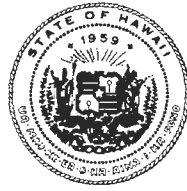


DAVID Y. IGE  
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339  
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January 2, 2020

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President and Members of the Senate  
Thirtieth State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott Saiki  
Speaker and Members of the House  
of Representatives  
Thirtieth State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ACT 177, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2018

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and members of the Legislature,

Attached is the following report submitted in accordance with:

- THE PROVISIONS OF ACT 177, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2018, on the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Pilot Project.

In accordance with section 93-16, HRS, copies of these reports have been transmitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau Library and the reports may be viewed electronically at <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

Cathy Betts  
Deputy Director

Ec copy only:

Office of the Governor  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
Department of Budget & Finance  
Legislative Auditor  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services  
Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

**Report to the Thirtieth Hawaii State Legislature 2020**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACT 177 (2018)  
EAST HAWAII CHILD WELFARE SERVICES  
PILOT PROJECT**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
Social Services Division  
Child Welfare Services Branch  
January 2020**

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### **I. Purpose**

The purpose Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018, was to establish a five-year pilot project within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to ensure the safety and well-being of at-risk children and families in East Hawaii on Hawaii Island by appropriating funds for four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) child/adult protective service specialists, administrative costs for the East Hawaii child welfare services section on Hawaii Island, and travel costs for the child welfare services division to train new hires.

On July 10, 2018, the Legislature authorized four temporary, full-time equivalent (4.0FTE) case manager/permanency social worker positions at the Child/Adult Protective Specialist level for the East Hawaii Pilot.

### **II. Act 177 (SLH 2018) Positions**

East Hawaii Child Welfare Services office is comprised of three units, East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 1/36 (EHCWSU1), East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 2/37 (EHCWSU2) and East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 3/72 (EHCWSU3). Two of the pilot positions were assigned to EHCWSU1 and EHCWSU2. EHCWSU3 was assigned the third and fourth positions, respectively.

These positions are in rooms #205 and #109 of the Hilo State Building, 75 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawaii.

East Hawaii Unit 1	East Hawaii Unit 2	East Hawaii Unit 3
Assigned 2 positions	Assigned 1 position	Assigned 1 position
Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122786	Pseudo/Position Number 91921K/122788	Pseudo/Position Number 91922K/122789
91920K/122787	Hire date: Feb 19, 2019	Hire date: Nov 21, 2018
Hire date: Nov 12, 2019 One vacancy not filled		

### III. WikiWiki Hire Pilot

Positions were recruited through the Waikiki Hire pilot program,<sup>1</sup> and yielded three new hires at the Human Services Professional (HSP) II and SW II level due to the applicants' minimum qualifications. These positions were filled effective November 21, 2018, February 19, 2019, and November 12, 2019.

### IV. Current Position Status

On July 1, 2019, the four pilot positions were converted to permanent status, and the two employees who filled the temporary pilot positions were hired into existing permanent positions. The third worker came on board in late 2019. All social workers completed the New Hire training provided by the DHS, Social Services Division, Staff Development office. As a result, East Hawaii Unit 1 now has only one vacant pilot position, and is in the process of scheduling interviews for potential applicants.

With the inclusion of the four pilot positions (now permanent status), East Hawaii's November 2019 position inventory indicates a total of 45 positions in the Section with 5 vacancies. It should be noted that an assessment social worker in East Hawaii Unit 2 has been on medical leave for several months and a permanency social worker in East Hawaii Unit 3 has also been on medical leave for approximately two months. One licensing social worker in East Hawaii Unit 1 has been on medical leave for over one year. Their leave of absences resulted in the re-distribution of their caseloads among the existing work force in the section.

### V. Caseload Evaluation

As of November 1, 2019, the breakdown of cases being managed per permanency social worker ranges from 10 to 22 and the number of children on each case load ranges from 21 to 46.

<sup>1</sup> For information on WikiWiki Hire, see: <http://dhrd.hawaii.gov/wiki-wiki-hire/>.

Since November 2018, when the first East Hawaii pilot position was filled, to current, East Hawaii CWS has convened 148 Ohana Conferences with the assistance of DHS contract provider, EPIC, Inc. Child Welfare Services anticipates that the implementation of the Program Improvement Plan strategy, that requires an Ohana Conference every 60 days from the date that a case is active and every four months thereafter, will improve family engagement and prevent entry into foster care or reduce the time a child spends in foster care.

**VI. Performance Evaluation**

Due to the delay in filling the positions and training the workers to manage a caseload, DHS is unable to begin its data reporting, and plans to utilize and analyze case review data to measure change in performance. The data will include, children’s re-entry into foster care, fatalities due to maltreatment, relative placement, timely response to new reports of harm, employee performance and satisfaction, caseload size, family court sanctions, and legal claims.

**VII. Employee Satisfaction Evaluation**

DHS plans to conduct a survey of employees upon complete hiring of all four (4) full-time FTEs to measure change in satisfaction.

**VIII. Court Sanctions**

No tracking system of court sanctions was implemented during the past five years prior to the East Hawaii pilot. Therefore, except for the period of January 2018 to current, the following information was extracted through the recall of supervisors, highlighted in yellow. The cost of the sanctions issued by the Family Court judges of the Third Circuit ranged from \$500 to \$1,000, primarily for reasons of the assigned social worker not visiting with the foster youth monthly and late court report filings.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Court Sanction</b>
2013	2
2014	0
2015	0
2016	1
September-December 2017	5
January 2018-December 2018	21
January 2019-June 2019	6
July 2019- current	0

The number of sanctions was high in the period of January 2018 to December 2018, prior to November 2018 when the first pilot position was filled. However, permanent vacant positions not related to the pilot were also being filled at that time; with these additional positions, the unit was able to reduce the number of cases on a permanency social worker’s case load.

**IX. Legal Claims**

More research will be conducted on the history of legal claims and their disposition. Currently, there are two active lawsuits.

**X. Provider Experience**

DHS plans to conduct a survey for SFY 2020 to measure change in partnership with providers that work directly with children who are assigned to social workers in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services section.

**XI. Findings**

The process to establish and hire positions takes time and due to the initial temporary nature of the positions, DHS had difficulty recruiting and filling the pilot positions. The aim is with the filling of all four positions, there will be positive change for the families served and provider partnerships. Preliminary numbers show a decrease in the number of court fines, and we will continue to track and report going forward. We look forward to our next report where we will be able to provide data on important indicators of children safety and well-being.