



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • December 2024



GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

As 2024 comes to an end, it's a time for reflection and gratitude. My administration has worked tirelessly to make significant progress on our priorities. We have made strides in creating more affordable housing units for working families and have been proactively tackling the issue of homelessness through building kauhale that include support services. We have signed numerous bills to improve the cost of living in Hawai'i and provide measures to create safer communities and of course, we have continued working with the people of Maui to rebuild Lahaina. For these reasons and many more I am incredibly grateful for everyone's time and devotion toward solving some of Hawai'i's most pressing issues. While there is always more work to be done, it's important to take a moment to recognize all that we have accomplished together this year!

In the spirit of giving back, our office regularly participates in volunteer opportunities in the community. This year we volunteered at Hui Mahi'ai 'Āina, a kauhale in Waimānalo operated by Aunty Blanche. A few members of our office also chose to sponsor a couple of families through a local nonprofit organization. We encourage everyone to participate in philanthropy this holiday season. One amazing opportunity is to donate to nonprofits through the Giving Machine, which recently kicked off at Ala Moana Center. There are two Giving Machines available on O'ahu, as well as one on Maui and one on the Big Island.

As we head into the holiday season, I also encourage you to buy local whenever possible. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities and define our state's unique character. Please take time to enjoy the holidays with your loved ones. I wish you and your family a safe and wonderful holiday season!

Warmest regards,

Josh Green M.D.



Ke Ala Hou intends to elevate, recognize, and celebrate the hard work done by our state departments. Our goal is to share top achievements from our state employees, emphasize aloha and kindness in action and demonstrate caring leadership at the state level. It is our hope that by sharing these stories, we build trust and understanding in what we do everyday in service to you.



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Gov. Green Addresses Housing Leaders at Affordable Housing Summit

Governor Josh Green, M.D., delivered the keynote address at the first-ever Novogradac Affordable Housing Summit in Waikīkī on Nov. 14.



From left to right: HHFDC Housing Finance Manager David T. Oi, HPHA Executive Director Hakim Ouansafi, DHHL Chairman Kali Watson. Photo courtesy: HPHA.

More than 200 of the most influential leaders in the affordable housing arena – developers, lenders, bankers, Wall Street investors, housing advocates and state and county officials – attended the summit to address the most pressing challenge facing working-class families in Hawai‘i today: the housing crisis.

“This convening is so important. We need more people and more investment in affordable housing in Hawai‘i to preserve housing opportunities for our local people,” Governor Green said, in his videotaped address. “I appreciate your commitment to providing affordable rentals for our most vulnerable ‘ohana members.”

During the summit, Hawai‘i Public Housing Authority Executive Director Hakim Ouansafi outlined the state’s

\$6.6 billion Ka Lei Momi redevelopment effort, which will deliver more than 10,000 new low-income and affordable housing units statewide at Hawai‘i’s nine public housing projects over the next 10 to 15 years. This is one of the largest public housing authority initiatives in the country.

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) Director Kali Watson also gave updates on the DHHL’s efforts to build more than 7,000 homes and houselots over the next decade. Act 279, which the state Legislature approved two years ago, appropriated \$600 million to help reduce the department’s waitlist of 29,000 Native Hawaiian applicants and to substantially improve the lives of thousands of kānaka maoli.

The governor’s housing team also publicly launched the “Hawai‘i Affordable Housing Pipeline Dashboard” which tracks hundreds of projects in the development pipeline since the start of the Green Administration. You can find it online at <https://hale.hawaii.gov/affordable-housing-pipeline-dashboard/>.

The pipeline has identified more than 60,000 affordable housing units to be delivered over the next decade and over 14,000 of these units are estimated to come online by 2026.

Because the pipeline tracks these projects along the seven stages of development, it gives greater insight into when the projects will be completed and what hurdles they face. It will also provide housing officials with the analytic tools to provide further reforms to refine the affordable housing development process so that we can deliver more housing – with fewer delays for struggling local families who need it the most.

Get Ready for the 2024-2025 LifeSmarts Competition!

Registration is now open for the LifeSmarts Competition, inviting students from across the state to form teams. This opportunity is available to public, private, home, charter and alternative schools, as well as clubs and youth organizations. Each team must have an adult sponsor or coach, and schools or clubs can enter multiple teams under one coach.

LifeSmarts is a free educational program that prepares students to enter the real world as savvy consumers by teaching them the consumer literacy skills needed to succeed. Students are challenged both individually and as a team through quizzes, challenges and a gameshow-style competition.

Brought to Hawai‘i by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Business Registration and Insurance Divisions, in partnership with the Hawai‘i Credit Union League, this program promises to be both educational and fun!

We encourage the public to spread the word and share this opportunity with friends and family. For more information, please contact Theresa Kong Kee at 808-587-7400. This year’s competition promises to be a fantastic experience for our keiki!



Last year’s winners, Team Kalani 4.2 from Kalani High School, were crowned first-place champions at the 2024 Hawai‘i LifeSmarts State Competition. Photo courtesy: DCCA.



Major Initiatives Support Lahaina's Educators



Governor Green and Superintendent Hayashi present the Lahaina HERO Award to Lahaina's DOE educators.

Two major initiatives are addressing critical needs and celebrating the resilience of Lahaina public school educators: a \$20 million workforce housing project and the Lahaina HERO Awards. These efforts demonstrate a shared commitment to stabilizing the educational workforce and honoring their contributions following the Maui Wildfires.

The housing project is funded through a combination of Capital Improvement Program funds from the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) and state support championed by Governor Josh Green, M.D. The project represents a pivotal step in ensuring the stability and continuity of Lahaina's educational workforce.

Governor Green and HIDOE Superintendent Keith Hayashi made the announcement on November 22 at Lahainaluna High School, where the 47-unit rental housing complex will be built by Maui-

based Dowling Co. The housing effort is designed to alleviate the severe housing challenges faced by educators, prioritizing displaced educators and attracting new recruits to stabilize the community and maintain the quality of education for Lahaina's students.

In addition to long-term investments, the Lahaina HERO – Honoring Employees' Resilience and Optimism – awards program has provided immediate financial recognition to educators who played a critical role in reopening schools. The program, launched in August, recently completed a first round of awards, distributing more than \$723,000 to more than 300 Lahaina educators. Eligible salaried employees received \$2,500, while eligible casual employees received \$1,000.

This one-time initiative was made possible through a generous donation from Marc Benioff, Chair and CEO of Salesforce, and his wife, Lynne, longtime Hawai'i residents and philanthropists who were moved by the incredible challenges faced by those who worked diligently to maintain educational continuity for Lahaina's students.

A second round of HERO awards will be opening in late January, with payments expected to be distributed in April. The second round will cover the current school year for employees who worked between August 5 and December 20, 2024. Application information and eligibility will be released and sent to employees.



DLIR Empowers Future Workforce Leaders Across Hawai'i

The Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) Workforce Development Division is actively shaping Hawai'i's future workforce through its Hele Imua Internship Program. The program offers those seeking employment an opportunity for hands-on experience, professional skill-building and pathways to government careers. State agencies are invited to partner in hosting interns, further expanding opportunities for young professionals to gain exposure to public sector careers.

This year, several former interns shared how the program helped launch their careers. Jonathan Fatu, placed at the Department of Human Services (DHS), credited the program with guiding him to a career aligned with his goals. Megan Yamamoto, also placed at DHS, noted, "The program connects individuals to jobs in a meaningful way, fostering a sustainable workforce and retaining local talent."

Another participant, Kyra Kaloi, spoke about her transformative experience with the Hele Imua/QUEST internship program. "This program equipped me with invaluable skills and knowledge I will carry for a lifetime," she said. Initially uncertain of her career path, Kaloi found herself gaining clarity through the program and later secured a position with DLIR as an Employment Service Specialist II.

Alexander Stroble, who interned with DLIR's Disability Compensation Division, also found the program to be a steppingstone. "Before Hele Imua, I had applied to many positions without success," he explained. "The program allowed me to show my merits through actions. My time with DLIR's TDI Disability team gave me the office experience I needed to move forward."



Participant Kyra Kaloi smiles for a photo. Photo courtesy: DLIR.

The Hele Imua Internship Program remains a key resource for participants to secure meaningful work, explore government careers and establish valuable networks within the public sector. For more information on how state agencies can participate or for internship details, visit labor.hawaii.gov/wdd or call WDD at 808-586-8877.



Recent Highlight!



Congratulations First Lady Jaime Kanani Green!

First Lady Jaime Kanani Green was recently recognized as a Global Women Peace Ambassador by the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP). Since its founding in 1992, WFWP has empowered women across more than 100 countries to break barriers, promote understanding and lead with compassion and service.

"This award is not just a personal recognition—it reflects our shared vision to create a peaceful, unified global society where empathy, care and cooperation serve as the foundation for lasting change," said First Lady Green.

WFWP recognizes Global Women Peace Ambassadors as leaders who promote cooperation across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity and nationality while practicing the principle of living for the sake of others. They demonstrate leadership excellence and work collaboratively to foster a culture of peace.

Taking Time to Celebrate and Honor Our Veterans

The State of Hawai'i Department of Defense (HIDOD) had a busy Veterans Day weekend. In the morning on Nov. 9, the Hawai'i Army National Guard (HIARNG) conducted a flyover of the Hawai'i Island Veterans Day Parade with a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

That night, Hawai'i Air National Guard (HIANG) conducted a flyover with a KC-135 refueler jet over the University of Hawai'i football game on military appreciation night. The HIANG 111th Army Band also played during halftime.

On Nov. 10, the 111th Army Band performed a Veterans Day concert at the Kapi'olani Park Bandstand. The Office of Veterans' Service, a division of HIDOD, hosted the event.

On Veterans Day morning, Nov. 11, HIDOD had many participants in the O'ahu Veterans Council's Veterans Day Ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl): F-22 flyover and the Hawaiian flag escorted by the Royal Guard of HIANG, the Youth Challenge Academy from Kalaeloa assisted with the presentation of the state flags. Deputy Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. Phillip Mallory, provided remarks as a guest speaker, and Maj. Gen. Logan presented the ceremonial wreath with Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, Mayor Rick Blangiardi, Gen. Kevin Schneider, Brig. Gen. Mallory, Col. (Ret.) James Horton and Command Sgt. Maj. Shaun Curry.

In the evening on Veterans Day, the Hawai'i Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Stephen Logan was the keynote speaker at the Battleship Missouri's Veterans Day Sunset Ceremony.



Photo courtesy: HIDOD.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Ke Ala Hou is a monthly publication of the Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.

We invite you to stay connected with us!

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