



HAWAII STATE - COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD (HS-COF)

MEETING AGENDA

Friday, May 16, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM



Location: Queen Liliuokalani Building, 1390 Miller St, Honolulu

Department of Human Services Human Resources Conference Room, Room 1 and 2

Virtual access to meeting via **Zoom** - Meeting ID #**876 5720 3038** / Password: **Fathers**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87657203038?pwd=MlZOejU3VS9iRWVwNG1ZRWhLM1ZpQT09>

Zoom waiting room will be open 5-15 minutes prior to meeting start time.

Call to Order <Hit Record>

MISSION Statement

[From [Chapter 577E](#), Hawaii Revised Statutes] **The mission of the Hawaii State - Commission on Fatherhood (HS-COF) is to promote healthy family relationships by emphasizing the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to state agencies and makes recommendations on programs, services, contracts, policies and laws relating to children and families.**

I. Introductions and Roll Call

(per [Haw. Rev. Stat §92-3.7\(a\)](#), state name of anyone present at nonpublic location)

- a. Chair Jeff Esmond (Oahu) – Introductory Comments and Conduct Reminder
- b. Fatherhood Commissioners (voting members, by seniority)
 - i. Alan Sunio (Hawai'i Coalition for Dads)
 - ii. Allen Cardines (Oahu)
 - iii. Brian Alston (Kauai)
 - iv. Marty Oliphant, Vice Chair (Oahu)
 - v. Neel Chauhan (Oahu)
 - vi. Mark Augustine (Maui)
- c. Ex-Officio(s) or their designees (non-voting members) and Updates
 - i. Director of Human Services
 - ii. Superintendent of Education
 - iii. Director of Health
 - iv. Attorney General
 - v. Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation
 - vi. Executive Director Office of Youth Services
- d. Deputy Attorneys General for Sunshine Law issues
- e. Administrative Assistant
- f. Guests

II. Legislative Update

- a. Guest Speaker – Former Representative Marcus Oshiro – From the 2025 to the 2026 Legislative Session: Why fathers and the HS-COF should engage the State Legislature on the topics of gambling, casinos and recreational marijuana bills in the 2026 legislative session (no specific bills attached to this agenda or for discussion)
- b. Commissioner Update - Legislative Update by Commissioner Alston (see attachment)

III. Community shares or concerns:

- a. Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)

Public comments must address items listed on the published agenda
- b. Commissioner Updates (seniority order) and Community Outreach (up to 5 minutes each)
 - i. Commissioner Cardines – Be a Hero to Your Children and Community Gathering on 5/19/25

IV. Current Fiscal Year Initiatives – (Vote)

- a. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
- b. Annual Awards – marketing, outreach, press release and updates

- i. Aloha Father of the Year Awards
 - ii. Parent-Friendly Business of the Year Awards
 - iii. Sponsorship Awards
 - iv. How will we present these awards (ceremonies or other programs)?
 - i. Maui – June 4, 2025 – Celebration of Fathers & Families Event
 - ii. Kauai
 - iii. Oahu
 - iv. Island of Hawai'i
 - c. Periodic Newsletter – Commissioner Alston – Summer 2025 Draft
 - d. Outreach Events
 - i. [Maui Family Support Services, Inc.](#) – 18th Annual Celebration of Fathers & Families on June 7, 2025, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon
 - ii. Periodic online gathering of fatherhood commissioners nationwide – Commissioner Alston
 - iii. Fatherhood Commission Luncheon
- V. Ongoing Business and Updates (vote)
- a. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
 - b. Trauma Informed Training planning
 - c. Professional Development –
 - i. [Question, Persuade and Refer Suicide Prevention Certification Training](#) presented by Fathers and Families Coalition of America (5/14/25)– report
 - ii. Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan Community Engagement Forum (5/15/25) - report
 - d. Commissioner position update
 - e. Officer nominations and elections
- VI. Upcoming Meetings (generally 3rd Friday each month 10:00 AM)
- a. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
 - b. Next Meetings
 - i. June 20, 2025 (DHS, Room 2F)
 - ii. Remaining 2025 meetings (7/18, 8/22, 9/19, 10/17, 11/21, 12/19)
- VII. Conclusion (Vote)
- a. Final Thoughts
 - b. Vote to Adjourn

<Stop Recording>

ATTACHMENTS (Agenda item indicated):

II.b – Legislative Update

IV.c – Summer 2025 Newsletter Draft

IV.d.ii - Gathering for Fatherhood Commissioners Nationwide Plan

The final Board Packet will be posted on the [HS-COF website](#).

If you need an auxiliary aid/service or other accommodation due to a disability, contact the Commission at fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com (or current Chair, Jeff Esmond, at 808-550-0080) as soon as possible. Requests made as early as possible have a greater likelihood of being fulfilled. Upon request, this notice is available in alternate/accessible formats. Testimony can be submitted via e-mail to fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com marked TESTIMONY in the title, or mailed to Hawaii State – Commission on Fatherhood, c/o DHS – Office of Fiscal Management, 1390 Miller Street, Honolulu, HI 96813. Captioning may be available with advanced request.

Meeting Conduct Agreement & reminder – please act appropriately, contribute and respect everyone.

HAWAI'I STATE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD LEGISLATIVE ALIGNMENT SUMMARY REPORT (2025–2027)

Advancing the Mission Through Strategic Policy Alignment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Hawai'i legislative session began with bold commitments to housing, education, healthcare, and economic opportunity — priorities deeply relevant to the mission of the Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood. This report analyzes legislative progress in these areas and identifies clear intersections with the Commission's 2025–2027 Strategic Plan. It concludes with actionable recommendations for Commissioners to drive positive outcomes for fathers, families, and communities across the islands.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND POLICY MOMENTUM IN 2025

This session, lawmakers introduced over 3,000 bills, with fewer than 15% remaining active and just 44 passing both chambers. Despite the high attrition rate, substantial state funding and legislative support have coalesced around:

- **Housing:** Nearly \$400 million allocated, including \$240 million to rental and dwelling unit revolving funds, and \$68 million toward the Ka Lei Momi initiative.
- **Education:** Expansion of preschool access through HB 692 and consideration of free school lunches via SB 1300.
- **Health & Human Services:** Over 600 bills introduced; wraparound services for former inmates funded at \$4 million.
- **Economic Stability:** Investment in vocational training and workforce housing development.
- **Justice & Equity:** Modest steps toward family-friendly court and workplace policies; formation of a working group on paid family leave.

COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW (2025–2027)

The Commission's strategy revolves around three guiding themes:

- **Empowering Fathers:** Provide access to legal, educational, and mental health resources.
- **Strengthening Families:** Promote stable family structures through father involvement.

- **Building Communities:** Cultivate support networks that recognize the father's role in child development.

Key Focus Areas: Education, Mental Health, Economic Stability

Strategic Goals:

1. Promote Healthy Families through outreach and education
2. Support Fathers as Caregivers through tailored legal and wellness services
3. Advocate for Supportive Policies, including parental leave and family court equity

KPIs: Workshop attendance, service access, policy adoption, participant feedback

AREAS OF ALIGNMENT BETWEEN LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND COMMISSION GOALS

A. Education

Legislative expansion of preschool access through the Open Doors program aligns with the Commission's Year 1–2 goal of launching educational initiatives. This is an opportunity to integrate father-focused curricula and outreach within these state-sponsored early learning platforms.

B. Mental Health & Reentry Support

The Legislature's \$4 million investment in reentry services directly supports the Commission's mission to empower marginalized fathers, including those exiting incarceration. Commissioners can help shape navigator programs to ensure services address mental health, parenting, and reintegration.

C. Housing & Economic Stability

Massive state investment in housing aligns with the Commission's focus on family stability. By linking fathers to affordable housing and workforce development programs, Commissioners can advance both economic empowerment and long-term involvement in children's lives.

D. Policy Reform and Workplace Equity

Although paid family leave bills did not pass, the formation of a study group keeps the issue alive. This aligns with the Commission's Year 3 goal to advocate for workplace flexibility and father-friendly reforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS' PRACTICAL ACTION

On Each Island and Statewide, Commissioners Should:

- **Engage with Preschool and Reentry Programs:** Collaborate with DHS and DOE to integrate father-centric services in preschool and navigator models.
- **Promote Mental Health Access:** Partner with funded agencies to refer fathers to counseling and legal services.
- **Advocate for Family Policy Reform:** Testify in future sessions on paid leave and family court equity; build coalitions with family-centered organizations.
- **Support Economic Uplift:** Leverage housing and vocational training programs to connect fathers to jobs and housing.
- **Monitor Impact Using KPIs:** Track participation and feedback across all fatherhood programs; use data to refine future initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 legislative session provides fertile ground for the Commission to deepen its impact. With state priorities overlapping our strategic vision, Commissioners must act as local champions, policy advocates, and community connectors. By aligning our efforts with ongoing investments in housing, education, and family services, we can make fatherhood a cornerstone of Hawai'i's healthy, resilient future.

HAWAII STATE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD



SUMMER 2025

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/fatherhood/>

FATHERHOOD AND TRAUMA

This summer's newsletter lead article builds on the informative April 2025 presentation by Kev Thompson, Project Manager for Hawai'i's Office of Wellness and Resilience, which highlighted the intersections of fatherhood and trauma.

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting healthy family relationships, we explore the nature of trauma, its various forms, how it affects fathers and their children, and practical steps families can take toward healing.

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is "an emotional response to a terrible event" that overwhelms a person's ability to cope, often producing intense fear, helplessness, dissociation, or confusion.

While experiences vary, trauma fundamentally disrupts an individual's sense of safety and well-being. In fathers, unaddressed trauma can quietly influence daily interactions, emotional availability, and the consistency of support provided to children.

TYPES OF TRAUMA

Trauma manifests in several forms:

Acute Trauma: Results from a single distressing event (e.g., a severe accident).

Chronic Trauma: Stems from repeated or prolonged stressors (e.g., ongoing domestic violence or childhood abuse).

Complex Trauma: Involves exposure to multiple, varied traumatic events over time. A fourth category, secondary or vicarious trauma, can occur when caregivers absorb the emotional burden of loved ones who've experienced trauma

IMPACT ON MEN, FATHERS, AND PARENTING

Trauma can impair emotional regulation, making it harder for fathers to respond calmly under stress

Common reactions include irritability, difficulty concentrating, and withdrawal—barriers to consistent, nurturing parenting. Fathers carrying unresolved trauma may struggle with bonding, discipline, and co-parenting communication, potentially eroding trust and stability in the home. Recognizing these patterns is the first step toward restoring healthy father-child relationships.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS.

Children exposed to trauma—either directly or through a parent's unaddressed stress—face risks to brain development, stress-response systems, immune function, and learning processes.

Adolescents may exhibit anxiety, withdrawal, or behavioral problems; younger children often show regression, somatic complaints, or difficulty expressing needs. Early identification of these signs enables families and professionals to intervene before long-term consequences set in.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT TRAUMA.

Early Recognition & Open Communication

Encourage honest conversations about feelings; validate struggles without judgment.

Adopt Trauma-Informed Practices

Frameworks like Community Connections' Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) and its male-focused adaptation, M-TREM, offer evidence-based tools for healing.

Leverage Local Resources

Contact Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Maui Ola (Office of Wellness and Resilience) for fact sheets, training, and referral networks.

Seek Professional Support

Trauma-informed parenting programs and mental-health services can guide families through structured interventions and peer support.

REFERENCES:

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Trauma. In APA Dictionary of Psychology.

Retrieved May 7, 2025, from

"<https://dictionary.apa.org/trauma>"

Jayne Leonard. (2025, February 12). Trauma: Types, causes, symptoms, and recovery. Medical News Today.

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Office of Wellness and Resilience. (n.d.). Fact sheet. Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Maui Ola, State of Hawai'i

(https://owr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/GOV-OWR_FactSheet.pdf)

Thompson, K. (2025, April). Trauma and fatherhood [Presentation]. Office of Wellness and Resilience, State of Hawai'i.

Trauma-Informed Approaches for Programs Serving Fathers in Re-Entry (OPRE Report No. 2018-69). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION & STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 legislative session brought forth critical policy advancements that align with the Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood's mission. From strengthening family stability to enhancing economic opportunities, lawmakers focused on issues that directly impact fathers and families. As the Commission continues to advocate for father involvement, this report highlights key legislative developments and strategic opportunities. By integrating these policy shifts into our long-term goals, we can further empower fathers, enrich communities, and promote family resilience across the islands.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The 2025 Hawai'i Legislature advanced priorities aligned with fatherhood advocacy, including:

- Housing: \$400M investment, ensuring family stability.
- Education: HB 692 expands preschool access, offering opportunities for father engagement.
- Health & Reentry: \$4M allocated for wraparound services benefiting formerly incarcerated fathers.
- Economic Stability: Workforce training and support programs enhance fathers' financial security.

Strategic Plan Correlation & Next Steps

- Education: Integrate fatherhood-focused curricula in early learning programs.
- Reentry Support: Advocate for mental health services and parenting resources.
- Housing: Connect fathers with workforce development for economic stability.
- Policy Reform: Engage in legislative advocacy for parental leave and family equity.

By aligning with state initiatives, the Commission strengthens its mission to empower fathers, stabilize families, and build resilient communities.



“Gathering for Fatherhood Commissioners Nationwide”

This document offers an actionable roadmap to guide Commissioners to bring the event to life successfully.

Overview:

The State of Hawaii Commission on Fatherhood seeks to implement the “Gathering for Fatherhood Commissioners Nationwide”— a bi-monthly online meeting designed to foster collaboration and professional development among Commissioners of Fatherhood Organizations across the United States.

Implementation Plan:

1. Establish a Planning Committee

- Form a dedicated team responsible for event organization, logistics, and participant engagement.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders, including state-level fatherhood commissions, to ensure broad representation.

2. Select a Virtual Platform

- Choose a reliable video conferencing tool with interactive features such as breakout rooms, Q&A functions, and panel discussions.
- Provide technical support and training to ensure seamless event execution.

3. Develop a Structured Event Format

- Rotating Hosting: Assign different states to lead each session, providing diverse insights and expertise.
- Interactive Content: Incorporate presentations, panel discussions, and workshops focused on fatherhood policies and program development.
- Networking Features: Facilitate virtual lounges, matchmaking algorithms, and scheduled meetings to strengthen connections.

4. Marketing & Outreach Strategy

- Promote the event through email campaigns, social media, and direct outreach to Fatherhood Commissioners nationwide.
- Ensure a streamlined registration process with clear instructions and event details.

5. Follow-Up & Continuous Improvement

- Conduct post-event surveys to assess effectiveness and gather feedback for future sessions.
- Distribute recordings, resource materials, and key takeaways to enhance ongoing learning and engagement.

Expected Impact:

- Stronger Collaboration: Enables Fatherhood Commissions to exchange best practices and innovative strategies.
- Knowledge Sharing: Fosters cross-state learning to improve fatherhood programs nationally.
- Professional Growth: Provides Commissioners with continuous development opportunities to enhance their leadership roles.
- Long-Term Sustainability: Establishes an ongoing support network for Commissioners dedicated to advancing fatherhood initiatives.