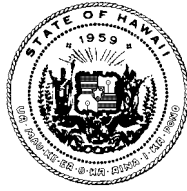


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**CATHY BETTS**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**JOSEPH CAMPOS II**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

**TRISTA SPEER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

Dir 23.95

December 27, 2023

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

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker  
and Members of the House of  
Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

Enclosed are the following reports submitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 346-381, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, on the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness And Section 346-386, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, on the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions.

In accordance with section 93-16, HRS, the report is available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Betts".

Cathy Betts  
Director

Enclosure

- c: Governor's Office  
Lieutenant Governor's Office  
Department of Budget & Finance  
Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)  
Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (2 hard copies, one electronic copy)  
Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (1 hard copy)

REPORTS TO THE THIRTY-SECOND HAWAI`I STATE LEGISLATURE  
2024

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF  
SECTION 346-381, HAWAI`I REVISED STATUTES, ON THE HAWAI`I  
INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

AND

SECTION 346-386, HAWAI`I REVISED STATUTES, ON THE  
STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS

HAWAI`I INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS  
STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DECEMBER 2023

## A. INTRODUCTION

These reports are submitted in accordance with the provisions [of section 346-386, Hawai'i Revised Statutes \(HRS\)](#) on the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) and [section 346-381\(9\), Hawai'i Revised Statutes \(HRS\)](#), on the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH).

### 1. Statewide Office of Homelessness & Housing Solutions

Act 252, SLH 2022, established a new Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) headed by the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH). The SOHHS is administratively attached to the Department of Human Services (DHS), with the GCH as its director. The SOHHS is statutorily mandated to: (1) work with State, county, and community agencies to develop solutions to prevent and end homelessness in the State, and (2) develop and test innovative solutions to prevent and end homelessness. In addition, SOHHS is to identify and address gaps in the homeless services system, provide administrative support to the HICH, and establish and maintain a statewide homelessness and housing clearinghouse.

The election of a new Governor in 2022 prompted the departure of the prior GCH and all GCH staff; Governor Josh Green, MD, appointed a new GCH in January 2023. The GCH spent the first half of 2023 shaping new priorities with the Governor, reorganizing roles and responsibilities within SOHHS to fit these priorities, hiring a new staff team, and working with the Legislature to align policies and appropriations with the new priorities. The new priorities guiding the work of SOHHS are:

1. Expand deeply affordable housing inventory for houseless individuals using existing tools and housing models.
2. Test new models to expand deeply affordable housing inventory for houseless individuals, including *kauhale* (communal housing).
3. Expand space for treatment and housing of homeless individuals with serious mental or behavioral health needs.
4. Clear obstacles along the path from street outreach to temporary shelter to sustained housing placements.
5. Call everyone away from *Not In My Back Yard* (NIMBY) reactions to homeless solutions and toward a *Yes In My Back Yard* (YIMBY) approach.

### 2. Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH)

The HICH is modeled after the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and serves "as the statewide homelessness planning and policy development entity with broad representation from state and county government and the community." See [section 346-381, HRS](#). The HICH consists of 27 members representing federal, State, and local government and public and private sectors. The GCH is the chair of the HICH.

In the second half of 2023, the new GCH and SOHHS staff team reconvened the HICH. The initial purpose of convening was to solicit feedback on the new priorities drafted by the GCH and the Governor and to build a shared understanding of and commitment to those new priorities among State, County, and community stakeholders.

**PART I:**  
**REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 346-386, HAWAII**  
**REVISED STATUTES**  
**RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING**  
**SOLUTIONS**

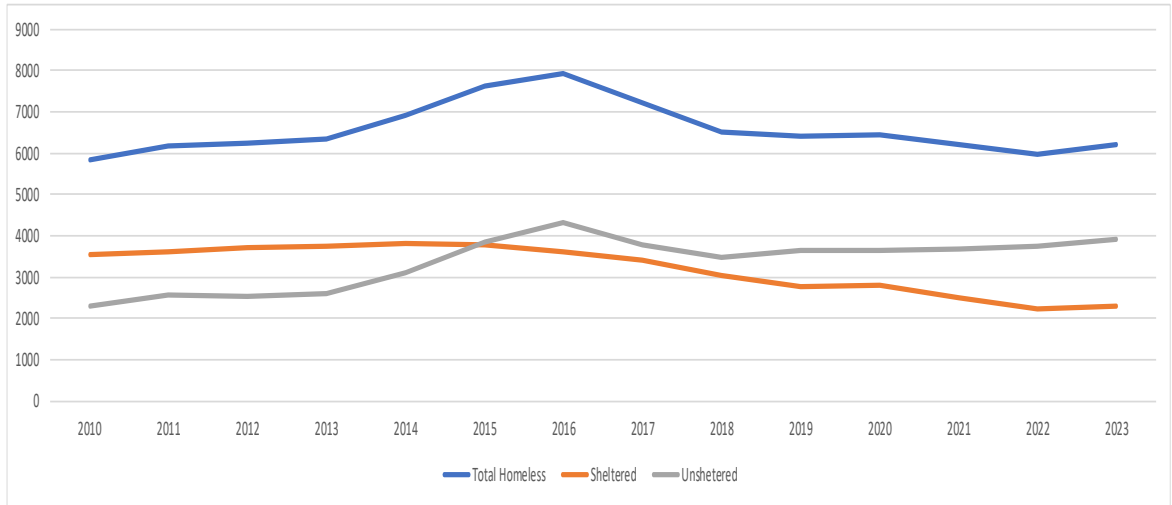
Section 346-389, HRS, requires the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH) to submit a report to the Legislature regarding the work of the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS). This report highlights (1) performance metrics related to the overall state of homelessness across the islands and (2) the five new priorities guiding the efforts of SOHHS, as well as progress in 2023 toward those priorities.

**A. Performance Metrics**

Homelessness has been stubbornly persistent in the islands, and Hawaii has consistently ranked among the top five states in rates of per capita homelessness for more than a decade. In 2010, the total number of homeless individuals counted in Hawaii's annual Point in Time Count (PIT Count) homeless census was 5,834. In the most recent 2023 PIT Count, the number stood at 6,223. During the intervening years, total homelessness has ebbed and flowed. It rose by more than 25 percent from 2013 to 2016 but has declined since then, returning to levels comparable to 2010.

It is a significant achievement that Hawaii has been able to stem a rising tide of homelessness in recent years. Other Western states with high housing costs, like Hawaii, have seen sharp increases in homelessness since the pandemic. Investments and efforts by State and local governments, homeless services providers, and community organizations appear to have prevented a similar spike in Hawaii.

While Hawaii has made strides, more work remains. Since 2010, the number of *unsheltered* homeless people has increased substantially in the islands, driven primarily by increases on Oahu. During this same period, *sheltered* homelessness (those in emergency shelters or transitional housing) declined. Indeed, since 2015, the number of unsheltered homeless individuals has *exceeded* the number of sheltered homeless people every year.



SOHHS reports on the following key performance metrics annually:

**1. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness according to the annual statewide PIT count of persons experiencing homelessness.**

	2022	2023	% Change
Oahu	3951	4028	1.9%
Neighbor Isles	2022	2195	8.6%
Statewide	5973	6223	4.2%

As noted above, other Western jurisdictions with high housing costs saw dramatic increases in their homeless Point In Time count between 2022 and 2023, while Hawaii held relatively steady.

**2. The number of available beds counted in the statewide HIC targeted explicitly for individuals experiencing homelessness, including shelter and housing beds.**

	2022	2023	% Change
Oahu	6046	6071	0.4%
Neighbor Isles	2063	2048	-0.7%
Statewide	8109	8119	0.1%

The number of beds available is a function of investment in housing vouchers and housing projects targeting people experiencing homelessness. That investment did not change substantially between 2022 and 2023.

**3. The length of time an individual spends in emergency and transitional shelter programs as captured in the HMIS databases for O`ahu and the balance of State.**

Emergency Shelter	2022	2023	% Change
Oahu	208	248	19.2%
Neighbor Isles	108	142	31.5%

Transitional Shelter	2022	2023	% Change
Oahu	290	344	18.6%
Neighbor Isles	263	263	0.0%

The average length of stay in emergency and transitional shelters is largely a function of the inventory of permanent housing available to those at the bottom of the income scale. An increasing length of stay points to the need to expand the inventory of deeply affordable, permanent housing for homeless people to transition into after transitional or emergency shelter.

***4. The number and percentage of individuals placed into permanent housing by homeless service providers as captured in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) databases for O`ahu and the neighbor islands.***

Number of Exits	2022	2023	% Change
Oahu	2663	2625	-1.4%
Neighbor Isles	1135	1439	26.8%
Statewide	3798	4064	7.0%

Percent of Exits	2022	2023	% Change
Oahu	33%	32%	-1.0%
Neighbor Isles	44%	55%	11.0%
Statewide	35%	38%	3.0%

**B. SOHHS Updates on Key Priorities**

Much of the work of the new GCH in 2023 was focused on setting new priorities and redefining the work of SOHHS. The new GCH worked closely with the Governor to define a new, overarching goal related to homelessness: To cut unsheltered homelessness in half during the Administration’s first term (by November 2026), despite the headwinds of rising housing costs, the end of federal COVID 19 pandemic assistance, an aging population, and the loss of housing and shelter inventory due to the 2023 Maui wildfires. Cutting unsheltered homelessness by half statewide would require getting approximately 2,000 people from street to home.

In the first quarter of 2023, the new GCH worked closely with the Governor to establish five new priorities to focus the limited time, staff, and resources of SOHHS on achieving this ambitious goal. Those priorities are:

1. Expand deeply affordable housing inventory for houseless individuals using existing

tools and housing models.

2. Test new models to expand deeply affordable housing inventory for houseless individuals, including *kauhale* (communal housing).
3. Expand space for treatment and housing of homeless individuals with serious mental or behavioral health needs.
4. Clear obstacles along the path from street outreach to temporary shelter to sustained housing placements.
5. Call everyone away from Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) reactions to homeless solutions and toward a Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY) approach.

The quantitative data (in the sections above) and qualitative data (from interviews with service providers and unhoused people) point to the lack of deeply affordable housing accessible to homeless individuals as a key barrier to reducing homelessness in Hawaii. Several of SOHHS's priorities, therefore, target the expansion of housing that is affordable and accessible to people experiencing homelessness. Put simply: We cannot end homelessness without homes. This section outlines work performed in 2023 related to each of the five priorities.

***1. Expand deeply affordable housing inventory for houseless individuals using existing tools and housing models. In the calendar year 2023, SOHHS:***

- Advocated with community stakeholders to the Hawaii Housing Finance & Development Corporation (HHFDC) to target Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF) toward projects that create supportive housing for people exiting homelessness.
- Worked with County governments to redirect more than \$2 million in State and County funding from temporary projects toward long-term, deeply affordable housing for homeless individuals. Also worked with Counties to focus a new round of \$15 million in Ohana Zones Pilot Program funding on programs that yield sustained housing placement (more on Ohana Zones Pilot Program, below).
- Worked with the Office of the Attorney General (AG) to draft the Governor's 2023 Emergency Proclamation on Homelessness and accompanying Emergency Rules, defining a process to expedite construction projects that house or serve people experiencing homelessness while also addressing environmental, cultural, and life safety concerns of the community.
- Utilized the Governor's Emergency Proclamation on Homelessness to expedite contracts for homeless services, including a dozen contracts related to supportive housing for homeless individuals, homeless survivors of domestic violence, and chronically homeless individuals.
- Worked with DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) to ensure Medicaid funds can pay for supportive housing services for homeless people who are Medicaid beneficiaries. This included aligning the Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot program with MQD's contracting requirements (more on the PSH Pilot below) and ensuring that additional housing supports for homeless people are included in a new 1115 waiver.

**2. Test new models to expand deeply affordable housing inventory for houseless individuals, including Kauhale (communal housing). In the calendar year 2023, SOHHS:**

- Worked with the Legislature to secure \$48 million for the Kauhale Initiative (\$15 million in FY23-24, \$33 million in FY24-25), with a goal of housing nearly 1,000 unsheltered homeless individuals through a minimum of twelve (12) Kauhale by November 2026, including six (6) Kauhale on Oahu and two (2) in each neighbor island County.
- Made dozens of speeches and presentations to the public and multiple briefings of legislative bodies to socialize the concept of Kauhale as a new model of communal housing that achieves deep affordability by building a sense of community and shared responsibility among residents.
- Created and oversaw operations of a temporary pilot Medical Respite Kauhale in the Capitol District, which served more than 20 patients who would have otherwise been discharged from hospitals into homelessness. The Medical Respite Kauhale also offered referrals, case management, and hygiene services to more than 200 homeless individuals in the Capitol District and yielded lessons now being used to improve and expand medical respite in the community.
- Worked with State agencies and private partners to plan two new Kauhale: one tiny home Kauhale near Middle Street and one vertical Kauhale at the Waikiki Vista dormitories. These projects will launch in January 2024 and provide deeply affordable, long-term housing for more than 150 homeless people.
- Worked with State, County, and community organizations to identify 20 potential Kauhale sites and assess the feasibility of developing or converting those properties into Kauhale. Identified potential operating partners (community-based organizations, homeless services providers, affordable housing property managers) for these potential Kauhale.
- Utilized the Governor’s Emergency Proclamation on Homelessness (Homeless EP) to expedite the design and/or construction of seven (7) projects that will house more than 400 homeless people: Pulama Ola Medical Respite Kauhale, Windward Behavioral Health Kauhale, Iwilei Medical Kauhale, Middle Street Kauhale, Puuhonua O Waianae Farm Village, Sacred Hearts Pahoia Village, and Haleiwa Youth Kauhale.
- Conducted community briefings and held a community informational session to lay the foundation for a Request for Proposals (RFP) for community-based Kauhale. RFP anticipated in early 2024.

**3. Expand space for treatment and housing of homeless individuals with serious mental or behavioral health needs. In the calendar year 2023, SOHHS:**

- Supported efforts led by the Governor’s Chief Advisor on Mental Health & the Justice System to plan two temporary Kauhale (Iwilei and Windward) with mental health and behavioral health support services to temporarily house and treat approximately 40 homeless individuals. SOHHS support included expediting construction via Homeless EP coverage, contracting assistance, and sharing lessons from other projects. These two



temporary medical/mental health Kauhale are planned to launch in January 2024.

- Supported efforts led by the Department of Health (DOH), Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) to create a mental health crisis stabilization center for homeless individuals at the City-owned Iwilei Resource Center. Used the Governor’s Homeless EP to expedite contracting and advised DOH on aligning crisis stabilization and housing services with SOHHS resources and priorities to reduce homelessness.
- Utilized the Governor’s Emergency Proclamation on Homelessness to expedite State and County homeless services contracts, including more than \$3.5 million in contracts for mental and behavioral health services, Assisted Community Treatment, and mental health crisis triage.

***4. Clear obstacles along the continuum of services from street outreach to sustained housing placement.***

- Surveyed and interviewed homeless services providers contracted by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Homeless Programs Office (HPO) to assess staffing needed to provide adequate services and staff salaries to prevent staffing shortages. Translated these findings into a budget figure needed for “adequate” outreach, case management, and shelter staffing. This amounted to a minimum increase of 25 percent in the HPO budget. Note that there has not been a substantial increase to the HPO budget in a decade.
- Connected homeless services providers with other government-contracted nonprofit organizations in the True Cost Coalition, to foster collaboration in advocacy for timely payment and adequate funding of homeless services.
- Worked with the two homeless Continuum of Care (COC) organizations (Partners in Care for Oahu and Bridging the Gap for neighbor islands) to foster timely, equitable, and sustainable placements into housing via the Coordinated Entry System (CES).
- Drafted contract provisions into contracts for Kauhale, Ohana Zones, and other funds managed by SOHHS to enable new pathways to housing for homeless people who do not fit existing eligibility criteria and prioritization rubrics that can restrict access to homeless housing and services.
- Utilized the Homeless EP to expedite more than 20 State and County contracts for homeless services, including contracts needed to quickly expand homeless outreach and to swiftly replace homeless outreach when a major homeless services provider on Oahu closed its doors.
- Conducted street outreach alongside State-contracted homeless services providers to gather qualitative data on provider staffing and training needs, and to identify areas of strength and improvement for homeless outreach services to remove barriers along the path from street to home.

***5. Call everyone away from Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) reactions to homeless solutions and toward a Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY) approach to support all other priorities.***

- Made more than 30 public speeches and presentations to educate the public on the root causes of homelessness, the need for homes to end homelessness, and the critical need for communities to support projects that bring unhoused people home.
- Conducted more than a dozen media interviews that stressed the importance of YIMBY over NIMBY if Hawaii is ever to end homelessness.
- Conducted more than a dozen meetings with and briefings of legislators at the State and County levels on the root causes of homelessness, the need for homes to end homelessness, and the critical need for communities to support projects that can bring unhoused people home.
- Created and oversaw operations of the temporary Medical Respite Kauhale in the Capitol District, near Washington Place, to promote the message of Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY).
- Included people with lived expertise of homelessness in community meetings, meetings and briefings with legislators, and conversations with State and County agencies. Hired SOHHS team members with lived expertise in homelessness.

## **C. SOHHS Updates on Key 2023 Legislation**

### **1. Ohana Zones Pilot Program**

The Legislature created the Ohana Zones Pilot Program (Ohana Zones) program in 2018 because it found attempts to address homelessness were insufficient and that, “addressing homelessness requires the courage to try something new.” The program was intended to foster spaces that offered “a welcoming, safe haven where individuals experiencing homelessness and those who serve them treat each other as extended family.” It provided exemptions from procurement and other requirements that allowed for flexible use of funds to address unmet needs. (Act 209, SLH 2018).

From 2019 to 2022, Ohana Zones funds were used to support a wide range of projects, from shelter repairs to diversion from incarceration to outreach and transitional housing. Initially, Ohana Zones funds were deployed through various State departments and attached agencies, including DOH AMHD, DBEDT HHFDC, DHS OYS, DHS HPO, and County governments. Over time, Ohana Zones appropriations were increasingly contracted through the Counties, to address unmet, island-specific needs that the Counties identified in consultation with their local communities.

Experience with Ohana Zones over the past four years has highlighted its key strengths:

- (1) No requirement for people to go through HUD-mandated Coordinated Entry System (CES).
- (2) Can support housing options that don’t meet HUD Housing Standards, e.g., tiny homes with shared bathrooms and kitchens.
- (3) Ability to serve people who don’t fit HUD prioritization of Chronic Homelessness – a definition that can be hard to document.

- (4) Ability to deploy funds quickly, thanks to exemptions from procurement and other requirements.

By 2022, a majority of Ohana Zones funds were being used by the Counties to launch supportive housing projects or other programs to house people experiencing homelessness. The Counties recognized that a lack of housing for people experiencing homelessness was a key obstacle to reducing homelessness in each jurisdiction. Counties were also using the flexibility offered by Ohana Zones funding to quickly place homeless people into housing who could not be prioritized under existing prioritization criteria or CES placement processes.

In 2023, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program as part of the State Budget that Governor Green signed into law in late June (Act 164, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023). Since July, the GCH and SOHHS have worked with the Counties to identify projects and programs for funding. Based upon these discussions and Ohana Zones lessons to date, the new appropriation will focus on providing start-up funding for projects or programs that lead to sustained housing placements for homeless people, including supportive housing. New Ohana Zones pilot program funding will also maximize flexibility to serve populations and provide programs not funded by other sources, e.g., to house populations that don't fit the "chronic homeless" definition; to provide more expedient pathways to housing that complement CES; and, to test housing models that are not supported by HUD-related funding.

Potential projects identified to date in discussions with the Counties include:

- Hawaii County: West Hawaii – Phase 2 of Kukuiola, a tiny home village to house homeless individuals adjacent to a shelter and homeless Navigation Center. East Hawaii – conversion of existing Hilo building into permanent supportive housing for homeless people.
- Maui County: Building purchase and conversion into Permanent Supportive Housing, similar to past conversion of dormitory space for Maui Huliau Project, funded by past Ohana Zones appropriations.
- Honolulu County: Convert a City-owned dormitory building into Permanent Supportive Housing for homeless families; convert a vacant City-owned Single Room Occupancy building into Permanent Supportive Housing for homeless singles and couples.
- Kauai County: New phases or expansions of existing Permanent Supportive Housing for homeless projects. Historically, these projects have been developed at under \$150,000 per unit and have a sustained housing placement rate of over 95 percent.

## **2. Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot Program**

In 2023, the Legislature established a supportive housing pilot program to "determine the impacts of supportive housing for vulnerable populations and provide urgent housing in the midst of the State's homelessness crisis and ongoing housing shortage." (Act 95, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023) Act 95 focuses the program on "[a]ffordable, permanent housing and services for people with special needs," for example, people with mental, physical, or developmental disabilities and kupuna. It is limited to Oahu.

More specifically, Act 95 provided:

- \$2,784,000 for SOHHS to contract for project-based supportive services. This amount was intended to be complemented by Medicaid funding.
- \$1,740,000 for HPHA to provide project-based rent assistance for up to 20 years.
- \$476,000 for SOHHS to contract to develop a data collection system related to the pilot.

Act 95 also exempts the program from procurement under chapters 103D and 103F, HRS, to enable SOHHS to select more efficiently, “qualified nonprofit organizations to administer components of the pilot program.”

Since July, the GCH and SOHHS have identified several projects on Oahu that are potential fits for the pilot program. These projects have existing housing units that could be converted into supportive housing with the addition of a supportive services contract and rental subsidies. These projects also have a potential service provider or providers to offer supportive services to residents.

The GCH and SOHHS have also worked closely with the MQD to incorporate Medicaid capacity-building and billing provisions into service provider contracts. This will ensure that housing and homeless service providers selected under the pilot develop their capacity to bill Medicaid for services, as intended by the Legislature.

### **3. Kauhale Initiative**

In 2023, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million for the Kauhale Initiative as part of the State Budget, signed into law in late June (Act 164, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023). Kauhale funding is intended to support projects that provide communal housing for people exiting homelessness. The Kauhale Initiative will strive to demonstrate new, cost-effective models of housing and healing that come from building a sense of community and responsibility among residents.

The theory behind the model is that typically costly aspects of operation, such as 24-7 hired security and high repair and maintenance costs, can be reduced if residents are encouraged to build a sense of ownership and responsibility for their community. This may be fostered by designing shared spaces for cooking, dining, recreation, gardening, or agriculture and/or intentional programming of activities like community improvement projects, a neighborhood watch, or other similar community service. Such roles can also help residents build skills and open employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Kauhale are sometimes envisioned as tiny homes with shared bathrooms, dining, and cooking facilities. However, they could also be created in repurposed hotels, offices,

dormitories, or apartment buildings. As long as deep affordability, extending from communal responsibility and ownership is built into the design and program plan, any space could be adapted for use as a Kauhale.

Many of the updates related to Kauhale are provided in the sections above. Since July, SOHHS has focused on identifying viable sites for Kauhale and likely operators for those sites. An overview of the sites identified and the spaces they will provide to house unhoused individuals is provided in Appendix A.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Ending homelessness ultimately depends on creating or acquiring long-term and permanent housing, affordable even to those with very limited incomes, such as Hawaii’s unhoused residents. Temporary shelters, transitional housing, and diversion programs only work to help end homelessness if there are places for people to “transition” and “divert” into. And, for housing to be sustained, it must be both deeply affordable and provide a sense of community connection. Lacking these two critical elements, people may leave the housing provided and return to homelessness.

Over the past year, a new GCH and SOHHS team have worked to define new priorities for the office, focused on creating deeply affordable spaces for housing and healing the unhoused residents of Hawaii’s communities. The office has set a new course for utilizing Ohana Zones funding, set the foundation for the Supportive Housing Pilot program, and launched the Kauhale Initiative. The GCH and SOHHS have also worked to cultivate the resources, personnel, partnerships, and shared understanding in the community needed to move the new priorities forward. The office looks forward to continued progress toward bringing all of Hawaii’s unhoused residents home.

**PART II:  
REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 346-381, HAWAII`I REVISED  
STATUTES  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS**

#### **I. Overview of the Hawai`i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH)**

##### **A. Background and Purpose**

The mission of the HICH is to prevent and end homelessness in Hawai`i. The HICH achieves this by coordinating governmental and private entities statewide, including federal, state, and local government; private foundations; the business community; the faith-based community; homeless service providers; and persons experiencing homelessness. [Section 346-381, HRS](#), outlines the specific duties and responsibilities of the HICH. The HICH is modeled after the [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\)](#) and is the first state interagency

council on homelessness formally established in statute.

The HICH has existed in various forms for over a decade; however, its specific duties and organizational structure have evolved as it transitioned from an informal entity to a formal advisory entity established in statute. In 2004, the HICH was an informal, voluntary council. In 2011, Governor Neil Abercrombie signed Executive Order No. 11-21, establishing the HICH. In 2012, Act 105, SLH, 2012 codified the HICH in HRS. The Legislature amended the HICH statute in [Act 76, SLH, 2013](#), [Act 81, SLH, 2019](#); and Act 252, SLH 2022. The 2013 amendments expanded the HICH membership; the 2019 amendment required the Governor to appoint the GCH without regard to Chapter 76, HRS; and the recent 2022 amendment established the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) to convene and support the HICH.

### **B. Membership and Quorum**

The GCH is the HICH chair. The HICH is comprised of 27 members, including leaders of State government agencies, legislators, federal and county government representatives, homeless service providers, and private, faith-based, and business sector leaders. A majority of HICH members, 14 of 27, constitute a quorum to do business and validate any council decision or act. The current HICH membership is available online at <http://homelessness.hawaii.gov/hich/>.

### **C. Organizational Structure and Staffing**

The SOHHS and HICH are attached to DHS for administrative purposes, and the SOHHS staff supports the HICH. The SOHHS includes the GCH and four staff that, among other duties, provide administrative support to the HICH and facilitate coordination and alignment of federal, State, and local efforts to address homelessness.

### **D. Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Address Homelessness**

In 2022, the HICH adopted a revised ten-year plan and strategic framework to end homelessness at its May 16, 2022, regular meeting. The plan targets four specific areas to drive implementation.

#### **1. *Building System Capacity and Strengthening Core Competencies.***

The HICH will continue to involve individuals with lived experience in every possible conversation and will encourage this for every sector of the system. This is vital to building the system's capacity and especially in strengthening core competencies because full understanding will never be reached without the perspective of those who have been on the receiving end of the system. Individuals with lived experience are the experts in the process and changes needed to strengthen our system. The GCH and staff are also currently working with the MQD to expand the use of peer support specialists, which will provide workforce development and healing while strengthening our system's capacity.

#### **2. *Strengthening System Leadership and Stakeholder Alignment.***

The HICH meets quarterly, which is inadequate to truly facilitate stakeholder alignment, so the GCH facilitates constant communication and awareness of each sector's kuleana and current

projects. The GCH meets regularly with various State departments, counties, and service providers to collaborate in any means possible and to reduce the duplication of efforts. The GCH is strengthening our leadership skills across the system by breaking down the silos in HICH operations and creating an inclusionary environment where all members and stakeholders feel comfortable working together. Providing this inclusionary space will strengthen the current leader's abilities and allow new leaders to emerge.

**3. *Investing in Organizational Support and Infrastructure.***

The HICH identified one major area: we must invest in: our front-line workers. State contracted service providers have not had an increase in funding for 10+ years, causing frontline workers to be severely underpaid. Our frontline workers are unable to provide quality care and services if they are at risk of homelessness themselves. It is a priority for both HICH and SOHHS to advocate for a 20% increase in the core homeless services budget administered by the Homeless Programs Office. This investment is a crucial first step in strengthening the system's capacity, leadership, and core competencies.

**4. *Sustaining and Scaling Housing-focused Approaches.***

One of HICH's top priorities is to support and lead any effort to create truly affordable spaces because the solution to homelessness is housing. The SOHHS is working on making this space through the Kauhale Initiative, the Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot program, and Ohana Zones. The HICH will continue identifying funding sources, land, and partnerships to increase Hawaii's housing inventory. Additionally, all projects HICH works towards will need a low barrier, housing first approach.

**5. *Diversion and Prevention to Address Households at Imminent Risk of Homelessness and Connections to Treatment for the Most Vulnerable.***

Treatment facilities for individuals with mental illness and behavioral health issues are overflowing, and this is a huge area of need that the HICH and SOHHS have identified as a priority. While some of the unhoused population will successfully maintain housing once receiving placement, many individuals will continue to need assistance and services. The HICH/SOHHS will work to create these spaces for treatment and also work to ensure that services are readily available and accessible. The HICH/SOHHS will also focus on improving services available to individuals at risk of homelessness, specifically focusing on programs that will improve economic stability. If we can provide support to individuals who are at risk of homelessness and connect vulnerable populations to treatment, then we can divert many away from reaching or staying unhoused.

The HICH 10-year plan is a living document and will be reviewed in 2024 to ensure alignment with the five priorities discussed by the HICH in the fourth quarter of 2023. During 2024, the HICH will work to strengthen alignment with new priorities and make any improvements to the 10-year plan that the GCH and Council members feel are needed. The GCH will also work with HICH members to identify key next steps and responsibilities to implement the 10-year plan.

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Affordable housing**—Generally, housing is considered "affordable" when the cost is less than 30 percent of a household's income. Conversely, when housing costs exceed this threshold, a household is 'housing-cost burdened.' With an estimated 57.5% of renters paying more than one-third of their income to rent, Hawai'i has the nation's second-highest number of cost-burdened renters. Also, the households with the most severe lack of affordable housing are extremely low-income, earning less than 30% Area Median Income (AMI).

**Chronically Homeless**—A chronically homeless person is a homeless person with a disability who has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or has been homeless on at least four separate occasions over the past three years. The combined length of time in those four or more occasions must be twelve months or more, as specified in the Final Rule on the definition of "chronically homeless" issued by HUD in December 2015. A chronically homeless family is a family with an adult head of household who meets the definition of a chronically homeless person.

**Continuum of Care (CoC)**—A CoC is a regional or local planning body coordinating HUD funding for housing and services for homeless families and persons. In Hawai'i, there are two CoCs – Partners in Care for the island of O`ahu and Bridging the Gap for the other counties. Each CoC includes government agencies, homeless service providers, funders, and other interested community members. Each CoC is responsible for submitting an annual application for federal homeless assistance funds. The federal funding for homeless services is also known as "CoC funds." In addition to applying for funding, the CoC administers the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count of the homeless population and the annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC). These counts provide an overview of the state of homelessness in a CoC.

**Coordinated entry system (CES)**—the Coordinated Entry System ensures that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access to homeless resources. Based on their strengths and needs, they are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance. A coordinated entry system helps communities prioritize housing and homeless assistance based on a homeless person's vulnerability and the severity of their needs. People who need assistance the most can receive it promptly. Federal law requires that CoCs establish a coordinated entry system.

**Deeply affordable housing** – housing units that charge approximately \$500 per unit, per month. At this price point, many people experiencing homelessness could afford housing. However, there is very little housing inventory at this price point in Hawaii's housing market, which is one of the root causes of homelessness in the islands.

**Emergency shelter**—An emergency shelter generally is a facility with overnight sleeping accommodations that provides short-term, temporary shelter for homeless persons and does not require occupants to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. Emergency shelters differ from transitional housing, which typically allows a maximum stay of up to 24 months.



Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)—The HMIS is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on housing and services for homeless persons, families, and persons at immediate risk of homelessness. Each CoC—Partners in Care and Bridging the Gap maintains its HMIS.

Homeless outreach—Homeless outreach includes meeting homeless persons on streets, sidewalks, or remote rural areas, including beaches and valleys. Outreach providers assist with completing program applications, determining program eligibility, housing search, placement, and working with the person to obtain identification and other vital documents (e.g., birth certificate or social security card).

Housing First—Housing First is a philosophy that provides homeless people with housing quickly and then provides services as needed. In a Housing First approach, there is an immediate and primary focus on accessing and sustaining permanent housing for all homeless populations. In addition to the Housing First philosophy, the term refers to specific Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs operated by the State and the City and County of Honolulu. The State's and City's Housing First programs adopt the philosophy of targeting chronically homeless households for services.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC)—The HIC is a point-in-time inventory of programs within a Continuum of Care that provides beds and units dedicated to serving homeless persons. The HIC includes beds for emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing beds.

Kauhale – housing intentionally designed and operated to foster a sense of community, belonging, and shared responsibility for caring for people and place. The Native Hawaiian word meaning a group of houses is also used to describe a hamlet or settlement.

Permanent supportive housing (PSH)—PSH is a service delivery model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to enable homeless persons to attain and maintain permanent housing. PSH programs typically target chronically homeless persons or homeless persons who experience multiple housing barriers and cannot maintain housing stability without supportive services. As a result, PSH programs positively impact housing status and result in cost savings to various public service systems, including health care. The State and City Housing First programs that target chronically homeless persons are examples of PSH programs.

Point-In-Time (PIT) Count—A PIT Count is an unduplicated count on a single night of the people in a community experiencing homelessness. The PIT Count includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations. HUD requires communities receiving federal funds for homeless services to conduct a PIT Count at least every other year. HUD also requires communities to identify whether a person is an individual, a member of a family unit, or an unaccompanied youth under 18. Also, communities must determine if a person is chronically homeless.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH)—Rapid Rehousing prioritizes moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The duration of financial assistance provided in a rapid rehousing program can include either short-term (up to 3 months) or medium-term (6 months to 24 months) support. In general, the core components of Rapid Rehousing are housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program—"Section 8" refers to Section 8 of the Housing Act, which authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords for low-income households. A common form of Section 8 assistance is the HUD Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, which provides direct rental payment to the landlord. Typically, a Section 8 voucher recipient will pay one-third of their income towards rent, with the remaining balance of rent provided by the Section 8 voucher payment. A Section 8 voucher typically provides a full rental subsidy instead of a shallow one.

Project-Based Voucher (PBV) – PBVs are part of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and provide place-based subsidies to assist households in affording housing in the private market.

Supportive Housing – Supportive Housing is affordable housing with wraparound supportive services for vulnerable individuals and families, including homeless individuals, families, and other sub-populations with acute needs.

Transitional Shelter—Transitional shelter, also referred to as transitional housing, is designed to provide homeless persons and families with temporary stability and support to move to and maintain permanent housing eventually. Transitional housing is generally for up to 24 months with accompanying supportive services.

## Appendix A

### RUNNING LIST OF POTENTIAL KAUAHALE PROJECTS

			Location	Retained	New	Total**
<b>VIABLE SITES AND OPERATORS</b>						
Waikiki Vista	Gov's Homeless Coordinator & C&C Honolulu		Honolulu	0	125	125
Middle Street Kauahale	Gov's Homeless Coordinator		Honolulu	0	54	54
Windward Mental Health Kauahale	Gov's Mental Health Advisor		Kaneohe	0	25	25
Iwilei Mental Health Kauahale	Gov's Mental Health Advisor		Honolulu	0	TBD	TBD
Central Maui Kauahale	Gov's Homeless Coordinator		Kahului	0	200	200
Mapunapuna Kauahale	Gov's Homeless Coordinator		Honolulu	0	30	30
Big Island Recovery Kauahale	Private nonprofit-led		Hilo	0	50	50
Waianae Kauahale	Private nonprofit-led		Waianae	0	125	125
Nanakuli Kauahale	Private nonprofit-led		Nanakuli	0	20	20
Haleiwa Youth Kauahale	Private nonprofit-led		Haleiwa	0	15	15
Shelter + Kupuna Kauahale	Private nonprofit-led		Pahoa	32	50	82
				32	694	726
<b>ADDITIONAL WORK NEEDED TO DETERMINE VIABILITY</b>						
Urban Honolulu Vertical Kauahale	City-owned building conversion		Honolulu	0	80	80
Big Island Wellness Kauahale	pending land discussions; oper identified		E Hawaii	0	TBD	TBD
Kauai Safe Parking + Kauahale	pending land discussions; oper identified		Anahola	0	40	40
Hui Mahiai Aina	pending flood mitigation; oper identified		Waimanalo	0	200	200
Molokai Kauahale	pending land discussions; oper identified		Kaunakakai	0	25	25
Sand Island Kauahale	pending site and infrastructure assessment		Honolulu	0	60	60
Wahiawa Navigation + Kauahale	pending negotiations with building owner		Wahiawa	0	30	30
Ewa Beach-Waipahu Kauahale	pending land discussions; oper identified		Waipahu	0	TBD	TBD
				435		435
<b>COMMUNITY-BASED PROPOSALS</b>						
"RFP" for community-based proposals, selection in Spring 2024. Goal: 5 projects with combined 200 occupants.				0	200	200
				0	200	200
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>						
				<b>32</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>1,361</b>

\* Note this list is subject to change as pre-development site planning and discussions with operators progress.

\*\* Retained, New, and Total figures are occupants, not units.