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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA**

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**HAWAII WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING**

MINUTES

Date: June 26, 2026
Time: 1:00 p.m.
In-Person Meeting Location: Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani Building
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 317
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Virtual Participation: Virtual Videoconference Meeting – Zoom
Agenda: The agenda was posted to the State electronic calendars as required by §92-7(b), Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS")
Meeting Materials: Meeting materials are available for review at <https://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/meeting-docs/>

Attendance:

Carla Kurokawa, Committee Chair
Amber Akana, Committee Vice Chair
David Sun-Miyashiro, HI Kids CAN
Hazel Galbiso, Seafarers International Union
Wanelle Kaneshiro-Erdmann, HI DOE, Workforce Development Branch
Mario Higa, retired Port Agent, Marine Fireman's Union
Thomas Chock, DBED/CID (Creative Industries Division)
Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, HI Dept of Human Services
George Denise, Director Turner & Townsend Construction Management; General Contractors Association Workforce Development Team
Erick Pascua, WDD
Patrick Weisbarth, Port Agent, Sailors Union of the Pacific
Don Ngo, Port Agent, Marine Fireman's Union
Troy Sueoka, HI DOE, Career Technical Education
Palani
Marimed

WDC Staff:

Tyrone Apolinar, Program Specialist
Margaret Miura, Program Specialist

- I. [Video 00:00:00] The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Chair Carla Kurokawa.
- II. [Video 00:06:30] Minutes (April 9, 2026) were approved without changes.
- III. [Video 00:08:19] Maritime Workforce Pathways for Hawaii Youth – **Amber Akana**
The collaboration between the unions representing various sectors of the maritime industry and the Marimed Foundation, which focuses on workforce development and community engagement, demonstrated how industry and community partners can work together to build effective workforce pathways.

“No single organization can solve workforce challenges alone.” ~Amber Akana

A. [Video 00:16:51] Seafarers International Union (SIU) – **Hazel Galbiso**

Galbiso provided an overview of the union, described the 3 main departments on a vessel, and provided background information before highlighting the paid apprenticeship program. As eligible members of the SIU, they will be dispatched through Honolulu’s, 1 of 20, union hiring halls from Guam up to Tacoma. Advance training is available after the apprenticeship program which results in safety certifications and a Merchant mariner’s credential which is like a driver’s license to work on a ship.

Paid training continues with free tuition, room and board when sent to any of the maritime training campuses across the country. Once participants complete the program, their first assignment will be at a rated capacity rather than entry level in their respective department.

B. [Video 00:23:21] Sailors’ Union of the Pacific (SUP) – **Patrick Weisbarth**

SUP, as reported by **Weisbarth**, does not provide an applicant training program for individuals new to the industry. Minimum requirements include a Merchant Mariner credential, TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Credential), a passport, Coast Guard Med Certificate, drug screening, STCW (Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers), and Vessel Security.

After an applicant obtains 30 days of working time, SUP provides training and certification (free of charge) which leads to advancement.

SUP members primarily work in the unlicensed deck department whose function is to steer the ship and navigational lookout. When not working in that capacity, members do deck maintenance: wire and line splicing, rust abatement, painting.

C. [Video 00:26:25] Marine Firemen’s Union (MFOW) – **Mario Higa & Don Ngo**

Higa described MFOW as the unlicensed engine department which takes individuals right out of high school with documented training to start at entry level positions. After 6 months at sea, MFOW will cover cost for more training (classes, airfare, and lodging) to upgrade to an oiler. Another upgrade is available after another 6 months

D. Inland Boatmen’s Union (IBU) – Palani Simon was unable to present.

E. [Video 00:29:14] Marimed Foundation – **Hazel Galbiso** for Melissa Hubert

Galbiso provided information on the Marimed Foundation which offers free 6–8-week Maritime Vocational Training Programs to prepare participants for entry-level maritime careers and provides help with obtaining industry credentials (TWIC, MMC-Merchant Mariner Credential, basic safety training, vessel personnel and security, and US passport).

Ms. Akana continued and went over the barriers to maritime career access and awareness of the opportunities overall.

Thomas Chock: What is the success rate of outreach? What strategies are in place? Are they working? How can WDC or DBED improve communication to the younger generation of potential workforce?

Amber Akana: Participating in Career Fairs and invitations to high schools helped get the word out slowly about Maritime careers—not stevedores.

Hazel Galbiso shared about a pilot for a maritime teacher externship that will launch July 22nd or thereabout. The unions are collaborating with **Catherine Lederer**, who serves as the **Director of the Labor’s Community Services Program** at the Hawaii State AFL-CIO. To educate and share career opportunities, the maritime group travel throughout the islands and welcome any invitations to meet as a group or individually.

Lea Dias inquired about the emotional and physical qualities needed to succeed in maritime careers. **Patrick Weisbarth** replied with a few key points: coping with long periods away from home, maintaining a strong work ethic, and navigating interpersonal and cultural differences. **Mario Higa** and **Hazel Galbiso** added that it does take a certain kind of person, and each person will have to experience the job and decide for themselves if the job is right for them.

Troy Sueoka explained that, per Perkins Law, Hawaii DOE can offer a high school program only if a corresponding post-secondary program exists. **Weisbarth** noted, having had an earlier discussion, that the Sand Island Maritime Training Center meets STCW requirements and explained that a plan that has not yet moved forward. He encouraged anyone interested to help start the program, emphasizing the need. **Sueoka** also inquired about available maritime apprenticeships. According to **Akana**, SIU has their apprenticeship program in Piney Point, Maryland; however, the Marimed Foundation does offer a pre-apprenticeship program.

- IV. [Video 01:03:38] Elevating Youth Voice and Engagement. Chair **Kurokawa**, tabled the discussion of youth voice and asked the committee to be prepared for discussion at the next committee meeting.
- V. [Video 01:10:28] Executive Director’s Report presented by **Margaret Miura** on behalf of **Executive Director Bennette Misalucha**. **Miura** reported the Modification of the State Unified Plan Implementation was approved today. She also shared highlights of past and future events and projects.
- VI. [Video 01:20:34] Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.
Virtual Videoconferencing Meeting via Zoom and in-person at 830 Punchbowl Street,
Room 317, Honolulu, HI 96813

VII. [Video 01:21:16] Meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities is 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.