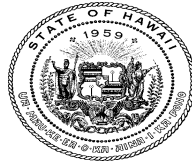


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HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

Date: Thursday, July 2, 2026

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am

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

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

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

Attendees:

- Members Present:

Gina Woo Anonuevo, Committee Chair
Cheryl Cross, Committee Vice Chair
Rossella Guardascione, WDC Council Member
David Rodriguez, WDC Council Member
Carla Kurokawa, WDC Council Member
Nalani Brun, WDC Council Member
Rona Fukumoto, WDC Council Member
Lea Dias, WDC Council Member
Ashleigh Loa, WDC Council Member

- Staff and Guests:

Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director, WDC
Jeanne Ohta, Employment Specialist, WDC
Margaret Miura, Program Specialist, WDC
Tyrone Apolarin, Program Specialist, WDC
Senator Sharon Moriwaki's Office
Sarah Guay, Hawai'i Employers Council
Jeannie Lum, Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce
Lei Ana Green, Workforce Development Division
Chrissy Kuahine, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center
Ryan Mandado, Hawai'i Department of Education
Umma Berkelman, Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), DBEDT
Adela Caggiano, Arcadia Family of Companies
Tami Chun, Hawai'i Department of Education
Ce Takahashi, PACT Hawai'i
Juanita Lauti, Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation
Kai Villamil
Kelli Opulauoho
Erin Yagi
Jennifer Green
Christine Beaule
Juanita Lauti
Dawn Hao-De Motta
Kehaulani Kukahiko
Roxanne Rokero
Molly Mamaril
Joanne Agnes
Tani Kalei Salazar
Donna Manibog
PACT Coalitions

- Excused:

Derek Kanehira, Committee Vice Chair

- I. [Video 00:00:10] The meeting was called to order by Gina Woo Anonuevo, Employer Engagement Committee Chair, at 10:01 am.
- II. [Video 00:02:12] Listening Session 2 (Health Care Sector)

Chair Gina Woo Anonuevo provided an overview of the Listening Session Series, which will focus on the following sectors: hospitality, construction, defense, energy, healthcare, IT and technology, the public sector, and general services. The sessions will run through early September. Each session will center on three key topics:

1. Current workforce and workplace trends

2. Employer awareness and use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) resources and services
3. Employer readiness for the growing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Insights gathered from these discussions will inform the qualitative component of the Hawai'i Employers Pulse Survey. The goal is to conduct this survey annually to build a clearer, ongoing understanding of employer experiences, challenges, opportunities, and overall outlook across Hawai'i.

[Video 00:04:13] Chair Gina Woo Anonuevo introduced Sarah Guay, Hawai'i Employers Council, who moderated the listening session.

Sarah introduced the panelist for the session: Adela Caggiano, Chief Human Resources Officer for Arcadia Family of Companies, Juanita Lauti, Chief Human Resources Officer for Hawai'i Health Systems, and Chrissy Kauhane, Development Director of Teaching and Learning Programs for Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center.

The panel discussed shared workforce challenges across the healthcare sector. Adela reported ongoing difficulty recruiting and retaining frontline staff due to strong wage competition from hotels and hospitals. Chrissy emphasized that rural communities have strong local talent but lack accessible training and support systems necessary to enter healthcare roles. Juanita described similar recruitment issues on the neighbor islands, noting that young graduates are discouraged by low entry-level wages and Hawai'i's high cost of living. Juanita also highlighted legislative efforts under consideration, including allowing healthcare workers to cash out vacation time to help with housing down payments.

Panelists shared approaches for improving recruitment and retention, especially in rural areas. Adela highlighted its use of competitive benefits, such as an 8.5% employer 403(b) contribution and access to financial advising, as well as shifts toward more flexible time-off policies. Chrissy stressed the importance of community connection and the advantage of being the largest employer on the Waianae Coast, which helps retain employees despite lower wages compared to major hospital systems. The group then transitioned to discuss workforce resources and partnerships supporting recruitment across the state.

Juanita described collaborations with the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i (HAH) to recruit Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Medical Assistants (MA), and Registered Nurse (RN), including the use of temporary positions for unlicensed RN graduates. Adela outlined its partnerships with HAH's high school pipeline, Project SEARCH, CNA training programs, and local colleges, noting the need for better coordination between training providers and employers. Chrissy shared success in partnering with Waianae High School, as well as bringing Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) training directly into the community, culminating in the recent graduation of 10 students from a City and County EMT Academy delivered in Waianae.

The panel explored how AI may help address workforce shortages. Chrissy highlighted a successful model of delivering clinical training within the community, reducing commute-related barriers—a model considered replicable statewide. Adela described its structured approach to AI adoption, including a 10-week executive training program that has already produced a 20% reduction in administrative workload. Panelists agreed that universal internet connectivity, strong governance frameworks, and robust security measures are essential foundations for safe and effective AI implementation in healthcare settings.

III. [Video 00:56:53] Next Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for Monday, July 27, 2026, at 10:00 am.

IV. [Video 00:57:34] Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 am.