICE PRESIDENT

Aloha Chair DeMello,

DEAN CORGEY
VICE PRESIDENT

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued appointment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

JOSEPH T. SORESI
VICE PRESIDENT

BRYAN POWELL
VICE PRESIDENT

In my role working closely with workforce development efforts, labor, and industry stakeholders, including the Seafarers International Union. I have had the privilege of collaborating with Ms. Misalucha on initiatives aimed at strengthening Hawaii's workforce pipeline. Her leadership has been instrumental in advancing a more coordinated, forward-thinking approach to workforce development across the state.

JOE VINCENZO
VICE PRESIDENT

PAT VANDEGRIFT
VICE PRESIDENT

HAZEL GALBISO
VICE PRESIDENT

Ms. Misalucha has demonstrated a clear ability to align policy with practice, bringing together government, education, labor, and industry partners to address real workforce needs. Her leadership reflects a strong understanding of Hawaii's economic landscape including the urgent need to build sustainable career pathways, retain local talent, and expand access to training opportunities that lead to long-term employment.

SAM SPAIN
VICE PRESIDENT

KAREN HORTON-GENNETTE
UIW NATIONAL DIRECTOR

As Hawaii continues to explore expansion into critical sectors such as maritime, her leadership has been especially valuable. The development of a maritime workforce pipeline, connecting local residents to careers at sea through structured pathways involving industry partners, training institutions, and apprenticeship programs represents a significant opportunity for the state. Ms. Misalucha has been supportive of these



efforts and recognizes the importance of creating accessible entry points into maritime careers, particularly for local residents seeking stable, well-paying, and upwardly mobile employment.

Her willingness to support innovative workforce models, including partnership that bridge education, workforce systems, and employers, ensures that emerging sectors like maritime are positioned for long-term success. This type of leadership is essential as we work to build not only immediate job opportunities, but also sustainable career pathways that strengthen Hawaii's workforce and economy.

Importantly, Ms. Misalucha leads with professionalism, integrity, and a deep commitment to public service. She listens to stake holders, values diverse perspectives, and works diligently to ensure that programs and policies deliver meaningful outcomes for the people of Hawaii.


Given the challenges and opportunities facing our state's workforce, continuity in strong, effective leadership is essential. I am confident that Ms. Misalucha will continue to guide the Workforce Development Council in a direction that supports economic growth, workforce resilience, and expanded opportunity for Hawaii's residents.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to strengthening Hawaii's workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amber Akana', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Amber Akana
Safety Director
Seafarers International Union

From: Rossella Guardascione dirhumres@konabeachhotel.com 
Subject: Bennette Misalucha
Date: April 29, 2026 at 1:03 PM
To: kdemello@ulupono.com



Aloha Keith,

I hope this message finds you enjoying your day!

I wanted to take a couple of minutes to share my appreciation for Bennette in her role. As previously shared with Ken Louie, Bennette is a powerhouse leader who works tirelessly to exceed expectations, add value, and develop and drive workforce development.

Having worked closely with Bennette for several years, I have seen firsthand her dedication to advancing workforce initiatives and her unique ability to align workforce goals with the needs of our local community. Her strategic vision, partnership building, and community advocacy is simply the best I've ever worked with. Bennette's leadership style is both innovative and collaborative.

I am confident that Bennette's expertise will continue to lead to exceptional outcomes for our community. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions or provide any further feedback.

Mahalo and warmest aloha,
Rossella

Mahalo,
Rossella



KING KAMEHAMEHA
KONA BEACH RESORT

ROSSELLA GUARDASCIONE
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

O: 808.331.6326 E: rguardascione@konabeachhotel.com

KING KAMEHAMEHA KONA BEACH RESORT
75-5660 PALANI ROAD

KAILUA-KONA, HAWAII 96740

konabeachresort.com



[@konabeachresort](#)

[King Kamehameha Kona Beach Resort](#)



April 15, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
Hawaii Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Recommendation for Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director

Dear Chair DeMello,

I offer this letter of support for Bennette Misalucha to continue serving as Executive Director of the State of Hawaii Workforce Development Council (WDC).

As the owner of Inkinen, the premier executive search firm in Hawaii, I see the need for workforce development every day. In order to develop the leaders of the future, we need to make sure our children are prepared for the careers of tomorrow. I believe we are all stakeholders in the WDC's mission, which is why I fully support one of our most valuable search consultants, Cheryl Cross, investing her valuable time to serve on the Council.

The work of the WDC is incredibly important to the future of Hawaii and its economy because it is the kind of complex, system-changing work that requires consistent, diligent effort over many years. Bennette's leadership over the past three years has been exemplary. The members of the Council are an amazing group of professionals and community leaders in their own right. However, because councils and committees have constant turnover, having a steady person in the Executive Director Chair is critical to creating lasting impact. This is why it is so important for Bennette continuing to serve in this capacity.

Bennette is a dedicated public servant who, throughout her career, has repeatedly stepped into leadership roles that have required integrity, transparency, and dedication, and her efforts are needed now more than ever. I fully support Bennette continuing as the Executive Director of the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

If you have any questions about this recommendation, please feel free to email me at bancheta@inkinen.com or call me at (808) 380-4175.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Ancheta, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Benjamin Ancheta, Jr.
President
Inkinen Executive Search

April 13, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
State of Hawaii Workforce Development Council

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello:

I am writing to express my strong support for Bennette Misalucha to continue as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). Ms. Misalucha's contract is set to expire on June 30, 2026; however, her work is not done. I believe we need her leadership and vision to reach the North Star set for 2045 with the Generational Workforce Commitment. Her professionalism, integrity, and commitment to her role have strengthened the WDC.

Ms. Misalucha has been instrumental in setting the foundational building blocks, for the Generational Workforce Commitment through the WDC's work on the State Unified Plan and subsequent evolution to casting a framework of Learn, Work, Thrive, Belong. That said, the Generational Workforce Commitment remains to be codified and implementation funded, and data must be collected and evaluated to inform future work. The state needs a strong leader to move this incredible commitment forward. Ms. Misalucha's ability to build networks, by asking difficult questions then going a step further to bring people together to work toward answers, is the reason we have agreement across the state and WDC partners. I believe Ms. Misalucha is the right leader to guide the work of the WDC and fulfill our role, as a partner in implementing the Generational Workforce Commitment.

In addition, as the Executive Director of the WDC she ensured that all members were well informed, received training, and were able to effectively participate in guiding the state, serving as convener and policy leader, and ensuring that Hawaii's workforce programs remain aligned with federal expectations. Ms. Misalucha tirelessly demonstrated her ability to build strong relationships and look for ways to align partners and improve resource utilization. I appreciated her ability to find information and make it available to the WDC through opportunities to learn from experts and colleagues in the field. Her ability to build relationships and her commitment to strengthening Hawaii's workforce is needed, now more than ever. We cannot let the momentum diminish. As a WDC member, I respectfully support the continued employment of Ms. Misalucha.

Sincerely,



Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President & CEO
Workforce Development Council Member

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804**

McKinley Community School for Adults
634 Pensacola St., Room 216
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

April 15, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello, Chairperson
Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Mr. DeMello,

I am writing to express my support for Bennette Misalucha in her role as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council. I have had the opportunity to observe her leadership and dedication, and appreciate her commitment to strengthening our workforce and expanding opportunities for our community.

She has supported the Workforce Development Council's initiatives that promotes skills training, career readiness, and economic mobility and she has utilized financial resources to support adult education's Career Foundations Workforce Preparation curriculum and program offerings.

I support Ms Misalucha's effort as well as the Workforce Development Council's display of leadership that supports adult education initiatives. The Council's consistent vision, integrity, and deep commitment to empowering individuals through education will further strengthen workforce development and adult education program offerings.

The Executive Director along with the Council have demonstrated the ability to foster collaboration among educational institutions, employers, and community organizations. These partnerships have strengthened program effectiveness, ensuring that adult learners are not only educated but also are connected to real-world opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "H. Sanpei".

Helen Sanpei, Principal,
McKinley Community School for Adults



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

April 30, 2026

Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Aloha Chair DeMello:

I am writing on behalf of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB) to express our support for the continued employment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council.

HFB represents farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers across the State of Hawai'i. Workforce availability remains one of the most significant challenges facing our agricultural community, and strong coordination between industry, education, and government is essential to developing practical and sustainable workforce solutions.

We have appreciated Ms. Misalucha's leadership in strengthening collaboration across sectors and her efforts to align workforce initiatives with the needs of employers. Her ability to bring together partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors has helped advance a more coordinated and responsive workforce system for Hawai'i.

Ms. Misalucha's experience in both government and industry, along with her commitment to building partnerships, has been valuable in supporting workforce development efforts that benefit a wide range of sectors, including agriculture. Her continued leadership will help maintain momentum on key initiatives and ensure continued progress in addressing Hawai'i's workforce needs.

For these reasons, HFB supports the continuation of her contract and respectfully asks for your consideration.

Mahalo for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Miyamoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Brian Miyamoto
Executive Director
Hawai'i Farm Bureau



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

KEITH A. REGAN
ACTING LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804
Web site: dbedt.hawaii.gov

Telephone: (808) 586-2355
Fax: (808) 586-2377

April 29, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
kdemello@ulupono.com

Dear Chair DeMello:

Re: Letter of Support for Bennette Misalucha

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC) at the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Her leadership, collaborative approach, and deep understanding of Hawai'i's economic and workforce landscape have made her an invaluable partner to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT).

The WDC plays a critical role as Hawai'i's statewide workforce policy and coordination body under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In this role, the Council brings together leaders across business, labor, education, and government to align workforce programs with the State's economic development priorities. This mission directly complements DBEDT's work to advance the "Redesigning Hawai'i's Economy for Resilience" framework, where workforce development is a core pillar of long-term competitiveness.

Under Bennette's direction, the WDC has been instrumental in strengthening coordination among State agencies, education partners, and industry stakeholders. She has demonstrated her ability to convene diverse groups, identify shared goals, and foster the collaboration necessary to build a skilled workforce that meets Hawai'i's evolving economic needs. Her leadership has helped advance statewide efforts to align training and education pathways with high-demand sectors, ensuring that Hawai'i residents have access to quality job opportunities while supporting industry growth.

DBEDT's partnership with the WDC has been especially impactful in the following areas:

- **Workforce Development:** Enhancing curriculum-to-career pathways and strengthening sector partnerships that prepare residents for in-demand careers.
- **Economic Diversification:** Supporting emerging industries—including technology, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and value-added industries—through targeted talent development strategies.

Mr. Keith DeMello
DBEDT Letter of Support
Page 2 of 2

- **Systems Alignment:** Reducing fragmentation across programs and streamlining efforts between State, education, and industry partners to improve outcomes for both jobseekers and employers.

Bennette's commitment to building industry-driven talent pipelines and her forward-looking approach to workforce alignment have been essential in supporting Hawai'i's economic resilience. Her ability to bring people together and collaborate has significantly advanced our shared goals for a stronger, more diverse, and globally competitive economy.

I offer my support and appreciation for Bennette Misalucha's continued service and leadership. She is a trusted partner to DBEDT, and her contributions are vital to Hawai'i's long-term economic success.

Sincerely,



Dane K. Wicker
DBEDT Deputy Director

cc: Bennette Misalucha, bennette.e.misalucha@hawaii.gov



Rosalee Agas-Yuu, RN
President

1600 Ala Moana Blvd Suite 100
Honolulu, HI 96815

Tel: (808) 531-1628
Fax: (808) 524-2760

To: Keith DeMello, Chair
Workforce Development Council, State of Hawai'i

Re: Endorsement for Continued Employment of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha

Dear Chair DeMello,

I am writing in **strong** support for the continued employment of Bennette Misalucha as the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC).

I have had the personal experience of her onboarding me as a member of the WDC. She was prompt in getting me to observe meetings, attend appropriate training sessions and get my paperwork in order. We were able to meet in person and she made the transition smooth.

Her previous experience is translated into the leadership and interpersonal skills in her present role as Executive Director. Her continued employment as Executive Director will add to the foundation that exists at the WDC and provide stability as we face the challenges of the workforce in the times ahead.

Sincerely,

Rosalee Agas-Yuu

Rosalee Agas-Yuu

President, Hawai'i Nurses' Association, OPEIU Local 50



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII*

SYSTEM

'Ōnaehana Kulanui o Hawai'i

Christine Beaulé, PhD
Director of Workforce Development

May 1, 2026

Mr. Keith DeMello
Chairperson, Workforce Development Council
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair DeMello,

As the University of Hawai'i (UH) System's Director of Workforce Development, I am pleased to express my strong support for the renewal of Executive Director Bennette Misalucha's contract as the Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council. Over the past two years, I have had a number of occasions to work with Executive Director Misalucha on a variety of initiatives, and have developed a deep appreciation for her strategic leadership, consistent advocacy, and unwavering commitment to the cross-agency effort to define and set Hawai'i's state workforce development goal.

Under her guidance, Executive Director Misalucha was instrumental in implementing the State Unified Plan and identifying high-growth business sectors. This initiative directly supports our academic planning for training programs and upskilling, ensuring our students graduate with marketable job skills to ensure their success well into the future. Executive Director Misalucha's role on the Career and Technical Education Coordinating Advisory Council furthers the connection between the State Unified Plan and local industries' workforce requirements.

She is also a crucial organizing partner of our cross-agency effort to define and set a state workforce development goal, and the Generational Workforce Commitment was just adopted via a joint legislative resolution. She has been a strong and consistent advocate for and partner to UH in several key areas, such as setting up Workforce Pell and modernizing the Eligible Training Provider list.

Furthermore, as an alumna of the UH with a BA in Communications and Journalism, Executive Director Misalucha intimately understands the critical need to ensure our students' future success and the significance of workforce alignment. Her dedication and commitment to cross-sector partnerships ensure persistent improvement, consistent stability, and improved collective impact.

I am confident that under Executive Director Misalucha's continued leadership, we will further advance educational excellence and workforce development across our state. I respectfully urge you to renew her contract so we may continue this important work together. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Christine Beaulé'.

Christine D. Beaulé, PhD

1733 Donaghho Road
Kuykendall Hall 723
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
Telephone: (808) 956-5841
An Equal Opportunity/ Institution

April 15, 2026

Letter of Support for the Reappointment of Bennette Misalucha
Executive Director, Hawai'i Workforce Development Council

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in my capacity as a member of the Hawai'i State Workforce Development Council to express my strong support for the reappointment of Bennette Misalucha as Executive Director of the Workforce Development Council.

Over the past three years, Ms. Misalucha has provided steady, strategic leadership that has strengthened Hawai'i's workforce development system and elevated the Council's role as a convener, connector, and strategic advisor. Her tenure reflects a clear commitment to collaboration, employer engagement, and the development of high-quality talent pipelines aligned with Hawai'i's economic and workforce priorities.

Ms. Misalucha's leadership has been particularly visible through her support and partnership in major statewide convenings that bring together employers, educators, workforce partners, and policymakers. The Synergy Summit exemplifies her ability to foster cross-sector dialogue focused on aligning education, training, and workforce strategies to meet Hawai'i's current and future labor market needs. By creating space for candid discussion and shared problem-solving, she has helped advance a more coordinated and responsive workforce ecosystem.

Similarly, Ms. Misalucha played a critical role in partnership with Hawai'i Employers Council on the Hawai'i Internship Summit, an effort that emphasized the importance of internships as long-term talent pipeline strategies rather than short-term placements. The Summit reinforced practical, employer-informed approaches to building high-quality internship programs, highlighted available funding and support resources, and elevated the voices of interns, employers, and educators. These efforts reflect Ms. Misalucha's focus on real-world solutions that work for employers of all sizes while expanding meaningful opportunities for Hawai'i's students and jobseekers.

Beyond these convenings, Ms. Misalucha has consistently guided the Council and has supported strong alignment between statewide plans and local workforce development efforts, and emphasized equity, access, and career pathways that lead to quality employment.

Based on her performance over the past three years, I believe Ms. Misalucha's reappointment will provide much-needed continuity, sustain momentum, and further strengthen Hawai'i's workforce development efforts. I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of her reappointment and thank you for the opportunity to offer this letter in support.

Respectfully,



Shelli Ihori
Hawai'i State Workforce Development Council

Next Meeting

**Tentatively Scheduled for Thursday,
September 10, 2026
9:30 am - 12:00 pm**

Adjournment