

Department of Human Services
Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC)
Minutes of the Meeting

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2015
Time: 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Place: Queen Liliuokalani Building, 2nd Floor
DHS Conference Rooms 1 & 2
1390 Miller Street, Honolulu, HI 96813

Present:

Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT): Luis Salaveria, Director

Department of Human Services (DHS): Rachael Wong, Director, Pankaj Bhanot, Deputy Director, R. Malia Taum-Deenik, Project Specialist, Director's office, Scott Nakasone, Acting Administrator, Benefits, Employment & Support Services Division (BESSD), Patricia Quiacusan, Program Administrator, Financial Assistance Programs (BESSD), Catherine Scardino, Employment & Training Program Office (BESSD), Cheryl Chang, Program Specialist (BESSD)

Hawaii Public Housing Authority: Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director

State Commission on the State of Women: Catherine Betts, Executive Director

University of Hawaii: Teresa Bill, System Coordinator, Bridge To Hope, Colin Moore, Assistant Professor, Political Science, for Susan Chandler, Ph.D., Director, Public Administration Program and Public Policy Center, Hua Zan, for Marianne Berry, Ph.D., Director, UH Center on the Family

City & County of Honolulu: Rolanse Crisafulli, Administrator, Work Hawaii/Oahu Work Links

Catholic Charities Hawaii: Rona Fukumoto, Director, Information, Intake & Referral

Goodwill Industries of Hawaii: Katherine Keir for Laura Smith, President/Chief Executive Officer

Hawaii Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED): Keoki Noji, for Brent Kakesako, Executive Director; Paige Allen, staff

Hawaii Disability Rights Center, Louis Erteschik, Executive Director

Hawaii Habitat for Humanity Association, George Massengale for Jean Lilley, Executive Director

Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, Connie Liu, Staff Attorney, for M. Nalani Fujimori-Kaina, Executive Director

Mental Health America of Hawaii: Marya Grambs, Executive Director

I. Call to Order/Introductions:

Director Wong called the meeting to order at 9:35. Those present introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes from previous meeting – September 23, 2014

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2014 meeting was carried.

III. Purpose of FAAC:

Director Wong provided an overview of section 346-14.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which established the FAAC. Director thanked the members for serving on the council and invited the group to share in the Department's work to repair the prosperity grid, and bridge and improve access to community resources and services to improve community health.

IV. Legislative/Budget Update for 2015 Session

Director Wong summarized two measures from the 2015 session that had positive impact on the General Assistance (GA) program. The legislature passed SB1107/Act 14, DHS' request for an Emergency Appropriation (EA) to support the GA program through the end of state fiscal year 2015. Passage of the EA avoided a reduction or suspension of GA benefits in the 4th quarter.

Representative Jo Jordan was a primary sponsor of HB1432/Act 196 that established the Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR) Special Fund. The IAR Special Fund will receive funds from the Social Security Administration (SSA) in reimbursement for state funded financial disability benefits paid to individuals pending application to the SSA for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits. Establishment of the IAR Special Fund improves government efficiencies as the fund will stabilize the GA program generally in the 4th quarter as GA block grant funds are diminished and caseloads fluctuate. Consequently, the IAR Special Fund eliminates the need for future requests for emergency appropriations.

V. Program Updates

A. Business Process Reengineering

1. Access and timeliness bonuses

Deputy Director Bhanot described that following the 2009 economic downturn, DHS faced timeliness issues with its SNAP program, dipping to a low of 66% statewide in 2010. With the oversight of the U.S. District Court, DHS/BESSD carried a huge burden to improve timeliness rates within a year. Additionally, as part of the Court's decree, the Court required the DHS to maintain at least a 95% timeliness rate until August 2013; and 96% until September 2014. The DHS successfully maintained an average of 97.6% timeliness in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015. To accomplish this feat, BESSD first reengineered the manual processes, created the work flow, and slowly introduced technology into the process. The experience has had a positive outcome for clients and staff, and access to benefits has skyrocketed.

The federal government recognized Hawaii's program improvement and awarded DHS with bonuses of nearly \$2 million for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, for the most improved access to the SNAP benefits; and recently announced a \$660,422 for being among the six (6) States with the highest percentage of timely processed SNAP applications in FFY 2014. The federal bonuses will be reinvested to sustain the business process re-engineer gains and to make further program improvements. Federal representatives will present the award to the Governor later in the month.

2. Future improvements

DHS envisions future improvements through use of technology. The DHS Enterprise Platform is being developed to build BESSD programs on to the on-line system already utilized by Med-QUEST division through KOLEA. In the future, BESSD programs will have its own on-line access and information will be integrated across programs.

Director Wong reported that at the start of her tenure at DHS, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) informed her that it had high confidence in KOLEA. In addition, Hawaii was one of 2 states, the other being Idaho, which incorporated all components of the Medicaid program into its new Medicaid system. DHS developed KOLEA in 9 months to comply with requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

The DHS Enterprise Platform will improve efficiencies of government and is a real investment in the community's access to services and overall well-being.

DHS will continue to work with the community to problem solve as new applications are added to the DHS Enterprise Platform.

VI. New Business

A. Two-Generation (multi-generation) Approach:

Director Wong described the working partnership with Director Virginia Pressler, Department of Health, to use a multigenerational approach to working with families. Director Wong noted the larger framework grounding the Department's work is the Aspen Institute's "Two Generation Approach" or "2Gen." Director Wong has permission from the Aspen Institute to adapt the 2Gen Approach to meet Hawaii's multigenerational community. She will invite groups of former foster youth to name the program.

B. Proposed Legislative and Budget Package (BESSED) for 2016

Director Wong briefly described the executive budget process which began at the end of the summer and will be completed in December.

Director Salaveria, appreciated attending the FAAC meeting and seeing representatives from HACBED in attendance. He noted that the DBEDT is focused on job creation in rural areas and is developing micro loan programs, grants and technical assistance. DBEDT is interested in learning what kind of jobs to create in communities that will lead to higher levels of prosperity. DBEDT looks forward to collaborating with DHS to create jobs at every level as the State transitions to an "innovation economy."

Deputy Director Bhanot noted that BESSD's programs are focused on self-sufficiency of families, job placement, vocational training and development of paths to higher education. Based on "Career Pathways," a framework that the Federal government is promoting for program development that provides an organized series of steps and supports for individuals to access education to higher paying employment.

Director Salaveria expressed interest in providing technical assistance to assist with program development for TANF families and to partner with Public Housing.

HPHA Executive Director Hakim Ouansafi thanked BESSD for its improvements in providing timely and concrete financial assistance to applicants as those benefits really effect the most vulnerable people.

Director Wong noted that the Governor values the work of the group so all children can thrive; his style is to convene people and ask who else should be at the table. Director Wong acknowledges that the process may take more time, effort and energy.

Scott Nakasone, Acting Administrator BESSD, described the division's current budget and bill proposals to: 1) have the state align with changes to the Child Care Development Block Grant; and 2) request a budget increase of A+ fees due to a planned DOE fee increase as a result of the changes to the minimum wage. BESSD provides A+ fees for eligible children of TANF/TAONF families.

Regarding the GA program, BESSD currently contracts with Cyrca for medical evaluations; the contract is 80% state general funds, and the item needs to be re-characterized in the budget so contract expenditures are covered.

HPHA is proposing to remove the cap on hiring of tenants to do maintenance work. HPHA is requesting additional funds to address the housing crisis. To address the backlog in repairs, HPHA Director estimates it would take over \$800 million to fix vacant units and increase the inventory. HPHA's positions are 99% federally funded so it will not be seeking positions.

VII. Other Business

Catherine Betts, Executive Director of the Commission on the Status of Women, reported support of the Commission for: 1) revisions to the pay equity statute, as it is currently drafted there has never been a successful claim; 2) addressing the pay gap differences between genders for the same work to require "a bona fide" factor to justify the pay difference; and 3) paid family leave bill, so 100% will be covered by a tax paid into a fund to be used for partial wage reimbursement.

Marya Grambs, Executive Director of Mental Health America of Hawaii, raised the question of establishing "sick leave" as "sick leave" is not a mandatory employment benefit. She also announced her pending retirement.

Director Wong reported that Scott Morishige, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness has a job posting. Scott leads the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness which is now attended by the executive branch Directors. The Governor has made homelessness a priority and includes the whole executive cabinet and county governments to address the solutions to Hawaii's homelessness crisis.

VIII. Announcements

Catherine Scardino, Employment & Training Program Office, announced that BESSD is working with Leeward Community College to create a new work program for SNAP/TANF to emphasize education. Ms. Scardino noted that 20-40% of TANF households are employed, however, individuals predominately have minimum wage jobs. The new work program will include an education program specialist to link individuals to non-credited course work, mentorship, job coaching, and eventual employment placement. BESSD is conducting online surveys to identify client interests and challenges.

Lou Erteschik, Executive Director, Hawaii Disability Rights Center, noted that the Council may be able to support the Department's budget bills and legislative proposals.

IX. Next Meeting

Director Wong noted the council will be reconvened after the 2016 Legislative session.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47.

DRAFT