



Courtesy Tyler Kuse

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at [governor.hawaii.gov](http://governor.hawaii.gov) to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check [www.facebook.com/GovernorIge](https://www.facebook.com/GovernorIge) for daily activities.

## From the Governor: Action on housing, homelessness

**Q. What is your plan to help provide homes people can afford?**

**A.** The housing shortage is a long-standing, complex problem that can only be solved by partnering with the private sector and the counties. To better understand the challenges, we met with representatives from the Land Use Research Foundation, the Building Industry Association and several home builders. We crafted a plan from those discussions and set a goal that was realistic and achievable: **to produce at least 10,000 housing units across the state by 2020.** The work ahead involves reducing bureaucratic barriers, strengthening financing tools and refocusing our priorities for people with low and moderate incomes.



Gov. David Ige meeting with developers and state housing agency staff to plan for more housing on all islands.

**Key pieces of the state housing plan include:**

- Streamlining policies for the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation to make building affordable units more feasible.
- Working with the Legislature to increase funding for the Rental Housing Revolving Fund for financing more rental housing and the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund so the state can help with infrastructure (roads, waterlines) on state lands.
- Helping more homeless individuals and families into shelters and permanent housing with the social services they need and using the governor's emergency proclamation authority to expedite action. Our strategy combines affordable housing, health and human services outreach, and public safety efforts that treat people with dignity instead of just shuffling them between encampments.



Planning director Leo Asuncion with map of state lands in Kalihi.

**Q. What does the future of housing look like for Hawai'i ?**

**A.** The 10,000 housing unit goal is just the start. Besides accelerating delivery of affordable housing in the short run, my administration is formulating a production goal for the next 10 years focusing on multi-family rental housing units for lower-income families. We want to maximize state assets and work with our community partners to meet the housing demand for the future.

# Governor's ESSA team to work on transforming schools

**A** Governor's Team on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will begin work this month to help the Department of Education transform public schools in Hawai'i.

The 17-member team, headed by award-winning former principal Darrel Galera, will develop a blueprint consistent with ESSA to improve public education and identify areas of need.

The new federal law has been called "historic" in that it returns authority to the states to set direction for their own schools. Community meetings and an education summit this summer will give people a chance to provide input.

"The law returns authority over education to the governors, districts, educators, and parents, and our priority is to make certain that it remains with them," Governor Ige said.

## Hawai'i to save millions as only state with two 'positive' outlooks

**F**ollowing a recent New York visit, Governor Ige and budget director Wes Machida got some good news: the state will be saving \$32.8 million from a refinanced general obligation bond sale for public improvement projects.

In fact, according to its consultant's report, Hawai'i is the only state in the nation with two "positive" outlooks — the highest outlook possible — from Standard & Poor's and Moody's for the state's financial condition.

"The negotiated refunding sale resulted in the state obtaining its lowest historical borrowing costs," said Machida. "The governor led the team in credit rating presentations, and his role was crucial in explaining our long-term strategy to manage our resources."

### State Job Fair at Capitol May 4

To help job-seekers, the State of Hawai'i will hold its own Job Fair Wednesday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Capitol.

Representatives from each of the executive branch agencies will be available to explain departmental operations, job vacancy information and career opportunities.

"We're hoping that those with work experience as well as recent college graduates will stop by and learn about opportunities to begin a public service career," said Jim Nishimoto, director of the Department of Human Resources Development.

A complete list of current recruitments for civil service and non-civil service jobs is available on the department's website. For more details on the job fair, go to <https://dhrd.hawaii.gov/statejobfair>.



## Record-high funds proposed for DHHL

The governor has proposed a funding plan for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) that, if approved by the Legislature, would provide a record-high level for administrative and operating expenses to serve Native Hawaiians.

The plan, consistent with State Constitution requirements (article XII, section 1) would provide for the current fiscal year, FY2016, \$17.14 million in general funds and, for FY17, \$17.8 million in general funds plus fringe benefits, for a total of \$23.5 million.

"We want to give DHHL the tools and flexibility to reform and restructure the department," said Governor Ige. "The ultimate goal is giving beneficiaries greater access to DHHL programs and services."

## Funds for homelessness deployed

**T**he state's partnership with Aloha United Way to fight homelessness is ramping up.



Eighteen local agencies on O'ahu and the neighbor islands have received the first increment of state funds to help those who may need short-term rental assistance, homeless prevention and help for housing stability.

The agencies range from Catholic Charities, U.S. Vets and the Waianae Comprehensive Health Center to Hawai'i, Kaua'i and Maui Economic Opportunity offices. The strategy calls for each family who receives assistance to have an individualized housing plan to reach their goals.

"We wanted to reach families before they end up on the streets," said state homelessness coordinator Scott Morishige. "The most direct way is through the agencies who are already providing services in the community."

# Building affordable homes for Hawai'i's people

Whether it's a studio rental or a three-bedroom home, what can be done to increase Hawai'i housing for all income levels? The answer, says Governor Ige, is to work with the private sector on policy changes and financing tools that make sense for both the builders of affordable units and the people who need them.

"This governor has said we need to expedite the projects already in the pipeline," said Craig Hirai, executive director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, which focuses on financing and developing affordable housing. "In the past, the focus was *not* on affordable housing for working families. It was either at the very low or very high end. Now we're working hard to ramp up as many low- and moderate-income units as possible."

Between now and 2017, more than 1,800 housing units are projected for completion — a great majority of which will be low-income rentals. These would be available to residents whose incomes are at or below 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). On O'ahu, that would mean earning less than \$40,260 for individuals or no more than \$57,480 for a family of four.

For example, residents will soon be moving into East Kapolei's Ko'oloa'ula (see photo at right), one of the largest affordable rental complexes in the state. Located a block from the Kroc Center and the first Honolulu Rail Transit station, the development will serve households with incomes below 60 percent of Honolulu's median income. The rent for a one-bedroom apartment would be \$885 a month; a two-bedroom unit's rent would be \$1,020 a month.

One developer who is doing both market-rate for sale and workforce rentals is Stanford Carr. He's part of a group that has been advising the Ige administration on how to make affordable housing units more feasible to build for rental or sale at affordable prices. Carr explained, "We're from this community and we want to help local residents: the teachers, the state and county workers, the single parents, and the young professionals just getting started. This governor has listened, responded and taken action to provide more tools and means of financing to create more housing."

Long-time housing advocate, the Rev. Bob Nakata, agrees. "This administration has a good, comprehensive approach," he said. "These projects take time. That's why we need to invest in them now."

## Single mom finds housing hope

Life hasn't been easy for Gabrielle Jenny, but she's proud to be a new resident of Hale Mohalu, an affordable rental housing facility that just opened in Pearl City.

Jenny, a single mom, was diagnosed with leukemia in 2013. After her recovery, Jenny and her daughter, Michaela, age 5, spent seven months at the Institute for Human Services shelter in Iwilei.



Gabrielle Jenny and Michaela

Then, they moved to Weinberg Village in Waimānalo, a transitional housing program. "But we needed something more permanent." So when a friend told her about Hale Mohalu, she "jumped on it" and was picked out of 800 applicants. To qualify, tenants can't earn more than 60 percent of the area median income.

"We like it at Hale Mohalu. It's something we can afford," says Jenny, who works at Taco Bell. Her advice? "Don't give up. It's worth it"



PROJECTS COMING ONLINE: (top) Gov. Ige with landowner Kamehameha Schools and developers break ground in Kaka'ako for Keauhou Lane, a moderate-income rental project. (above) Residents of Ko'oloa'ula Phase II in East Kapolei, an affordable rental development, are moving in this month.

## Parts of the strategy

- **The Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA)** will fast-track repairs to facilities for very low-income families. It also is negotiating agreements to redevelop three public housing projects into mixed-income, mixed-use communities in Kalihi. HPHA will continue its work in successfully housing hundreds of homeless veterans and homeless families.

- **The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA)** will work with the **Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation** to produce more affordable units at lower income levels (120% AMI) for longer periods, effective June 2016.

- **Transit-oriented development (TOD) of affordable housing** on O'ahu state land can reinvigorate older neighborhoods. This includes Governor Ige's Kalihi 21st century plan, the HCDA's efforts in Kaka'ako, and other communities along the rail line.

- **The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands** is preparing 630 vacant lots for further development by the end of 2016. An additional 195 lots are projected to be ready in 2018.

## People in the News

### DCCA's Uyehara honored as veterans' business advocate

Jayna Uyehara, the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Business Action Center (BAC) manager, was honored recently with the 2016 Small Business Advocate for Veterans award from the Small Business Administration.



Under her leadership, BAC, located at 1130 N. Nimitz Hwy, has established centers on the neighbor islands and has helped with a number of military outreach programs for businesses owned by veterans and military spouses.

"I am truly honored to receive this award, but the outreach activities would not be possible without the very capable staff at the O'ahu and Maui BAC offices," said Uyehara. "They know that this award recognizes our work as a team."

### Summer reading challenge

First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige will join governors' spouses across the country as a Reading Ambassador for the 2016 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge. Last year the program resulted in 1.4 million children worldwide reading more than 286 million minutes.



First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige

From May 9 to Sept. 9, Hawai'i students can take the Summer Reading Challenge by logging on to [scholastic.com/summer](http://scholastic.com/summer) to record the number of minutes they have read.

"I encourage all students to read this summer and work for the 'Best in the State' recognition in the 2017 Scholastic Book of World Records," said the first lady. For more details, contact the Office of First Lady at <http://governor.hawaii.gov/meet-the-first-lady/contact-the-first-lady/>

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### 19 schools offer free pre-K for low-income families

Many keiki whose families can't afford preschool may lag behind throughout their school years. But at 19 public elementary schools, eligible children can attend pre-kindergarten at no cost.

The schools on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i and Hawai'i island were identified as being in areas of greatest need. The state-funded program serves children who qualify based on federal poverty guidelines and age requirements.

Lauren Moriguchi, director of the Executive Office on Early Learning, announced that applications are now being accepted for the 2016-2017 school year. While priority will be given to families who apply by April 29, applications will continue to be accepted throughout the year. "All children should enter school ready and able to succeed," said Moriguchi. "I highly encourage families to take advantage of this opportunity."

To qualify, children must be age 4 on or before July 31 of this year. Call 586-3811 or download an application and obtain eligibility requirements at <http://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/doe-eoel-prekindergarten-program/>.

### Celebrating Mother's Day

#### 'Okage sama de: All that I am is because of you'

She grew up on a sugar plantation, dreamed of becoming a nurse, and raised six sons – one of whom became governor of Hawai'i. For Mother's Day, Gov. David Ige reflected on the impact his own mom, Tsurue Ige, 94, has had on his life and the part mothers play in our lives.

"My mom has always been one of my biggest supporters," he said. "She and my dad sacrificed because they believed in the value of a good education. Our family didn't have much, but my parents figured out how to give us opportunities."

In his inauguration day speech, the governor included the heartfelt words, "Okage sama de . . . All that I am is because of you," for his mom, watching from her hospital bed that day.

Tsurue Ige grew up on Kahuku Plantation on O'ahu's North Shore, where public schools at the time went up to only the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. But at age 15, with the help of a family friend, Tsurue traveled alone by steamship to the mainland for school and eventually earned a nursing degree. "My mom believed we could be whatever we wanted to be," Governor Ige recalled.

As for mothers statewide, he said, "Our moms are our first and most important teachers. I want to thank them for maintaining the values that make Hawai'i such a special place."



(top) Gov. Ige with his mom and his brother Robert.  
(above) The Ige family (Governor is second from right)