

# HAWAII STATE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD



SPRING 2025

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### AWARDS

HS-COF announces that we are seeking applicants for the following 2025 awards, due by 4/16/25:

- 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)

Visit [Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood](#) or email [fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com](mailto:fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com) to submit an application.



Commissioner Alston issues a proclamation to award Father of the Year to David Bown with Kauai Mayor Derek Kawakami.



Chair Jeff Esmond honors previous Father of the Year, Pono Guerrero at the Key Project.

### 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 County of Maui

**Brian Alston**

Representing the County of Kauai

**Neel Chauhan**

Representing the City and County of Honolulu

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### FATHER HUNGER: RESTORING HAWAII'S FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN

Hawaii, a land of diverse cultures and breathtaking landscapes, faces a silent issue that impacts its very core – the absence of fathers in the lives of many children. This phenomenon, often referred to as "father hunger," is a growing concern that aligns closely with the mission and goals of the HAWAII -State Commission on Fatherhood. Our aim is to strengthen family bonds by emphasizing the critical role of fathers.

### THE ISSUE OF FATHERLESSNESS IN HAWAII

In HAWAII, the absence of fathers has become a significant social issue. Children growing up without the presence or involvement of their fathers or father-figures are more likely to face emotional, behavioral, and academic challenges. This gap in the family structure can lead to a deep-seated yearning in children, a condition Dr. Margo Maine, a Clinical Psychologist, first described as "father hunger." It's an emotional void felt by children whose fathers are physically or emotionally absent, leading to various issues, including poor self-esteem, emotional distress, and difficulties in social relationships.

### IMPACT ON BOYS AND GIRLS

The effects of fatherlessness are particularly pronounced in Hawaii. Boys may exhibit signs of aggression, struggle with identity issues, and face educational setbacks. Girls, on the other hand, often encounter difficulties in forming trusting relationships and may suffer from low self-esteem and body image issues. The absence of a father figure affects children's emotional and social development, underscoring the need for father involvement in their lives.

### RICHARD REEVES' PERSPECTIVE ON FATHERLESSNESS

Dr. Richard Reeves, a renowned researcher, highlights the broader implications of fatherlessness. He emphasizes that children without fathers are more likely to experience poverty, educational failures, and mental health issues. His research suggests that effective intervention strategies are crucial to address these challenges.

### LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO FATHERS, MEN AND FAMILIES

As part of our ongoing commitment to support and uplift fathers, men, and families across Hawaii, this section is dedicated to keeping you informed about legislative developments that could impact your lives and roles within the family and community. We actively monitor and advocate for policies that promote fatherly engagement, support family unity, and ensure the well-being of all family members. Stay connected with us for updates on laws, policies, and initiatives designed to empower fathers, enhance family dynamics, and foster a supportive environment for all Hawaii's children and families.

### VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

**VISION:** A Hawaii where every child thrives in the nurturing care of their fathers and where the invaluable role of fathers in family life is fully recognized and supported by all facets of the community.

### VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

**MISSION:** To combat the pressing issue of "father hunger" in Hawaii by promoting the importance of fatherhood, supporting fathers in their journey, and facilitating the reestablishment of strong father-child bonds. We aim to address the emotional, social, and economic impacts of father absence and advocate for a society where fathers are actively involved in the lives of their children.

### GOALS:

**Awareness and Education:** Increase awareness about the importance of fathers and the impact of their absence. Offer educational programs to empower fathers with parenting skills.

**Legislative Advocacy:** Support policies that enhance the role of fathers in families and ensure fathers have the resources to be involved in their children's lives.

**Community Support:** Build partnerships to provide fathers with counseling, educational programs, and support groups.

**Father-Child Interaction:** Promote activities that improve father-child relationships and encourage positive interactions.

# 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 formerly 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

- [O'ahu](#)
- [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

[fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com](mailto:fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com)

## OPPORTUNITIES

HS-COF is looking for Commissioners to represent the following counties: Hawai'i. Please email [fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com](mailto:fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com) for more information.