



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

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

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

As we reflect on April, I am reminded of the many ways we are working together to build a stronger, more resilient Hawai'i. From creating affordable housing to supporting our workforce, we are making meaningful strides toward a future where the people of Hawai'i have opportunities to succeed.

We celebrated the groundbreaking of a new affordable housing project, a significant step toward addressing the housing challenges many of our families face. The Department of Human Resources also hosted the Operation Hire Hawai'i job fair, connecting job seekers with employers and strengthening our local economy.

Another milestone we marked in April was the five-year anniversary of activating the National Guard in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its service, along with the resilience of our people, played a crucial role in our recovery.

I'd also like to note that this month is Ha'aheo Pride in Public Service Month! Mahalo to all of our state employees for your dedication and hard work to make our communities better and safer. I am incredibly grateful for all that you do!

These efforts, big and small, are part of our shared vision for a Hawai'i where everyone thrives. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create a brighter future for all.

With aloha,

Josh Green M.D.

Increasing Housing Opportunities for Local Families



Governor Green poses with local elected officials and project leaders at the Kuilei Place groundbreaking ceremony.

Kuilei Place is a new condominium development in Mō'ili'ili, created through a partnership between BlackSand Capital and the Kobayashi Group. The project will offer over 1,000 homes on 3.15 acres of land. The April 9 groundbreaking celebrated this milestone project and construction is currently underway. When completed, Kuilei Place will expand homeownership opportunities for kama'aina in this residential community.

This project is designed to transform the area into a vibrant neighborhood with a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes to accommodate local families.

"This project represents real progress toward increasing housing opportunities for local families," said Governor Josh Green, M.D. "Developments like Kuilei Place show how the public and private sectors can work together to create well-designed communities that help more residents achieve homeownership."

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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.



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Increasing Housing Opportunities for Local Families

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From left to right: Susan Kobayashi, Founder and Senior Advisor of the Kobayashi Group, Bert Kobayashi Sr., CEO and Partner of the Kobayashi Group, Alana Kobayashi Pakkala and Governor Josh Green.

Kuilei Place has experienced substantial demand among local buyers, with more than 85% of residences already sold. This highlights the urgent need for effective housing solutions in Honolulu. Residents will benefit from a variety of amenities, including a lap pool, hot tub, fitness centers and dog parks, all aimed at promoting community and wellness. Additionally, there are stunning views of Diamond Head and the Koʻolau Mountains.

Sustainability is a central focus of Kuilei Place, which will feature Hawaiʻi's first residential on-site greywater reuse system, expected to conserve around 11 million gallons of water yearly. Other eco-friendly aspects include solar hot water systems and EV-focused solutions.

Kuilei Place aims to be an inclusive homeownership community, blending market-rate and workforce residences, particularly for essential workers through the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund Equity Pilot Program.

"As one of the first projects in the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund Equity Pilot Program, it shows how innovative housing initiatives can make a difference. The success of this program demonstrates that when we prioritize forward-thinking solutions, we help our essential workers secure homes in the communities they serve," said Mayor Rick Blangiardi.

With completion anticipated in 2027, Kuilei Place is set to be a model for responsible and community-focused development, addressing Hawaiʻi's critical housing needs while creating a vibrant, well-planned neighborhood for generations. For more information, visit www.kuileiplace.com.

Five Years Since the Hawaiʻi National Guard's COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a challenging time to Hawaiʻi five years ago and the Hawaiʻi National Guard was activated to help respond. The Hawaiʻi National Guard's Joint Task Force (HING JTF) was officially activated on April 6, 2020. At COVID's peak, about 1,300 Guard personnel were on COVID-19 ready status across the state. The HING JTF's mission was to support the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 1,800 total soldiers and airmen were activated to support the various state and county agencies.

Some of their missions included COVID-19 mapping, testing in correctional facilities, constructing shelters, distributing food and personal protective equipment, conducting temperature screenings at harbors, processing Safe Travels applications for all visitors coming to Hawaiʻi by air and providing logistical support to all county emergency managers and administering public education classes on COVID-19.



A member of the Hawaiʻi National Guard assists with COVID-19 testing. Photo courtesy: Hawaiʻi Department of Defense.

In addition to medical and logistical support, HING members were instrumental in community relief efforts, including staffing food banks and assisting with unemployment claims processing. Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hara, the Adjutant General at the time, served as the state's overall COVID-19 incident commander from March 2020 to March 2022.

The HING's ability to rapidly adapt to emerging challenges played a part in helping stabilize the state's response infrastructure during critical phases of the pandemic. The Guard's presence helped ensure safety and order at testing and vaccination sites, and their efforts were widely recognized by local leaders and residents alike.

On March 15, 2022, the HING JTF transitioned its remaining COVID-19 responsibilities back to the state, marking the end of the longest state activation in its history. Governor David Ige and the HING JTF Commander, Brig. Gen. Moses Kaoui Jr. commended the Hawaiʻi National Guard Soldiers and Airmen for their dedication, service and aloha throughout the pandemic.



Hālawā Correctional Facility Hosts First Keiki Day for Incarcerated Fathers

The Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DCR) continues its efforts to transform Hawai'i's unified correctional system into a rehabilitative, restorative and reentry-focused system.

In April 2025, the Hālawā Correctional Facility (HCF), in collaboration with Keiki O Ka 'Āina (KOKA) Family Learning Centers, hosted its first Keiki Day. The event is an example of DCR's ongoing efforts to rehabilitate those in our custody and care.

Four fathers, 10 children and grandchildren, three adult children and eight caregivers participated in the event.

Keiki Day was significant because participating fathers were able to have physical contact with their children. Generally, all visits at the facility are non-contact visits. The event was an incentive for eligible fathers who exhibited good behavior and completed parenting classes.

Staff and volunteers decorated the courtyard with Easter inflatable decorations, pastel-colored balloons and banners for the event. Director Tommy Johnson of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said, "We are grateful to all of our staff members and volunteers who made this event possible."

For more than three hours, children enjoyed decorating cookies with their fathers and taking family photos together with the Easter Bunny. They also played games and did arts and crafts. Staff and volunteers also organized an Easter egg hunt for families.



A father and his child participates in the Easter egg hunt. Photo courtesy: DCR.

Executive Director Momi Akana of KOKA Family Learning Centers said, "In Hawai'i, having a parent in jail affects over 6,000 children. Studies show that children who stay in touch with their incarcerated parents are more likely to do well and less likely to get into trouble. Research also shows that good family connections can help reduce repeat offenses by 30 percent."

HCF Warden Shannon Cluney said, "It's important for fathers to maintain a relationship with their children as the men will eventually return to the community upon their release. It's all about family reunification." HCF plans to have two additional Keiki Day events later this year.

Planting Seeds for a Brighter Future: EOEL's Commitment to Early Learning

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) remains steadfast in its commitment to nurturing the youngest members of Hawai'i's communities, laying a strong foundation for lifelong success. EOEL's mission is to ensure that all keiki across the islands have access to high-quality early learning opportunities, recognizing that these critical early years shape not only individual futures, but the well-being of Hawai'i as a whole.

A key milestone in advancing this mission is the continued expansion of public pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds, a central element of Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke's Ready Keiki initiative. This collaborative statewide effort is increasing access, while enriching early education experiences for Hawai'i's youngest learners.

Applications for the 2025–2026 EOEL public pre-K school year opened March 3, with priority based on eligibility and home school region. Starting July 1, all eligible children may apply on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis.



A teacher reads a book to the children. Photo courtesy: EOEL.

EOEL is proud to partner with Hawai'i's families and communities to build a strong educational foundation for every child. Through initiatives like expanding public pre-kindergarten, EOEL is nurturing today's keiki to help Hawai'i thrive in the future.

Interested families can visit earlylearning.hawaii.gov for more information on the free public pre-K programs and apply online.



Mahalo to our State Employees!

Celebrating those who serve the public, Governor Josh Green, M.D., proclaimed May 2025 as Ha'aheo, Pride in Public Service Month in Hawai'i. This month-long celebration aims to honor and show appreciation for the contributions of members of the state workforce, who dedicate themselves to serving the public.

"Ha'aheo, Pride in Public Service month provides us an opportunity to join together to recognize our employees for their dedicated public service and take pride in their accomplishments," said Governor Green. "Mahalo to all of our state employees for your contributions and tireless efforts!"

In observance of the month, the Governor encourages department heads via executive memorandum to honor and recognize employees for their commitment.

"We are happy to recognize our hard-working employees during Pride in Public Service month," said Brenna Hashimoto, director of the Department of Human Resources Development. "The work they do every day keeps state government running smoothly while supporting the needs of our residents and visitors and they deserve our aloha."

The Public Employees Roundtable and the Partnership for Public Service sponsor an annual nationwide Public Service Recognition event, to raise public awareness of the work done by public sector employees on behalf of their respective communities during the first full week of May. This event reinforces pride in public service and recognizes the critical role played by public sector employees in promoting the well-being of society. Also in honor of the month Ha'aheo, Pride in Public Service flags will be flown outside the state capitol throughout May.



State Launches Operation Hire Hawai'i to Fill Vacant Positions



DHRD Employee Staffing Division. Photo courtesy: DHRD.

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) coordinated a two-day Operation Hire Hawai'i (OH-HI) Recruitment Event in April for state and county agencies to promote their open job opportunities. More than 900 interested job seekers attended, taking time to meet with hiring managers and human resources personnel from every state department.

OH-HI was launched in conjunction

with Governor Green's executive order to address the uncertainty of employees affected by the federal government funding cuts. In response, DHRD is prioritizing the recruitment of highly skilled professionals and other experienced workers to address critical workforce needs across Hawai'i's public sector.

Since launching OH-HI in February 2025, the state has received more than 3,000

applications from individuals seeking to transition into state jobs. DHRD's recruitment team, in partnership with the human resources offices in the executive branch, has committed to screening, interviewing and making a conditional offer within days of receiving an online application.

For more information on OH-HI or to view recruitments, visit dhrd.hawaii.gov/ohhi.



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

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