

STATE OF HAWAI'I SYMPOSIUM

Workforce Reskilling to Serve the People of Hawai'i

Navigating Workforce Risk in the AI Era

Leslee Stockton · StillDayOne.ai · A Builder's Guide to What's Next





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A mission-driven leader who builds — highly effective teams, durable strategy, and organizations ready for what's next.

25+ Years

At the cutting edge of tech – 3 start ups/2 major players

AWS 6+ Years

Charities Enterprise → Global Team

Public Sector

Deep nonprofit & gov-adjacent work

Dedicated to Tech for Good

Maui to Washington D.C. and globally

Quick Show of Hands

Who's in the room today?

Raise your hand if you work in...



**Health & Human
Services**



**Housing /
Homelessness**



**Education &
Training**



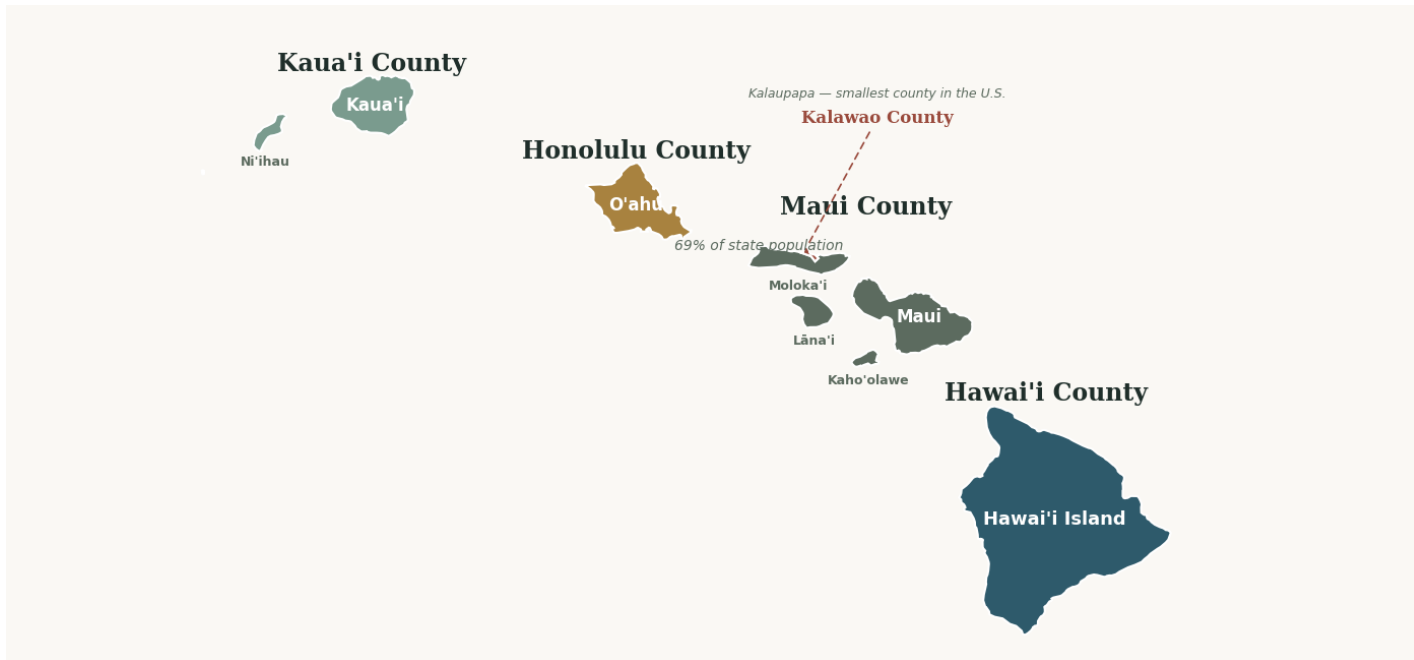
**Law
Enforcement**



**Social
Services**

Whatever your seat — whether you serve a resident directly or prepare those who will — the mission is the same: serving the people of Hawai'i. Today is about how we do it better.

Who You Serve : 1.43m residents in 5 counties



Five counties. One mission: serving the people of Hawai'i.

Over half of Hawai'i's 1.43M residents rely on public health coverage — Medicare (~310K) + Med-QUEST/Medicaid (~400K).

Over Half the State Relies on Public Coverage

~400K

on Med-QUEST
(Hawai'i Medicaid)

~310K

on Medicare
(~20% of the state)

~165K

on SNAP
(~\$58M/mo, 13M meals)

1 in 3

households are
food insecure

These aren't abstractions. They're the people your teams serve every day — and the demand is rising while the resources tighten.

Sources: CMS (2026); Hawai'i Med-QUEST; Hawai'i Foodbank; State of Hawai'i DHS

How Hawai'i Prioritizes Its \$19.8B Budget

Public Welfare (incl. most Medicaid)

\$2,859 per resident

Elementary & Secondary Education

\$1,729 per resident

All other services

balance of budget

Health care and food security are the state's #1 priorities — by design.

Sources: Urban Institute (per-capita, FY22); Hawai'i Exec. Biennium Budget Act 250 (FY26)

HR1 Shifts the Cost — and the State Is Absorbing It

The Big Beautiful Bill (HR1) is the operating reality for the next 3 years:

\$170M

state general funds shifted
to backfill Medicaid

\$200M

state funds to keep
SNAP benefits flowing

~\$3B

projected state revenue
shortfall this year

Hawai'i isn't just losing federal dollars — it's spending its own to hold the safety net together. Every efficiency gain frees real money for real services.

Sources: Hawai'i House budget (HB 1800, FY27); Gov. Green; Honolulu Civil Beat (2026)

The HR1 Squeeze Hits Every Service Area



Healthcare

Medicaid eligibility checks now every 6 months (was 12). New work requirements. More churn, more admin load. Less people eligible. Cost challenges for hospitals



Food

SNAP cut ~\$200B nationally. Stricter work rules. 4 island food banks already serving 2x pre-pandemic demand.



Housing

Federal housing & homelessness dollars squeezed as the state absorbs more of the safety-net cost. > 6300 homeless



Education

Funding pressure as state general funds get redirected to backfill health and food programs.

Three Pillars for Serving Hawai'i Better

1



People

Reskill the workforce. Build curiosity, data fluency, and a culture of innovation.

People are ~ 30-35% of State budget

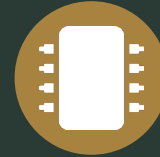
2



Process

Find the friction. Where do eligibility, approvals, and paperwork consume excessive time?

3



Technology

Apply AI where it serves. Transcription, prediction, and eligibility screening?

Reskilling for a Culture of Innovation with AI



Durable skills over tools

Curiosity, systems thinking, working backward from the citizen's need — these outlast any single AI tool.



Data fluency as baseline

Not a specialist skill anymore — the way spreadsheets became table stakes a generation ago.



Cross-disciplinary translators

People who sit between technical teams and frontline service teams, turning capability into outcomes.

The reskilling gap is real: 97% of public service employees want AI skills — only 7% of organizations are reskilling at scale. Closing that gap is where educators and trainers lead.

Source: Accenture, Talent & Workforce Transformation (Public Service)

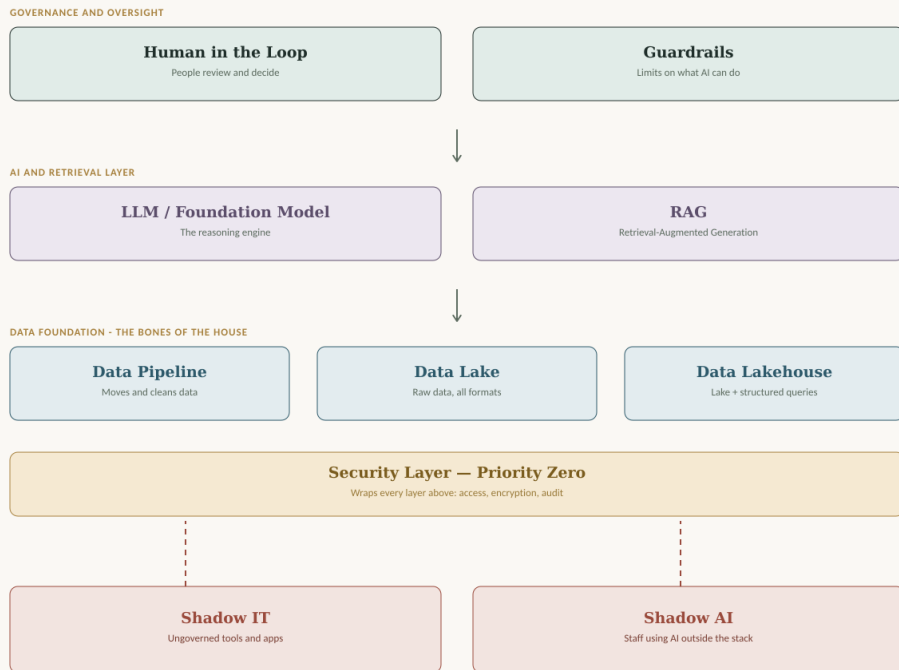
Find the Friction Before You Automate It

Where does time disappear in serving the citizen?

- Eligibility interviews & redeterminations — now required every 6 months under HR1, doubling the workload.
- Housing voucher approval & distribution — manual review, long queues, finite supply.
- Document collection & verification — the same paperwork, requested again and again.
- Benefits screening — citizens not getting what they qualify for because the maze is too complex.

Map the process first. AI applied to a broken process just makes the mess faster — it automates the problem instead of solving it.

A Healthy Data + AI Foundation



Build the bones first

- Data foundation — secure pipelines, lakes, lakehouses. Priority zero.
- AI sits on top: the model plus RAG to reach your own data.
- Governance — guardrails and humans — keeps it accountable to citizens.
- Shadow AI shows up when the real stack is missing or too hard to use.

Questions to Ask in Your Own Role



Does AI transcribe your call centers?

Turn every citizen call into searchable, actionable notes — no caseworker typing while listening.



Can you predict who needs help — before they fall?

Spot citizens on a path toward crisis and intervene proactively, instead of reacting after the harm.



How are you screening for eligibility?

Citizens miss benefits they qualify for because the maze is too complex. Tools can close that gap.

Other States Are Already Building around shared Data *which can make AI more powerful as an impact tool*

The pattern is spreading – west coast state sample

California — HHS DxF



Statewide HHS Data Exchange Framework & state law : secure, real-time health & social-services data across counties. "Goodbye fax machine." 4300 Signatories. 740 Grantees. Government in partnership with CBO's

California — GetCalFresh

6.2M people helped access \$12.8B in food benefits through human-centered digital design.

Colorado / Washington

MyFriendBen's home base, now expanding — proving the model travels across states.

MyFriendBen

AI eligibility screening · built on Anthropic

- Anonymous screening for 40+ benefits in ~6 minutes
- 100,000+ households helped
- \$52M+ in benefits accessed
- Now in 6 states (CO origin → WA, NC & more)
- Open source — states can build on it

Sources: MyFriendBen / Gary Community Ventures; CalHHS DxF; Code for America (2026)

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In California, with HHS DXF we are driving data efficiency to CBO caseworkers so they can serve clients with complex needs in partnership with county & state agencies . AI will play a role at multiple touchpoints from a first 211 call, to predictive analytics to prevent homelessness. HR1 only raises the need for deeper government – NPO partnership.

Dave McCann

Fractional CTO, United Ways of California
Former AWS VP of Engineering, Control Services



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Four Questions to Take Back to Your Team

1

Think about the Hawai'i resident.

The person you serve — or the one you're preparing to serve them. Start there, always.

2

How could I serve them more effectively?

What would 5% better look like? 10%? Where's the win?

3

What's a waste of time in my current role?

The repetitive task, the duplicate paperwork, the lack of needed data, the thing that drains your day.

4

How could AI help?

Not to replace you — to free you to do the work only a human can.

Innovation doesn't have a beginning and an end. It's a mindset — and it starts with one question.

STILL DAY ONE

Reskill to serve. Build for the citizen. Still Day One.

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Sources Referenced

State of Hawai'i Budget

Exec. Biennium Budget Act 250 (FY26) & HB 1800 (FY27); Dept. of Budget & Finance

Urban Institute

Hawai'i per-capita state spending (public welfare, education)

CMS / Med-QUEST

Medicare (~310K) & Medicaid (~400K) enrollment, Hawai'i

Hawai'i Foodbank / Feeding America

SNAP enrollment, food insecurity, HR1 nutrition cuts

KFF / NACo

HR1 Medicaid & SNAP eligibility and cost-shift impacts

MyFriendBen · CalHHS DxP · Code for America

AI eligibility screening & state benefits-delivery proof points

Accenture / Deloitte

Public-service reskilling gap; human-centric AI adoption

"What's the biggest misconception organizations have about their own readiness?"

The Answer

- That cutting people is the fast path to AI value — when the evidence says otherwise.
- The orgs pulling ahead built a culture of innovation and treated data security as priority zero.
- They know where their data lives and how to make it valuable with the right infrastructure.
- Those struggling are bolting AI onto a foundation that was never built to support it.

The Analogy

It's like wanting to renovate your kitchen with beautiful new countertops when the bones of the house — the foundation, the wiring, the plumbing — were never sound.

The cosmetic fix looks great for a moment, but it doesn't hold.

AI delivers real value only when the house is already in order.