

HAWAΓI STATE - COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD (HS-COF) <u>MEETING AGENDA</u> <u>Friday, June 20, 2025</u> <u>Time: 11:00 AM</u>



Location: Queen Liliuokalani Building, 1390 Miller St, 2nd Floor, 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** <u>https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87657203038?pwd=MIZOejU3VS9iRWVwNG1ZRWhLM1ZpQT09</u>

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

Call to Order <Hit Record>

MISSION Statement

[From <u>Chapter 577E</u>, Hawaii Revised Statutes] The mission of the Hawaii State - Commission on Fatherhood (<u>HS-COF</u>) 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 <u>Haw. Rev. Stat §92-3.7(a)</u>, 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. <u>Community shares or concerns:</u>

- a. Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
 - Public comments must address items listed on the published agenda
- b. Guest Speaker- Geena Thielen The Transgender Parent Experience
- III. 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 Award
 - iii. Sponsorship Awards
 - iv. Update on presentation of awards (ceremonies or other programs)
 - i. Maui June 7, 2025 Celebration of Fathers & Families Event
 - ii. Kauai
 - iii. Oahu
 - 1. Key Project

2. Update from Mayor's Office

iv. Island of Hawai'i

- c. Periodic Newsletter Commissioner Alston Summer 2025 edition
- d. Outreach Events
 - i. Periodic online gathering of fatherhood commissioners nationwide Commissioner Alston
- IV. Ongoing Business and Updates (vote)
 - a. Community shares or concerns Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
 - b. Trauma Informed Training planning tentatively planned for 8/22/25
 - c. Commissioner position update
 - d. Officer nominations and elections

V. Upcoming Meetings (generally 3rd Friday each month 10:00 AM)

- a. Community shares or concerns Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
- b. Next Meetings
 - i. Remaining 2025 meetings (7/18, 8/22, 9/19, 10/17, 11/21, 12/19)

VI. <u>Conclusion (Vote)</u>

a. Our logo

"The hand is holding or supporting the kalo, which is extremely important in Hawaiian culture because it serves as a symbol of ancestry, heritage and family as well as sustenance and life. The triangle has a dual meaning as it is both a symbol of the family (three points representing the mother, father and child) and safety and shelter of the home." – Designer Jonathan Zane, 2016



- b. Final Thoughts
 - i. Commissioner Cardines final meeting as a Commissioner
 - ii. Commissioner Esmond- final meeting as Commission Chair (but not as a Commissioner)
- c. Vote to Adjourn

<Stop Recording>

ATTACHMENTS (Agenda item indicated):

II.b - Guest speaker bio

 $III.c-periodic \ newsletter$

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 <u>fatherhoodcommission.hi.@gmail.com</u> (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 <u>fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com</u> 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.

Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood June 20, 2025 Meeting Guest Speaker: Geena Thielen

The Transgender Parent Experience



Geena Thielen has been a licensed General Contractor since 1996. She established Complete Construction Services in 2001 and quickly built a successful track record as a top custom home building and remodeling Contractor. This included back to back years on Hawaii's fastest 50 as well as multiple Renaissance Awards and the 2019 BIA Builder of the Year.

In 2021 Geena changed her focus and began working as a

Developer and Construction Manager on affordable housing projects under the City Bill 7 program. She has overseen two projects to successful completion and is nearing the same milestone on a third.

In addition to her work, Geena has a robust volunteer schedule. She has served in many positions with BIA including Past President 2013, State Rep and National Area Chair at NAHB, Past Chair Government Relations Committee and Current Chair Codes Committee. Geena also currently serves on the City Building Board of Appeals as well as the Board of Directors for the Hawaii Habitat for Humanity State Association.

Geena and her wife Laura live in Kailua with their son (15) and have a daughter (19) in college on the mainland.

HAWAI'I STATE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD



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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPONSORSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

- NANAIKAPONO CHURCH
- MAUI FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES
- STORYBOOK THEATRE OF HAWAII
- KUALOA-HEEIA ECUMENICAL YOUTH PROJECT
- HAWAII CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY
 CENTER
- ADULT AND TEEN CHALLENGE PACWEST OAHU



Commissioner Cardines at Nanaikapono Church's Be a Hero to Your Children and Community Gathering.



Adult and Teen Challenge PacWest Oahu pictured at their fundraiser gala event.

FATHERHOOD COMMISSION MEMBERS

CHAIR - JEFF ESMOND Representing the City and County of Honolulu

VICE CHAIR - MARTY OLIPHANT Representing the City and County of Honolulu

ALAN SUNIO Representing the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads

ALLEN CARDINES Representing the City and County of Honolulu

MARK AUGUSTINE Representing the City and County of Maui

> BRIAN ALSTON Representing the County of Kauai

NEEL CHAUHAN Representing the City and County of Honolulu

HAWAI'I 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.

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 malefocused adaptation, M-TREM, offer evidence-based tools for healing.

Leverage Local Resources

Contact Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Mauli 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.

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.

REFERENCES:

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Trauma. In APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved May 7, 2025, from "<u>https://dictionary.apa.org/trauma</u>" Jayne Leonard. (2025, February 12). Trauma: Types, causes, symptoms, and recovery. Medical News Today. Retrieved from <u>https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/trauma</u> M-TREM: Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model for men. In Dion, R., LaFlair, L., Azur, M., Morzuch, M., & D'Angelo, A. (2018). Office of Wellness and Resilience. (n.d.). Fact sheet. Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Mauli Ola, State of Hawai'i (<u>https://owr.hawaii.gov/wp-</u>

<u>content/uploads/2025/04/GOV-OWR_FactSheet.pdf</u>) 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.



Five Ways to Restore Father-Child Relationships in Hawai'i

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Partnering with local organizations and agencies to create support systems for fathers.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

Advocating for policies that support fathers and their roles in families.

EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Encouraging fathers to engage more in their children's education and addressing the educational disparities that affect boys in particular.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Focusing on improving the physical and mental health of men in Hawai'i, which directly impacts their ability to be present and supportive fathers.

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Providing platforms for fathers to connect emotionally with their children.

CONCLUSION

The concept of "father hunger" in Hawai'i is a call to action. It is imperative to acknowledge and address the void left by absent fathers. Through strategic partnerships, policy changes, and community engagement, there is hope to restore the essential father-child bond, significantly benefiting Hawai'i 's families and society. By addressing these issues head-on, Hawai'i can set a precedent for how communities can come together to heal and strengthen the foundational family unit and ensure the well-being of all children in the state.

SPOTLIGHT: EMPOWERING FATHERS & FAMILIES

Showcasing invaluable resources and the stories of inspiring leaders.

Mr. Kawika Mattos

In this edition, we're thrilled to shine a spotlight on Mr. Kawika Mattos, a beacon of hope and guidance for fathers across Hawaii. As the dynamic manager of Kane Connections and a devoted Hawaii State Fatherhood Commissioner, Kawika's unwavering dedication to nurturing family bonds and fostering leadership among fathers is truly commendable. His work, especially with men on Maui, has been transformative, creating a ripple effect of positive change throughout the Hawaiian islands. Join us in celebrating Kawika's impactful contributions as a father, leader, and pillar of strength in our community.

RESOURCES

RESOURCE LIST

- Oʻahu
- Maui.
- Kaua'i

SUPPORT SERVICES

Details on counseling, educational programs, and support groups specifically designed for fathers in Hawai'i.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Reach out to the Hawai'i State - Commission on Fatherhood and other key organizations for support and information.

Jeff Esmond, Chair, Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood

808.550.0080

father hood commission. hi@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS 🚓

HS-COF announces that we are seeking applicants for the following 2024 awards, due by 4/10/24.

- o Aloha Father of the Year Awards
- o Parent-Friendly Business of the Year Award
- o Sponsorship Awards (up to \$1,500 for local non-profits offering programs or services related to fatherhood)

HS-COF is looking for Commissioners to represent the following counties: Maui, Hawai'i. Please email <u>fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com</u> for more information.