



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • April 2025

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

As we move forward into April, our administration continues to actively work on initiatives aimed at improving the health and well-being of our communities.

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands has recently begun awarding hundreds of leases, which is an important step toward fulfilling our commitment to the Native Hawaiian

community. The Department of Accounting and General Services is actively seeking qualified candidates for building construction inspector positions, presenting valuable career opportunities, and including some who may have been affected by federal government cuts.

First Lady Jaime Kanani Green hosted an insightful International Women's Day panel, highlighting our dedication to celebrating and empowering women.

Furthermore, the Hawai'i Society of Professional Engineers Maui Chapter awarded the Department of Human Services' Ka La'i Ola Project the Project of the Year award, acknowledging its significant contributions to the community and commitment to addressing housing needs.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke and I have been working together on a few initiatives that will enhance government efficiency through technology. And finally for the third year, we both are working to help the Hawai'i Food Bank with its annual food drive.

These initiatives embody our dedication to creating a brighter and more inclusive future for all residents of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

DHHL Awards Historic Leases for Native Hawaiian Families

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) awarded 790 leases in March for two projects in West O'ahu. Presented at the Salvation Army Kroc Center in 'Ewa Beach, the leases are part of DHHL's strategy to expedite homesteading opportunities and address the long-standing waitlist for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

The leases — 605 in Ka'uluokaha'i and 60 in Kaupe'a — represent the first project lease awards in more than two decades. Unlike previous processes, this approach allows beneficiaries to secure a homestead lot before development is complete, ensuring long-term stability and allowing families to pass their leases to qualified successors.

"This is more than just awarding land; it's about delivering on the promise of Prince Kūhiō and ensuring Native Hawaiian families have a permanent place to call home," said Governor Josh Green, M.D. "Housing is healthcare—when people have stable, secure housing, their overall well-being improves. My administration is committed to making sure every family has that opportunity, and today's lease awards are a major step forward in that effort."

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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.



Governor Green hugs community member Aunty Blanche at the event.



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Governor Green and local leaders pose for a group photo at the lease awards.

The historic nature of the event was underscored by the fact that some of the families receiving leases had been on the waitlist since the 1950s — before Hawai‘i became a state. With nearly 1,200 beneficiaries and their ‘ohana in attendance, the event celebrated their resilience and patience.

In April, DHHL will award an additional 400 leases in West Hawai‘i and nearly a thousand leases will be awarded on Maui in the fall.

Project leases provide a critical pathway to homeownership, offering options such as turnkey homes, owner-builder lots and rent-to-own opportunities. Developers including Gentry Homes and Mark Development, Inc. are working alongside DHHL to ensure that affordable, high-quality housing is available to beneficiaries.

Ka La‘i Ola: A Beacon of Hope for Maui

In the aftermath of the tragic wildfires that swept through Maui in August 2023, numerous families found themselves without homes, grappling with uncertainty and instability. Since then, Ka La‘i Ola Temporary Housing Village has become a symbol of renewal and resilience and it was recently awarded the prestigious 2025 Project of the Year by the Hawai‘i Society of Professional Engineers, Maui Chapter.

This accolade not only recognizes the project's innovative engineering and commitment to environmental sustainability, but also underscores its significant positive impact on the community, providing a much-needed refuge for those affected. Ka La‘i Ola was designed to provide emergency housing for wildfire survivors who do not qualify for FEMA assistance.

A collaborative effort between state agencies, local organizations and private partners, the first phase that was completed in 2024 and delivered 270 of the planned 450 units, giving families a safe place to begin rebuilding their lives.

Constructing the village was no easy feat. Engineers and builders worked through complex environmental and construction challenges, ensuring that the project not only met immediate housing needs but also set a standard for sustainable and resilient disaster recovery. Governor Josh Green, M.D., praised the project, stating, “Ka La‘i Ola is more than a housing project—it is a beacon of hope for families who have lost so much.”

This achievement is a testament to what can be accomplished when a community comes together in a time of crisis. As Maui continues to heal and rebuild, Ka La‘i Ola will continue to stand as a symbol of resilience, compassion, innovation and the collaborative efforts that pave the way for a stronger future for all.



HomeAid Hawai‘i Civil Engineer Jacob Freeman and his team pose for a group photo. From Left to Right: Tee Jay Jacalne, Jacob Freeman, Kiley Dindinger, Brandon Murr. Photo courtesy: HomeAid Hawai‘i.



Overhead view of Ka La‘i Ola. Photo courtesy: HomeAid Hawai‘i.



Affordable Housing Project Opens First Phase and Prepares for Next Phase



Kahu Kordell Kekoa blesses the first phase of Koa Vista with Governor Green and other key stakeholders.

A dedication and groundbreaking event for Koa Vista took place on March 17, marking the initial phases of a project designed to provide affordable housing for qualifying seniors and families. Developed by Homes Hawai'i Inc. and GSF LLC, Koa Vista is part of the Koa Ridge master-planned community and will feature 192 rental apartments in two mid-rise buildings, located across from Waipi'o Costco.

The dedication ceremony celebrated the completion of the first phase of the project, which consists of a seven-story, 95-unit rental apartment building intended for eligible seniors earning between 30 and 60 percent of the area median income. A groundbreaking ceremony also marked the start of construction for the second phase, which will offer affordable rentals for qualifying families.

Celebrating Women: A Powerful Gathering on International Women's Day

In a heartfelt celebration of empowerment and resilience, First Lady Jaime Kanani Green co-hosted an inspiring International Women's Day breakfast and discussion panel alongside Wilhelmina Van Beers and the Consulate General of Australia. This event brought together significant voices from Hawai'i and beyond to honor the remarkable strength and contributions of women in our communities.

The engaging discussion was moderated by the Office of the Governor's Communications Director, Makana McClellan, and featured an esteemed panel of women leaders: Margery Bronster, Amy Marvin, Mona Pasquil Rogers and Kathy Raethel. Each speaker generously shared their insights and experiences, drawing from their diverse and impactful careers to illustrate the importance of supporting one another in our personal and professional journeys.

Attendees were reminded of the powerful legacies of trailblazing women, such as Queen Lili'uokalani, and reflected on the ongoing challenges that many women continue to face today.

"In a world that constantly demands our resilience, the event served as a poignant reminder that we must uplift each other

"Stable, affordable housing is the foundation of strong communities and today, we take another step toward ensuring that Hawai'i's families and seniors can live with dignity and security," said Governor Green. "My administration is committed to building affordable housing, and projects like this show what's possible when we work together."

Construction for the \$39 million first phase of this affordable rental housing complex began in the summer of 2023 and was completed late last year. Work on the second phase of the project is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2026.

The project was funded through state and federal tax credits, Hula Mae Multi-Family bond financing, and Rental Housing Revolving Funds from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation.

"With the opening of Koa Vista phase one, today is an exciting day and important step in helping reach the state's goal of housing sustainability for local families," said Wally Inglis, president of Homes Hawai'i Inc. "We could not have moved forward with this project without the support from our government partners at the state of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu."

Amenities include a multi purpose room, laundry facilities and a garden. Tenant applications for phase one are currently being accepted online at www.hawaiiiaffordable.com or in person at 1050 Queen St., Suite 304.

and advocate for a brighter future," said First Lady Green. "As we look forward, let us commit to fostering an environment where every woman has the opportunity to thrive. Together, we can create lasting change and continue to honor the incredible contributions of women everywhere."



From left to right: Wilhelmina Van Beers, Amy Marvin, Margery Bronster, Mona Pasquil Rogers, Kathy Raethel, and First Lady Jaime Green pose for a group photo at the event.



State Employees to Support 26th Annual Food Drive



The 26th Annual State Employees Food Drive in support of Hawai'i Foodbank is now underway until May 9, to help fight food insecurity across the state. With a goal to raise 405,000 meals, state employees are encouraged to donate food and funds to support the drive.

Food insecurity is a pressing issue in Hawai'i, affecting thousands of families, including 90,000 keiki. The generosity of state employees and community members is crucial in ensuring that no one in our islands goes hungry.

As the largest coalition drive for Hawai'i Foodbank, the State Employees Food Drive is being chaired for the third consecutive year by Lt. Governor Sylvia Luke, who is leading efforts to raise donations and increase awareness of food insecurity across our islands.

Every contribution, whether large or small, makes a difference. A donation of just \$10 can provide up to 20 meals, helping families throughout Hawai'i gain access to nutritious food.

This year, the state is also partnering with the City and County of Honolulu, setting a joint goal of raising 515,000 meals for Hawai'i residents in need.

Anyone can support Hawai'i Foodbank by donating online or dropping off nonperishable food at the Lieutenant Governor's office at the state capitol, any Satellite City Hall, or any Honolulu Fire Department station for the duration of the drive.

To support Hawai'i Foodbank, visit hawaiifoodbank.org/state.

For those facing food insecurity, resources and assistance are available at hawaiifoodbank.org/help.

Akamai Arrival: Modernizing Hawai'i's Agriculture Declaration Form

On March 1, the state launched Akamai Arrival, a pilot program under the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to digitize the Plants and Animals Declaration Form.

In this initial phase, travelers on select domestic flights to Hawai'i will have the option to complete a digital declaration form instead of a paper form. The goal of the program is to test the effectiveness, compliance and use of the online form. The program aims to strengthen Hawai'i's biosecurity efforts by improving adherence to regulations and streamlining the arrival process.

Akamai Arrival is the first step toward fully modernizing the declaration process making compliance easier for incoming travelers or returning residents while enhancing protections against invasive species. The digital form also features artwork by local artist David Shepard.

Major airlines—including Alaska, American, Delta, Hawaiian, Southwest and United—are collaborating with HDOA to integrate the digital form into pre-departure messaging, in-flight announcements and arrival procedures thereby ensuring a seamless experience for travelers.

The initial pilot phase will run through May 31, with data collected to evaluate effectiveness and assess future expansion.

For more information, visit akamaiarrival.hawaii.gov.



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

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