



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND  
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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# ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2024 - 2025

## ► DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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**Equal Opportunity Employer/Program**

**Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.**

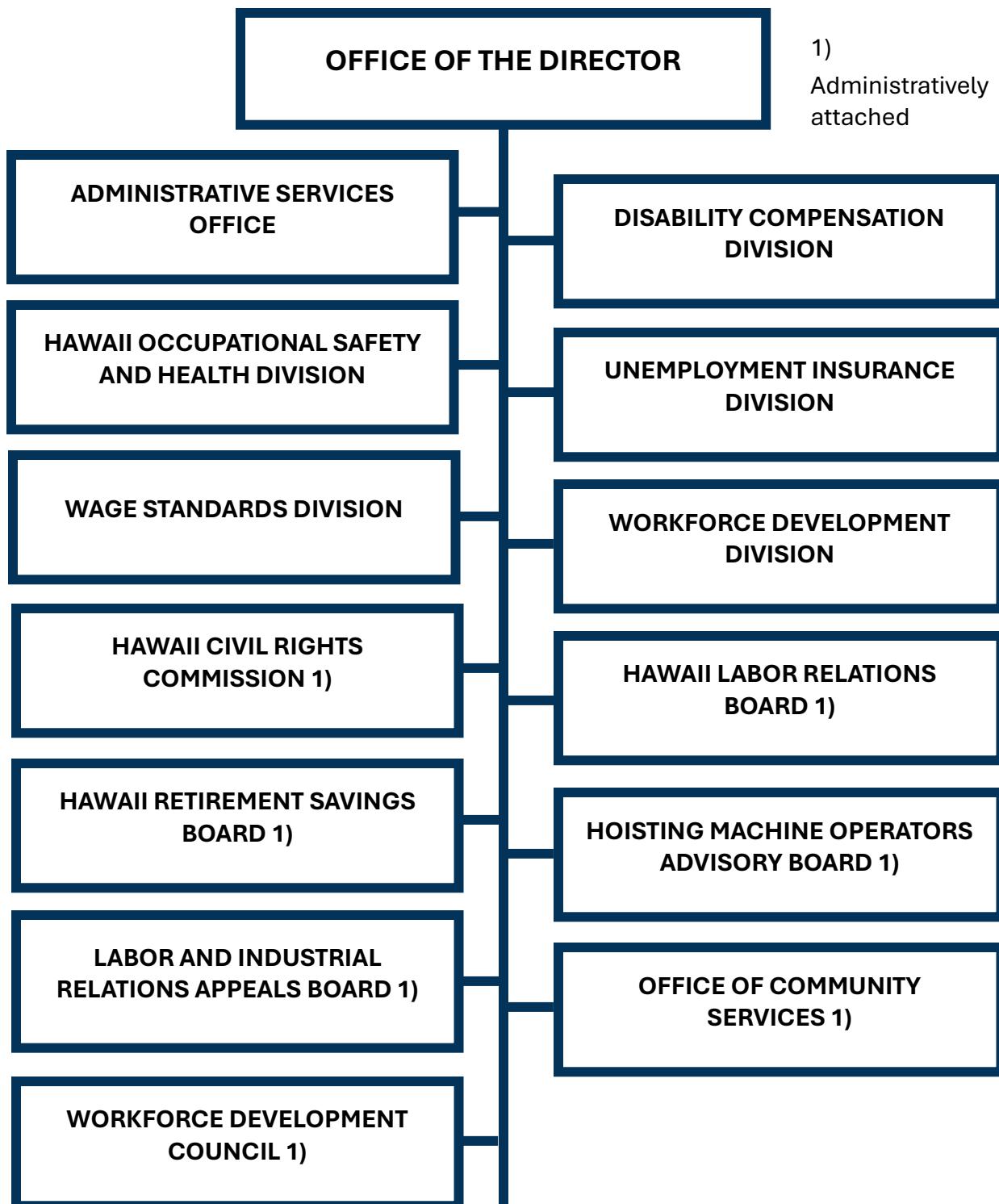
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In accordance with section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Department's Non-General Fund Reports and other reports may be viewed electronically at  
<https://labor.hawaii.gov/find-a-report/>.

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**  
**ORGANIZATION CHART**



# Disability Compensation Division



## Mission Statement

To provide economic security and stability for Hawai‘i’s workforce through education, enforcement, and adjudication of the Workers’ Compensation (WC), Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI), and Prepaid Health Care (PHC) laws.

## Statement of Goals

### Short-Term Goals (Two Years or Less)

- 75% of claimants and employers are aware of their rights and obligations under WC, TDI, and PHC laws.
- 75% of stakeholders (employers, carriers, adjusters, attorneys, health care providers) comply with WC, TDI, and PHC laws.
- 75% of disputes that delay benefits are resolved in a timely manner.
- Ensure fair and timely decisions within statutory timeframes.
- Provide timely compliance investigations.

### Long-Term Goals (Three to Five Years)

- 100% awareness among claimants and employers of their rights and obligations.
- 100% compliance among stakeholders.
- 100% timely resolution of disputes.
- Full implementation of digital systems and interagency data sharing.

## Objectives and Policies

### Education

- Provide knowledge-based documents on program laws to stakeholders.
- Conduct informational campaigns to inform claimants of their rights and protections under the WC, TDI, and PHC program laws.

- Conduct informational campaigns to inform employers of their obligations under the WC, TDI, and PHC programs laws.

### Enforcement

- Conduct investigations and audits of non-compliant employers.
- Audit insurance carriers for timely benefit payments and medical services.

### Adjudication

- Conduct hearings and issue decisions within statutory timeframes.
- Review and approve settlements in a timely manner.

### Program Support

- Mandate electronic filing of claims.
- Utilize the Electronic Case Management System (eCMS) to monitor performance.
- Evaluate cost-benefit impacts and medical costs.
- Update laws and rules to reflect digital processes.
- Promote data sharing with other divisions and agencies (DHS and DOH).

## Action Plan (2025-2029)

### Education

Initiative	Year One (2025)	Year Two (2026)	Year Five (2029)
Knowledge-Based Documents	Design and build knowledge base	Pilot internal access and gather feedback	Public rollout with stakeholder training
Stakeholder Campaigns	Develop information campaign	Launch and monitor engagement	Evaluate and enhance campaign
Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Begin survey and review results	Analyze trends and identify improvements	Implement systemic improvements

### Enforcement

Initiative	Year One (2025)	Year Two (2026)	Year Five (2029)
Investigations & Audits	Update records and revise audit strategies	Begin targeted enforcement actions	Continue monitoring employer compliance. Evaluate effectiveness and adjust, as needed

### Adjudication

Initiative	Year One (2025)	Year Two (2026)	Year Five (2029)
Timely Hearings	Identify causes of issues beyond statutory time frame. Develop plan	Implement and monitor	Achieve 90% compliance with deadlines
Settlement Approvals	Develop resource plan	Implement and track	Automate tracking and reduce delays by 50%

## Program Support

Initiative	Year One (2025)	Year Two (2026)	Year Five (2029)
Electronic Filing	Identify statute changes; draft changes	Propose statutory changes	Enforce mandate and monitor via eCMS
eCMS Utilization	Identify usage barriers	Implement solutions and promote	Achieve 90% usage and integrate dashboards
Medical Cost Review	Monitor data and impacts	Recommend policy changes	Reduce average cost per lost-time claim by 10%
Laws and Rules Updates	Monitor and identify needs	Draft and propose updates	Complete legislative alignment
Data Sharing	Identify resources and legal needs	Draft agreements and begin exchange	Finalize agreements/expand to real-time verification with other executive branches

## Performance Measurement Process

### Education

- Track number and percentage of informational sessions.
- Conduct and analyze customer satisfaction surveys.

### Program Support

- Monitor legislative progress on electronic filing.
- Use eCMS to:
  - Track delivery times for hearings and wage replacement benefits.
  - Monitor stakeholder usage and identify barriers.
  - Maintain and update the knowledge-based document library.
  - Log and resolve operational issues with timestamps.
- Monitor cost-benefit impacts and payments.
- Track medical cost per lost-time claim.
- Monitor updates to laws and rules.
- Track inter-agency data sharing activity and effectiveness.

### Enforcement

- Monitor compliance through investigations and audit reports.
- Track reduction in non-compliant employers.
- Penalize late benefit payments.
- Monitor WC, TDI, and PHC-related complaints.

### Adjudication

- Track percentage of WC decisions issued within 60 days.
- Track percentage of settlements approved within 3 weeks.

# Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health



The Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) ensures compliance with two laws:

- Chapter 396, HRS, The Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Law, which states that every employee in the State should have safe and healthful working conditions; and
- Chapter 397, HRS, The Hawaii Boiler and Elevator Safety Law, which mandates the safe operation and use of boilers, and pressure systems; elevators, lifts, kindred equipment, and amusement rides.



Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program (Chapter 396, HRS) staff engages in the following activities, with the goal of encouraging voluntary compliance with the law and administrative rules:

- The HIOSH enforcement staff conducts programmed inspections of high hazard workplaces, and responds to accidents, complaints, and referrals. Voluntary Protection Program evaluations are done to identify and recognize exemplary employers.
- HIOSH consultants conduct workplace audits to improve employers' safety and health management systems in response to requests from employers. This service is free and confidential. Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program evaluations are done to identify and recognize small employers with effective safety and health programs.

- Certifications are issued to qualified individuals in the following areas: explosives and pyrotechnics; certified safety and health professionals; and hoisting machine operators.

## Promulgation of OSHA Standards

HIOSH is required to adopt "as effective as" administrative rules within 6 months of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's adoption. These safety and health standards state what employers must do to ensure safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. HIOSH continues to work on updating its standards to match current federal OSHA standards. HIOSH receives 50% federal funding for the compliance program and 90% federal funding for the on-site consultation program. OSHA does not permit federal funds to be used for the certification programs that are 100% state funded, such as the hoisting machine operators' certification. The U.S. OSHA provides oversight of the program, requiring benchmark staffing levels as well as performance and timeliness criteria for mandated activities.

The Boiler and Elevator Inspection Branch staff (Chapter 397, HRS) staff conducts the following activities with the goal of public safety through voluntary compliance with the law and administrative rules:

- Inspections of equipment at specific intervals to assure its safe operation and use. Equipment determined to be satisfactory are issued permits to operate.
- Investigations of accidents and some complaints.
- Review of installation and alteration plans to ensure that the equipment is being constructed/installed/ altered in accordance with safety codes. A permit to install/alter is issued to initiate the construction work.

- Certifications are issued to special boiler inspectors to enable them to perform third party inspections of boilers and pressure systems.
- Reviews and audits of companies authorized by the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors to enable Hawaii companies to perform necessary repairs and alterations to critical equipment in the State.

HIOSH met 90% of its Fiscal Year 2025 Federal grant objectives and is making progress in filling its compliance officer positions. The net gain of the Enforcement Branches for FY 2025 was plus one compliance officer. Federal OSHA approved HIOSH Fiscal Year 2025 Federal grants submittals. The Boiler and Elevator Branch performed 3,158 elevator inspections and conducted or accepted 4,793 boiler & pressure vessel inspections during FY 2024-25.

HIOSH continues to recruit for its vacant positions, cultivate existing staff and working towards improving staff retention.

# Unemployment Insurance Division



The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division provides temporary wage replacement to eligible workers during times of need, thereby ensuring economic stability for individuals and families. The UI Division administers the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which is funded through federal and state taxes paid by employers and managed in compliance with federal laws and regulations to ensure long-term sustainability. The UI Division includes claims offices on Oahu, Maui, Hawaii Island, and Kauai as well as the Employment Security Appeals Referees' Office (ESARO).

The UI Division is committed to supporting workers by offering equitable access to services and safeguarding the unemployment insurance system. System security is being strengthened through multi-factor authentication and partnerships with federal agencies to verify applicant identities. To enhance employer engagement, the UI Division continues to expand the use of the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES), supported by outreach and training. The UI Division also prioritizes benefit integrity by managing claims responsibly and ensuring a fair and independent appeals process.

The goals of the UI Division focus on improving efficiency, security, and accessibility while contributing to the State's economic resilience. Short-term goals include protecting and stabilizing the existing Mainframe System during the transition to a modern platform; expanding SIDES adoption; and improving claimant access and system safeguards. Long-term goals include full modernization of the Mainframe System, improved service delivery for all users, and expanded access for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Recent accomplishments demonstrate meaningful progress toward these goals. The UI Division:

- Launched electronic document upload, allowing claimants to submit documents online.
- Launched a new and improved statewide UI call center, providing additional servicing options and multilingual support in English, Cantonese, Ilocano, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- Developed and implemented a simplified decision template to improve claimant understanding.
- Released new educational and instructional materials, including videos on how to file claims, create accounts, and resources for federal employees and military members.

To support long-term modernization, the UI Division is also:

- Updating laws to authorize electronic notifications for claimants and employers and to simplify processes that delay benefit delivery.
- Collaborating with other agencies to improve public-facing services, streamline inter-agency workflows, and support responsible information sharing.
- Continuing comprehensive modernization work, ensuring that system design, business processes, and policies align with the requirements of a cloud-based platform.

The UI Division will continue modernization efforts and operational improvements that expand access, enhance security, and strengthen service delivery for workers and employers statewide.

# Wage Standards Division



The mission of the Wage Standards Division (WSD) is “Service with Aloha to Improve the Quality of Work-Life in Hawai‘i”.

The WSD protects Hawai‘i’s workers by administering and enforcing six labor laws relating to wages in the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS). The laws operate to keep young workers safe in the workplace (Child Labor Law, Chapter 390, HRS); ensure employees are paid their wages due (Wage and Hour Law, Chapter 387, HRS; Payment of Wages and Other Compensation Law, Chapter 388, HRS; Wages and Hours of Employees on Public Works Law, Chapter 104, HRS); and provide job protection when family members need care (Hawai‘i Family Leave Law, Chapter 398, HRS), or an employee is discharged or discriminated against because of a lie detector test, a workers’ compensation injury, or taking an on-site drug screening (Employment Practices Law, Part II – Lie Detector Test and Part III – Unlawful Suspension or Discharge, Chapter 378, HRS).

## Highlights and Activities

The Compliance Branch resolved 211 cases this fiscal year. This included issuing four Notifications of Violation to contractors on public works projects that violated the Prevailing Wage Law under Chapter 104, HRS, and ordered \$8,629.28 in Chapter 104, HRS, penalties to be paid to the State

General Fund. There were 42 Orders of Wage Payment Violation issued to employers in violation of Chapter 388, HRS. Penalties for employees and the Labor Law Enforcement Special Fund totaled \$58,578. The Compliance Branch identified \$139,824 in back wages found due for 92 workers.

The Hearings Branch disposed of 14 unlawful terminations due to work injury cases and resolved four Orders of Wage Payment Violation appeals and two Notification of Violation appeals.

The Intake and Certification Branch processed 252 complaints, made three presentations on Chapter 104, HRS, Wages and Hours of Employees on Public Works Law and Chapter 388 Orders of Wage Payment Violation, processed one pay exception request, resolved nine child labor investigations, and responded to 4,950 inquiries.

The number of child labor permits issued was 12,541. There were 35 variances and addendums granted to television and film productions such as “Chief of War”, “Lilo & Stitch”, “Moana”, “Rescue: HI-Surf”, and other films and television commercials, to permit minors under age 16 to work beyond the hours permitted under the Child Labor Law.

# Workforce Development Division



## Internships



The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), Workforce Development Division (WDD) administers the [Hele Imua Internship Program](#), a statewide initiative that began as a pilot in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and has continued through FY 2025. The program provides 12-week internship opportunities for current college students and recent graduates across various State agencies, including partners under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Titles II and IV.

Annual appropriations from the State Legislature support the continued placement of interns within departments and agencies across the executive branch. In FY 2025, a total of 386 interns were placed in State agencies. Of this total, 182 were high school students who participated in a summer internship program that included financial literacy workshops to enhance career readiness and foundational life skills.

Internship placements were made across a broad range of State offices and agencies, including but not limited to:

- Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS)
- Department of Agriculture (HDOA)
- Department of the Attorney General (AG)

- Department of Budget and Finance (B&F)
- Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT)
- Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA)
- Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR)
- Department of Defense (DOD)
- Department of Education (DOE)
- Office of Elections
- Enterprise Technology Services (ETS)
- Office of the Governor
- Office of the Lieutenant Governor
- Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation (HHSC)
- Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS)
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD)
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Office of Information Technology Services (OITS)
- Judiciary
- DLIR
- Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)
- Department of Law Enforcement
- Legislature and Legislative Reference Bureau
- Department of Public Safety
- Senate
- Department of Taxation (DOTAX)

Internship placements covered a diverse range of occupational fields including Information Technology Specialist, Human Resources Assistant, Program Specialist, Accountant, Environmental Health Specialist, Engineer, Research Statistician, Marketing Specialist, Housing Coordinator, and Elections Specialist.

The Hele Imua Internship Program continues to expand access to work-based learning experiences within State government, supporting the development of Hawai‘i’s future workforce and strengthening career pathways into public service.



## National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) – QUEST Recovery

DLIR, WDD was awarded \$10,595,171 under the Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The purpose of this grant was to assist individuals adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in entering, returning to, or advancing in high-quality jobs within growth industries.

Originally established as a two-year grant, the project received a no-cost extension approved by USDOL, extending the period of performance to three years, from September 2022 through September 2025.

As of June 30, 2025, a total of 425 participants were enrolled in the program, exceeding the original enrollment goal of 300 by 41 percent.

The program was operated by the Counties of O‘ahu,

Hawai‘i, and Maui, along with DLIR’s WDD. Each operated the project within its respective American Job Center (AJC). Two contracted partners supported implementation:

- Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i (COC Hawai‘i) – responsible for sector partnerships and business engagement activities.
- The Kalaimoku Group (TKG) – responsible for community outreach and participant recruitment.

## National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) – Maui Wildfire Disaster Recovery



Following the Lahaina Wildfire on August 8, 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor approved a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) on August 25, 2023, to support disaster recovery and workforce reemployment efforts. Administrative startup was completed rapidly to deliver services to affected residents as soon as possible.

By June 30, 2025, the program had served 444 participants, exceeding its goal of 350 by 27 percent. Most participants were employed in temporary humanitarian assistance positions, including work in food hubs, social services, and community resource centers. The total grant award was \$13,031,320.

DLIR partnered with Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. (MEO) as the primary contractor due to its extensive community network and experience operating federally funded programs. MEO subcontracted Employer Options, a staffing agency that served as the employer of record for

temporary private sector positions. The DLIR WDD, Maui Branch focused on creating temporary jobs with state agencies engaged in recovery and humanitarian services.

Through strong collaboration among DLIR, MEO, Employer Options, and community partners, the Lahaina Wildfire NDWG provided timely employment opportunities, critical community support, and meaningful income for residents affected by the disaster, contributing significantly to Maui's overall recovery efforts.

## HireNet Hawai‘i (HNH)



HireNetHawai‘i ([www.hirenethawaii.com](http://www.hirenethawaii.com)), the State's electronic job board and case management system, connects employers and jobseekers at AJCs statewide at no cost to the public. The vendor, Geographic Solutions, Inc., has customized HireNet Hawai‘i (HNH) for Hawai‘i's workforce programs. Modules are continually updated to streamline tools for case management, document management, or to add features for new programs. Anyone with internet access and a computer can self-register and benefit from online services, while those needing individualized service can contact or visit the nearest Hawai‘i AJC. In FY 2025, 6,169 participants used HNH to obtain individualized services, up from 5,130 the previous year.

## Hawai‘i Career Acceleration Navigator (HI CAN)



In partnership with the DLIR, ETS, DHS, Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL), and the National Governors Association Workforce Innovation Network, the State developed the Hawai‘i Career Acceleration Navigator (HI CAN). This innovative platform leverages machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI), state administrative data, and cloud

computing to generate customized job and training recommendations for Hawai‘i residents.

By combining advanced technology with a human-centered design, HI CAN provides jobseekers with personalized, data-driven career guidance and referrals to supportive services through integration with the Hawai‘i Next: HNH platform for those conducting career research and planning.

## Registered Apprenticeship Program

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, there were 1,486 newly registered and reinstated apprentices in Hawai‘i. The majority of new apprentices were enrolled in construction trade programs. During the same period, 480 apprentices completed their programs and attained journeyworker status. As of June 30, 2025, the State had a total of 5,375 registered apprentices across all industries.

In recognition of 2024 National Apprenticeship Week, Governor Josh Green issued a proclamation declaring November 17–23, 2024, as Hawai‘i Apprenticeship Week, encouraging residents to recognize and support Registered Apprenticeship as a proven model for developing a skilled workforce.

The week's activities included a bus tour of the Hawai‘i Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training and Plumbers and Pipefitters Apprenticeship facilities on November 19, 2024, attended by more than 50 participants, including Hawai‘i Job Corps students, high school educators, and workforce partners.

A virtual presentation held on November 21, 2024, featured sponsors such as the Hawai‘i Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund, Associated Builders and Contractors Hawai‘i, and the Hawai‘i Behavioral Health Training Institute, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and representative from the USDOL, providing updates on Registered Apprenticeship initiatives nationwide.



In total, more than 300 individuals participated in the week's events, which provided opportunities for sponsors to highlight their programs and promote apprenticeship as a viable career pathway.

As the State Apprenticeship Agency, the DLIR continues to rely on the State Apprenticeship Council (SAC) as an advisory body to the DLIR Director on all apprenticeship-related matters. During FY 2025, the SAC met quarterly to review proposed revisions to existing program standards and to address other issues related to apprenticeship policy and oversight.

The Federal grants awarded to DLIR by the USDOL under the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) Base Formula Grants Rounds 1 and 2 concluded on June 30, 2025. DLIR's request for a no-cost extension for these grants was denied by USDOL. However, on June 25, 2025, DLIR was awarded \$556,981 under the State Apprenticeship Expansion Base Formula Funding Round 3. The three-year grant, spanning July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028, will support continued efforts to build statewide capacity as the State Apprenticeship Agency and to promote and expand registered apprenticeship programs across Hawai'i.

The USDOL also awarded the DLIR \$4,999,707 under the SAE Base Formula Round 2 Competitive Funding. The grant period runs from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. Of this amount, \$4,442,124 was sub-awarded to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) to develop and implement a Teacher Apprenticeship Program for K-12 licensed teachers.

The program aims to register 142 teacher

apprentices and engage 500 pre-apprenticeship participants. It is sponsored by HTSB, in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Education, Hawai'i Government Employees Association, and the Hawai'i State Teachers Association.

## Employment & Training Fund (ETF)

The Employment and Training Fund (ETF) supports employers and workers through innovative programs, including training in business-specific skills, new occupational areas, management, and support services. Since its inception, ETF has helped train over 91,000 workers. The [ETF Micro Program](#), allows employers to register employees for short-term, non-credit courses from ETF-approved providers to enhance skills and meet workplace demands. As of FY 2025, fifteen organizations delivered training through the program, resulting in 518 course registrations and serving 542 employees from 92 businesses statewide. Additional program details are available in the ETF Annual Report.

## Veteran Services & Jobs for Veterans Services Grant



The Jobs for Veterans Services Grant ([JVSG](#)) supported individualized career services and case management for veterans facing employment barriers, including those at risk of homelessness, with disabilities, low-income status, or prior incarceration. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists partnered with the Veterans Administration, WIOA partners, Homeless Veterans Reintegration grantees, and other resources to help veterans transition to stable employment. On Oahu,

the JVSG-funded Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) worked with businesses statewide to connect veterans to workforce opportunities and served on the AJC Business Services Team.

In FY 2024, job fairs and special recruitments targeted veterans statewide, and the LVER led promotion of the Hire Vets Medallion Program recognizing employers who hire and retain veterans. The State also sponsored professional development for AJC and partner staff on serving veterans with disabilities, substance abuse disorders, and justice-involved veterans, as well as leadership in integrating veteran services. Key AJC staff and partners met statewide in January 2025 to report progress and update plans to enhance veteran services. In March 2025, federal-led online training clarified revised DVOP eligibility criteria and AJC intake responsibilities for veteran screening.

## Federal Bonding

WDD administers a federally funded bonding program that provides up to 200 bonds to employers hiring justice-involved individuals, including those impacted by opioid or drug use. Through active participation in the Going Home Hawai‘i Consortium—a statewide and national network of public and private partners—WDD shares program information with agencies serving justice-involved individuals, as well as directly with those being released from Hawai‘i correctional facilities, supporting innovative and culturally responsive reentry and reintegration services.

## Workforce Information Grants to States (WIGS) & Hawai‘i Workforce Infonet (HIWI)



The WIGS grant enabled Hawai‘i to provide reliable Labor Market Information (LMI), including data on in-demand occupations and long-term employment projections for the state and counties. It also supported the maintenance of the Worker's Information Database (WID) and the production of a statewide economic report. All resources are publicly available through the HIWI website, offering jobseekers and students timely information to help them acquire the skills needed for meaningful employment.

## Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW)

The Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers ([MSFW](#)) program operates under the Wagner-Peyser (WP) framework, providing employment services and benefits to migrant workers while ensuring their labor rights are protected. The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) coordinates with each Local Office Manager (LOMA) to ensure that MSFWs are accurately identified, receive necessary Employment Services (ES) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) services, and are properly reported in the HNH reporting system. In alignment with the WP Act, Final Rule (TEN 10-23), effective January 23, 2024, requires state merit staff to provide services to both MSFWs and Employment Services customers. These changes must be fully implemented by January 22, 2026.

## Rapid Response/Layoff Aversion Activities

Rapid Response (RR) activities are carried out by the WDD in collaboration with the American Job Center (AJC) staff and local workforce development boards. These efforts ensure timely coordination and support for workers affected by layoffs or business closures.



Under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, Hawai‘i businesses with 50 or more employees are required to provide the DLIR with a WARN letter at least 60 calendar days before a covered plant closing or mass layoff.

In FY 2025, a total of 24 WARN notices were submitted to DLIR — a decrease from 36 notices in FY 2024. Additionally, 11 companies with fewer than 50 employees voluntarily submitted notices regarding upcoming sales, mergers, furloughs, or closures.

All affected employers were contacted by Rapid Response team members, who offered assistance and provided orientation sessions and layoff resources for impacted employees.

During the year, an estimated 983 workers were affected — a significant decline from the 2,872 workers reported in the previous fiscal year. Among companies that submitted WARN letters detailing total workforce impact:

- 10 companies reported a 100% reduction in their workforce (either through total layoffs or reemployment under new ownership).
- The lowest staff reduction recorded was 1.39%.
- The overall average reduction across all companies submitting notices was 60.88%.

Breakdown of WARN notices by county:

Oahu:	21
Maui:	3
Kaua‘i:	3
Hawai‘i:	2
Total:	24

There were WARN letters from 21 unique companies for 29 locations.

## **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**

The SCSEP, authorized under the Older

Americans Act of 1965, assists unemployed and low-income individuals aged 55 and older by providing paid, part-time training opportunities with public or local non-profit agencies. The program’s goal is to help participants gain the skills and experience needed to secure unsubsidized employment. There are four SCSEP operators in Hawai‘i that partner with various public and non-profit agencies to deliver services statewide. The DLIR, WDD administers the program in the Counties of Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, and the City and County of Honolulu, while Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., a non-profit organization, operates the program in the County of Maui.

In FY 2025, SCSEP partnered with 50 active host agencies and served 64 participants across the state.

## **Trade Adjustment Assistance**

Trade Adjustment Assistance ([TAA](#)) program continued its phase-out termination status in FY 2025, a process that began in July 2022. Since that time, no new TAA petitions have been authorized. However, outreach and services may continue for workers who remain eligible under previously approved petitions.

In FY 2023, Hawai‘i received a \$100,000 allocation to support outreach, case management, and administrative costs associated with serving eligible workers.

## **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program is a voluntary statewide initiative that supports individuals receiving SNAP benefits. Designed to help able-bodied adults enter and succeed in the workforce, SNAP E&T emphasizes employment, work experience, training, on-the-job training, and limited job search activities.

Through a subcontract between the DLIR and DHS, WDD staff provide E&T services to SNAP participants in the Counties of Kaua‘i

and Hawai‘i. WDD staff also work to connect participants with additional workforce opportunities, including Hele Imua Internship Programs and Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

## First-To-Work Job Development and Job Preparedness Services

The [First-to-Work \(FTW\)](#) program, operated through a subcontract between the DLIR and the DHS Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division (BESSD), supports Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients in preparing for employment and achieving financial self-sufficiency.

DLIR Job Developers, stationed in DHS offices, provide job development services to FTW participants and establish Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) sites to expand hands-on learning opportunities. Job Readiness Training (JRT) classes are available in the Counties of Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, and Maui.

Additionally, DLIR FTW staff collaborate with the City and County of Honolulu’s Ho‘ala Job Readiness Workshop staff to assist participants with resume creation and related employment preparation activities.

## Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit ([WOTC](#)) program, administered by the USDOL and the U.S. Department of Treasury, supports employment opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment, including people with disabilities, veterans, ex-felons, the economically disadvantaged, and the long-term unemployed. The program incentivizes employers to hire from these target groups through federal tax credits.

WDD administrative staff process WOTC applications submitted by hundreds of participating employers each year. To improve efficiency, a WOTC module was recently added to the HireNet Hawai‘i portal, streamlining the application and processing workflow.

## WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth)

Under the WIOA, services to Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers are contracted to the Chief Local Elected Officials (Mayors) in partnership with the local workforce development boards (WDB).

In the City and County of Honolulu, the O‘ahu WDB contracts with the Department of Community Services, WorkHawai‘i Division. In the Counties of Hawai‘i and Maui, services are provided through Goodwill Hawai‘i. For Kaua‘i County, the USDOL granted a waiver allowing the WDD to directly provide these services.

The WIOA Adult Program assists individuals who meet eligibility criteria and face barriers to employment. Priority of service is given to veterans, public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient, among other priority groups.

Services include occupational training, on-the-job training (OJT), job development, and job placement.

The WIOA DW Program assists individuals who have been laid off or terminated, have received a notice of layoff, or have exhausted unemployment benefits and are unlikely to return to their previous industry or occupation.

Services include career and training assistance, job placement, and reemployment support.

Rapid Response services are also coordinated by WDD and its branch managers and delivered by county AJCs, ensuring timely support for workers affected by layoffs and business closures.

The WIOA Youth Program provides services to eligible youth who face barriers to education, training, and employment, with a statewide focus on out-of-school youth. Participants have access to fourteen program elements, including career counseling, mentoring, financial literacy, and work-based learning opportunities.

## **WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services)**

Under Title III of WIOA, the Wagner-Peyser (WP) program provides universal employment services—including job search assistance, career counseling, unemployment insurance filing assistance, and labor market information—to support all eligible job seekers and employers across the State.

In FY 2025, WP exceeded all performance measures, demonstrating continued success in delivering effective and accessible employment services statewide.

### **Partnership with UI/RESEA**

In FY 2025, the WDD continued its partnership with the Unemployment Insurance Division (UID) to strengthen alignment with the WIOA and create a clear entry point to other workforce system partners.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WDD and UID, WDD provided Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) services to UI claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their benefits, in accordance with the RESEA Grant State Plan.

To ensure accessibility, WDD delivered services both virtually and in person, resulting in 2,859 individuals completing an initial RESEA session and 2,547 individuals completing a subsequent RESEA session during FY 2025.



The State of Hawai‘i has a strong commitment to the protection of civil rights. Article I, Section 5 of the Hawai‘i Constitution provides that “no person shall be denied the enjoyment of civil rights or be discriminated against in the exercise thereof because of race, religion, sex or ancestry.” The legislature gave meaning to this commitment by creating the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC), through enactment of Act 219 in 1988 and Acts 386 and 387 in 1989.

The HCRC was organized in 1990 and officially opened its doors in January 1991. The HCRC enforces state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment (H.R.S. chapter 378, Part I), housing (H.R.S. chapter 515); public accommodations (H.R.S. chapter 489), and access to state and state-funded services (H.R.S. §368-1.5). The HCRC receives, investigates, conciliates, and adjudicates complaints of discrimination. The HCRC has five (5) uncompensated volunteer Commissioners. They are appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, based on their knowledge and experience in civil rights matters and commitment to preserve the civil rights of all individuals.

By law the Commission may hold hearings and make inquiries, as it deems necessary, and has the authority to administer oaths and affirmations, conduct depositions, compel the attendance of parties and witnesses and the production of documents by the issuance of subpoenas, examine parties and witnesses under oath, require answers to interrogatories, and delegate these powers to any member of the commission or any person appointed by the commission for the performance of its functions.

Furthermore, the law authorizes the Commission to enforce the State’s anti-discrimination statutes or any of its orders,

conciliation agreements, or predetermination settlements by commencing civil action in circuit court; by issuing “right to sue” authority to complainants; or by ordering appropriate legal and equitable relief or affirmative action when violations are found.

The law also authorizes the Commission to appoint an executive director, deputy executive director, hearings examiners, investigators, and other necessary support personnel, as well as attorneys to represent the commission in litigation.

## Statement of Goals

The HCRC is looking forward to a future more focused than ever on vigorously enforcing the civil rights laws protecting Hawai‘i’s people by ending discrimination and increasing diversity. *To fulfill this mission in both the short term and the long term, the HCRC will focus on filling vacancies, training new staff, improving our processes, and increasing outreach and education efforts.*

## Objectives and Policies

Consistent staffing continues to be one of the biggest challenges to the HCRC. The HCRC, like other state employers, is constantly engaging in the recruitment and selection process to fill vacancies as they arise. At the same time, FY 2025 has seen a robust increase in inquiries and complaints which have exceeded pre-Covid-19 pandemic numbers.

Training of new staff while short staffed in other positions limits further the HCRC’s capacity to timely process cases. To address this, the HCRC has engaged in cross training of staff, sought 89-day hires, and recruited interns, externs, and various volunteers to help lighten the burden of those remaining permanent administrative assistants and investigators to fulfill the HCRC’s mission.

The HCRC is committed to balancing the needs and rights of our employees with our service to the community. To improve our processes, the HCRC has begun updating its legacy database and case management processing to comport with the needs of technology, increase efficiency in our processes, and provide a more accessible experience for the community.

The HCRC continued its increased emphasis and efforts in providing education and outreach to our community in FY 2025. By partnering with other governmental agencies and community groups, the HCRC is increasing its visibility and providing education on civil rights laws for the people of Hawai‘i. Through participation in the State of Hawai‘i’s Fair Housing Month trainings, in FY 2025 the HCRC reached more than 800 participants statewide for fair housing trainings held virtually and offered free of cost. Additional community events and training include representation at the annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade, the Honolulu Pride Parade and Festival, resource fairs organized by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, and a national virtual fair housing conference presented in collaboration with community partners.

The HCRC enforcement team regularly presents on various topics relating to civil rights in the state of Hawai‘i, as well as to promote the HCRC and public interest legal practice at the UH Mānoa William S. Richardson School of Law. The HCRC continues to build its network of allies and partnerships in the community to better remain informed of the needs and resources to further our shared mission and multiply our efforts. A few notable examples over the past year were the Hawai‘i Coalition for Civil Rights and the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies.

## Action Plan

Last year the HCRC first reported on its five-year action plan as follows:

### Year One:

1. Fill all staff vacancies through permanent hire

recruitment

2. Revise and improve training curriculum for new and current staff
3. Organize and host a nationwide fair housing conference in collaboration with community fair housing partners
4. Update the HCRC’s legacy database and case management system

### Year Two:

1. Create a public-facing web portal to allow the public to submit complaints electronically
2. Begin to reduce the backlog of cases and increase the efficiency in processing complaints

### Year Five:

1. Overhaul administrative rules to provide clarity on the laws that the HCRC enforces
2. Significantly increase the HCRC’s reach to all islands and underserved communities through continued outreach and education efforts

Over the past fiscal year the HCRC was able to fill multiple vacancies for Investigator and Office Assistant positions, in part through the state’s innovative “Operation Hire Hawai‘i” program. Senior employees trained the entire staff, including these new hires, with a revised and improved training curriculum. Despite these welcome additions, the HCRC is not quite fully staffed yet, as turnover has created a few more vacancies for which recruitment is currently being conducted.

The HCRC successfully completed its Year One goal of organizing and hosting the nationally broadcast Fair Housing for Our Future Laws & Litigation Conference, in partnership with the Fair Housing Council of San Diego and the Legal Aid Society of Hawai‘i. Additional outreach efforts included an overhaul of the HCRC’s brochures and other informational materials (featuring the addition of QR codes), and the creation of Instagram and LinkedIn accounts to update the public on the HCRC’s activities.

In FY 2025 the HCRC made significant progress in updating its legacy database and case management system, as well as in creating a

public-facing web portal to assist with the filing of complaints. When these projects reach completion, they should dramatically increase both the public's access to the HCRC's services and the efficiency of the HCRC's case processing.

During recent months the HCRC has begun to feel the impact of certain unexpected changes in the federal government's interpretation and enforcement of federal civil rights laws. Whereas in the past a person wishing to file a discrimination complaint could choose to file most claims with either the HCRC or a counterpart federal agency (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), recent executive orders and policy changes have resulted in limitations on the types of complaints that the federal agencies will accept for filing. In an effort to ensure that members of the public are able to effectively exercise their legal rights on the state level, the HCRC will pursue legislation to increase the time in which a person can file a discrimination complaint (i.e., the statute of limitations) from 180 days to one year. The HCRC will add this legislative initiative to its action plan going forward.

## Performance Measures

The HCRC's overall goals and objectives, expressed simply, are to improve internal processes to become more effective and efficient as an agency, and to increase the public's access to our services. The HCRC tracks certain measurable standards, such as the length of time to file complaints, the length of time to investigate complaints, and the various outcomes of complaints (cause/no cause findings, settlements, administrative hearings, etc.). When the database upgrade is complete, the HCRC will be better able to track and analyze these standards to ensure that the anticipated staff and process changes actually result in improvements to effectiveness and efficiency when implemented. We will also be able to evaluate the impact of our efforts in the areas of outreach, education, and technological upgrades by tracking the numbers of inquiries and complaints that we receive from the public. We hope to see a dramatic increase in our complaint filing numbers, especially from the communities in

the state that are traditionally most underserved.



The Hawai‘i Labor Relations Board (HLRB or Board) is a quasi-judicial agency attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) for administrative and budgetary purposes only. HLRB has original jurisdiction over matters filed under Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 89 (Collective Bargaining in Public Employment) and HRS Chapter 377 (Hawaii Employment Relations Act). HLRB also adjudicates appeals of contested citations and orders issued by the DLIR Hawai‘i Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) under HRS Chapter 396 (Occupational Safety and Health Law).

## Program Objective

HLRB seeks to provide just, fair, and timely resolution of the issues brought before it, consistent with public policy to provide for collective bargaining in the public and private sectors, and to assure employee health and safety in the workplace.

## HLRB Members and Staff

HLRB is comprised of three Board Members, including a Chairperson and representative of the public, one member representative of labor, and one member representative of management, who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate to six-year terms.

The three-member Board is supported by a staff of seven, including an Executive Officer, a Hearings Officer, two Staff Attorneys, a Researcher, a Hearings and Case Specialist, and an Administrative Assistant. The Board’s Administrative Assistant holds a civil service position that is excluded from collective bargaining. All other HLRB staff positions are exempt from civil service and excluded from collective bargaining.

## Accomplishments and Challenges

FY 2025 marked another year of change and transition for the Board, with the retirement of

former Chairperson Marcus R. Oshiro, the hiring of a new staff attorney pursuant to Act 143, Session Laws of Hawai‘i (SLH) 2024, the appointment of current Chairperson Dwight Takamine, a changeover in Executive Officer, the ongoing search for a new Hearing Officer, and the enactment and implementation of new laws affecting HRS Chapters 89 and 377, all while remaining focused on its core function of administering Hawai‘i’s collective bargaining laws and adjudicating appeals of contested HIOSH citations and orders.

## FY 2025 Caseload

In FY 2025, the number of new cases filed with the Board more than doubled from the previous fiscal year, with 56 new cases initiated, including 36 new HRS Chapter 89, three new HRS Chapter 377, and 17 new HRS Chapter 396 cases. With 30 pending cases carried over from previous fiscal years, the Board oversaw a total of 86 active cases. During the same period, the Board disposed of 61 cases, including 45 HRS Chapter 89, three HRS Chapter 377, and 13 HRS Chapter 396 cases. At the close of FY 2025, 13 HRS Chapter 89 and seven HRS Chapter 396 cases remained active, with one case pending a final decision and order.

During FY 2025, the Board also had 29 cases at various stages on appeal in State Circuit and appellate courts.

## New Laws Affecting HRS Chapters 89 and 377

During the 2024 Regular Session, the Legislature passed five bills affecting HRS Chapters 89 and/or 377 that were signed by the Governor and became law in FY 2025:

[Act 063](#), signed June 21, 2024, effective July 1, 2024 (Gov. Msg. No. 1164) [HB 1642 HD1 SD1 \(SSCR 3735\)](#) Allows an employee or the exclusive representative, if applicable, to file a complaint with HLRB if the employer fails to

comply with section 78-64, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, relating to general employee orientation. [Status](#)

[Act 141](#), effective July 1, 2024 (Gov. Msg. No. 1242) [SB 2718 SD1 HD1 CD1 \(CCR 30-24\)](#) Allows the Board to admit and consider hearsay evidence. [Status](#)

[Act 143](#), effective July 1, 2024 (Gov. Msg. No. 1244) [SB 2991 SD2 HD2 CD1 \(CCR 178-24\)](#) Requires HLRB to adopt rules establishing criteria and procedures for the creation of new bargaining units. Requires certain employees or any employer or exclusive representative proposing a new bargaining unit to submit an application to the Board. Allows certain employees or any employer or exclusive representative to petition the Board to determine the appropriateness of a new bargaining unit. Requires the Board to consider certain criteria in determining the appropriateness of a new bargaining unit. Requires the Board to, upon its approval of the application, submit a report to the Legislature, including proposed legislation to create the new bargaining unit, accompanied by a decision and order issued by the Board. Makes an appropriation. Repeals 7/1/2027.

[Status](#)

[Act 174](#), effective July 2, 2024 (Gov. Msg. No. 1275) [SB 2715 SD1 HD2 CD1 \(CCR 29-24\)](#) Makes it unlawful for an employer to discharge, discipline, or otherwise penalize or threaten any adverse employment action against an employee because the employee declines to attend or participate in an employer-sponsored meeting that communicates the opinion of the employer about political matters, or declines to receive or listen to a communication from the employer that communicates the opinion of the employer about political matters. Defines “employee” and “political matters”. [Status](#)

[Act 234](#), signed July 9, 2024, effective July 1, 2024 (Gov. Msg. No. 1339) [HB 1640 HD1 SD1 CD1 \(CCR 128-24\)](#) Requires the employer to initiate negotiations on repricing of classes within a bargaining unit within thirty days of its receipt of the exclusive representative’s written request to negotiate. Establishes that the

employer’s failure to initiate the negotiation within the required time frame and the parties’ failure to reach an agreement within one hundred fifty days of the exclusive representative’s written request to negotiate or by January 31 of a year in which the collective bargaining agreement is due to expire, whichever is earlier, constitutes an impasse to which the impasse procedures shall apply, under certain conditions and limitations. Sunsets 6/30/2029. [Status](#)

In addition, on May 27, 2025, the Governor signed [HB162 HD2 SD1 CD1 \(CCR 76\)](#) into law as [Act 087](#) (Gov. Msg. No. 1187). This new law, passed by the Legislature during the 2025 Regular Session, authorizes the Board to request a list of five qualified and experienced interest arbitrators, from which parties at impasse under HRS § 89-11(e) shall select a neutral third member and chair of the arbitration panel, from either the American Arbitration Association (AAA) or the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), or a combination of both. Act 087 became effective upon its approval. [Status](#)

## **Implementation of Act 143, SLH 2024**

Upon the release of funds in November 2024, the Board, pursuant to Act 143, SLH 2024, hired a staff attorney to draft administrative rules to implement the criteria and procedures for establishing new bargaining units under HRS § 89-6.5.

## **Revision of HLRB’s Records Retention and Disposition Schedule**

In February 2025, the State Archives approved HLRB’s request to revise its records retention and disposition schedule, which was last updated in October 2005. HLRB’s new record retention and disposition schedule reduces the number of years the Board must retain closed cases from 20 years to seven years.

## **Review of HLRB’s List of Arbitrators and Mediators**

In March 2025, the Board convened a joint meeting with representatives from the public sector unions

and public employers to discuss concerns, initially raised by the exclusive representatives, regarding the list of arbitrators and mediators maintained by the Board pursuant to HRS § 89-5(i)(6) and (8).

## Goals and Objectives

Over the past two years, there has been a complete turnover in Board members and a near one-hundred percent change in Board staff. The current Board acknowledges the many accomplishments of prior Board members and staff under the leadership of former Chairperson Oshiro, particularly for their success in essentially eliminating the Board's backlog of old cases. In moving forward with Chairperson Takamine at the helm, the current Board will continue to timely process and resolve cases, implement new laws, and foster harmonious and cooperative labor-management relations as it simultaneously confronts pressing staffing, space, technology, and resources issues and needs. The Board plans to address these challenges head-on while maintaining its commitment to openness, access, and accountability to the people of Hawai‘i it serves.

In FY 2026, the Board will accomplish its goals and objectives by making strategic changes to its current operations and by pursuing partnerships to build capacity and improve efficiency.

## FY 2026 Initiatives

The Board will address staffing, space, technology, and resources issues in the following ways:

### Staffing

- The Board is actively seeking to fill its vacant Hearings Officer position by the end of summer or early fall 2025.
- The Board will undergo a reorganization to restructure roles and responsibilities of current employees to improve efficiency and performance, and to adapt to change.
- The Board will use salary savings to hire an independent contractor to oversee the Board's records retention project in accordance with HLRB's revised records retention and disposition schedule, to be completed by December 2025.

- In April 2025, the Board registered to be a host agency with the DLIR Workforce Development Division's (WDD) Hele Imua Internship Program with the goal of recruiting interns to fill legal and/or technology support shortage areas, beginning in the summer of 2025.
- The Board will pursue sponsorship of paralegal or legal assistant interns through the Legal Education Program at Kap‘iolani Community College (KCC) to address current shortage areas.
- The Board will work with the William S. Richardson School of Law to coordinate a *pro bono* opportunity for law students to assist with HLRB shortage areas.
- The Board will request authorization of a new project pursuant to Act 160, SLH 2015, to obtain two temporary exempt positions (one legal support position and one technology support position) to fill shortages areas at HLRB.

### Space

- With its updated records retention and disposition schedule now in place, the Board intends to sort through 50+ years of paper documents, including more than 20 years of case files that are currently stored at HLRB, to determine whether the documents and files should be retained, disposed, or sent to the State Archives for preservation.
- When the records retention project is complete, the Board plans to reconfigure its office to create additional workstations and make more efficient use of space.

### Technology

- The Board will address document management and storage issues as it completes its transition from paper to electronic documents.
- The Board will pursue technology upgrades to its hearing room to better support remote and in-person proceedings.
- The Board is working to ensure that its web content meets Web Content Accessibility

Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. Level AA standards by April 24, 2026.

- The Board is coordinating an on-prem to cloud migration with DLIR's Electronic Data Processing Service Office (EDPSO), with the goal of moving its data from DLIR servers to the cloud by October 2026.

## Resources

- The Board has been scrutinizing its operating budget to identify ways to reduce spending and free up funds.
- The Board will cancel its landlines and move to Teams call in July 2025.
- The Board will renegotiate its online legal research contract, which is set to expire at the end of May 2026.
- To fill shortage areas, the Board will recruit paid interns from WDD's Hele Imua Internship Program and unpaid student interns from KCC's Legal Education Program and/or the William S. Richardson School of Law.

## Ongoing Initiatives

- The Board will continue the process of establishing administrative rules to comply with Act 143, SLH 2024, with the goal of sending its draft rules to the Attorney General for review by the fall of 2025.
- The Board is planning a follow-up meeting with the exclusive representatives and public employers in August 2025, to address concerns regarding the list of arbitrators and mediators maintained by the Board.
- The Board will continue to participate in Joint Labor Management Seminars sponsored by the Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA) throughout the State.
- The Board is continuing the process of updating its agency forms to conform with its latest administrative rules.
- The Board intends to develop an online topical index or searchable database of its HRS Chapters 89 and 377 Decisions and Orders as a research tool for students,

researchers, practitioners and the general public.



# Hawai‘i Retirement Savings Program



The Hawai‘i Retirement Savings Program (HRSP) was established by Act 296 (SLH, 2022), to provide a retirement savings option for private-sector workers who do not have access to an employer-sponsored plan. The HRSP will function as a payroll-deduction Roth IRA program. Most recently, Act 113 (SLH 2025), amended the HRSP to automatically enroll covered employees into the Program.

The program is administered by the Hawai‘i Retirement Savings Board (Board), in consultation with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and Department of Budget and Finance.

The Board is co-chaired by B&F Director and DLIR Deputy Director William “Bill” Kunstman, members include Jessie “Keola” Dean, Barbara Krieg, Andrew Nomura, Brian Taniguchi, a member of the State Senate, and Representative Jackson Sayama.

The primary goals and objectives of the HRSP are to:

- (1) Increase Retirement Savings Coverage: Ensure that all private-sector employees in Hawai‘i have access to a retirement savings plan,

thereby increasing the overall retirement savings coverage in the state.

- (2) Promote Financial Security: Help employees build financial security for their retirement years by providing a convenient and accessible way to save for retirement.
- (3) Facilitate Employer Participation: Encourage employers to facilitate employee participation in the program by providing necessary support and resources.
- (4) Ensure Program Sustainability: Maintain the sustainability of the program through effective management and oversight, ensuring that it remains a viable option for future generations.
- (5) Enhance Public Awareness: Increase public awareness about the importance of retirement savings and the benefits of participating in the HRSP through targeted outreach and education efforts.

In 2025, the Board chose to enter an interstate partnership which would significantly benefit the program by reducing the time and labor required to implement the program and costs are anticipated to be significantly less. Most importantly, this structure allows the program to maintain a certain level of autonomy while benefiting from shared resources and streamlined processes.

More information about the program and board is available at:

<https://labor.hawaii.gov/hrsp>

# Hoisting Machine Operators' Advisory Board



The Hawai‘i Hoisting Machine Operators' Advisory Board is charged with establishing minimum standards to assure construction tower and mobile crane operators across the islands operate hoisting machines in a safe and lawful manner on behalf of the citizens of our State. Sixteen other states and six municipalities have similar requirements.

To be eligible, each operator (whether an independent contractor, a state government worker, or private company hire) must be certified by an ANSI Accredited Program, such as NCCCO, and pass criminal, medical, and practice training requirements to legally work in construction in Hawai‘i. All hoisting operators must be at least 21 years of age and need certification if they work with machinery having a lifting capacity of one ton or more. Certification ensures a minimum competency level of operators; assures employers that potential employees comply with relevant State and federal

standards; and provides safeguards for the public that hoisting operators use best available practices.

More information about the program and board is available at:

<https://hmoab.hawaii.gov/>

# Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board



## Overview

The Labor & Industrial Relations Appeals Board (LIRAB) is a quasi-judicial agency that is attached to the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR) for administrative and budgetary purposes only. LIRAB adjudicates appeals from decisions rendered by the Director of Labor & Industrial Relations (Director) via the Disability Compensation Division relating to workers' compensation matters (Chapter 386, Hawaii Revised Statutes) and decisions rendered by the Director relating to the Boiler and Elevator Safety Law (Chapter 397, Hawaii Revised Statutes). Proceedings before LIRAB are subject to Chapter 91 of the Hawaii Administrative Procedures Act and other applicable administrative rules and laws.

## Program Objective

LIRAB's program objective is to provide prompt, just, and efficient adjudication of appeals from decisions of the Director of Labor & Industrial Relations relating to Workers' Compensation and Boiler and Elevator Safety.

## LIRAB Members

LIRAB comprises three Board Members, one of whom is the Chairperson, who are appointed by the Governor of the State of Hawaii and confirmed by the Hawaii State Senate. The Chairperson is required by law to be an attorney licensed to practice in all of the courts of this State.

## LIRAB Staff

For FY 2025, the three-member Board was supported by a staff of 7: Executive Officer, Hearings Officer, two Staff Attorneys, Paralegal, Chief Clerk, and Secretary.

## LIRAB Activities for FY 2025

Workers' Compensation Cases	
New LIRAB appeals received in FY 2025	141
Cases disposed of or closed by settlement, dismissal, Decision & Order, or other means in FY 2025	175
Cases pending as of June 30, 2025	259
Pre-hearing conferences (initial conferences, settlement conferences, and status conferences) held in FY 2025	167
Motions/Orders to Show Cause /Oral Arguments heard in FY 2025	101
Trials held in FY 2025	116
Percentage of appeals resolved within 15 months of receipt in FY 2025	49.4%
Decisions & Orders issued	77
Number of cases awaiting written decision and order in FY 2025	164
Number of settlement documents reviewed and approved in FY 2025	54
Number of Attorney's Fees Orders issued in FY 2025	65
Boiler & Elevator Safety Cases	
Cases pending as of June 2025	0
New appeals filed during FY 2025	0

## LIRAB Accomplishments and Challenges for FY 2025

- In FY 2025, the LIRAB continued to face the challenge of filling its vacant positions, including the positions of Chief Clerk, Researcher, and Office Assistant. The vacancy of Chief Clerk was filled at the end of the second quarter of the FY 2025.
- The LIRAB continues to face challenges

with increased number of appeals involving self-represented litigants and those with limited English proficiency (LEP) who require language interpreters. Such increases resulted in a greater amount of time expended by the LIRAB staff to accommodate the needs, inquiries, and requests of these injured employees.

- The LIRAB continues to face the challenge of addressing the pandemic-related backlog as well as the backlog of cases and delays associated with the testing and implementation of the DLIR-DCD's modernization project, including the roll-out of its portal giving parties 24/7 access to their Workers' Compensation records.
- In light of these challenges, however, for a second straight year, the LIRAB continues to timely process all orders relating to requests for approval of attorney's fees and settlement documents; no backlog exists with respect to the Board's review and processing of fee requests and settlement documents.
- In FY 2025, the LIRAB doubled its output of Decisions and Orders when compared to FY 2024.
- In FY 2025, in cases where settlement conferences were requested by the parties, LIRAB held 20 conferences, and a majority of these cases resolved through negotiated settlements. The LIRAB's change from a mandated, 45-minute settlement conference to a voluntary conference involving a minimum of 3 hours of discussion and negotiations is much more successful in reaching resolution, in many cases, of not only the appeals issues in question but also all other issues involved in the workers' compensation case.
- The LIRAB faced the challenge in FY 2025 and will continue to face the challenge of the increased time required to prepare not only its Decisions and Orders but also all other orders arising during the proceedings before it, in an effort to comply with the directives of the Hawaii appellate courts. In recent appellate decisions, the appellate courts have insisted that the Board include

more thorough and detailed findings of fact, legal analyses, and conclusions of law, enabling the Board's determinations to be "traceable." These increased demands have necessarily resulted in a significant increase in the time it takes to issue any order, including but not limited to, hearing and non-hearing motion orders, attorney's fees orders, and Decisions and Orders.

- Beginning in September of 2024, the LIRAB returned to in-person trials at the LIRAB office while continuing to address the health and safety considerations of its staff and stakeholders by using its retrofitted hearings room with "sneeze-guard" partitions. For the convenience of its non-Oahu (i.e., Neighbor Island) participants and stakeholders, the LIRAB continues to maintain telephonic and videoconferencing appearances.
- Consistent with the preference of its stakeholders who routinely appear before the LIRAB, the LIRAB utilized telephonic and videoconferencing appearances for purposes of conferences and motion hearings, while also accommodating those participants who wanted to appear for these events, in-person, at the LIRAB office, by providing for "hybrid" hearings and conferences (where the participants may appear either remotely or in-person).
- The LIRAB continues to accommodate the electronic filing of documents.
- LIRAB continues to assist with the DLIR-Disability Compensation Division on a multi-phase modernization project to digitally transform the Workers' Compensation system from a paper-based system to an electronic one. The implementation to electronic based filing and operations will have a positive impact on injured workers, employers, and insurance carriers when claims and appeals of benefit awards can be processed more efficiently and when the parties have 24/7 access to their Workers' Compensation records.

# Office of Community Services



Staff of the Office of Community Services, December 2025

The Office of Community Services (OCS) was established by Act 305 of the 1985 Hawai'i State Legislature to consolidate the functions of several anti-poverty agencies that administered state and federal funds. Act 305 was codified as Chapter 371K in the Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS). OCS fulfills this mandate by administering many state and federal grants for programs that include assisting low-income individuals and families, refugees, and immigrants so they can live healthier lives and achieve greater economic self-sufficiency. OCS is administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

OCS has become a model in grant administration in the State of Hawai'i. OCS continually seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in the administration of state and federal grants using sound fiscal management, maximizing utilization of grant funds, monitoring funds through on-site reviews, and improving overall contract performance.



OCS administers many Grants-in-Aid (GIA) awards under HRS Chapter 42F appropriated by the Hawai'i State Legislature to non-profit agencies. OCS continues to administer Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

GIAs. In FY 2025, OCS managed a portfolio of eighty-nine (89) GIAs totaling over \$22.2 million, with \$20 million for Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) and \$2.2 million for operating expenses. Of the twenty (20) operating GIAs, eighteen (18) were successfully contracted by the encumbrance deadline of June 30, 2025. Of the sixty-nine (69) CIP GIAs, eighteen (18) were either appropriately transferred to other agencies, or closed, while the remaining fifty-one (51) were either contracted or pending contract execution. In the 2025 legislative session, when FY 2026 (i.e., the July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 period) budget was finalized, OCS was designated to administer seventy-two (72) GIAs totaling over \$21.9 million. OCS anticipates that fifteen (15) of the sixteen (16) operating GIAs will be contracted by the end of FY 2026. The contract execution date of the remaining GIAs, which are CIPs, will vary.

In addition to GIAs, OCS is also responsible for the following programs.



The **Employment Core Services Program** helps Hawaii's low-income individuals and legal immigrants to gain employment skills, find and retain jobs, and receive basic vocational training. The total appropriation in FY 2025 was \$1.3 million. Starting in late 2023, a portion of the appropriation was set aside for Maui wildfire victims. In FY 2025, three-hundred fifty-nine (359) people completed job-readiness training, and one-hundred sixty-two (162) of them went on to obtain employment. The program provided financial assistance for vocational training for sixty (60) of

these participants. This is a truly life-changing program for many of these people, who often come to the program after long periods of unemployment and with difficult barriers to employment, such as single moms and former inmates attempting to return to the workforce.

# IMMIGRANT WELCOME & RESOURCE CENTER

The Immigrants Resource Center Program provides funding to agencies statewide to serve as Immigrant Service Centers to improve access to government services for low-income legal immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community. During FY 2025, the State allocated \$1,090,000 to five Immigrants Resource Centers providing services in Hawaii County, Maui County, and Kauai County, with two centers providing services in the City and County of Honolulu. Overseeing this program is the newly formed Immigration Services and Access Unit whose purpose is to promote immigrant economic sufficiency, community inclusion, and integration.



The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program supports Hawai'i's four community Action Agencies (Honolulu Community Action Program, Inc., Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council, Maui Economic Opportunity,

Inc., and Kauai Economic Opportunity, Inc.) with federal funding to assist in providing an array of services to address community needs such as job training and placement, Head Start, housing assistance, transportation services, food assistance, shelter assistance, and financial literacy. The FY 2025 grant award was \$4,021,915. During times of disaster, CSBG funds can be utilized to create programs to assist those affected by disaster.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides shelf-stable and frozen foods to supplement the diets of low-income individuals at no cost. TEFAP is by far our largest food program serving an estimated monthly average of 98,956 people through funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) branch. The FY 2025 grant award included \$264,313 in administrative funding.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides one box per month of pre-selected canned and packaged foods to 3,178 low-income seniors through the USDA's FNS branch. A typical box contains a cross-section of foods, including canned fruits and vegetables; dry goods such as flour, rice, pasta, and cereal; canned meat, poultry and fish; plant-based protein such as beans and peanut butter; cheese; and beverages such as fruit juices and milk. The FY 2025 grant award was \$328,239. In FY 2025, CSFP also received Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds of \$158,670 to supplement monthly food boxes that were impacted by delays in the delivery of USDA foods.



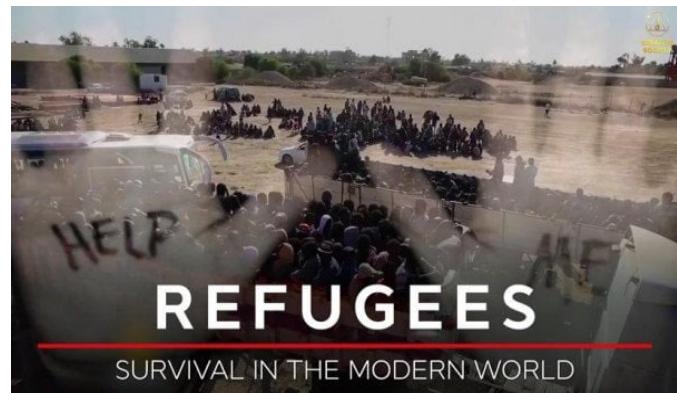
The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provided \$50 in food coupons in FY 2025 to each of about 7,500 Hawaii seniors aged 60 and older. The seniors used these coupons to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables from participating farmers and farmers' markets in this extremely popular program. The grant award from the USDA for the 2025 program year was approximately \$420,000, a reduction of \$15,000.

**The Legal Advocacy, Outreach, and Referral Services to Protect the Rights of Children and Their Families** are two programs that collectively serve approximately 2,000 children under this grant funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It provides legal services to children in low-income households to address a myriad of issues ranging from family violence, abuse, and neglect, to child support and access to education and social-net services. The FY 2025 grant awards were \$132,000 and \$150,000.



The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) provides funding from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for energy conservation education and the installation of weatherization measures: solar water heaters, hybrid heat pumps, energy-efficient refrigerators, air conditioner replacements, compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) or light emitting diodes (LEDs), advanced power strips, and low-flow faucet aerators and shower heads. The state FY

2025 grant award is \$353,403. DOE also provided WAP Readiness Funds to assist in addressing necessary repairs (e.g., Health and Safety issues, structural) in dwellings that are receiving weatherization services, or dwellings that are currently in the queue to be weathered, but at risk of deferral. In state FY 2025, Hawaii's WAP award includes \$74,582 in WAP Readiness Funds.



The Refugee and Entrant Assistance Program provides refugees and asylees with two types of services under this formula grant from DHHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR): (1) Social services for employment and other social services for up to five (5) years after arrival into the U.S. or granting of status; and (2) Cash and medical assistance for up to four (4) months from arrival into the U.S. or granting of status. In 2025, ORR allocated additional base funds in the amounts of \$67,500 and \$8,400. ORR also extended the obligation of FY 2023 and FY2024 funds to FY 2025 resulting in \$829,218 and \$171,724 in funding available.

# Workforce Development Council



The Workforce Development Council (WDC) is an advisory council composed of both public and private-sector representatives, who assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the 4-year State plan and review statewide policies, programs, and recommendation on actions that must be taken to align workforce development programs. The WIOA Unified State Plan for Hawai'i (2024 – 2027), was approved by the U.S. DOL in Spring of 2024. There is a Modification Plan that is now being worked on and is set to be submitted to the US Department of Labor by March 2026. The WDC meets quarterly and is comprised of the following subcommittees: The Employer Engagement Committee, The Military and Veteran Affairs Committee, Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Committee, Youth Services Committee, Performance Measures and Financial Accountability Committee, Special Projects Committee, and the Executive Committee.



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