

HAWAII STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MEETING

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 310
Honolulu, HI 96813

Minutes from August 27, 2025 Meeting

Held In-Person and Virtually via Zoom

SAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Employer Representatives

Gregg Serikaku (In-person)
James Hardway (In-person)
Cristina Vocalan (Virtual)
Keian Shon (Virtual)
Seunghye Hong (Virtual)
Melodie Vega (Virtual)

Employee Representatives

Robert Aquino (In-person)
Travis Murakami (In-person)
Patrick Sullivan (Virtual)

Public Representatives

Ellen May (In-person)
Caroline Vega (Virtual)

SAC MEMBER ABSENT/EXCUSED:

Rick Subiono – Employee Representative

Public Attendees (In-person):

Mimi Sroat – IBEL Local 11861
Jarred Santos – IBEW Local 1186
Jon Perry – High Regard
Jeff Masatsugu – IUPAT, District Council 50
Mario Manrique – IUPAT, District Council 50
Pat Asuncion – IUPAT, District Council 50
Orlando Gante – IUPAT, District Council 50
Garrett Russel – IUPAT, District Council 50
Pookela Banis-Chun – IUPAT, District Council 50
Dean Kobashigawa – PAMCAH-UA Local 675

Wes Alcover – PAMCAH-UA Local 675
Ronden Numasaki – PAMCAH-UA Local 675
Keith Nakano - HARIETT

USDOL Office of Apprenticeship Attendee (Virtual)
Corinna Pereira – Multi-State Navigator

DLIR/WDD Staff Attendees:

In-person:

Jade Butay	Director, DLIR
Maricar Pilotin-Freitas	Administrator, WDD
Edgar Fernandez	Program Specialist, WDD
Jaimee Tabangay	Program Specialist, WDD
Aaron Seet	Office Assistant, WDD
Adele Manera	Office Manager, WDD Kauai (Virtual)

- I. **Call to Order.** SAC Chair Gregg Serikaku called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

Chair Serikaku conducted a roll call of the SAC members and announced that there is a quorum. Eleven (11) members were present (5 in-person, 6 virtual), and one (1) member was excused.

II. **Welcome and Introductions**

- Dir. Jade Butay welcomed the SAC members and the public who were in attendance. In his message, Dir. Butay emphasized how important apprenticeship programs are, not just for helping people build careers but also keeping industries strong and competitive. He shared an article that he read on the Wall Street Journal where experts predicted that in the next five (5) years, up to 50% of entry-level white-collar jobs in the United States will be gone due to artificial intelligence. However, there is one sector that AI cannot easily disrupt and that is the skilled trades such as plumbers, electricians, and carpenters because AI cannot be used to build or put wiring in a house. The best part of apprenticeship is avoiding student loans and earning money while you learn, gaining hands-on experience and real-world skills from day one. He added the SAC is where we come together to make sure the apprenticeship programs keep growing and enriching more people by promoting apprenticeship as a legitimate option that is equal to going to a university. He thanked the members for all the work they do.

- Chair Serikaku agreed that AI an extremely powerful tool that will come sooner than we think that will affect the professional and administrative sector more than the skilled trades.
- Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, WDD Administrator introduced herself, followed by other WDD staff. Ms. Adele Manera, WDD Branch Manager of Kauai County, attending remotely, also introduced herself.
- Members of the public who were attending in-person introduced themselves.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

There were no questions or corrections to the minutes as presented.

SAC member Keian Shon made a motion to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Travis Murakami.

Chair Serikaku conducted a roll call vote on the motion to approve the minutes. The members unanimously approved the minutes of the June 10, 2025, SAC meeting.

IV. **Reports/Updates**

A. State Apprenticeship Council

Chair Serikaku announced that there is no report from the Council

B. Workforce Development Division Report

Ms. Maricar Pilotin-Freitas, shared the following report/updates:

- WDD bought computers/laptop using grant funds from the US Department of Labor. The laptops include those being used by SAC members attending in - person. As reported during the last meeting, WDD also brought virtual reality (VR) equipment that is available in the American Job Centers of each county and used to promote and expand apprenticeship. The virtual reality exploration will help expand apprenticeship to not only current trades but to non-construction trades as well.

She explained that the American Job Center is a one-stop shop that provide various services to the public including career services, such as preparing resume and assisting job seekers with soft skills. The VRs located at the AJCs are used by the public to explore occupations and get an idea about the job

and what an 8-hour day would entail for the individual. VR is a career exploration tool to explore not only apprenticeship but other types of jobs.

SAC member Ellen May asked if the purpose of the VR at the AJC is purely career exploration, or is there a component where there is actual training happening using curriculum through the VR goggles? Ms. Pilotin-Freitas replied that the AJC does not provide training to the public but provides career services, like preparing resume and assisting them with soft skills. When it comes to the actual training, that is where they are deployed to eligible training providers as well as referred them to an apprenticeship program.

Travis Murakami commented that the VR hopefully does not chase away applicants because the VR goggles may be showing only a part of the job and not the whole job. He cited as example an individual looking at the goggles which shows scaffolding may chase away an individual who cannot deal with heights.

Ms. Pilotin-Freitas replied that the VR can be a tool to screen applicants and reduces liability,

The virtual reality equipment is also available at the WDD office, and she invited the members and the public to try the tool for themselves and provide feedback.

- DLIR was awarded \$557,000.00 by USDOL under the State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant Base Formula Funding Round 3. Grant funds will be used to help support WDD/DLIR as State Apprenticeship Agency, provide staff support to the SAC, and promote and expand apprenticeship to other sectors, including the teacher apprenticeship program.

C. USDOL Office of Apprenticeship

Ms. Corina Perreira, Multi-State Navigator, USDOL Office of Apprenticeship congratulated WDD/DLIR for receiving the SAEF grant Base Formula Funding Round 3. She mentioned that in her quarterly report, there is a notification of an upcoming grant for revitalizing domestic manufacturing by developing the next generation of America's shipbuilders. She hoped that the forecasted grant will be shared with stakeholders throughout Hawaii.

Ms. Perreira shared that the most important thing in her quarterly report is the current Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) prohibiting illegal discrimination in

Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Anyone from the public can submit their comments through Regulations.gov. The deadline to submit comments is September 2, 2025.

Ms. Perreira explained that USDOL Office of Apprenticeship put a pause to 29 CFR part 29 regulations regarding the Equal Employment Opportunity, but they have not required State Apprenticeship Agencies to do the same, although SAAs are able to do that if they choose.

SAC member Travis Murakami asked how often and where the quarterly reports are publicized. Ms. Perreira replied that her reports are quarterly, which she provides to the SAAs to be shared to the public.

Chair Serikaku thanked Ms. Perreira for her report.

V. New Business

Chair Serikaku informed the members that the revised Standards of Apprenticeship for HECO, HELCO, and MECO included in the agenda was deferred for review upon the request of the sponsor.

A. Review and Recommendation on the Revisions to the Standards of Apprenticeship for Painter, Floor Layer, Glazier, and Painter Apprenticeship Programs of International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District Council (DC) 50.

Chair Serikaku reminded the members to inform him if they will recuse themselves for the discussion or voting on the agenda item for potential conflict of interest.

Jeffrey Masatsugu, Director of Government Affairs of IUPAT DC 50 introduced himself and shared that their organization consists of five (5) unions, Painters, Tapers, Glaziers, Floor Layers, and Sandblasting Harbor. Mr. Masatsugu shared that they were advised by their training fund professionals that training funds are ERISA funds. Technically, pre-apprenticeship participants are not yet members of the Union and part of the apprenticeship program and to be able to use/expend funds for training of pre-apprenticeship participants, there must be provisions in the standards of apprenticeship regarding the pre-apprenticeship program.

Mr. Masatsugu explained that the revisions added pre-apprenticeship provisions to the Selection Procedures (Appendix B) and Granting Credit (Section 15) of the Standards of Apprenticeship for the Painter, Taper, Glazier, and Floor Layer

Apprenticeship Programs. The pre-apprenticeship provisions will allow them to participate in pre-apprenticeship programs and grant credit hours to pre-apprenticeship program participants.

SAC member Travis Murakami asked for clarification on who will provide the pre-apprenticeship training. Mr. Masatsugu explained that the particular District Council 50 union will partner with different stakeholders in the community to provide the pre-apprenticeship training.

At this juncture, SAC member Keian Shon informed the Chair that he is recusing himself from voting on the agenda item.

SAC member Rober Aquino moved to recommend for approval the added provisions on pre-apprenticeship in Appendix B, Selection Procedures and Section 15, Granting Credit of the Standards of Apprenticeship for Painter, Taper, Glazier, and Floor Layer Apprenticeship Programs. James Hardway seconded the motion.

Chair Serikaku asked for any discussion on the motion, and hearing none, he proceeded to conduct the roll call vote. The members voted as follows:

Robert Aquino	Yes
James Hardway	Yes
Ellen May	Yes
Seunghye Hong	Yes
Keian Shon	Recused
Travis Murakami	Yes
Caroline Soga	Yes
Patrick Sullivan	Yes
Melodie Vega	Yes
Cristina Vocalan	Yes
Gregg Serikaku	Yes

Chair Serikaku informed Mr. Masatsugu, the SAC will recommend approval of the revisions to the Selection Procedures and Granting Credit of the Painter, Glazier, Taper, and Floor Layer Apprenticeship Programs.

VI. Unfinished Business

- a. Review and Recommendation on the High Regard Arborist Apprenticeship Program.

Jon Perry, CEO of High Regard introduced himself and informed the members that issues and concerns raised by the SAC members were addressed in the new version of the Standards of Apprenticeship that was submitted for review. Mr. Perry summarized the changes as follows:

- Apprentice Wage Progression - the number of competencies required for each step/level of the wage progression was added in the apprentice wage schedule. The list of competencies was also included in Appendix D, Related Instruction Outline.
- Section V, paragraph 1, Maintenance of Records of Appendix F – removed “demotion”. There will be no demotion of apprentices.
- Appendix A (1), Assurances and Certifications - changed 16 years to 18 years
- Section XI, Ratio of Apprentice(s) to Journeyworker(s) - removed the statement pertaining to 2 apprentices to 1 journeyworker ratio. As provided in the Standards of Apprenticeship, the program will use a 1 apprentice to 1 journeyworker ratio.
- Complaint Procedures – referenced the complaint procedures in the High Regard Employee handbook. The language was provided in the response to the issues and concerns of the SAC members.

Mr. Perry explained that they have 4 journeyworkers including himself which is sufficient to meet the 1 apprentice to 1 journeyworker ratio based on the 4 apprentices that they plan to hire. When asked by Travis Murakami if he will be working on the jobsite with the apprentices as a journeyworker. Mr. Perry replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Murakami moved to recommend for approval of the Arborist Apprenticeship Program. Ms. May seconded the motion

The members voted as follows:

Travis Murakami	Yes
Ellen May	Yes
Robert Aquino	Yes
James Hardway	Yes
Seunghye Hong	Yes
Keian Shon	Recused
Caroline Soga	Yes
Patrick Sullivan	Yes
Melodie Vega	Yes
Cristina Vocalan	Yes
Gregg Serikaku	Yes

Chair Serikaku informed Mr. Perry, the SAC will recommend for approval of the High Regard Arborist Apprenticeship Program.

b. Policy and Procedures for Safety Reports

Chair Serikaku mentioned that the SAC will continue discussions on the policy and procedures and asked WDD staff to provide a recap from the last meeting.

Mr. Edgar Fernandez mentioned that during the last meeting of the SAC, WDD Administrator Ms. Pilotin-Freitas recommended that for purposes of transparency, all programs should be required to submit annual safety reports. He explained that the current state apprenticeship bulletin on safety reports, sponsors who request for temporary change of their ratio to an expanded ratio, for example from 1 apprentice to 1 journeyworker to 2 apprentices to 1 journeyworker are required to submit a baseline safety report for the 1:1 ratio covering the 1-year period prior to the request. The baseline safety report is used to evaluate whether the requested temporary expanded ratio is reasonable and will not compromise the safety of the apprentices. If the temporary expanded ratio is approved, the sponsor is required to submit annual safety reports during the duration of the temporary ratio. The annual safety reports are used to review the number of accidents and injuries. If the report shows a high number of accidents, then this will be presented for determination by the SAC on whether the sponsor should continue with the expanded temporary ratio. Sponsors who request for extension of the temporary expanded ratio are also required to submit safety reports for previous years prior to the request. Sponsors/programs whose temporary expanded ratio was subsequently approved as permanent ratio in the standards of apprenticeship are no longer required to submit safety reports. He also clarified that sponsors with expanded temporary ratio, e.g, 2 apprentices to 1 journeyworker who want to revert to the 1:1 ratio are not required to present the change to the SAC for review because they are just going back to their previous ratio and 1:1 ratio is the recommended ratio for apprenticeship programs. The request to revert to the 1:1 ratio will go directly to the Director for approval.

In relation to the proposal to require all programs to submit safety reports, WDD staff prepared a checklist of the various issues/concerns pertaining to safety reports that was provided to the members for review and comments. The comments/inputs of the members will be used to revise the current bulletin or formulate new policies and procedures if the proposal to require all sponsors to submit annual safety reports will be adopted and implemented.

SAC member James Hardway clarified that he thought that the discussion during the last meeting was how to modify the safety report to make it more useful versus having every sponsor/employer submitting safety reports because that is asking a lot.

Also, he has not seen annual safety reports for programs with modified ratios and he was asking where the reports are. He added that before doing something that applies to everybody, we should first address those concerns involving programs that the SAC made a recommendation to the Director for approval of their expanded ratio. He thinks that the overall concern is whether or not the SAC's recommendation will be putting apprentices in an unsafe work environment. He wants it clear that he was not asking for every sponsor to submit safety reports.

Ms. Ellen May mentioned that what she wants to bring to the table for discussion was the responsibility of the SAC to determine high incident rate and its severity across industries which may be different. According to her, there are many people in the field who are experts on safety, including OSHA and on the state level who can provide inputs/information regarding safety issues, including what is considered high incidents. The determination of high incident versus severity is a very complex issue which she believes the SAC members are not considered experts and she suggested if somebody from OSHA or an expert on safety can provide inputs.

Other issues/matters discussed include the following:

- a. It was suggested that safety reports should be submitted electronically to enable sponsors to submit within the 90 days period. It was agreed that WDD should be responsible to determine how the reports should be submitted.
- b. Sponsors who want to change their ratio must first request for temporary ratio change and if approved, must submit annual safety reports. The reports will be used to determine succeeding request for permanent approval.
- c. Revise the safety report forms to include additional information as recommended by the SAC.
- d. The current state apprenticeship bulletin will remain effective and WDD will continue to enforce the policies and procedures, including the submission of baseline safety reports for new requests for expanded ratio, until revised/amended.
- e. The WDD will prepare a draft of the revised state apprenticeship bulletin for review and comments by the SAC members.

Chair Serikaku asked the members how to proceed with the proposal to require all sponsors to submit annual safety reports.

Mr. Robert Aquino moved to deny the proposal to require all sponsors to submit annual safety reports and instead amend the current bulletin to address issues discussed by the SAC. Mr. Hardway seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows:

Robert Aquino	Yes
James Hardway	Yes

Ellen May	Yes
Seunghye Hong	Yes
Travis Murakami	Yes
Keian Shon	Yes
Caroline Soga	Yes
Patrick Sullivan	Yes
Melodie Vega	Yes
Cristina Vocalan	Yes
Gregg Serikaku	Yes

The proposal to require all sponsors to submit annual safety reports was denied.

c. Announcements

- Mr. Fernandez informed members that based on the guidance of the State Attorney General's office, proxies will no longer be allowed to represent members who cannot attend the meeting. He asked the members to make themselves available during the next SAC meeting on December 9, 2025 to ensure a quorum.

He also informed members that the term of office of the current members of SAC ends on December 31, 2025. At present, there are 2 vacancies in the SAC with the resignation of Aaron Tilton of Operating Engineers, and Francis Tau'a of Hawaii Laborer's Training Office. WDD will be soliciting applications/nominations for membership with the SAC, including incumbent members who are interested to re-apply.

- Chair Serikaku asked if there were term limit for SAC members. Mr. Fernandez replied that currently, there is no term limit for SAC members. He however clarified that although the members are appointed by the Director and does not require confirmation by the State Senate, based on the definition of board and commission in the Hawaii Revised Statutes, the SAC is considered a board. He will check if there is term limit in the statutes that will be applicable to the SAC members.

d. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.