



**State of
Hawai'i
Department
of Human
Services**

2018

Annual

Report



**OUR MISSION IS
TO ENCOURAGE
SELF-SUFFICIENCY
AND SUPPORT THE
WELL-BEING OF
INDIVIDUALS,
FAMILIES, AND
COMMUNITIES
IN HAWAII**

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN SERVICES

Aloha in Transformation

Hawai'i is unique for the care of its residents embedded in our state constitution. Article IX, section 3 mandates the provision of financial assistance, medical assistance, and social services. And it is also seen in the "Aloha Spirit" statute (section 5-7.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes) that requires government officials to fulfill their duties with the aloha spirit. During my first two years as the Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS), together these provisions have become our north star as we transform our department into one that better serves our residents, families, and communities.

Perhaps nothing in 2018 exemplifies our team's commitment to selfless service more than our response to the emergency management needs during the various severe weather events this year. From flooding on O'ahu and Kaua'i in April, to destruction caused by the most recent Kilauea eruption, to the chaos Hurricane Lane wreaked on Hawai'i Island and Maui, DHS staff were there. We worked collaboratively internally and externally to assess damage, support statewide emergency management functions, and make sure residents had access to much-needed benefits and services. This example of our staff assisting throughout emergency situations and maintaining normal operations is the kind of dedication we bring to residents in need every day.

In line with this aloha spirit, we are working to change DHS into a 21st century integrated delivery system that serves clients more efficiently and effectively in a holistic way. We have spent much of 2018 building on the work of 2017 creating a foundation from

which we will achieve this transformation.

We continue to invest in expanding our IT enterprise platform to improve client experiences when applying for benefits. We have also moved forward with 'Ohana Nui, our multi-generational approach, with micro-adaptations that serve as proofs of concept. We have also identified policy and process improvements to support implementation and improve government efficiency and transparency. Both of these initiatives are supported by our first-ever DHS strategic plan.

As one of the few executive department directors to have emerged through the state's civil service system, my staff and I recognize that we must invest in our human services workforce to sustain this transformation. We are working collaboratively with staff from the Department of Human Resources Development to redesign our hiring processes and rethink how we can liberate talent throughout DHS. Better support of our workforce will result in more positive outcomes for the residents we serve and a healthier and more nurturing community.

DHS leadership and staff are committed to fulfill its mission and responsibilities in collaboration with others and with aloha. Individually and collectively we work to meet our mission to encourage self-sufficiency and support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i.

We have accomplished a lot this past year, and we acknowledge we have more work to do to become the department that we want to be. Above all, we are committed to improve Hawai'i's human services delivery system so our residents thrive.

"We have accomplished a lot this past year, and we acknowledge we have more work to do to become the department that we want to be."



Pankaj Bhanot
DIRECTOR,
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SERVICES

Pankaj Bhanot



The Department of Human Services provides important benefits and services that serve as building blocks for individuals and families in need to achieve self-sufficiency and success on their own terms. Our team is made up of more than 2,400 employees across the islands. We provide these benefits and services with one of the largest state department budgets of \$3.6 billion, which includes the majority of the state government’s federal monies.

Did you know?



We serve 1 in 4 of Hawai'i's residents

40%

More than 40% of kids are covered by Medicaid

4 Divisions

Residents are primarily served through our four divisions:

- Med-QUEST Division
- Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division
- Social Services Division
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

These divisions deliver the core benefits and services to residents in need. Their work includes connecting individuals with food and financial support, providing employment and job readiness supports, improving access to quality healthcare, protecting vulnerable adults and Hawai'i's keiki, and providing services and supports to individuals with disabilities to succeed as members of the workforce.

2 Agencies & 2 Commissions

There are also two attached agencies and two attached commissions that are part of DHS:

- Hawai'i Public Housing Authority
- Office of Youth Services
- Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women
- Commission on Fatherhood

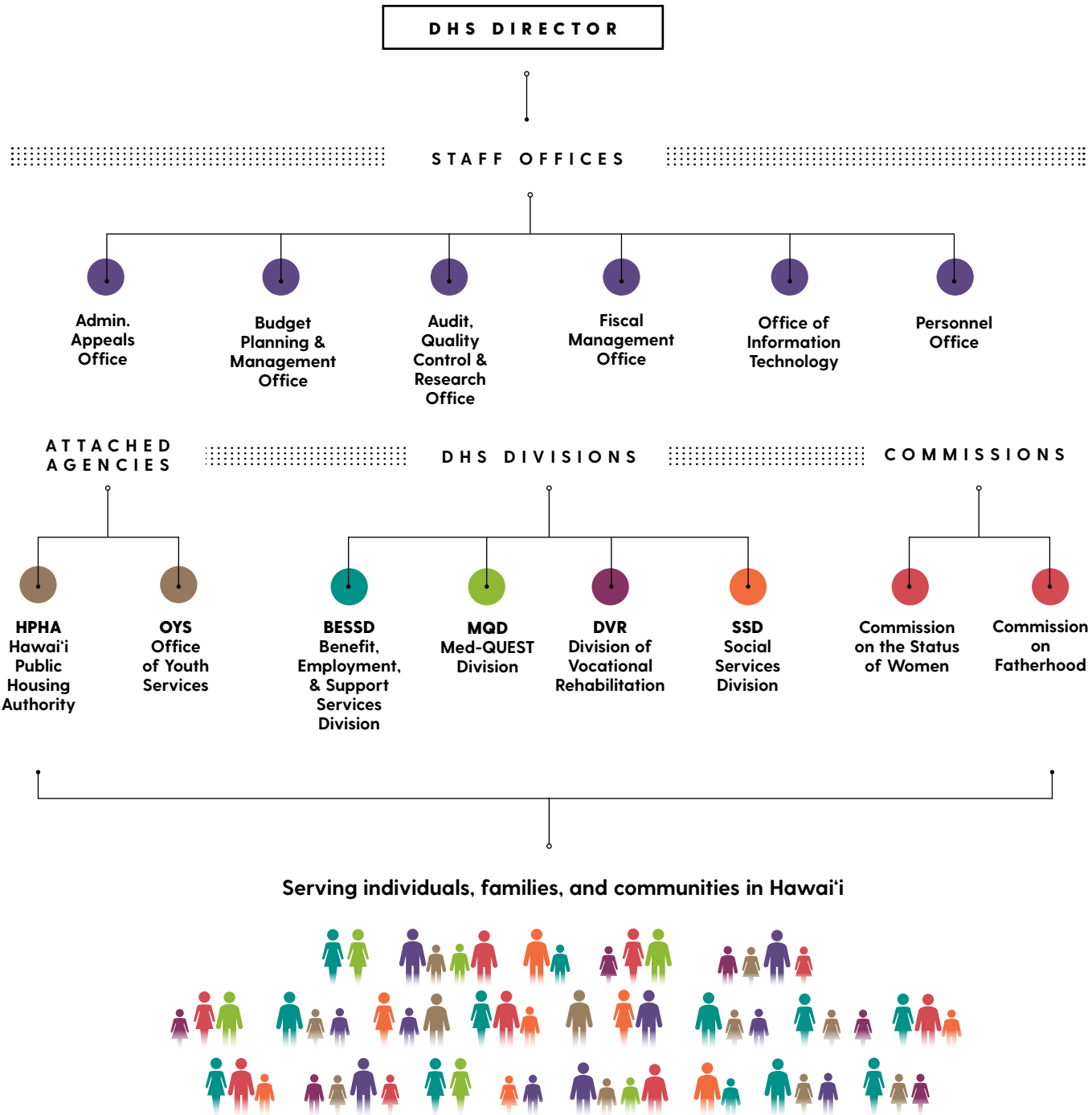
6 Staff Offices

The above divisions, agencies, and commissions are supported by six staff offices:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Personnel Office | • Budget, Planning & Management Office |
| • Audit, Quality Control & Research Office | • Office of Information Technology |
| • Fiscal Management Office | • Administrative Appeals Office |

These staff offices provide essential administrative services so the department can run smoothly and our infrastructure is maintained and secured.

DHS Organization Chart





At the Department of Human Services (DHS), we have a vision for the future. We believe that all Hawai'i residents can and will thrive. We strive to reach this vision by fulfilling our mission to encourage self-sufficiency and support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i. We are guided in all of our work by our core values:



T.H.R.I.V.E.

- T****eam-Oriented**
We acknowledge that internal and external partnerships are critical to the success of DHS.
- H****uman-Centered**
We develop strategies and make improvements as necessary from the client's perspective.
- R****espect**
We recognize the inherent value of each person as well as the diverse cultures of Hawai'i.
- I****ntentional**
We are mindful of our decisions and actions in our collective work.
- V****isionary**
We strive to support our clients by co-creating generative, forward-looking strategies.
- E****vidence-Based**
We make decisions that are based on data and take actions that we know will have sustainable outcomes.

The DHS 'ohana works together daily to serve Hawai'i's residents who are most in need. Our programs and benefits support our communities, contribute to our local economy, and establish us as national leaders in human services. We are proud to help Governor Ige achieve his goal to change the trajectory of Hawai'i one client and one family at a time.

Over the last year, in addition to our daily commitment to serving 1 in 4 residents, which includes more than 40% of Hawai'i's kids, we have focused on modernizing our department. We look to transform DHS into a modern integrated human services delivery system by:

- (1) Modernizing** the DHS IT infrastructure,
- (2) Implementing** our multi-generational 'Ohana Nui framework to end intergenerational poverty through integrated services that will improve individual, family, and community well-being, and
- (3) Developing and implementing** the first department strategic plan and establishing departmental performance measures.

In 2019 and beyond, we look to continue this work. We have procured and will begin development and design of the Benefits, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD) phase of the DHS Integrated Enterprise Solution. The development and design will build on the existing KOLEA Medicaid application and eligibility determination system to create a unified application process to support BESSD programs and benefits like food (SNAP) and financial assistance (TANF, General Assistance, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program). The third phase of the DHS Enterprise System will be for Child Welfare Services. More information about our Integrated Enterprise Solution is available on page 12.

We will continue to carry out and evolve both the 'Ohana Nui framework and the DHS strategic plan. In redesigning our business processes we use a multi-generational approach and lens to identify and develop integrated services that will improve individual, family, and community well-being. We will also continue to work toward achieving our three main department strategic goals:

- (1) Improve self-sufficiency and well-being of Hawai'i's individuals**
- (2) Improve services integration and delivery to develop solutions for sustainable outcomes**
- (3) Improve staff health and development**

In the next few years, we will continue to modernize the department to be more responsive and improve government services to see a Hawai'i where all residents have easy access to basic human necessities and opportunities to thrive. We will spend 2019 continuing to build upon the foundation to achieve this transformation and, in turn, better serve Hawai'i's residents and families.

2018 DHS
INCENTIVE
& SERVICE
AWARD
WINNERS

TEAM
OF THE
YEAR

Transformation through Collaboration

A new pilot project shows how innovative hiring processes can translate to success for DHS, our staff, and our families



If you read the Star Advertiser or watched the nightly news during Spring and early Summer 2018, you may have heard calls from legislators, journalists, community members and even our own staff for changes in the Department of Human Services Child Welfare Services Branch (CWS).

Caseloads were too high. Children were put in unsafe situations. Families needed better service. The Department of Human Service was failing in its vision to see Hawai'i's families thrive.

Yet, out of this flashpoint came an innovative solution: Wikiwiki Hire.

We heard from various internal and external stakeholders that we could improve outcomes by alleviating heavy caseloads and providing additional support. These efforts would allow workers to spend more quality time with clients and focus more on serving children and families rather than on administrative tasks.

As a solution to what seemed an insurmountable problem, the DHS Human Resources Office and Department of Human Resource Development (DHRD) came together with an idea to support CWS and fill vacancies more quickly than usual. They would streamline the application process, significantly reduce the amount of time it takes for applicants to move through the hiring process and give greater autonomy to local CWS offices to hire the talent they need. This proposed pilot project aimed to improve recruitment, which could also translate to reduced caseloads. In the end, these measures could mean children and families CWS work with would benefit most.

DHS and DHRD launched what is now called Wikiwiki Hire in June 2018. This pilot program applied to specific CWS positions. With Wikiwiki Hire, a micro-adaptation, DHS and DHRD wanted to see if they could indeed expedite and improve the hiring process of positions that were historically difficult to fill and retain.

Initial results have been extremely promising. Since the start of the pilot, DHS has slashed application processing times from 21 weeks (nearly 6 months) to 7 weeks. Additionally, we have filled 20 professional and para-professional positions in the three months since we began.

Since the start of the pilot, our DHS have slashed application processing times from 21 weeks (nearly 6 months) to 7 weeks. Additionally, we have filled 20 professional and para-professional positions in the three months since we began.

Beyond the tangible results of quicker processing and more positions filled, Wikiwiki Hire has also translated to other successes. The Wikiwiki Hire team also engaged the Hawai'i Government Employees Association (HGEA), knowing union support was important for the success of this pilot. The team also identified CWS staff who could carry the pilot through completion, empowering them to promote the program, interview applicants, and represent this new way of recruiting.

The team responsible for Wikiwiki Hire has also laid a foundation for the pilot to have broader and more permanent impacts. At every step, they have documented processes, procedures, practices, and responsibilities for all parties involved. This provides a blueprint for other DHS divisions and perhaps other departments to improve their own hiring practices.

On the surface, Wikiwiki Hire's success may appear to be strictly administrative – tearing down bureaucratic red tape. However, the program goes beyond rules and regulations. It demonstrates a commitment to DHS and DHRD expanding boundaries to do what's best for our staff and more importantly what will better serve Hawai'i's families. Time will tell exactly how successful the pilot will be, but for now it has succeeded in providing an important source of hope and a path forward for our department to see Hawai'i thrive. PAU

Photo on Left: Wikiwiki Hire Project team honored as DHS team of the year with DHS director and governor (left to right): Director Pankaj Bhanot, Jodie Choo, Brenna Hashimoto, Qiara Hatae, Malissa Oku, Donna Gusman, Alyson Roig, Ann Sueoka, Patti Taketa, Kalei Kam, Patti Miyamoto-Asato, Debbie Nishiyama, Governor David Ige. Missing: Cori Daido, Arleen Kamei, Shelley Perez, Kevin Uehara.



Moving DHS into the 21st Century

DHS continues its work to modernize application and eligibility processes through technology

In a world of smart phones and electronic applications, wouldn't it seem natural that all DHS programs had a single, electronic, web-accessible point of access by now? Unfortunately not.

Right now, if a family falls on hard times, they would need to go separately to one office for financial and food assistance and another to apply for Medicaid. If they were participating in family strengthening services through Child Welfare Services, they may need to add that office to the list of potential visits. These offices, sometimes in wholly separate buildings and towns (on some islands), may take all day to visit. To add to this inconvenience, sometimes our offices will ask for verifying documents such as a birth certificate or social

Imagine if this family could access their case information, maybe even apply for additional services, via an online portal. This portal would allow them to enter basic information only once and upload verification documents alleviating trips to DHS offices entirely.

security card. If the family does not have these readily available, they need to visit yet more offices to retrieve them, adding more time to complete their applications for services. Time is one of many luxuries a family in need cannot afford.

Imagine if this family could access their case information, maybe even apply for additional services, via an online portal. This portal would allow them to enter basic information only once and upload verification documents to a central online location alleviating trips to the DHS offices entirely. It would also allow them access to their benefit records any time of the day.

This future – one where we improve client access to and experience with DHS benefits and programs – will be realized with the DHS Integrated Enterprise Solution.

The Integrated Enterprise Solution (IES as it is currently referred to) began in 2013 with the build of the Kauhale On-Line Eligibility Application (KOLEA) system. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) drove KOLEA's development. The system took paper-based workflows in the Med-QUEST Division and transformed them into an online application tool that both our team and prospective clients can use to apply for Medicaid coverage.

In 2018, DHS continued its work to expand this platform to other divisions by procuring necessary services. BIAS, the platform vendor, assumed responsibility for making sure the hardware and software supporting KOLEA and future applications will run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We will also begin development and implementation for our Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD), which administers food and financial assistance like SNAP, TANF, and other benefits. DHS contracted with Unisys to complete this build. Once complete, an individual or family will be able to apply online for BESSD services, perform self-service to report changes, and view communications (like approval and renewal notifications). To ensure integration across the platform, Unisys is also assuming maintenance and operations for KOLEA. Public Consulting Group is now on board to provide independent verification and validation (IV&V) services to review and monitor the progress of the BESSD build-out.

By the close of 2021, we expect to have an integrated platform that will enable clients to apply online (as well as existing in-person, fax, and phone options) at one time for medical, financial and SNAP benefits, perform self-service such as reporting changes like address or income, and check on the status of their benefits online and on the phone. We look forward to a future where clients, staff, and applicants can be left to worry not about outdated systems and applications but rather about the important stuff – like taking care of families and matching people with the services they need. **PAU**





DHS connects affected residents with needed benefits like Medicaid and food and financial assistance. Staff from Med-QUEST and Benefit, Employment and Support Services Divisions worked in disaster recovery centers to provide access to medical coverage and food and financial assistance.

◀ Aerial view of erupting fissure 22 and lava channels flowing southward from the fissure during an early morning overflight.

tation were in the thick of these emergency situations, supporting the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) with their operations at the State Emergency Operations Center in Lē'ahi (Diamond Head) on O'ahu. A handful of other dedicated DHS workers also assisted federal, state, and local officials in conducting preliminary damage assessments on Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, and O'ahu which was a key step in getting federal aid in response to the various disasters.

In total, approximately 80 DHS team members provided an immeasurable number of hours over the course of calendar year 2018 to support emergency management operations. The dedication of our department – whether preparing in the sunniest of times or working through the worst of weather – to ensure residents affected by disasters are cared for demonstrates our commitment to seeing Hawai'i thrive. [PAU](#)



◀ DHS team members pitched in to help with damage assessments on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Hawai'i Island. Pictured here is damage seen on the north shore of Kaua'i after heavy rains wreaked havoc.



PHOTO COURTESY: USGS U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY/VOLCANO HELICOPTERS/
PHOTOS: KATHRYN MINEO

The state of Hawai'i experienced myriad emergency management situations in 2018. In April, the north shore of Kaua'i and southeast O'ahu were pummeled with some of the greatest rainfall recorded in a single 24-hour period in the U.S. These areas were devastated by landslides and flooding. Then, in early May, a new Kilauea eruption surfaced and leveled neighborhoods in the Puna district of Hawai'i Island. Then just a month after the Kilauea lava flow slowed, in August, Hurricane Lane wreaked havoc with torrential rains in East Hawai'i and wildfires in Lāhainā, Maui.

Most people's image of disaster relief probably involves hardworking volunteers and government employees rescuing residents stranded by storm wreckage, serving displaced individuals and families at shelters, or rendering aid to those harmed by a natural disaster. When the rain stops, the ground dries, or the lava slows – and even before it does sometimes – the Department of Human Services steps in to provide support to residents affected by disasters.

DHS, the lead state agency for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6, provides leadership, expertise, and resources to

support the implementation of disaster assistance programs. Specifically, DHS connects affected residents with needed benefits like Medicaid and food and financial assistance. Throughout the various disasters this year, staff from our Med-QUEST and Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Divisions worked in disaster recovery centers to provide access to medical coverage and food and financial assistance.

Additionally, before, during, and after a disaster, our teams check on DHS clients who are often among our state's most vulnerable populations. Child Welfare Services staff made contact with youth in our custody and Adult Protective and Community Services staff made contact with vulnerable adults ahead of and following each emergency situation to ensure their safety and well-being.

Still other members from these divisions as well as the Division of Vocational Rehabili-

Long After the Rain Stops

The Department of Human Services provides relief in times of emergencies, after all the dust has settled and residents must face their new realities

BESSD



Did You know:
In FY 2018, the
POD program
served **1,676 chil-**
dren with
\$10.5 million of
the budgeted \$11.6
million in state
funds.

Every month, the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division (BESSD) provides public assistance benefits to nearly 1 in 8 individuals throughout the state. These benefits provide for basic daily necessities for individuals – keiki to kūpuna – and families.

The more than 700 BESSD staff members, which includes a presence on every major island including Lānaʻi and Molokaʻi, provides this basic support to families in need through financial (cash) assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In support of these benefits, BESSD also provides an array of job-readiness trainings, educational and vocational trainings, job placement and

retention services, child care supports, services to the homeless and work-related supports. These benefits and supports combined aim to help clients achieve self-sufficiency. The mission of BESSD is to provide timely, efficient, and effective programs, services and benefits to empower those who are the most vulnerable in our state to expand their capacity for self-sufficiency, self-determination, independence, healthy choices, quality of life, and personal dignity. →

CORE SERVICES

Economic Stability & Self-Sufficiency

Food, financial, and child care assistance programs help eligible low-income individuals meet their basic needs and make progress toward economic independence through cash and food assistance, employment-focused services, and subsidized child care. Major programs include:



Cash Assistance:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- General Assistance (GA)
- Aid to Aged, Blind, and Disabled (AABD)



Food Assistance:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



Employment Services:

- First-to-Work (FTW) (TANF work program)
- SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) (SNAP work program)



Child Care

Tuition Assistance:

- Child Care Connection Hawaiʻi (CCCC)
- Preschool Open Doors (POD)



Energy and Utility Assistance:

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)

Accountability & Integrity

Investigations Office (INVO)

The objectives of the fraud investigations offices (INVO) are to ensure the following:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| (1)
Public assistance benefits are provided only to those that are eligible. | (2)
Benefits are used only in the manner that is allowable under all applicable federal and state laws. | (3)
Recovery and prosecution of fraudulent use is pursued. |
|--|---|--|

INVO has offices located on four islands to achieve these goals: Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi, Maui, and Kauaʻi.

Child Care Licensing (CCLU)

Child Care Licensing Units license and oversee specified regulated child care providers (e.g. infant and toddler centers, family child care homes). Their work aims to ensure that licensed and registered child care providers meet basic health and safety standards. This regulatory work aims to reassure families of the safety and well-being of their children while they are with regulated child care providers. Licensing units are located on four islands: Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi, Maui, and Kauaʻi.



Homelessness Intervention & Prevention

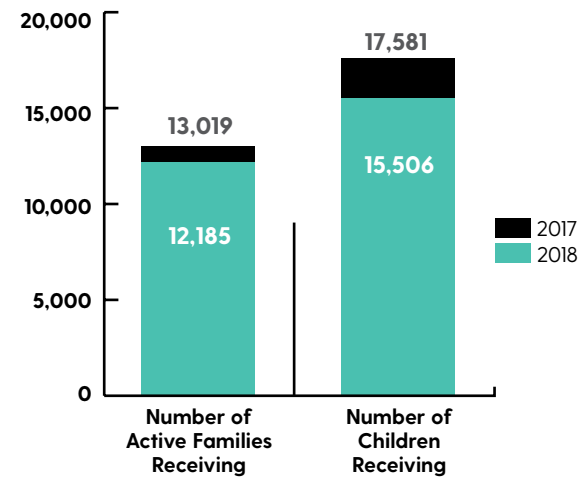
The BESSD Homeless Programs Office (HPO) provides programs and services for those that are homeless or are on the brink of being homeless. These supports aim to provide short- and long-term housing placements to stabilize each individual or family's housing situation while coordinating support services needed to address the root causes of homelessness and interfere with a person's ability to maintain stable housing placement.

MAJOR PROGRAM AND SERVICES INCLUDE

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • Homeless Outreach | • Emergency and Transitional Shelter Services |
| • Housing Placement | • Rapid Re-Housing |
| • State Housing Emergency Grants | • Housing First |

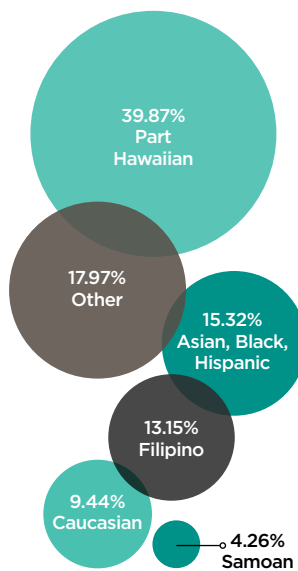
BESSD by the Numbers: Child Care

CHILD CARE PAYMENT

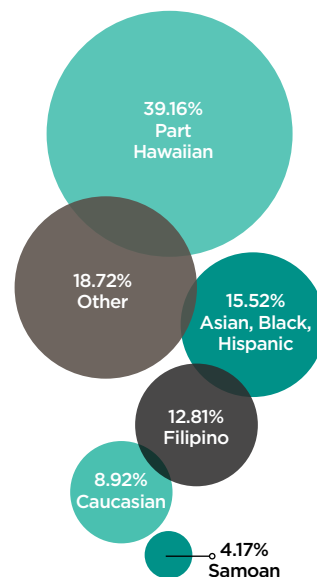


ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN RECEIVING CHILD CARE

FISCAL YEAR 2017



FISCAL YEAR 2018



Note: In FY 2017, the Department revised its methodology of analyzing the data, previously the ethnicity had been coded alphabetically, so children who are part Hawaiian were under-counted. The adjustment to the data analysis has been corrected for FY 2017 and going forward.

NUMBER OF REGULATED FACILITIES & CHILD CARE SLOTS

Facility Type	Fiscal Year 2017	Fiscal Year 2018
Number of registered Family Child Care Homes	461	426
Number of licensed Group Child Care Centers (includes Group Child Care Homes, Before and After School, and Infant/Toddler Centers)	635	622
Total Number Regulated Child Care Slots	36,070	35,548

FY 2019 (by June 30, 2019) performance targets for the Child Care Connection Hawai'i Program include:

468
Family child care homes licensed

640
Group care centers licensed

355
Additional child care slots available

Forward Movement

Team members at this fast-paced processing center help clients move forward together

On any given day, if you visit the Pohulani Processing Center, you may find a lobby full of applicants and clients in need of assistance.

Pohulani Processing Center serves a geographic area with a population of more than a quarter million people – the largest population area of any of Hawai'i's processing center. Clients and applicants face tremendous and often heart-breaking adversity, needing food, financial, child care, housing and other assistance. "It takes a special kind of person to be an employee at Pohulani Processing Center," says Christine Wong Assistant Statewide Branch Administrator and

former section administrator, overseeing the processing center.

Pohulani Processing Center is one of 20 statewide processing centers for the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division (BESSD). The processing center provides financial and food assistance for Hawai'i's individuals and families most in need.

When Pohulani is fully staffed, 51 team members serve one of the highest volume processing centers in the state. As can be expected this demanding work often results in high turnover and often leaves the processing center team down 15% or more of its positions. "The work environment is very fast-paced with constant changes, heavy workload, and not enough hours in the day to do all the work a supervisor expects workers to do," says Arthur Kelly, a Pohulani eligibility worker.

In addition to the high volume and difficult situations clients face, processing center employees must adapt to ever-changing federal and state policies. "People do not understand the number of policies that have to be applied to any given case. They don't understand how often policies and procedures change and how we have to adapt to that as workers," reflects Kelli Kilmartin, also a Pohulani eligibility worker.



Kelli Kilmartin (top) and Arthur Kelly (bottom) are just two of the hard-working staff that keep Pohulani Processing Center serving clients. The processing center serves the largest geographic and demographic area in the state.

Despite a widely accepted notion that Pohulani is a tough place to work, many team members have been with the processing center for decades. So what keeps employees coming to work everyday? Time and time again, workers who stay dedicated to Pohulani say they stay for two things: the camaraderie among staff and the opportunity to make an impact in people's lives.

"There are strong bonds of camaraderie and friendship that have built over time," says Wong. "We don't always see the best sides of life, and it can get difficult. Our staff come to work day after day and help people to be able to move forward – even if it's only one step at a time. They do it because they want to help people."

"Our staff come to work day after day and help people to be able to move forward – even if it's only one step at a time. They do it because they want to help people."

And if you ask our eligibility workers, they'll say the same things. "The most rewarding part of my job is the completion of an applicant's initial eligibility interview and authorization for the benefit the family is applying for. Making a positive impact on their lives and the smile upon their faces is priceless," says Kelly.

Kilmartin adds to this commitment, "It is very rewarding to help those who are genuinely in need. Clients who are crying tears of joy because of their eligibility make the grind worthwhile. I appreciate the opportunity to make a legitimate difference in people's lives."

EMPLOYEE
SPOTLIGHT

Nadine Mahiai

Nadine Mahiai, who currently works as an office assistant at Pohulani Processing Center, did not just come up through the ranks of DHS BESSD employment. She first started with Pohulani as a client.

"I began volunteering with DHS because I am a recipient of the department, and I needed to fulfill twenty minimum work hours," recalls Mahiai.

Mahiai was enrolled in First-to-Work, a program that provides case management, employment, and support services to those receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, a federal program that the State of Hawai'i administers). First-to-Work (FTW)

requires those who are able to work complete at least twenty hours of service – paid or volunteer. This requirement and the supports that the program provide aim to help clients get back on their feet.

To support the goal of achieving self-sufficiency, FTW families are linked with child care assistance so that a parent can be sure their children are safe when they go to work. These particular supports helped Mahiai. "One wonderful thing about [the opportunity to work at Pohulani] is that, with the help of my FTW worker and Kama'aina Kids located

"If they can view themselves as a client, they would better understand situations, especially homeless situations."



in the building, I was able to complete my work requirements while bringing my young children with me. I did not have a babysitter and became a single parent at this time," says Mahiai.

Volunteering at DHS was a game-changer for Mahiai. "With the opportunity to volunteer at a DHS site, my eyes really opened up! DHS continues to amaze me in how we can go above and beyond to assist clients for not only what they are asking but also to provide additional resources to assist them further."

Mahiai's own experience of being a client remains a guiding light for her. She hopes this kind of perspective might guide other staff members in their work too. "If they can view themselves as a client, they would better understand situations, especially homeless situations." She believes this kind of empathy goes a long way to supporting clients and applicants with all the resources they need.

After all, for Mahiai, "assisting a client and hearing 'thank you' and 'I appreciate it,' that is the most rewarding part of my work." **PAU**



◀ Helping Hands staff help clients access our benefits. From left to right: Cheyona Lopez (Program Specialist), James Li (Outreach Specialist) and Brenda Dimaya (Outreach Specialist).

Access Is Everything

DHS works closely with service providers like Helping Hands Hawai'i so more people can access our important benefits and services.

The work we do at the Department of Human Services (DHS) – connecting Hawai'i's people in need with the resources and assistance that will help get them back on their feet – is only possible because of our community partners.

Helping Hands Hawai'i is one of our invaluable partners in getting SNAP (formerly called food stamps) information to people who may not have otherwise known about the program. They are our community connectors – outreaching to potential clients with information about SNAP and how it can help them.

“Many SNAP recipients receive multiple services, such as financial medical, housing, Social Security,” says Sandra Leong Program Specialist with the SNAP program in the DHS Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division (BESSD). Clients and potential clients benefit most when SNAP works across DHS divisions, alongside other state agencies and hand-in-hand with community partners.

Our SNAP outreach work with Helping Hands shows the great potential we can achieve when we find the sweet spot where community organizations’ and the department’s visions for self-sufficiency and a thriving Hawai'i overlap. Helping Hands Hawai'i shares information about SNAP via outreach and education and assists individuals and families to apply for and maintain SNAP benefits. They offer mobile outreach services to accommodate those with limited mobility or who are homebound as well as translation and interpretation services for those who are not English proficient.

“The SNAP outreach program works with a variety of clients, including but not limited to the elderly and disabled, homeless individuals, veterans, immigrants and LEP individuals. SNAP outreach efforts focus on helping to assist and educate populations that have barriers accessing SNAP, such as mobility and language difficulties,” says James Li, Helping Hands Hawai'i Program Manager.

Partnership between DHS and Helping Hands Hawai'i has been a key ingredient in BESSD's success over the years. Helping Hands Hawai'i not only provides direct outreach services, they also help coordinate outreach efforts across the islands with other contractors. The organization is responsible for training and orienting new outreach providers,

which adds consistency as well as promotes collaboration.

“Working together with DHS, we are able to assemble a team of agencies and providers with unique strengths and geographic representation. With this diverse group of providers, we're able to share outreach strategies and best practices, complementing each other's strengths to best serve our communities,” says Li.

“At the end of the day, if we are able to assist that one elderly person, disabled or homebound client, or immigrant family gain access to SNAP and bring him or her better access to food and nutrition, it makes it all worth it.”

And Hawai'i's communities are why both DHS and Helping Hands Hawai'i come together for this work. “BESSD can offer life-changing services and benefits to folks. Everyone needs help at some point in their life,” Leong mentions as motivation for her and her teammates' work.

Li and his Helping Hands Hawai'i team agree. “At the end of the day, if we are able to assist that one elderly person, disabled or homebound client, or immigrant family gain access to SNAP and bring him or her better access to food and nutrition, it makes it all worth it.” PAU

1976
Year Hawai'i
Vocational
Rehabilitation
began.

4,433
Consumers with
disabilities served
in 2018.

Did You know:
307
Employers Hawai'i
Vocational
Rehabilitation
worked with in
2018.



**The Hawai'i Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
assists individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive
employment, promote independence, and self-advocacy
through five main programs.** →

MAIN PROGRAMS



Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Provides a high level of professional vocational counseling and guidance to assist individuals with disabilities in securing and maintaining integrated employment. Additionally, VR connects with employers, providing them with job-ready, qualified applicants while offering training and information on disability issues and accommodations in the workplace.

Transition Services

Provides services to students and youth with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to employment. Ongoing collaboration with the Department of Education is essential to the success of various transition programs and helping participants in developing self-advocacy skills.

Ho'opono Services for the Blind

Provides support and resources through various services which increases participants' functional independence, productivity, and integration. Ho'opono teaches important skills such as cane travel, braille literacy, home management, and utilizing adaptive equipment. Services offered under Ho'opono include:

- Older Individuals who are Blind
- Low Vision Clinic
- Summer Employment Program
- New Visions Program
- Hawaii Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

Disabilities Determination Services

Makes medical determinations on disability claims and communicates with applicants on whether they meet requirements for Social Security Benefits.

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Services

Provides advanced communication technology and career counseling for participants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. DVR has a designated section to meet the needs of persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Counselors in this section are fluent in American Sign Language which is a critical component in providing culturally sensitive communication and collaborating services.

29%

of individuals
served were
transition-aged
youth with
disabilities in
2018.

20%

of transition-
aged youth
have engaged
in workforce
opportunities in
2018.



▲
DVR programs include those for youth with disabilities and helping them transition to adulthood smoother.

Embedded Success

The Comprehensive Service Center's success is in large part because their services, staff, and mission are embedded in the community they serve

The Comprehensive Services Center has made a mission of making opportunities and possibilities out of obstacles. What's more is that they transform obstacles for a diverse group of constituents into individually tailored opportunities, matching those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind with the support and services they need.

The Comprehensive Services Center (CSC) is a one-stop support and referral service funded by the Hawai'i State Legislature and the Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) through a contract with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center on Disability Center. Principal investigator Eric Folk summarizes what the CSC provides even more succinctly, "There's something for everyone at the CSC!"

Folk and his staff of seven as well as contractors who serve various capacities like camp counselors and instructors provide academic classes, workshops, accessibility support, summer youth programs, and fun events that encourage the inclusion of all consumers. The CSC team works closely with DVR to provide educational classes and workshops for DVR clients.

"Deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind individuals are typically language-deprived at an early age for a variety of reasons and miss out on hitting critical language milestones," explains Folk. "They are often playing catch-up on language skills and overall knowledge of how the world functions. This, in turn, creates extraordinary challenges for the deaf in both education and employment." At the CSC though, staff provides supports, including classes and workshops that "are specifically designed for each constituent group," says Folk.

One of the greatest challenges Folk recognizes is that the CSC serves an extremely diverse constituent group, often with their own communities. "Some don't understand that we are obligated to serve all the constituent groups, not just those who sign," says Folk.

These groups can include those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, those who are signers and who are not, and even hearing kids of deaf adults. Each group – and each individual – comes to the CSC with their own set of

needs and expectations. For example, CSC team member Jana Kidder, who runs Hard of Hearing Outreach and is hard of hearing herself, shares that hard of hearing individuals who do not sign are more likely to "hide" among the hearing community which can make outreach difficult. Kidder and CSC have worked hard to develop materials, programs, and supports specifically for this and other populations.

CSC staff and contractors are able to provide such tailored services and supports because many of them are part of the communities they

serve. "Instructors who teach [American Sign Language (ASL)] users are fluent in American Sign Language, the native language of the deaf, and oftentimes deaf themselves. Because of this, they know how to tailor the pacing of lessons, choose appropriate visuals, and communicate effectively with the students which is something that does not happen when a deaf individual takes a regular hearing class using an interpreter. The CSC also offers educational options, including accommodations or course offerings for constituent consumers who use spoken or written English instead of ASL," says Folk.

REINVESTING IN STAFF

Principal Investigator Eric Folk credits the CSC's success to the group of experts that make up their team with more than 75 years of combined experience working with deaf, hard of hearing, and/or deaf-blind individuals. The team is "dedicated to helping consumers conceive, believe, and achieve their education, work, and life goals, while nurturing their self-esteem, confidence, and social abilities along the way."



Some of the CSC staff stand proud in front of their Beretania offices. From left to right: Jana Kidder, Kon Davis, Ryan Marshall, and Eric Folk, Principal Investigator

“We are proud when they face obstacles head on, take the tools they’ve learned and make necessary changes toward a better future.”

ERIC FOLK

▶ Project Coordinators Roz Kia and Crissy Holmes work hard to provide quality and impactful services to the community they serve.



PHOTOS COURTESY: CSC



Left: Students are exposed to leadership exercises through Camp Mānoa; Right: Participants enjoy Dark Dinner & Game Night

CSC PROGRAMS

The CSC provides myriad opportunities for constituents ranging in ages from adolescent to adult. To best serve such diverse constituents, programs are sometimes tailored specifically to a certain age or constituent group. Camp Mānoa for example is a summer leadership program for adolescents helping with their transition to adult lives of working and attending higher education. Youth from all constituent groups are encouraged to attend.

Other initiatives are tailored to a specific constituent group and those who support them. Deaf-blind outreach for example provides unique opportunities like a Dark Dinner & Game Night, which included a presentation on Usher’s syndrome, blindfolded dinner, and tactile board games. Participants get a brief experience of what it’s like to be deaf-blind.

All this thoughtful planning and program development allows the CSC to provide an environment where hurdles that those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind frequently face do not exist. “Deaf individuals are able to more fully participate in their classes and workshops and benefit. The cultural norms of the deaf community are not only respected but embraced. This creates the environment of learning and support that is necessary to foster deaf individuals’ growth, independence, and success,” says Folk.

In the end, it’s the simple gestures from constituents that show the CSC’s impact and makes the difference for staff. “It’s the simple things that make all the difference. A smile from a new consumer, a shared laugh, pleasant conversation, goal accomplished, nod of gratitude,” says Folk “We are proud when they face obstacles head on, take the tools they’ve learned, and make necessary changes toward a better future.”

The team is also committed to developing one another. Project coordinators tailor the workload of each staff member around that person’s strengths while also providing training to help them grow. This is especially meaningful as many staff members are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind themselves. One team member Kon Davis describes how his work impacts him, “I finally feel like an adult. No one has ever challenged me before or made me feel that I can do more with my life ... I am grateful to [the project coordinators] for seeing more than just a deaf-blind man with a bunch of limitations. They saw my potential. They saw my heart.” PAU

For more information visit CSC at www.csc-hawaii.org
1953 S. Beretania St. Suite 5A, Hon., HI 96826
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 8:30-4:30 p.m.
Call: (808) 284-3551 (Voice/text);
(808) 447-2044 (Videophone)

Thriving Transitions

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is there for the transition from adolescence to adulthood for youths with disabilities

They say it takes a village to raise a child. The extraordinary youth that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) works with are no different. Success for youth that work with DVR in their transition into adulthood requires collaboration from different departments – like the Departments of Health and Education – various levels of government – from city and county to state government – for-profit entities and community organizations. And it's not a single investment; participating organizations and DVR support youth as they transition to adulthood with years of preparation and experiences.

Whether it's the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) or the newly launched Project SEARCH, DVR programming for youth is a team effort among government agencies and the private sector. In both SYEP and Project SEARCH, students with disabilities spend time working for

local public and private sector employers to gain valuable experience and insight.

Youths' work with DVR often begins long before they start employment. Youth may participate in a preparation program that takes them through workshops and trainings, including one that helps students learn how to navigate The Bus to and from work and building confidence to get themselves around independently.

Once youth begin their employment either through SYEP or Project SEARCH, they are provided numerous opportunities to build their skills and capacity. Students are often given the chance to explore work and careers that interest them. Youth are also challenged with responsibilities and new environments that can help them grow and learn, even if it can be uncomfortable for them.

Participants receive support from everyone around them to help them through challenges and discomfort and to further prepare them for adulthood. Supervisors and coworkers on the jobsite often act as mentors. DVR staff help prepare students for employment and remain with them through their employment experiences. Depending on the program, they may provide job coaching and weekly monitoring of student progress to guide and problem-solve as needed.

Perhaps the greatest outcome we see from these experiences is that some students continue their growth through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) which is co-sponsored by DVR.

Perhaps the greatest outcome we see from these experiences is that some students continue their growth through other DVR programs. Participants with SYEP often return to worksites by personal request and at the invitation of previous employers. A select number of SYEP students have also gone on to participate in the newly launched Project SEARCH. Camps and activities DVR staff plan can further enhance students' preparation for the futures



▲
DVR provides programs and services to youth with disabilities as they transition to adulthood. Programming includes employment opportunities, mentorship, and camps away from their homes.

in higher education and employment.

It is not just the adults who invest in the youth. Students also enrich the lives of co-workers, employers, customers, and their communities. Employers who employ students with SYEP and Project SEARCH as well as those who participate in youth camps report growth for their own staff from their experiences working with these youth. Many thank SYEP for giving them the opportunity to hire these students. Some even keep these students on for work through the school year or subsequent summers when funding allows.

The journey for most youth transitioning from adolescence to adulthood can be challenging and uncomfortable. SYEP and other programs that DVR supports young adults with disabilities in this transition. And we know it will pay dividends for them throughout their adult lives. We are most thankful though for what they give to DVR and our partners: inspiration, hope, and appreciation for our mantra that disabilities should not be a barrier to success. [PAU](#)



▲
Students from Project SEARCH celebrate their graduation from the program with proud family members, coworkers and other supporters. Project SEARCH and other programs expose youth to career possibilities while building skills and capacities.

PHOTOS COURTESY: GAVAN ABE



The Social Services Division (SSD) is committed to promoting the health, safety, and well-being of children and vulnerable adults throughout the State of Hawai'i. The division is comprised of two branches: Adult Protective and Community Services Branch (APCSB) and Child Welfare Services Branch (CWS). Together these branches envision a future where all citizens of Hawai'i are cherished and safe in nurturing families and communities. →

1) The Adult Protective and Community Services Branch (APCSB) works with communities and families to protect adults from exploitation and harm.

2) The Child Welfare Services Branch (CWSB) focuses on supporting families and communities to keep children safe from abuse and neglect.



Achieving Our Goal

The strategies that SSD uses to achieve its goals focus on:

- Collaboration that respectfully engages individuals and families to design their own solutions;
- Multidisciplinary approaches that include input from families, communities, and professionals from a wide range of fields and backgrounds;
- Creativity in addressing individual problems;
- Honest and earnest communication;
- Compassion and caring;
- Strength-based, supportive approaches to build family and community capacity to ensure safety.

We work together with sister agencies, community providers, extended family, and community members to use these strategies and wrap families in supports and services. SSD uses these strategies together with other agencies and communities with the aim of meeting families' needs and building upon their strengths. [PAU](#)



Every year CWS and community partners recognize a family for National Reunification. We honor the family's journey through services to be reunited safely and successfully. In 2018, CWS and partner organizations chose a Kaua'i family who was honored at a ceremony at Lili'uokalani Trust.

Successful Outcomes

SSD has developed interventions to promote successful outcomes for children, vulnerable adults, and their families. These interventions are:

- Based on an assessment of the family's strengths and challenges;
- Tailored to the individual needs of each child, adult, and family;
- Designed using the strengths, problem-solving abilities, and unique capacities of each family and the family's local community;
- Culturally sensitive;
- Respectful of family lifestyles, dynamics, and choices;
- Undertaken in a spirit of partnership and collaboration with all parties committed to strengthening the capacity of families to make healthy choices for the safety and well-being of all family members;
- Developed with the family in a manner that nurtures, enhances, and sustains their community supports.

One Person at a Time

Adult Protective & Community Services Branch's newly launched Intake Unit helps their community one caller at a time by understanding the impact one team member can make

In the not so distant past, every office of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Adult Protective and Community Services Branch (APCSB) would field their own intake calls.

Concerned citizens and families relied on small offices of dedicated staff to take calls, triage often complex issues that overlap jurisdictions, investigate cases of suspected abuse or neglect, and receive needed assistance. The result was a sometimes overtaxed staff and longer processing times of cases. Since September 2017, a centralized APCS intake unit has eased the burden and improved processing with consistent and timely eligibility determinations.

The Adult Services Intake Unit receives and determines eligibility of all reports of suspected abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. In other words, they hear concerns about vulnerable adults, determine if APCS investigation and intervention might be appropriate, and try to connect callers with the appropriate resources.

The challenging job the Intake Unit has is captured not just by the sheer volume of calls. It's also defined by the difficult calls they take every day with heartbreaking details of vulnerable adults being abused, neglected, or financially exploited.

The intake staff knows they provide more than just eligibility determinations. "Sometimes we are a 'sounding board' for those who

are frustrated, and the intake workers often times are providing the caller the opportunity to vent," says Adult Services Intake Unit Supervisor Kristine Shimogawa.

Shimogawa further acknowledges callers' frustration can be founded in caregiver

burnout, lack of resources, financial barriers, or complex overlapping state, county, and agency jurisdictions. A single case may touch not only multiple individuals or families. It may also involve private businesses or providers, law enforcement, prosecutor's offices, the Department of Health, the Office of the Attorney General or our own DHS Med-QUEST Division.

Because of the complexity of cases as well as with the overlapping jurisdiction, Shimogawa says she and her team also see their responsibility as "assisting callers who don't know where to get services. If the caller needs assistance in finding resources, we provide information and service links."

It's not uncommon for callers' concerns to fall outside APCS's jurisdiction and be better referred to another agency. "Workers have to multi-task incredibly well to keep up with the demands of the job," says Shimogawa.

The success of the Intake Unit's first year is a testament to the team that has brought the vision of a centralized intake to fruition. Shimogawa credits the camaraderie and culture they've built where team members pitch in to help one another and can support each other emotionally and professionally. "Despite the work volume and demands of the

Did You know:

In the unit's first year, they received and made a total of **more than 14,000 calls**. They received 6,451 and made an additional 8,133 collateral calls to follow-up and determine if APCS investigation or intervention was warranted. From these calls, the unit generated more than 2,100 reports of abuse or neglect.

job, each person truly is a team player," says Shimogawa.

In the end, this pays dividends for callers and clients. "We strive daily to provide quality customer service," says Shimogawa.

The unit's commitment to service extends to all callers and not just those eligible for APCS interventions. Shimogawa wants to encourage concerned individuals to call when in doubt. "If you're not sure if your concern is reportable, you should call our reporting line to consult with an intake worker." PAU

"Workers have to multi-task incredibly well to keep up with the demands of the job."

— Kristine Shimogawa





IN FULL BLOOM

THE ROGERS' 'OHANA SHOWS THE POWER OF LOVE FOR KEIKI, WHETHER BIOLOGICAL, ADOPTED, OR FOSTERED

JOEY AND EMILY ROGERS ARE THE REAL LIFE EXAMPLE of the lyrics “A house with love in it just seems to bloom.” They have filled their Laupahoe home to the brim with love for eight children – three from birth, four adopted, and one current foster child. And from this love, their house blooms. The Rogers are farmers too, growing and raising lettuce, avocados, ‘ulu, vegetables, chicken, sheep, and the occasional pig. The Rogers are farmers, parents, and licensed resource caregivers (formerly called foster parents).

Becoming foster and adoptive parents was not part of the original plan for Joey and Emily. They had three children by birth spanning ages 4, 6 and 14 when their journey to expand their family through adoption and fostering began.

“When people find out that we foster and adopt, many people say to us, ‘Oh, I always wanted to do that. But the time was never just right.’ If you’re called to do it, just go ahead and do it!” says mom Emily.

—
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MEGAN SPELMAN

FOR THE ROGERS

their call came when Hope INC, a Christian adoption agency, moved into the area. They took it as a sign for them to take action, knowing many children needed good homes. This sign would eventually become their destiny, and they were licensed through Hope INC.

Shortly after becoming licensed, Joey and Emily were shown a picture of a child – then one year old – who had severe cerebral palsy and seizure disorder with almost no body function. “We had no experience with any special needs children and no medical background,” remembers Emily. Then, after spending time with him and praying, Emily says, “We knew he was meant to be our son. He’s been with us for over five years now, and he is just incredible. He is an overcomer and a joy to be around.” They later adopted this child.

After this positive experience caring for a child with cerebral palsy, they were contacted about another child, this time a girl, who also lived with the condition. “I knew right away that she belonged with us,” Emily recalls.

This time would be a little different though. “We visited her and were told that her birth mother had just had another child and they asked if we would consider adopting them both as a sibling group. Again after much prayer and talking with the other kids, we said yes.”

With six kids at home, the Rogers felt like their family was complete. And yet they still felt a calling to give more. The Rogers began Hānai Hamakua Foster and Adoption Ministry with their church, Hamakua Baptist Church. The organization offers support groups, horseback riding days, and gift-giving ministries for foster and adoptive families. The ministry supports Keiki Kloset, a free children’s clothing store for foster families and other families in need. The ministry also reaches out to families to encourage them to become resource caregivers.

When the Rogers learned that over a third of foster children in the entire state live in their

district, the Rogers decided to become licensed resource caregivers through Hawai‘i’s Department of Human Services to foster more children. Emily and Joey decided to foster another child, working with the child’s birth family. The goal would be for the child to eventually rejoin their birth family safely.

The Rogers know that parenting generally can be tough. They also know that parenting children who are fostered or adopted can be different than parenting children from birth. “When a child comes into our home [as a foster child], there is a period of adjustment,” says Emily. “After the initial shock of being transplanted into a strange environment ... the problems and issues of their life up until then start to show and we go through an adjustment as we figure out how best to help that child.”

Eventually though, Emily mentions their family gets a handle on things and the child gets more comfortable and starts to enjoy becoming part of the family. It’s these moments that stick with the Rogers. “When a child’s guard is let down, such as when one of our foster daughters who compulsively disliked getting her hands dirty, was at the beach with us. She spent the afternoon rolling down a sandy dune and laughing hysterically as she got completely covered in sand. She showered off and then did it all over again!” remembers Emily.

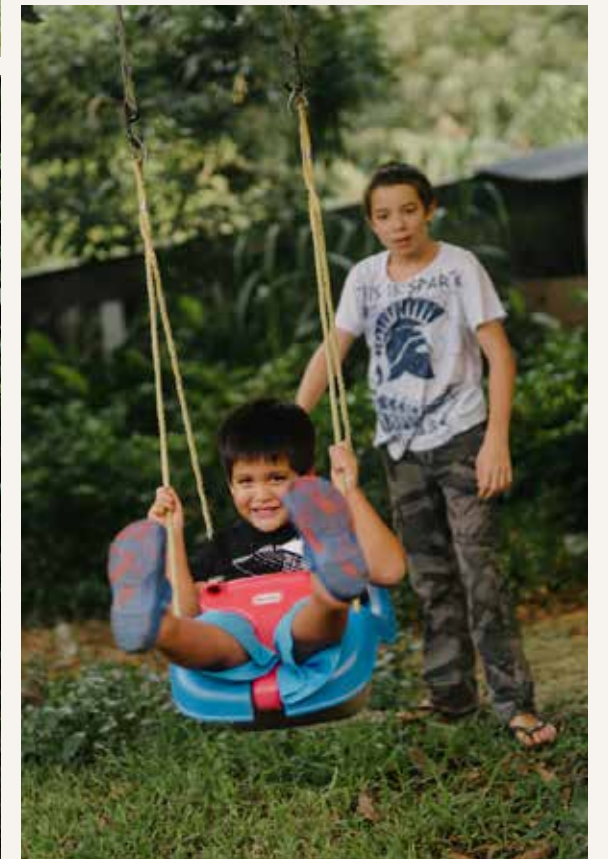
Joey and Emily believe it’s part of their calling to encourage others to become resource caregivers and care for foster youth. Emily urges, “Don’t be scared of these kids! Many of these kids have had trauma in their lives and this trauma can physically affect their brains and behavior. They may need time to heal ... but they are just children that need your help. Please don’t be afraid to provide that sanctuary they need.”

Emily also insists that resource caregivers get support and training to help them parent. “My parents live next door and our church and friends are very supportive, and we couldn’t do this without them ... Also, don’t be afraid to get more training. Parenting a child in foster care can be different than parenting a child from birth.”

As the Rogers continue to grow their family – they welcomed another baby by adoption in Fall 2018 – they measure success through love. “We

hope to give kids a place to feel comfortable, safe and loved while they are with us. If we can give them a sanctuary, they can let their guard down and be themselves. Then they can rest and be healed,” Emily says. With Joey and Emily as loving parents, we know all of their kids will continue to bloom. [PAU](#)

▶ The Rogers’ ‘Ohana have created a sanctuary of love for eight children. Their journey to become resource caregivers for the Department of Human Services has brought them to create a house that supports their children from birth, adopted and fostered.





Med-QUEST (Quality, Universal Access, Efficiency, Sustainability, Transformation) is a division under the State of Hawai'i's Department of Human Services. Our team of approximately 300 employees are located at office sites across the state serving every island. Our division is comprised of the following branches:

DIVISION BRANCHES

- ▶ **ELIGIBILITY BRANCH**
In-person eligibility offices at six locations statewide
- ▶ **HEALTH CARE SERVICES BRANCH**
Managed care contracts, quality assurance/improvement
- ▶ **CUSTOMER SERVICE BRANCH**
Call center and Medical Financial Integrity System that ensures enrollment information is accurate
- ▶ **CLINICAL STANDARDS**
Medical Officer, psychiatrist, pharmacist, dentist
- ▶ **PROGRAM & POLICY**
State plan amendments, waivers, administrative rules, guidance
- ▶ **HEALTH CARE OUTREACH BRANCH**
Outreach to community about enrolling in Medicaid and health insurance coverage
- ▶ **SYSTEMS OFFICE**
Runs MMIS Claims, Encounters, eligibility app (KOLEA), and our office systems
- ▶ **FINANCE OFFICE**
Financial tracking, audits, third party liability, liens, budget, and contracts
- ▶ **HEALTHCARE ANALYTICS OFFICE**
Provide analytics that achieve the goals of increased transparency, better health, better healthcare, and lower costs for beneficiaries of state-funded health insurance plans, including the Medicaid program pursuant to Act 55 (2018)

MESSAGE FROM DR. JUDY MOHR PETERSON



Dr. Judy Mohr Peterson
Med-Quest Administrator
/Medicaid Director

Hawai'i's Med-QUEST program continues to focus on our commitment to ensure we provide essential services to those in our community who depend on Med-QUEST for their health needs while supporting the invaluable health plans and providers who are at the front lines of service to our people. We take our kuleana of public service very seriously and have engaged in a business process redesign of our customer-facing work sections to ensure our processes are responsive to the needs and expectations of the 350,000+ people we serve. We also have begun the complex process of renewing an agreement with our federal partners at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that allows us to improve our communities' well-being through new innovative approaches. This is called an 1115 Waiver renewal.

In 2018, I continued my role as president of the National Association of Medicaid Directors' board of directors. This organization provides resources and advocacy for Medicaid programs in every state and, as its president, I am engaged with senior policy makers at a federal level and am able to provide our Hawai'i lens to the national dialog on Medicaid and our healthcare delivery system.

OUR VISION

The people of Hawai'i embrace health and wellness.

OUR MISSION

To encourage self-sufficiency and support the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i

OUR CORE VALUES

Hi'iola – Embracing wellness

H I ' I O L A

- Healthy Outcomes**
We develop strategies and improvements necessary to promote overall well-being.
- Integrity**
We are accountable to the work we do, the resources we manage, and the people we serve.
- 'Ohana Nui**
We focus on the whole family's needs, with priority on children ages 0 – 5 years old.
- Innovation**
We cultivate an atmosphere of continuous learning and improvement.
- Optimism**
We each make a difference for the people of Hawai'i.
- Leadership**
We are all leaders in the work we do.
- Aloha**
We extend warmth and caring to all.

Who we serve:

Med-QUEST provides health insurance to roughly one quarter of all of Hawai'i's people and over forty percent of Hawai'i's keiki through five health plans listed here:

Plan	O'ahu	Kaua'i	Hawai'i	Maui	Moloka'i	Lāna'i	Total
AlohaCare	36,441	5,535	12,495	8,702	2,236	489	65,898
HMSA	96,175	10,701	43,625	11,078	780	146	162,505
Kaiser	19,927	0	0	10,091	0	0	30,018
Ohana	24,740	2,054	7,838	4,136	450	98	39,316
United	32,068	2,555	9,112	3,935	222	80	47,972
Total	209,351	20,845	73,070	37,942	3,688	813	345,709

Hawai'i Medicaid Managed Care Enrollment - by Plan and Island for the month of 07/2018
Note: the above is a snapshot and subject to change based on retroactive enrollment information

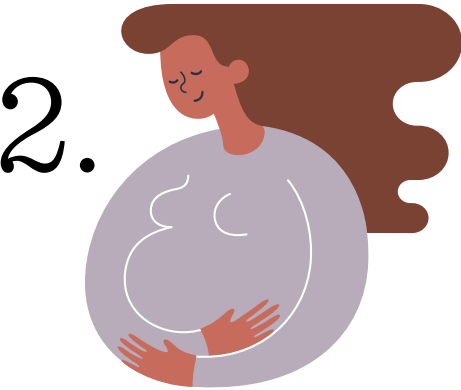
3 Strategic Areas

FOR 2018, MED-QUEST FOCUSED ON THREE STRATEGIC AREAS:

1. Access to Healthcare and Insurance

MQD is focused on ensuring that families have health insurance. This is being addressed through:

- **Business Process Redesign** efforts that are centered around improving processes to help support excellent customer service.
 - **MQD support of outreach initiatives and community partner Navigators:** MQD contracted with community partners in Hawai'i and Honolulu Counties as Kōkua service providers to assist with outreach and application completion.
 - **Partnering with institutions** to improve continuous coverage for individuals transitioning out of institutions or from one program to another such as those transitioning out of prison/jails, aging out of foster care, and moving from the Department of Health's State Hospital to MQD & Community Care Services.
- MQD's Healthcare Outreach Branch (HCOB) continued their work with the Department of Public Safety and the Honolulu County Offender Reentry Program (HCOBP) to collaborate on ways to ensure those leaving incarceration have access to health coverage the day they leave incarceration.
 - HCOB is also collaborating with the Hawai'i State Hospital (HSH) to assist those who are being released from HSH with continuous health coverage whenever possible.



Child & Family Health

In an effort to improve health access and outcomes for children and families, MQD has focused on addressing the needs of women of child-bearing age and mothers by working with partners on deploying the **One Key Question®** model. The question is "Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?"

YES

- Preconception care
- Screen for conditions that can affect pregnancy
- Medication review
- Counsel on nutrition, exercise, substance use
- Recommend folic acid daily
- Recommend early prenatal care

NO

- Ask whether she is using a contraceptive method
- Check satisfaction with current method
- Offer contraception options, emphasizing long-acting reversible contraceptives

S.B.I.R.T.

In addition to the One Key Question®, there is also an expanded emphasis on screening for substance use using the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) tool. In partnership with the Department of Health, training was rolled out across the state for OB/GYNs and some family practitioners.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

3. Chronic Homelessness & Behavioral Health

MQD's efforts to address the complex needs of our chronically homeless population who also experience behavioral health challenges was the focus of a requested amendment to our 1115 Waiver. (The waiver is an agreement that we have with the federal oversight agency.) The amendment proposes a redesign of benefits to increase who can receive behavioral health intensive case management services and housing "tenancy supports" services.

There is continued advocacy for integration of care for both behavioral and physical health. Some of the tools proposed to address these needs are:

- Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral for Treatment (SBIRT): to help address the hidden issues with substance misuse in multiple settings
- Focusing on pregnant women, Individuals with chronic disease, dual diagnoses
- Additional clinical and non-clinical settings (emergency departments)
- Telepsychiatry



To accomplish our strategic focus areas, there is a recognition that we need to invest in our staff, our IT systems, and other infrastructure. The following are some of our 2018 accomplishments:

- **Invested in staff development** through a series of leadership development retreats for customer-facing staff as well as a leadership development workshop for MQD administrators and their lead staff members.
- **Launched a team approach to process improvement** by bringing staff from various functional areas together into a Process Improvement Team, also known as the PIT Crew. This collaborative group has led MQD's efforts to review differing processes and determine best practices. The work of the PIT Crew will become the basis for MQD's training manual moving forward.
- **Launched a new MQD website** with a customer-centered focus and an emphasis on ease of use and positive customer experience. Provided tools and training to staff to self-manage the new website resulting in more timely updates to information.
- **Developed and got CMS approval for implementation** of a new Quest Integration (QI) Managed Care Organizations (MCO) Pay-For-Performance (P4P). The impact has been very successful, as each of the five health plans received a check based on the new P4P algorithm.
- **Continued to process Electronic Health Records (EHR)** incentive payments.
- **Received a three-year approval** from CMS to maintain our electronic interfaces with the various federal agencies such as Homeland Security, Social Services Administration, etc. The data exchange allows the state's Medicaid system to validate more easily a Medicaid applicant's identity and qualifications to be eligible for medical insurance assistance by the State of Hawai'i.
- **Participated in multiple technical assistance opportunities** to leverage new information and apply new approaches to our work at MQD.

MED - QUEST
EMPLOYEE
SPOTLIGHT

Dana Curnan

ELIGIBILITY
WORKER
YEARS OF DHS
SERVICE: 5

T

he Med-QUEST Division administers the state Medicaid program. It provides healthcare coverage to one in four residents and more than 40% of Hawai'i's keiki. The division, which has offices on every major Hawaiian island except Kaho'olawe and Ni'ihau, is able to connect people with the coverage they need because of dedicated staff. This important work is made possible by a talented team of administrative, policy, eligibility, and clinician staff and more. Some of the Med-QUEST staff have worked in other DHS divisions or state agencies while others have made their entire careers in the division, seeing significant changes from the federal to local levels over the years. Here we share the perspective of one newer Med-QUEST team member and another veteran who has been with the department for more than 30 years and the Med-QUEST Division for 15 of those.

I first started working for DHS because I had family and friends who worked for county and state governments and thought they were great places to work. That reason still applies, however, it's become much more for me. I get to help people that are in tough situations and allow them to get the care they need in times of distress.

Our division helps people. Usually when people apply at Med-QUEST, they are in a tough spot in their life. By alleviating one concern (medical coverage) especially if they are a child, elderly, or a sickly person is a great relief for them, and it is rewarding for me.

Sometimes our work can be challenging. Sometimes we can't help you as much as we wish we could. Our work has limits too; we have to adhere to policies and rules that can limit the help we wish we could give. But we will do everything we can to help our clients and our community. We strive to give clients as much aloha as we can.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

informing me I got a position with the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division (BESSD). I spent 16 years with BESSD before moving to the Med-QUEST Division.

As the years have passed, I have seen so many changes in the department, the state, the federal government, the state legislature, my colleagues, and even in the people we serve. There have been many really high points and some not so high points. Through it all, I always hoped one day that the different departments, divisions, and offices in the state government would truly work together to make a difference in the lives of those we serve as well as for the state as a whole. That is exactly what has been happening in the last couple years because of the vision and commitment to the people of Hawai'i by our governor and DHS Director.

At a time when I could be considering my retirement details, I am feeling so energized and hopeful about the future of what we can do together to truly make a difference to the people of Hawai'i. Over the last couple years, Med-QUEST Division leadership has inspired and provided tremendous opportunities for me and my colleagues to be a part of things I couldn't imagine were possible. I am even more excited and pumped up now than I was when I started. This is the DHS I have always dreamed of, collaborating

and truly reaching across sectors and boundaries to achieve great things for the residents in this state. I feel very proud and privileged to work for Med-QUEST, DHS, and the dedicated staff I work with every day. I look forward to continuing this work as long as I can!

I have always been passionate about helping people as well as making a positive impact on the world around me. My degree is in Human Development. I wanted to go back to graduate school, but when that didn't work out, I still wanted to pursue a career in public service. This led me to apply for a job with the Department of Human Services. I will never forget how excited I was to get that letter from Personnel

Client Impact

Med-QUEST staff share some of their favorite recent stories of impact on Medicaid members and our broader communities

Work in our Med-QUEST Division goes beyond health care applications and eligibility. Our Med-QUEST team also helps individuals who face barriers – whether related to health, age, language, or something else – access Medicaid applications. Where individuals do not qualify for Med-QUEST, we also often assist in connecting them to the federal marketplace or to more information about other options available. Below two members of our Health Care Outreach Branch share how their team helped Hawai'i residents get the healthcare coverage they need and deserve this year.

In May 2018, one of our former kōkua notified me that Maunalani Bay Hotel would be closing for renovations at the end of September for a minimum of 14 months. She wondered if we would be willing to go out and assist with healthcare applications, and we connected with Human Resources at the hotel. The Human Resources employee explained that all 220 employees would be without a job for a minimum of 14 months and some would not be invited back. She asked if we could come out and help them through the process and make the transition a little easier. So, we scheduled two days in August, which changed to three days because demand was even greater than anticipated.

When we went out in August, I took four kōkua from various Hawai'i Island community organizations. We successfully assisted the 30 employees per day that were scheduled over three days plus 22 walk-ins – 112 employees in total.

Most of the employees had worked at the hotel for close to 30 years and many for the entire 34 that the hotel had been running. They had never been out of work and without health insurance. Tension was very high at the start of every application. But by the time the appointments were complete, they had a better understanding of their options and were relieved that they and their families would have insurance.

We have followed up with them throughout the transition period and all of the clients who qualified for Med-QUEST are currently covered. The few who did not sign up are signed up either under their spouse's plan or on the federal marketplace and received advanced premium tax credits.

– Kuu Makuakane-Salavea,
Health Care Outreach Coordinator

Qimei, his daughter Yifang and HCOB Manager Puanani Crabbe-Parker

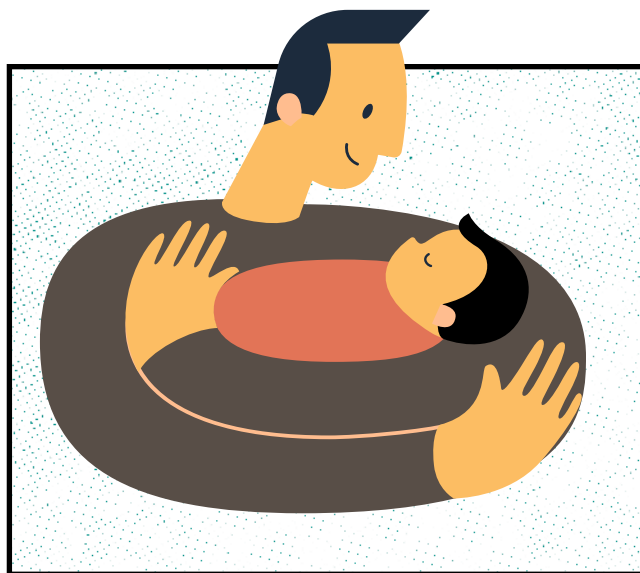


Qimei Wang came to Hawai'i in 2015 from Shanghai at the age of 105 to live with his daughter Yifang. Once he was settled, we were able to get him covered on Med-QUEST in the state-funded aged program so he could be connected to much-needed healthcare services. Still in good health and able to move around on his own, his family decided to move to San Francisco so Qimei could be closer to his grandsons.

When I first met him, he said he was going to live to be 120 years old. I think he will. His family is very grateful for the assistance we provided to Qimei. We are very proud to have been a part of his journey to 120 years old.

– Puanani Crabbe-Parker,
Health Care Outreach Branch Manager

Two commissions are administratively attached to the Department of Human Services. For each of the commissions, the DHS director or his representative serves as an ex-officio member.



Commission on Fatherhood

The **Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood (COF)** is a governor-appointed board comprised of representatives from all four counties, with representation from DHS, the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Education, and the Office of Youth Services. The Commission is administratively attached to DHS.

COF advises state agencies and makes recommendations on programs, services, and contracts to promote healthy family relationships. COF also emphasizes the importance of involved, nurturing, and responsible fathers in children's lives. The presence of fathers positively impacts school performance and self-esteem and decreases high-risk behaviors and substance abuse.

COF participates in various community events to encourage fathers to become more involved in the welfare of their families and children.



Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

The **Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women (HSCSW)** is a non-partisan state commission that consists of seven appointed commissioners from across the state. The commission works toward equality for women and girls by acting as a catalyst for positive change through advocacy, education, collaboration, and program development. HSCSW was established on May 15, 1964 through executive order by the governor and made permanent through Act 190, Session Laws of Hawai'i 1970.

HSCSW is the statewide link between the Honolulu, Maui, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i Counties' Committees on the Status of Women and the University of Hawai'i President's Commission on the Status of Women.

HSCSW has established four main purposes:

- Aid in the implementation of policy recommendations;
- Advise governmental and non-governmental organizations of the specific issues and problems faced by Hawai'i women;
- Act as a central clearinghouse and coordinating body for governmental and nongovernmental activities and information relating to the status of women; and
- Create public awareness and understanding of the responsibilities, needs, potentials, and contributions of women in Hawai'i.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

ADMINISTRATIVELY ATTACHED AGENCIES

The Office of Youth Services

The **State Legislature established the Office of Youth Services (OYS)** in 1989 to provide and coordinate a continuum of services and programs in every county for youth-at-risk, to prevent delinquency, and to reduce the incidence of recidivism. OYS is administratively attached to the Department of Human Services.

A core responsibility of OYS is to manage and operate the state's only Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility. The facility provides a safe and secure setting to provide care and custody of at-risk youth committed to the state by the family courts.

In 2018, OYS concentrated efforts to transform HYCF into Kawaioloa Youth and Family Wellness Center. This continued transformation is the culmination of efforts over the last couple years to create a healing space at the Windward O'ahu campus that will provide support services for youth to prevent juvenile delinquency.

The agency outside of HYCF also provides and supports

Renderings of
Kawaioloa Youth and
Family Wellness Center.



"front-end" prevention, diversion, and intervention services as well. OYS focuses on programs and service areas that address youth needs ranging from prevention to incarceration and after-care. These programs are rooted in a belief that community is where our youth belong and that deep connections, restoration, forgiveness, and healing emerges as the "Aloha Spirit" statute (HRS 5-7.5) is considered and embraced.

Did you know:

6,200



HPHA is the state's largest residential landlord with almost 6,200 low-income public housing units throughout Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Public Housing Authority

The **Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA)** is the sole public housing agency for the State of Hawai'i. HPHA is dedicated to providing safe, decent, and sanitary housing for low-income residents of Hawai'i. HPHA administers the federal and state Low Income Public Housing programs, Section 8 program, Veterans Program, and Rent Supplement and project-based housing.

HPHA is the state's largest residential landlord with almost 6,200 low-income public housing units throughout Hawai'i.

The agency is guided by a Board of Directors consisting of 11 members appointed by the governor. It is administratively attached to the Department of Human Services, whose director is a voting member of the HPHA Board of Directors.



**Our mission is to encourage
self-sufficiency and support the
well-being of individuals, families,
and communities in Hawai'i**