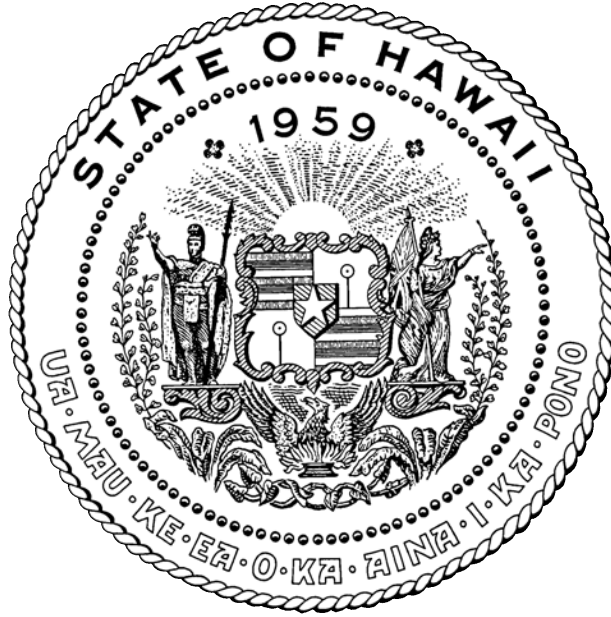


RESULTS FOR OUR PEOPLE







RESULTS FOR OUR PEOPLE

Bold, Innovative Action for Our Communities

The 2025 Policy Briefing Report to Hawai'i's People

2025 State of Hawai‘i Policy Booklet: *Results for Our People*

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Governor Josh Green, M.D.

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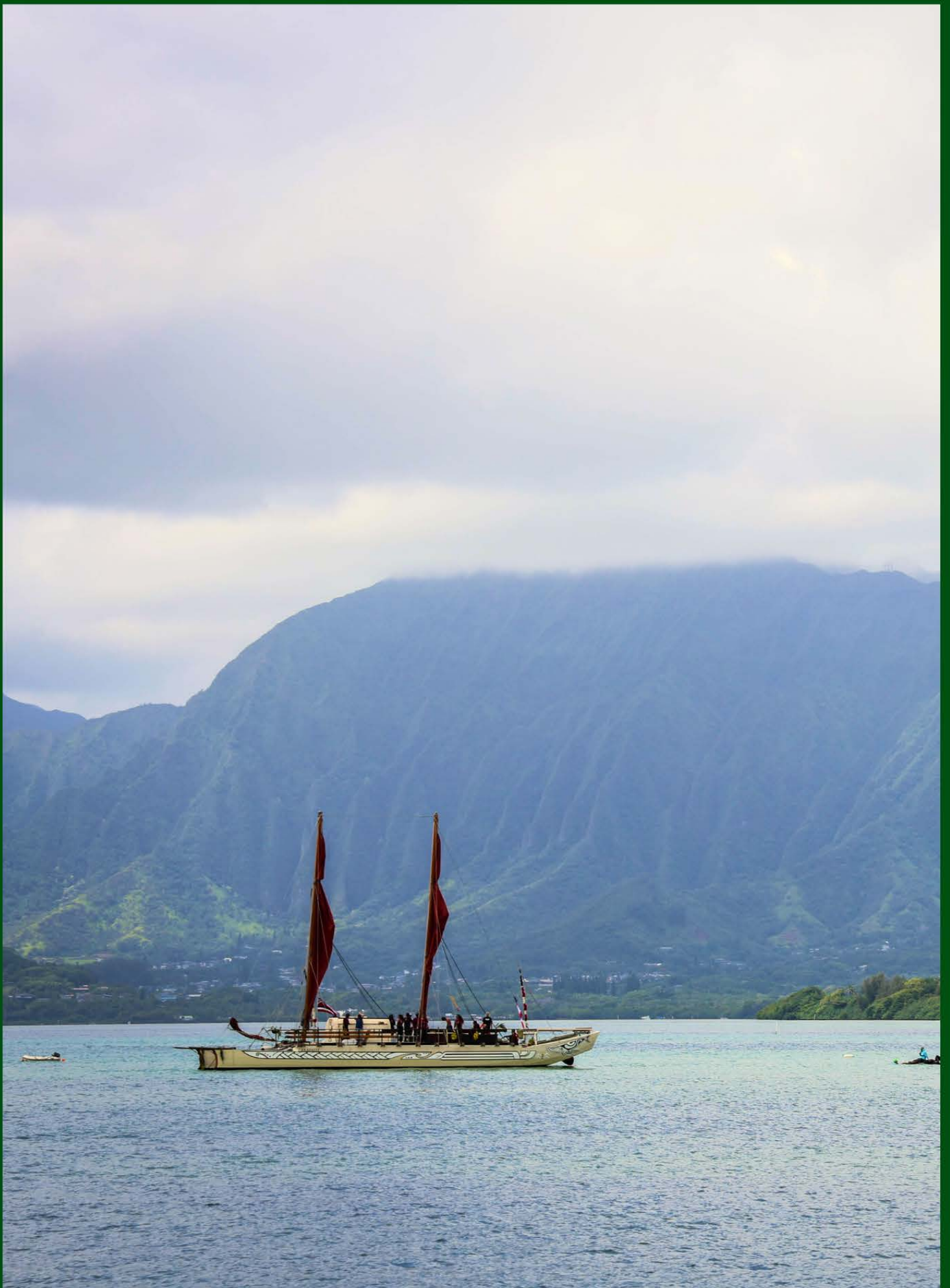
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*“You must remember never to
cease to act because you
fear you may fail.”*

– Queen Lili‘uokalani (1917)¹

¹ Lili‘uokalani, 1917. Reported by her hānai daughter, Lydia K. Aholo to Helena G. Allen, *The Betrayal of Lili‘uokalani*, Mutual Publishing, 1982.



CHARTING A COURSE FOR A THRIVING HAWAI‘I

A Foreword by Nainoa Thompson

Navigator and CEO of the Polynesian Voyaging Society

Hawai‘i has always been a place of resilience, unity and deep responsibility. Our ancestors navigated vast oceans, guided by the stars and nature, with a shared vision of a better future for the generations to come. Today, as stewards of this land and its people, we all carry that same kuleana — to chart a course toward a Hawai‘i where every person has the opportunity to thrive.

Governor Josh Green’s 2025 State Policy Book reflects this commitment. It is built on a foundation of service, equity and accountability, with a clear focus on results for our people. The priorities within — housing, homelessness, access to healthcare, reducing the cost of living, enhancing public safety, protecting our lands and waters, good governance and Maui’s recovery — are not just policies; they are responsibilities that demand our collective action and unwavering dedication.

The challenges before Hawai‘i are great, but so is our capacity to meet them. By working together with courage, innovation and aloha, our state can ensure that every individual in Hawai‘i has a place to call home, has access to the care they need, and the security of a government that protects and uplifts them. This is the journey we all embark on, and the success of this voyage will be measured in the well-being of our communities.

As public servants, you are the navigators of this course to the Hawai‘i we and our keiki deserve. With the values of our ancestors as your guide and the people of Hawai‘i as your purpose, you can turn vision into reality. May you move forward with strength, with compassion and with an unwavering commitment to results for our people.

Mahalo for your dedication, your service and your leadership in shaping a Hawai‘i that honors its past and builds a brighter future for all.



RESULTS FOR OUR PEOPLE

Governor Josh Green, M.D.

Last year, when we asked ourselves, “What is the Hawai‘i We Deserve?” we were reminded that it’s not just a vision, but a call to action — one that demands tangible benefits for the people of Hawai‘i.

It’s about ensuring that the policies we craft and the bold actions we take deliver real, measurable results for our people.

The “Hawai‘i We Deserve” is a place where our children can grow up healthy and safe, with opportunity and hope.

It’s a place where families can find affordable homes, secure jobs and live meaningful lives.

It’s a Hawai‘i where economic opportunity is accessible to all, and where our communities are strong, resilient and connected.

It’s about creating a state where everyone, regardless of their background, can feel at home, secure in their future and connected to the shared purpose of building a better Hawai‘i.

But the Hawai‘i we deserve is not just about what we hope for — it’s about what we work to achieve.

In the first half of my term, we’ve been focused on taking real, actionable steps to address our state’s most pressing challenges.

This book is about that commitment: turning our vision into results. It’s about ensuring that every policy, initiative and decision is rooted in making life better for those who call Hawai‘i home.

Three key events from the past year have shaped my thinking and continue to guide my actions. These are not just stories — they are lessons that highlight the importance of strong, proactive leadership.

The first was the horrific acid attack on a woman by a man who had recently been released from prison.

This tragedy, rooted in mental health challenges, underscores the need for greater access to social services. If there had been better mental health support for this man, perhaps the attack could have been prevented.

That’s why we are expanding mental health services and supporting programs like the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program. By creating an opportunity for our psychologists and social workers to stay and serve in our communities, we can ensure that people get the help they need before it’s too late.

The second event is of a father, overwhelmed by economic pressures, who tragically took the lives of his children and wife before ending his own. His story is a stark reminder of the financial and emotional strains that too many families face in Hawai‘i.

The high cost of living, soaring housing prices and rising taxes contribute to a growing sense of despair. That’s why we’ve made it a priority to provide tax relief and build more affordable homes.

These efforts aren’t just about numbers — they’re about making sure families can afford to live here without the crushing anxiety of whether they’ll make it from one month to the next.

The third event is the New Year’s Eve fireworks disaster, in which reckless behavior caused devastating injuries and loss of life.

This tragedy illuminated the consequences of neglect and poor regulation. In response, we need strong systemic corrections and support for solutions to ensure that an incident like this never happens again.

This is about taking action today to prevent further harm and creating a safer environment for our communities.

These tragedies — though deeply painful — have driven me to act. They’ve made it clear that policies alone won’t create the Hawai‘i we deserve.

What we need are bold, systemic changes that address the root causes of the challenges we face. It’s about more than just promises; it’s about getting things done. That’s the essence of “Results for Our People.”

Over the past year, we’ve made significant strides in addressing some of our state’s most urgent issues: affordable housing, homelessness, disaster recovery and tax relief.

We’ve broken ground on new affordable housing developments, built 21 new kauhale for our homeless community and enacted the largest tax cut in Hawai‘i’s history.

These are tangible results that are already making a difference for our people. But I’m the first to admit that there’s much more work to be done.

We face complex, longstanding challenges — lack of affordable housing, healthcare access, environmental sustainability — and we are committed to the work involved to move the needle.

From making housing more affordable to expanding economic opportunities for working families, from strengthening public services to supporting local businesses and communities, the policies here are all about improving the lives of Hawai‘i’s people.

As your Governor, I am committed to ensure that the Hawai‘i we deserve is not just a dream, but something we can achieve together.

This is our time to act — to deliver results, to create lasting change and to build a future where everyone in Hawai‘i has the chance to thrive.



Mahalo,

Josh Green M.D.

Governor Josh Green, M.D.



PART I

Caring for Hawai‘i

Results for Our People

Chapter One

PROTECTING OUR FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT

Biosecurity, Climate Action and Community Forestry

Hawai‘i’s environment is central to our identity and culture — and it is our shared kuleana to protect these islands for future generations. From the forests that give us life to the waters that sustain us, our natural resources are both a blessing and a responsibility. This year, we’ve taken bold steps to confront the most urgent threats to our environment, including biosecurity, climate change and the protection of critical resources like water.

Taking bold action to confront the climate crisis head-on, Governor Green signed Act 96, SLH 2025, a landmark initiative that establishes the first-ever climate impact fee, or “Green Fee,” in the nation. The Green Fee addresses the critical need to build resiliency against the impacts of climate change by providing a stable source of funding for environmental stewardship, hazard mitigation and sustainable tourism. Thanks to this policy, when travelers visit Hawai‘i, they are helping to fund and support our entire state’s community health and resilience, as well as enhance our natural resources.



Governor Green smiles with Legislators and key stakeholders after signing Act 96. (May 27, 2025)

“Once again, Hawai‘i is at the forefront of protecting our natural resources, recognizing our fundamental role in sustaining the ecological, cultural and economic health of our island home. Hawai‘i cannot wait for the next disaster to hit before taking action. We must build resiliency now — and the Green Fee will provide the necessary financing to ensure resources are available for our future,” said Governor Green.

Following the devastating Maui wildfires and in response to the growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters across Hawai‘i and the nation, Governor Green established the Climate Advisory Team (CAT) in 2024, led by Chris Benjamin and comprised of leaders to develop community-

informed policy recommendations. A key recommendation of the CAT was to establish a dedicated source of funding for climate change mitigation and disaster resilience. The CAT recommended the transient accommodations tax (TAT) as a potential revenue source.

“The Green Fee bill marks a historic investment in climate disaster resilience and environmental protection,” said Chris Benjamin. “Using the TAT to fund resiliency projects ensures that the financial burden of safeguarding our ‘āina and people doesn’t fall upon residents alone. We thank the Legislature, industry and countless community groups and individuals who advocated tirelessly for this bill.”

Act 96 increases the transient accommodations tax (TAT) rate by 0.75% beginning in 2026 and levies, for the first time, the TAT on cruise ships that port in the state. Assessing the TAT on cruise ships — a sector of transient accommodations that has long gone untaxed under the TAT — promotes equity across the tourism industry, ensuring that all visitors to Hawai‘i contribute to the islands’ long-term resilience and well-being.

The Green Fee is expected to generate \$100 million annually. The Green Administration will collaborate with the Legislature to confirm projects next session as revenue becomes available. These projects include environmental stewardship, climate and hazard resiliency and sustainable tourism.

Strengthening Biosecurity to Protect Our Islands

Invasive species threaten our native ecosystems, agricultural sustainability and even public health. Recognizing these dangers, we have made historic investments in biosecurity. We’ve dedicated \$12.7 million and created 44 permanent positions in the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to strengthen biosecurity programs. These efforts enhance prevention measures, improve early detection and ensure rapid responses to invasive threats. By protecting our environment and supporting local agriculture, biosecurity is critical to safeguarding Hawai‘i’s future.



Governor and First Lady Green, along with St. Andrews students, plant native Hawaiian trees on the grounds of Washington Place for Earth Day. (April 22, 2025)

Shutting Down Red Hill for Good

We also took action to protect Hawai‘i’s water, one of our most precious resources. Six months ahead of schedule, we safely removed 104 million gallons of fuel from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, eliminating a threat that loomed over our islands for decades. Now, we are working to shut down Red Hill permanently, ensuring it will never again endanger the health of our people or the safety of our water.

Declaring the Year of Our Community Forests

Forests are vital not only to our environment but also to our communities. That’s why we’ve declared 2025 as the “Year of Our Community Forests.” This year-long initiative celebrates the trees that surround us in our neighborhoods, schools, parks and along our streets. These community forests provide essential benefits: by cleaning our air and water, reducing stormwater runoff, stabilizing soil, providing shade and food, and capturing carbon dioxide. Hawai‘i’s municipal trees alone store over 25,000 tons of CO₂ and remove 3,340 additional tons of these greenhouse gasses each year, helping to mitigate climate change.

This initiative also emphasizes the connection between people and forests, encouraging volunteerism and education to strengthen these ties. By celebrating community forests, we are fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural world while promoting the health and resilience of our environment.



Year of Our Community Forests Proclamation Ceremony. (Jan. 10, 2025)

Youth Leadership in Climate Action

We are inspired by the leadership of Hawai‘i’s youth, who are standing at the forefront of the fight against climate change. Last year, we joined youth plaintiffs in announcing a resolution to *Navahine v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation*, the world’s first youth-led constitutional climate case. Thirteen young leaders from across our islands demanded bold action to address transportation emissions and transition Hawai‘i to a climate-safe, zero-emissions transportation system.

The youths' courage and commitment to creating a healthy, sustainable future remind us that the choices we make today will shape the world they inherit. These young leaders are a powerful voice for change, and we honor their efforts to ensure Hawai'i meets the climate emergency with determination and resolve.



Governor Green and state leaders met with some of Hawai'i's young leaders to discuss the state's efforts to fight climate change. (June 20, 2024)

Developing a Roadmap for Climate Resilience

To address the severe impacts of climate change, we formed the Climate Advisory Team (CAT) last year. This group brings together leading climate scientists, business and financial advisors and legal experts to provide a comprehensive strategy for mitigating climate-related disasters and building resilience. Its work is critical to guiding Hawai'i's climate policies, and we are committed to taking action on its science-based recommendations.

The CAT's expertise should drive our legislative efforts in the coming years. We are grateful to lawmakers for the landmark legislation passed in 2025 to fund this vital work. By investing in climate resilience now, we can protect our islands from the advancing climate crisis and ensure a sustainable, secure future for all.

Conclusion:

Every action we take to protect Hawai'i's environment reflects our shared responsibility to care for these islands. Whether it's strengthening biosecurity, preserving our community forests, safeguarding our water, or tackling the climate crisis, we are committed to creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Together, we are not just responding to challenges — we are building a legacy of sustainability and stewardship. By investing in our environment today, we ensure that future generations can live, learn and thrive in the Hawai'i we all love.



Chapter Two

HELPING MAUI HEAL

Wildfire Recovery and Mitigation



The aftermath of the August 2023 Maui wildfires. (Aug. 10, 2023)

Aug. 8, 2023 was one of the most tragic days in our state’s history: 102 lives were lost, and thousands more were tragically altered after a series of wildfires broke out on the island of Maui. The wildfires scorched thousands of acres, causing widespread damage in the town of Lahaina, located in West Maui, while destroying more than 2,200 structures and displacing over 8,000 residents.

Housing Displaced Maui Residents

Among them was longtime Lahaina resident Nicole Rickard and her family, who barely escaped the fire with just the clothes on their backs. After their desperate escape, the family continued to struggle, bouncing from one temporary living situation to another – often in the homes of families and friends already bulging with wildfire survivors.

“I would say at one place, there was probably about 14 of us in a house,” said Rickard.

Kaiulani, another longtime Lahaina resident and a single mother, said she and her two children were forced to move six times over several months.

Less than 18 months later, displaced families like Nicole Rickard's and Kaiulani's are returning to Lahaina. They are among the first group of families to move into the new Ka La'i Ola temporary housing project.

Ka La'i Ola — which means “The Place of Peaceful Recovery” — will eventually be home to 450 dwelling units for families hit hard by the disaster. The project also includes community gathering places offering healthcare and case management services for survivors.



One of the units at Ka La'i Ola. (Aug. 9, 2024)

The temporary housing project — a partnership between the state, the Hawai'i Community Foundation and kauhale developer HomeAid Hawai'i — is for families who were not eligible for FEMA aid. Ka La'i Ola will house wildfire survivors for at least five years — before the land is returned to the property owner, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, for more permanent housing.

Residents were able to live there rent-free until August and will be charged nominal fees after that, to cover operational costs.

“When I got the call the day before Thanksgiving to pick up the keys, I was definitely — I was speechless, you know. Yeah, I was just speechless and grateful and blessed and thankful for this whole organization that is helping out all the displaced families,” said Rickard.

“We’re so thankful, and it’s so nice to have this place, and especially since we don’t have to pay for a year and we still have to pay our mortgage on our house,” added Kaiulani.

“When I applied for this, it was — you know, as quick as it this happened — it was just like one door, just wen open. It was definitely a relief, for sure, definitely happy, you know,” she said.

“I don’t have to worry now. I can actually try to somewhat live normal.”



Above: Lahaina resident Kaiulani.
Photo courtesy: HomeAid Hawai‘i.

The 450 units planned for the Ka La‘i Ola project are among the 1,200 new interim housing units the state, the counties, FEMA and the private sector plan to build over the next year to house wildfire survivors.

Another temporary housing project, Hale ‘o Lā‘ie, opened in October when the first 55 families moved into the newly acquired Haggai Institute building in Kihei. Before the deadly August 2023 fire, the state had planned to purchase the former hotel building and convert it to a preschool classroom and workforce housing for teachers. It will now provide 178 interim housing units for wildfire survivors for the next three years and will eventually be converted to permanent housing.

The temporary housing is in addition to the direct rental assistance that FEMA has provided to nearly 4,200 survivors who have successfully transitioned from the temporary shelters in West Maui hotels to more stable housing situations. The state is providing similar direct rental assistance for nearly 260 families.

Overall, the state, FEMA, Maui County and its private sector partners are forecast to deliver more than 6,800 temporary housing solutions for wildfire survivors.

Since August 2023, the federal government, the counties and the private sector paved the way for these housing solutions by coordinating the initial phases of the recovery, planning and rebuilding process. This included providing financial and other assistance and support for displaced residents, by clearing the debris in residential and commercial areas and by restoring critical infrastructure.

The fruits of this unprecedented partnership will also lay the groundwork for much-needed permanent housing solutions in West Maui.

Over the next decade or so, more than 2,200 new permanent housing units — including 685 affordable units — are planned by the Hawai‘i Public Housing Authority (HPHA), Kamehameha

Schools and by other private developers in conjunction with financing provided by the state of Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC).

Mitigating the Impact of Wildfires and Building a More Resilient Hawai‘i

The wildfires on Maui have underscored the urgent need for Hawai‘i to prepare for climate-related disasters. In response, the Green Administration is committed to strengthening our resilience and improving wildfire mitigation efforts across the state. Some of these efforts include the following:

Re-establishing the State Fire Marshal

The Green Administration re-established the State Fire Marshal’s Office with dedicated funding. This office will regulate building and fire safety standards, guide wildfire prevention efforts and coordinate state agencies to reduce fire risks.

Improving Emergency Warning Systems

Working closely with counties, the state updated emergency siren protocols to ensure timely and effective communication during crises. This enhances statewide preparedness for disasters.

Deploying Wildfire and Wind Sensors

With support from the federal government, 80 wildfire sensors and 16 wind sensors were deployed across the state. These systems provide real-time data, enhancing the ability to detect potential fire threats and increase response times, reducing risks to life and property.



Governor Green poses for a group photo with federal, state and county leaders and Maui firefighters at a wildfire sensor deployment news conference. (March 28, 2024)

Defensible Spaces and Community Preparedness

The Green Administration proposed creating defensible spaces around homes, mapping evacuation plans and launching community preparedness initiatives. These efforts will help mitigate fire impacts, safeguard our residents and ensure that we are ready to respond to emergencies.

Key Investments in Fire Mitigation and Recovery

To further bolster our wildfire response and mitigation efforts, the Green Administration secured significant funding for the upcoming fiscal years:

- \$200,000,000 in revolving funds for FY 26 and FY 27 for the State Risk Management and Insurance Administration to support Maui recovery projects;
- \$3,000,000 in FY 26 for fire prevention efforts at Ukumehame wetland and stream in West Maui;
- \$4,000,000 in FY 26 for fire pre-suppression, readiness, response and post-fire restoration activities managed by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR);
- \$15,000,000 in FY 26 for statewide fire mitigation along state highways;
- 22 permanent positions and \$1,425,696 in FY 26 and FY 27 for fire and emergency response statewide;
- \$230,000 in FY 26 to modernize and consolidate equipment for distributed antenna systems to ensure effective disaster response;
- increasing staffing of the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) to enhance emergency management functions;
- 15.75 FTE temporary positions and \$1,406,296 in general funds; and
- 4.25 FTE temporary positions and \$487,770 in federal funds for FY 26 and FY 27.

Conclusion

These initiatives are just the beginning. As we continue to recover and rebuild from the wildfires and other crises, we remain focused on creating a more sustainable, resilient Hawai'i. Together with the support of federal partners, local communities and nonprofits, we will continue to face the challenges of climate change, build stronger communities and secure a sustainable future for Hawai'i's generations to come.

We look forward to sharing more of these plans throughout the year as we work to build a brighter, more resilient Hawai'i.



Chapter Three

PUBLIC SAFETY

Creating a Safer Community for All

Over the past few years, Hawai‘i has endured too many tragedies due to gun violence and illegal fireworks, threatening the safety of our families and communities. My administration refuses to accept this as the status quo. We are taking bold, decisive action to make our state safer and to ensure that our children can grow up in neighborhoods free from fear.



Attorney General Anne Lopez speaking at a press conference. (May 21, 2024)

Cracking Down on Gun Violence

Gun violence has no place in our communities and my administration has made historic strides in protecting the people of Hawai‘i. We passed two new gun safety laws that designate sensitive places where firearms are strictly prohibited statewide and introduced active shooter training in public and charter schools to keep our keiki safe.

Our efforts don't stop there. The state has conducted two highly successful gun buyback events, collecting approximately 500 firearms at each event. That's 1,000 fewer deadly weapons on our

streets. The firearms collected included assault rifles, semi-automatic rifles, handguns, revolvers, shotguns and ghost guns — dangerous weapons that will never again pose a threat to our people. In exchange, we provided incentives such as Foodland gift cards, reinforcing our commitment to keeping our communities safe.

In 2024, we launched a gun tip hotline to empower residents to anonymously report illegal gun ownership and firearm-related crimes. As of March 2025, this initiative has generated 41 credible leads, helping law enforcement remove illegal firearms and prevent potential tragedies before they occur.

Our administration will continue to push for stronger gun safety measures, tighter restrictions on illegal firearms and aggressive law enforcement action against those who put our communities at risk.

Eliminating Deadly Illegal Fireworks

Hawai‘i witnessed a heartbreaking tragedy this past New Year’s Eve when an illegal fireworks explosion in Salt Lake claimed multiple lives and critically injured more than two dozen people. This must never happen again. We must make a collective decision as a state to put an end to the reckless use of illegal fireworks. We can celebrate our traditions in safe and responsible ways, without putting lives at risk.

That’s why my administration created the Illegal Fireworks Task Force to dismantle the supply chains bringing these dangerous explosives into our state. Since its inception in 2023, the Task Force has seized an unprecedented 227,000 pounds of illegal fireworks — a major victory in protecting our communities. Additionally, task force investigations have led to felony convictions for two individuals illegally distributing fireworks and resulted in 20 citations for those using illegal fireworks.



Governor and First Lady Green, along with former Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hara and the current Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Stephen F. Logan, posed for a photo with their families during the change of command ceremony. (Oct. 1, 2024)

Beyond enforcement, we also created opportunities for residents to dispose of illegal fireworks safely. In January, the state conducted a fireworks amnesty event, where individuals could surrender fireworks without penalty. Thanks to the coordination of the Department of Law Enforcement, Honolulu Police Department, Hawai'i Department of the Attorney General, Honolulu Fire Department, Honolulu Department of Emergency Services and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, we collected an astounding 1,374 pounds of fireworks at Aloha Stadium. This effort represents a significant step forward in removing hazardous explosives from our neighborhoods.

We will continue working with the legislature to push for even tougher regulations and enforcement actions to completely eradicate illegal aerial fireworks in Hawai'i. Our families should not have to fear for their safety during celebrations.

Our Agricultural Communities Deserve Action

In 2024, the state also launched efforts to address agricultural crime in Hawai'i. Agricultural crime is underreported in Hawai'i, leaving the state with little data to study the scope of agricultural crime around our islands. In response, the state attended several agriculture industry and community meetings to encourage the farming and ranching community to report agricultural crimes, to allow the state to collect data that could then be used to analyze and recommend ways to address and reduce this costly issue.

Conclusion

This administration is unwavering in its mission to take illegal guns and dangerous fireworks off our streets. The safety and security of Hawai'i's people remain a central focus of this administration. The heartbreak caused by gun violence, illegal fireworks and agricultural crime has made it clear that we need to take action. We have taken bold, strategic steps to address these challenges, but we need the community's help.

Hawai'i's people deserve a future where our neighborhoods are safe, our traditions are celebrated responsibly and our families can thrive without fear. The state will continue to work hand in hand with law enforcement, community leaders and residents across the state to ensure that every family feels safe. Together, we will continue moving forward — stronger, safer and united in our shared commitment to public safety.



Chapter Four

ENHANCING HEALTHCARE

Prioritizing Hawai‘i’s Health



Governor Green talks to healthcare workers after signing the largest tax cut in the state’s history. (June 3, 2024)

A Beacon of Hope for Healthcare Professionals

The challenges of healthcare, especially in underserved areas in Hawai‘i, continue to be an ongoing issue that our administration has been working hard to address. Governor Green has seen the problems firsthand as an emergency room doctor in a rural hospital.

The state’s growing shortage of physicians and other healthcare professionals, limited hospital beds, low reimbursement rates and cultural barriers that prevent greater understanding of various benefits are just a few of the reasons Hawai‘i’s healthcare industry has struggled.



Governor Green poses with Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, M.D., associate dean for Academic Affairs and professor at JABSOM, and a HELP recipient at a news conference announcing the program. (Dec. 22, 2023)

However, the Administration has taken several steps to address some of the issues including the creation of the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program (HELP), which provides educational loan debt repayment for health professionals licensed or certified to provide care to patients in Hawai‘i. The program, conceptualized by Governor Green in partnership with the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the Healthcare Association of Hawai‘i and the state Department of Health, was funded by the state Legislature to provide \$30 million in educational loan debt repayment to licensed professionals who accept public health insurance for at least 30% of their patient care claims.

Philanthropists Marc and Lynne Benioff added their support to the program with an additional \$5 million over two years. In exchange for two years of full-time service in Hawai‘i, healthcare professionals in dozens of specialties can qualify for loan repayments starting at \$12,500 and capped at \$50,000.

The HELP program strives to alleviate some of the burden of educational debt so Hawai‘i can attract and retain the healthcare professionals essential to addressing Hawai‘i’s healthcare challenges. HELP prioritizes specialists in Primary Care and Behavioral Health along with those practicing in rural areas (as defined by the state).

As of February 2025, there have been 1,200 scholarships provided, 900 additional scholarships projected for the next two years, and we've seen a 3% reduction in the workforce shortage in under two years.

The plan is to continue to pursue funding so that additional cohorts can also receive benefits from the HELP program. HELP is just one effort to strengthen healthcare access, especially in our most underserved communities.

New State Law Takes Step Toward Relieving Financial Burdens and Increasing Recruitment in Healthcare Sector



Governor Green smiles with Emergency Medical Services workers at the EMS Week proclamation ceremony. (May 24, 2024)

In addition to the HELP program, Governor Green also signed into law a SB 1035, now Act 47, SLH 2024, which exempts certain medical services from the general excise tax (GET). This legislation will provide relief to the healthcare system by specifically exempting hospitals, infirmaries, medical clinics, healthcare facilities, pharmacies, and medical and dental providers from GET on goods or services that are reimbursed through Medicaid, Medicare or TRICARE.

Act 47 is viewed as a part of the potential solution to the state's shortage of nearly 800 physicians. The legislation received endorsements from more than 155 healthcare professionals and a survey of physicians at the John A. Burns School of Medicine found that eliminating the GET on medical services could be an effective means of recruiting and maintaining more physicians.

There is also a push on the federal side by U.S. Senator Brian Schatz, alongside Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation, to introduce legislation that will seek higher Medicare reimbursements for the state’s healthcare providers.

Investments to Increase Capacity to Serve Hawai‘i’s Communities

The Hilo Benioff Medical Center commenced construction of its expansion project that will include a new 19-bed intensive care unit and 36 additional hospital beds in March 2024. The \$80 million project was made possible due to a combination of public and private funding and will help reduce the shortage of hospital beds on Hawai‘i Island.



Governor Green and Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff walk and chat with their o‘o sticks in hand. (April 10, 2024)

Last year, the Hawai‘i State Legislature awarded \$50 million for the expansion project, as well as \$18 million for Kona Community Hospital; \$21.2 million for improvements at Samuel Mahelona Hospital in Kapa‘a; and \$39 million for Maui Health System for repair and maintenance projects. The funds were released by Governor Green, to support healthcare infrastructure.

“The island’s largest hospital desperately needed these beds to care for the growing community and today, we are delivering on our commitment to improve healthcare in the state. We are honored to partner with the Benioff ‘ohana to double the state’s commitment to support Hilo Benioff Medical Center,” Governor Green said at the ceremony.

Marc and Lynne Benioff also generously donated \$50 million to the hospital, a portion of which will go toward the expansion project.

“We feel honored and blessed to have been part of the Hawai‘i community for so many years and to be able to support our ‘ohana in this way,” Salesforce CEO, Chair and Co-founder Marc Benioff.

“Together, we’re not just adding a building, we’re bringing a world-class continuum of care to our community, partnering with Hawai‘i Pacific Health on O‘ahu and extending it to the mainland with UCSF Health in San Francisco, one of the world’s great medical research institutions. We hope that everyone on our island can get the expertise and care they need, when they need it.”

Transforming Hawai‘i into a Trauma-Informed State

Feb. 20, 2024, was a milestone day for the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR), previously attached to the Office of the Governor, when Governor Green, signed Executive Order No. 24-01, declaring Hawai‘i a trauma-informed state.



Governor Green, OWR Director Tia Hartsock and mental health advocates pose for a photo in the ceremonial room at the executive order news conference. (Feb. 20, 2024)

The office conducted a news conference and reception to celebrate the executive order, which invites state departments to collaborate with OWR to integrate trauma-informed care principles like safety, transparency and collaboration, as well as to build resilience in our communities and state workforce.

Since its start, the Green Administration has been prepared to deliver what’s needed for Hawai‘i. To this effect, OWR and its Director, Tia L.R. Hartsock, have been in place since early 2023 to tackle some of the most pressing issues we face in Hawai‘i, including community traumas like the Maui wildfires, our ongoing mental health crisis and child welfare reform.

In the implementation of Governor Green’s executive order, the office began to engage more deeply with state departments on their staff wellness and resilience goals, using tools such as the Hawai‘i Workplace Wellness and Well-Being Survey, the Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard, and an inaugural Kupa‘a Maui Ola Summit on wellness and resilience. It has also engaged in individual meetings with departmental leadership on their departmental survey results regarding workforce wellness and their trauma-informed care goals.

OWR was tasked by Governor Green to coordinate the mental health community’s response to the Maui wildfires in early August 2023, and it remains committed to this purpose long-term.



From left to right: Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager; Michele Navarro-Ishiki, LCSW; Amy Petersen, assistant project director with the Department of Health Maui Behavioral Health Wildfire Response; Tia L. R. Hartsock, OWR director. (Sept. 1, 2024)

Hawai‘i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard

Beginning in 2023, OWR partnered with the Health Policy Initiative at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UH-Mānoa) College of Social Sciences to conduct both community and state workforce wellness and resilience assessments through mixed-method surveying.

Through the spring and early summer of 2024, the Hawai‘i Quality of Life and Workplace Wellness survey was distributed across the state and initiated by more than 10,800 Hawai‘i residents in

partnership with the University of Hawai‘i at UH-Mānoa Health Policy Initiative. In total, nearly 8,800 residents completed the survey in its entirety, and the results have created the Hawai‘i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard.

The dashboard is now publicly available to inform legislation and policy, grant making, reporting and other funding needs, population-specific programming, and coordination of collaborative efforts with the goal of improving individual and system-level outcomes. To view and learn more about the survey and interactive dashboard, visit health-study.com. The website includes a user guide, as well as policy briefs on a variety of topics, including workforce wellness and medical debt. It will continue to be updated, so make sure to sign up for updates on the data and study overall.

It is now the largest statewide dataset related to health in Hawai‘i ever, as well as the largest survey using the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC)’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Worker Well-Being Questionnaire (NIOSH WellBQ).

Kūpa‘a Maui Ola: Hawai‘i’s Inaugural Wellness and Resilience Summit

OWR hosted its inaugural Kūpa‘a Maui Ola, Hawai‘i’s Wellness and Resilience Summit, on May 31, 2024, at the Ko‘olau Ballrooms in Kāne‘ohe. In total, 282 organizational leaders, supervisors, attorneys general, peer supports and contracted providers from the state departments and various nonprofits attended the event. The event was designed as an opportunity to formally kick off the trauma-informed state effort and inspire champions for the cause.

OWR introduced its trauma-informed state declaration with Governor Green and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green as the summit’s morning speakers.



Office of Wellness and Resilience staff at the inaugural Kūpa‘a Maui Ola: Hawai‘i’s Wellness and Resilience Summit. (May 31, 2024)

Working Groups

OWR wrapped up a major working group in 2024 — the Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group (Act 86, SLH 2023), which released a series of policy recommendations with the goal of transformational change to our state’s child welfare system, several of which were part of our administrative package. We will continue to partner with the Department of Human Services on this work. We also began convening a new working group, the Peer Support Specialists Working Group (Act 88, SLH 2024), which is developing a vision and framework for how the state can systematically infuse the voices of people who have had experience navigating our social service systems with the goal of improving those systems.



Participants gather at Aha Mālama ‘Ohana to strengthen the alignment of the community with the Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group in improving and transforming the child welfare system in Hawai‘i. (Aug. 19, 2024)

Plans for 2025

OWR has been meeting with state department leadership on their specific survey data, and co-hosting events in partnership with community-based organizations to share the Hawai'i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard with communities across the state, gathering feedback along the way to improve the 2026 version of the survey.

In response to 2024 legislation (Act 106), the Office is also planning to examine in-depth, the mental health and wellness supports available to our state workforce “helpers,” such as police, fire departments and public health employees in communities statewide.

Our commitment to advancing trauma-informed care remains strong as we continuously work on key initiatives and prepare for our upcoming wellness and resilience summit.

The office is also developing a diverse range of trauma-informed training content in 2025, for both executive state departments and the general public, toward the goal of creating a trauma-informed state.

To learn more about the Office of Wellness and Resilience, visit owr.hawaii.gov.



OWR poses for a team photo after doing a team building and planning session in Hilo.



PART II

Setting Hawai‘i Up for Success

Results For Our People

Chapter One

CONFRONTING THE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Working Toward Reducing Hawai‘i’s Cost of Living

Hawai‘i has been grappling with an affordability crisis for years. The disruptions to supply chains and inflation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the situation for families in Hawai‘i, as prices continued to rise, while incomes declined.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that area prices increased by 3.5% in the last year and food prices increased 3.1%,² whereas personal incomes fell by the same percentage. Affordable housing remains a significant concern in the state, with home prices on the rise; the median home price is \$1.1 million.³

The Green Administration has taken steps toward tackling these issues since the very beginning. This has included the construction of thousands of new affordable housing units, the doubling of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for most working parents, as well as the doubling of the food tax and child and dependent tax credits.



Governor Green talks about his priorities at his Legislative wrap-up news conference. (July 10, 2024)

Phase One of the GAP Plan

In December 2022, the Green Administration introduced the Green Affordability Plan (GAP). The Legislature approved the initial phase of GAP through Act 163, SLH 2023, which was enacted on June 30, 2023. This law applies to taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2022, and is intended to remain in effect until Dec. 31, 2027.

² https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_honolulu.htm

³ <https://www.locationshawaii.com/learn/market-reports/O'ahu-real-estate-report/>

This landmark legislation offers significant advantages for families in Hawai‘i by enabling parents and caregivers to either stay in or return to the workforce rather than opting to stay at home for caregiving. The key changes include:

- Increasing the cap on qualifying employment-related expenses for the household and dependent care services credit
 - from \$2,400 to \$10,000 for one qualifying individual.
 - from \$4,800 to \$20,000 for two or more qualifying individuals.
- Enhancing the EITC by raising the credit amount from 20% to 40% of the federal EITC. This effectively doubles the refundable credit for the majority of working parents, putting more money back into their hands.
- Providing greater financial relief for residents facing high food costs by amending the refundable food/excise tax credit. This change will double the credit for each qualified exemption and raise the adjusted gross income limits by \$10,000 across all income brackets.

This extraordinary financial initiative aims to reduce the cost of living by doubling both the earned income tax credit and the food tax credit, as well as enhancing the existing child and dependent care tax credit.

<i>Projected Tax Relief for Hawai‘i Families</i>	
Fiscal Year	Savings
2024	\$89.2 Million
2025	\$88.0 Million
2026	\$87.6 Million
2027	\$87.7 Million
2028	\$88.2 Million

Phase Two: Tax Relief and Family Support

Residents of Hawai‘i face one of the highest tax burdens in the United States, ranking second in income tax burden among states, behind only Oregon, which does not have a sales tax. To address this issue, Governor Green enacted HB 2404, Act 46, SLH 2024, known as the Income Tax Reform Bill.



Members of the Legislature and other key stakeholders joined Governor Green for a photo following the signing of the largest tax cut bill in Hawai‘i’s history. (June 3, 2024)

Act 46 results from collaborative efforts with the Legislature and aims to provide historic tax relief through major reforms. This law represents the most substantial income tax reduction for working families ever seen in the state, specifically targeting concerns about affordability and inflation.

It significantly raises the standard deduction and adjusts tax brackets for inflation. As a result, working families are expected to see their take-home pay rise by thousands of dollars annually.

Prior to this reform, 25% of income taxpayers in Hawai‘i had no state tax liability. This law will increase it 40%. The reform shifts the tax burden significantly, as 60% of the state’s income tax revenue historically came from high-income earners.

Act 46 implements a progressive tax policy, increasing the percentage to 80% of income tax collections derived from high-income earners. The law will also raise the standard deduction, benefiting low- and medium-income households, while eliminating the lowest tax brackets and lowering tax rates for all remaining brackets.

	Before GAP II	GAP II, 2025	GAP II, 2031
Standard deduction — single	\$2,200	\$4,400	\$9,000
Take-home pay increase — person making \$75K	-	+\$995	+\$2,372
Take-home pay increase — married couple making \$150K	-	+\$1,990	+\$4,745

The provisions of Act 46 will be implemented over a seven-year timeline. In odd-numbered years, the legislation will enhance the standard deduction, providing additional benefits for low- and medium-income households. In even-numbered years, the law will modify tax brackets by eliminating the lowest brackets and reducing tax rates across the board.

The bottom line: Working-class families are projected to see a 71% decrease in state income taxes by 2031.

To illustrate the impact, consider a family of four earning a median household income of \$88,000. Under the current tax law, this family would be liable for approximately \$5,086 in state taxes. With the new tax adjustments, its tax liability would drop to \$1,479, resulting in an increase of \$3,613 in its take-home pay by 2031.

The legislation is expected to facilitate Hawai'i's transition from being the second-highest-taxed state for working families, to the fourth-lowest.

These alterations to the tax landscape will disproportionately benefit lower-income taxpayers compared to their higher-income counterparts, enhancing the overall progressivity of the tax system. Many taxpayers may even transition from tax liabilities to tax refunds enabled by targeted income-based tax credits.

While Act 46 offers critical tax relief for working families, Act 47 exempts hospitals, infirmaries, medical clinics, healthcare facilities, pharmacies, and medical and dental providers from GET on goods and services that are reimbursed through Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE, from the state's GET. The measure will encourage cost-effective patient outcomes and increase access to care for traditionally underserved populations.

Cutting taxes and providing ways for people to keep more money in their paychecks will boost Hawai'i's economy and help ease some of the pressure on our families' pocketbooks. Too many local families are moving away. We must reduce the cost of housing, food and healthcare so local families can continue living in the home state they love.

Conclusion:

GAP represents a significant step toward alleviating the financial burdens faced by families in Hawai'i amid an ongoing affordability crisis. With the enactment of Act 46, the state is not only addressing immediate economic challenges but also laying the groundwork for a more equitable tax system that prioritizes low- and middle-income households. By increasing tax credits, standard deductions and restructuring tax brackets, the Green Administration is committed to ensuring that working families can retain more of their hard-earned income.

However, the new federal budget cuts pose significant challenges, threatening vital areas such as healthcare, education and social services. To navigate these challenges effectively, Governor Green has been proactively engaging with senior White House officials and strategically collaborating with the legislature to ensure that the people of Hawai'i are protected and still receive crucial services that support our communities.



Chapter Two

ADDRESSING THE HOUSING CRISIS

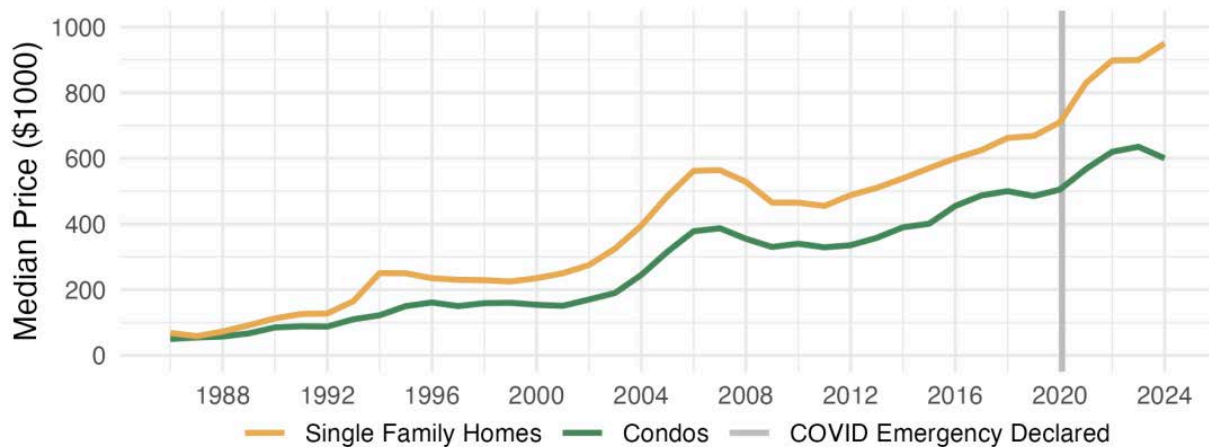
Building More Homes for Our People

Soaring housing prices are the biggest contributor to Hawai‘i’s highest-in-the nation cost of living, which stifles economic growth, forces thousands of local families to relocate out of state each year, constrains the demographic health of each county and jeopardizes the long-term viability of our way of living.

Fueled by high land and labor costs, the most restrictive housing regulations in the country and a severe shortage of affordable housing due to steep infrastructure costs, Hawai‘i’s housing crisis has been decades in the making. The state now boasts the highest home prices and rents in the country, forcing local families to spend a larger portion of their incomes on housing than anywhere else in the U.S.⁴

Studies show that the state needs to build more than 50,000 new housing units by this year to meet growing demand, but it is on pace to deliver less than a quarter of that.⁵

Median Sale Price–Statewide



Home transaction data is provided by Title Guaranty and includes both new homes and resales.

Graph courtesy: UHERO 2025 Hawai‘i Housing Factbook:

<https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2025.pdf>

⁴ Measuring the Burden of Housing Regulation in Hawai‘i: <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MeasuringTheBurdenOfHousingRegulationInHawaii.pdf> and The Hawai‘i Housing Factbook 2024: <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2024.pdf>

⁵ <https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/housing-demand-2019.pdf>

The shortage of affordable housing is fueling an exodus of local families who can no longer afford to pay Hawai‘i’s sky-high housing costs, eroding Hawai‘i’s identity and its culture.

Since 2020, Hawai‘i lost nearly 9,000 residents or about five people every day. These are not just numbers, these are people who lived and worked here and contributed to the Hawai‘i economy and society. Many of them were our neighbors, some of them were our relatives.

The exodus corresponds to a dark milestone in Hawai‘i’s history for the state’s indigenous people. For the first time since a government census was conducted in 1850 under King Kamehameha III, a majority of the world’s Native Hawaiian population lives outside the Hawaiian Islands.

To address the severe shortage of affordable housing, Green Administration has developed a three-point plan of action, including:

- Building more housing units on state- and county-owned lands;
- Eliminating red tape and costly impact fees that cause long delays and increases the cost of construction; and
- Investing in infrastructure to boost housing capacity.

Many of these steps are already paying dividends. Governor Green’s housing team has identified more than 46,000 affordable housing units in various states of the development pipeline that are expected to be completed in the next decade. That includes more than 10,000 affordable units scheduled to be completed in the next few years.

Building More Units: Ka Lei Momi

The Ka Lei Momi Redevelopment Project, which the state launched in July 2023, represents a cornerstone of the administration’s efforts to tackle Hawai‘i’s housing crisis, transforming many of the state’s aging public housing projects — some 70 years or older — into modern, mixed-use apartment complexes for Hawai‘i’s low-income and working-class families.

The 10-year redevelopment push will expand the inventory at nine Hawai‘i Public Housing Authority projects nearly tenfold from 1,187 apartments to 12,067 — or a total of 10,880 new units. The \$6.6 billion redevelopment represents the largest public housing expansion in the nation and will transform existing low-density public housing properties into modern, mixed-income and transit-oriented communities.⁶

Of the 10,000 additional units that will be created under the Ka Lei Momi Redevelopment Project, 90% will serve households making at or below 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI). These housing projects will add affordable units in high-need areas to increase opportunities for low- and middle-income residents and invest in underserved communities.

⁶ <https://governor.hawaii.gov/newsroom/news-release-the-hawai%CA%BBi-public-housing-authority-announces-master-developer-to-create-morethan-10000-affordable-rental-units/>



Photo rendering of Kuhio Park Terrace.

The housing projects include:

- 2,450 units at the current 364-unit Mayor Wright Homes project in downtown Honolulu;
- 2,170 units at the current 260-unit Pu‘uwai Momi project in ‘Aiea;
- 1,550 units to the current 152-unit Ka‘ahumanu Homes project in Kalihi;
- 3,000 units to the current 221-unit Kamehameha Homes project, also in Kalihi;
- 700 units to the current 36-unit Hale Laulima project in Pearl City;
- 500 units to the current 36-unit Nānākuli Homes project in Wai‘anae;
- 200 units to the current 82-unit Kahekili Terrace project in Wailuku, Maui; and
- 110 units to the current 36-unit Kapa‘a project on Kaua‘i.



The Mayor Wright Homes Redevelopment Project will transform the current 364-unit public housing site into a 2,448-unit mixed-income, transit-oriented community.

Many of these projects are beyond the conceptual stages and actual design and entitlement process permitting are underway.

The largest Ka Lei Momi project — Mayor Wright Homes — will expand the low-density public housing project from 364 units into a 2,448-unit, multiple high-rise, mixed-use community. The administration is budgeting \$56 million this year to fund the early construction.

The project's first phase is estimated to break ground in 2026.



Construction site of HPHA's affordable housing complex for senior citizens on School Street.

In addition to the Ka Lei Momi developments, the HPHA is redeveloping its School Street administrative offices in Kalihi and is expanding the Kuhio Homes and Kuhio Park Terrace (KPT) low rises, which both were built more than six decades ago. The School Street project, which will include 800 senior affordable rentals, broke ground last year, while the first phase of KPT's 650 units is anticipated to break ground this year.

The Emergency Proclamations on Affordable Housing: How Streamlining the Regulatory Process Can Enhance Affordable Housing Development

Governor Green signed the first Emergency Proclamation (EP) Relating to Housing on July 17, 2023, and signed a separate EP relating to affordable housing on Sept. 15, 2023. The Affordable Housing EP has been consistently renewed up to the present day.⁷

The proclamations address critical barriers to expanding affordable housing options by:

- Prioritizing affordable housing development projects where new additional units will serve primarily those at or below 140% of the AMI;
- Allowing more flexibility in zoning and other county-level building requirements to prioritize adaptive reuse and mixed-use communities;

⁷ <https://governor.hawaii.gov/category/newsroom/emergency-proclamations/>

- Amending processes under Section 201H-38, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), relating to expedited processes for state affordable housing development to shorten approval times;
- Expediting procurement, which adds costly delays to state and county projects;
- Allowing more flexibility for hiring critical staff in agencies or contractors to implement and regulate the housing development process to fill more than 300 identified vacancies; and
- Waiving school impact fees and county wastewater connection and park dedication fees for certified affordable housing projects. This will help offset rising construction costs due to inflation and supply-chain disruptions.



Lewili Kapolei, a 900-unit state affordable housing project, benefited from exemptions under the Emergency Proclamation.

This investment in streamlining and reducing costly fees is already reaping benefits. Since the EP was signed, nearly 10,000 affordable housing units have benefited from the exemptions under the Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing. They include:

- Five state development projects totaling over 5,000 units that received expedited entitlements through the 201H program;
- Thirteen private development projects that received over \$24 million in school impact fee waivers;

- Several HPHA projects that utilized the EP's fast-tracked procurement process to rehabilitate hundreds of vacant, low-income apartments and bring them back into operations; and,
- Several key housing and regulatory agencies were also able to fill dozens of vacant positions by bypassing the lengthy and cumbersome civil service hiring process.

Investing in Infrastructure: Leveraging our Future

Numerous studies identify the lack of infrastructure as the number-one obstacle to building affordable housing. Tens of millions of dollars in sewer, water, electrical and road upgrades will be needed to serve the growing housing demands and remove barriers to the construction of new affordable housing.

Currently, infrastructure improvements are financed by private developers or by state and county capital improvement programs.

To help unlock nearly 11,000 new affordable housing units in four key neighborhoods statewide over the next several decades, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the state \$6.6 million in federal funding through the Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) program, which rewards state and local governments that reform land-use policies and address other local barriers that constrain the supply of affordable housing.

With this PRO Housing grant, the Hawai'i Office of Planning and Sustainable Development will create a State Infrastructure Bank as a long-term infrastructure financing solution that will accelerate critical infrastructure investments to unlock housing production at a larger, more impactful scale than existing initiatives. Additionally, the grant will allow the state to increase its capacity to identify and address regulatory burdens that are driving up the cost of housing throughout the state.



From left to right: U.S. Senator Brian Schatz, Governor Green and HUD Regional Administrator Jason Pu pose with the check for the HUD PRO Grant. (July 3, 2024)

In the 2024 legislative session, state lawmakers passed more than two dozen measures and resolutions which aim to streamline the building permitting and zoning process, generate more funding for affordable housing, regulate the short-term rentals (STRs) market, encourage the adaptive reuse of underused commercial buildings for housing and to promote the construction of accessory dwelling units in residentially zoned urban areas.⁸ The measures include:

- Act 17 (SB 2919), SLH 2024, which regulates STRs. This law authorizes the counties to address STRs by regulating land use, allowing counties to determine the time, place, manner and duration of land and structure use through zoning ordinances. The legislation also determines that transient accommodations (rentals under 180 days) do not qualify as residential uses and may be phased out by counties;
- Act 39 (SB 3202), SLH 2024, which requires the counties to adopt or amend ordinances by Dec. 31, 2026, to allow for at least two accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on all residentially zoned lots – so long as there is enough water, sewer and electrical capacity to support them. New ADUs cannot be used as STRs and must follow the counties' development and

⁸ <https://hale.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2024-Legislative-Session-Housing-Digest.pdf>

permitting standards, such as setback requirements. They also do not apply to protected locations, such as wetlands, agricultural lands or state historic districts;

- Act 35 (HB 1760), SLH 2024, which enables the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) and the counties to implement a bond volume cap recycling program, utilizing prior years' tax-exempt private activity bond volume, while preserving the current volume cap to support affordable housing development. The HHFDC estimates that if \$100 million of private activity bonds could be recycled each year, it would support the production of 500 additional affordable housing units;
- Act 37 (HB 2090), SLH 2024, which directs the counties to allow for the adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings through their ordinances, increasing the housing inventory by repurposing underutilized commercial spaces and office buildings;
- Act 38 (SB 2066), SLH 2024, which expands the HHFDC's 201H-38 expedited processing and review program. This measure provides an alternative pathway for affordable housing developers seeking exemptions from certain state laws and rules so long as the homes are sold at affordable levels for Hawai'i residents; and
- Act 34 (SB 2133), SLH 2024, which authorizes HHFDC to issue bonds for housing project infrastructure, financing the development of regional state infrastructure projects, particularly in transit-oriented development areas.

Conclusion:

Hawai'i's housing crisis has been decades in the making and threatens the fabric of the community by forcing working-class families to relocate out of state to more affordable places. However, by implementing practical solutions we can address this crisis. This includes eliminating red tape and costly impact fees that cause long delays and increase the cost of construction, and building more housing on state and county lands, as well as investing in infrastructure to boost housing capacity. By collaborating with the counties, the development community and various housing stakeholders, we can boost affordable housing development statewide, helping to reduce Hawai'i's sky-high cost of living.



Governor Green and "Auntie" Blanche McMillan embrace at the DHHL West O'ahu Lease Awards. (Mar 22, 2025)

Chapter Three

REDUCING THE WAITLIST FOR HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands:

Native Hawaiians suffer disproportionately when it comes to housing burdens and face compounding barriers to accessing affordable housing. Nearly half of the households on that waitlist are cost burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their monthly income on housing. Additionally, 40% of Native Hawaiians on the waitlist reported living in overcrowded homes.

But with the passage of the historic Act 279, SLH 2022, the state Legislature appropriated \$600 million to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to reduce the decades-long waitlist for Hawaiian homesteads, which has swelled to over 29,000 kânaka maoli.



Governor and First Lady Green smile with Representative Darius Kila, DHHL Chair Kali Watson, Councilmember Andria Tupola and DHHL Deputy to the Chair Katie Lambert. (Dec. 13, 2024)

A large majority of the Native Hawaiians on the waitlist — like Jade Mapuana Riley of Maui — are over the age of 60 and are on fixed incomes, underscoring the urgency to develop homes as efficiently and quickly as possible.

Riley was among the first 52 DHHL beneficiaries to be awarded a home at the Pu‘uhona Homestead project in Wailuku back in June. After 37 years on the waitlist, Riley had initially given up and bought a home in Arizona.

“I’ve been one of those people who have been pushed aside and pushed aside and that’s why I wasn’t that hopeful this time. But you hope and you pray that maybe this is the time,” said the retired mother of four adult children and grandmother to five grandchildren.

In April, the DHHL awarded her a lease for a five-bedroom home with the help of a low-interest DHHL loan.

“I just started crying because I just couldn’t believe it,” she said.

“Our three generations — at the very least — are going to be able to enjoy this and I’m going to be able to live out my life in this home that I’ve dreamed of... this is going to be so huge for our family.”

The Pu‘uhona Homestead project includes future phases that will add 109 additional new homes is the DHHL’s first residential project on Maui in nearly two decades. It’s also one of dozens that the department is pursuing to fulfill its obligations to its Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

Under a five-year plan, the DHHL is hoping to deliver more than 7,500 homes and lots — especially for kūpuna.

- Many of these projects are beyond the conceptual stages where actual design work and construction are underway.
- DHHL partner Stanford Carr broke ground in December 2024 on the 23-story Hale Mō‘ili‘ili project at the former Bowl-O-Drome site on O‘ahu. Work is expected to be completed in two years, providing 278 apartments at rents ranging from \$657 to \$3,460;
- Building has also started on Villages of Leiali‘i 1B in West Maui. The project is next to the DHHL’s existing Leiali‘i homestead community, which was relatively unscathed by the Lahaina wildfire. The latest phase will add 181 much-needed homes for Native Hawaiians in a housing market that was in crisis mode even before the Aug. 8, 2023 wildfires;
- The DHHL is also in the construction process with the Ka‘uluokaha‘i master-planned community project in East Kapolei, which will eventually include 700 single-family lots;
- On Hawai‘i Island, work is ongoing on the La‘i ‘Ōpua Villages project. The department awarded the first 24 rental leases on the project’s first phase in 2023, which offers a rent-to-own option for beneficiaries. When all four villages are completed, the project will comprise 580 lots;

- On Kaua‘i, construction is nearing completion second phase of the Hanapēpē residence lots. This latest phase will include 82 single-family homes to complement the 47 residential lots in the project’s first phase.
- To date in 2025, DHHL has awarded more than 1,000 leases on O‘ahu, Maui and Hawai‘i Island.

Conclusion:

The efforts of DHHL to address the housing crisis faced by Native Hawaiians mark a crucial step forward in fulfilling the long-unmet needs of the community. With significant funding from Act 279 and a range of ongoing projects designed to produce thousands of new homes, those on the waitlist have renewed hope. These projects will profoundly impact families and communities, allowing them to build a stable and affordable future.

As DHHL continues to award leases, the vision of providing safe, affordable housing for all Native Hawaiians is becoming a tangible reality.



Chapter Four

HOUSING IS HEALTHCARE

Tackling Homelessness One Person at a Time

One of the biggest aftershocks of the housing crisis is our continually growing homelessness problem. The Green Administration is implementing various strategies to tackle homelessness, focusing on prevention, outreach efforts, transitional services and sustainable housing solutions.

Addressing the Complex Challenge of Homelessness



Office of the Governor and Hui Mahi'ai 'Āina staff passes out food to the homeless for Thanksgiving. (Nov. 23, 2024)

Homelessness is a multifaceted issue stemming from various causes and cannot be addressed with just one solution. Hawai'i's homeless population comprises a diverse group of individuals, each with their own stories, difficulties and potential solutions.

Some people may find themselves temporarily without housing due to financial hardships stemming from unemployment or underemployment, especially in the face of escalating housing and living costs.

In contrast, those who experience chronic homelessness often face additional hurdles, such as mental health issues, physical disabilities, or substance abuse. There are also individuals who are employed yet struggle to secure affordable, permanent housing.

Given this intricate landscape, any effective long-term strategy to address homelessness must not only prioritize the welfare of Hawai'i's most-vulnerable populations, but also cater to the diverse needs present in each situation.

The Green Administration aims to tackle homelessness in Hawai'i while also taking a leadership role on both national and global fronts in finding solutions. This involves implementing pragmatic

approaches that compassionately assist Hawai‘i’s homeless individuals while addressing the broader impact of homelessness on our communities.

HOW DO WE DEFINE THE ‘CHRONICALLY HOMELESS’?

A “chronically homeless” individual is defined as a homeless individual who lives in a place not intended for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter — or in an institutional care facility for fewer than 90 days and had been living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven or in an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility. This definition includes a wide range of vulnerable groups including women, children and families.

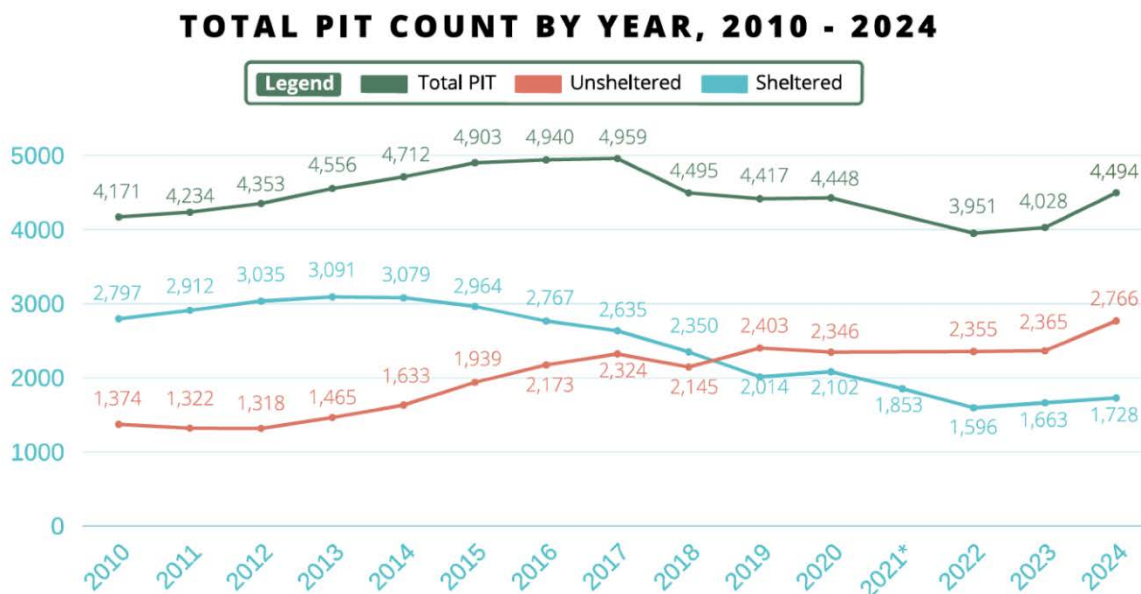
To meet the “chronically homeless” definition, the individual also must have been living as described above continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, where the combined occasions total a length of time of at least 12 months. Each period separating the occasions must include at least seven nights of living in a situation other than a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a safe haven.

The causes of homelessness in our state are diverse. Reasons for falling into homelessness in Hawai‘i might include one, or a combination of the following:

- The high cost of living;
- Limited or high-cost housing;
- Loss of income or employment;
- Family disruption;
- Natural disaster;
- Medical issues;
- Mental illness;
- Drug and substance abuse; and
- Arriving in Hawai‘i already homeless.

Hawai‘i’s Trends in the Point in Time Count

The latest Point in Time Count (PIT) report found that the state homeless population grew 2.7% to 6,389 from the year-earlier’s 6,223 — including an alarming 12% jump on O‘ahu to 4,494 from the previous year’s 4,028 (see graph below)¹.



*The 2021 Unsheltered PIT Count was canceled due to COVID-19.

Overall, homeless data indicates significant progress in addressing the crisis since 2015. The 2024 Point in Time (PIT) count is down 16.2% from 7,620 in 2015.

The year-to-year population trends are even more encouraging when it comes to the chronically homeless — whose numbers declined by nearly 496 or 12.6% to 3,452 people in 2024.

The chronically homeless account for a disproportionate share of the healthcare costs in our homeless safety net system. Chronically homeless people tend to suffer either from mental illness, addiction and/or PTSD. Many can only get treatment in the emergency room and when they get discharged, they’re back on the streets where they get sick again.

A report by the University of Hawai‘i Center on the Family found that the average healthcare costs for a chronically homeless person treated in the ER, in substance abuse programs and in other healthcare settings is about \$8,162 a month — or 76% higher than that of a homeless person in a sheltered environment.

Tackling Hawai‘i’s Homelessness with Kauhale

The concept of the Kauhale Initiative is to quickly and cost effectively house people experiencing homelessness, while building belonging and community.



Kauhale units at Ka Malu Ko‘olau. (Feb. 9, 2024)

Kauhale, often envisioned as tiny homes, prefabricated homes or other modest low-cost housing units clustered together, offer communal living with shared spaces for cooking, eating, recreation, community activities and sometimes job training, health-and-wellness services and more.

Hawai‘i’s chronically homeless population comprises individuals who are challenged with higher needs due to their longer time being unsheltered/unhoused, and other issues they are dealing with, which may include substance abuse and/or mental health challenges. Higher needs mean high levels of care. Many of the kauhale projects that we are creating for our communities across the state are special places where housing and healthcare are brought to the individual. The Department of Human Services’ Homeless Programs Office has been hard at work for many years in creating stronger more supportive programs which includes better outreach.

Since the onset of the program, 21 kauhale have been completed statewide to help homeless individuals and families transition off the streets and into supportive environments. These kauhale collectively provide a total of 874 units through various projects across the state. The Green Administration plans to develop additional kauhale over the next two years, aiming to reduce the state’s homeless population by half.

According to a University of Hawai‘i Center on the Family report, healthcare costs for the average person living on the street dropped by 76%, to \$1,965 a month, after being housed for six months, down from about \$8,162 per month. The Green Administration projects that over the next five

years after all costs, there will be a net savings of over \$450 million for Hawai'i taxpayers, all while reducing homelessness and caring for people in need.

The kauhale program aims to break this vicious cycle by putting people in housing so they not only have a roof over their heads but can get access to medical, mental health, substance abuse, case management and other social services. When our unhoused neighbors have a roof over their heads, without time limits or other conditions that force them back onto the streets, they are healthier — and so are our communities.

Our goal is that each day, we take one person off the streets.

These are not numbers. These are real people with real problems, struggling every day — like Manalani Kanahele, or Mana.

“Kauhale gives you a place of security, gives you your privacy, and I feel like every day, it gives you your life back,” she said.

The single mother was homeless, living in Whitmore Circle Park, battling substance abuse problems. She's now a kauhale case manager at Ka Malu Ko'olau kauhale — helping people like her rebuild their lives.



Above: Ka Malu Ko'olau Kauhale Case Manager Manalani Kanahele. Photo courtesy: HomeAid Hawai'i.



Kauhale resident Laura Mae Duclayan participates in the blessing of the Ho'okahi Leo kauhale. (Feb. 15, 2024)

Current List of Operational Kauhale Projects

(Subject to change as more kauhale are built)

Count	Project Name	County	# of units available
1	Kama'okū Kauhale — Kalaeloa	O'ahu	36
2	Waikiki Vista	O'ahu	120
3	Ho'okahi Leo	O'ahu	50
4	Salvation Army — Hilo	Hawai'i	24
5	Pae Pae Hou	O'ahu	25
6	CORE Le'ahi	O'ahu	19
7	Kauhale Health Iwilei First Hawaiian Bank	O'ahu	60
8	Ka Malu Ko'olau	O'ahu	34
9	Hui Mahi'ai 'Āina	O'ahu	57
10	Maui Central — Kūpuna	Maui	10
11	Fernhurst YWCA	O'ahu	20
12	Maui Vineyard — Kūpuna	Maui	16
13	Wiwo'ole YWCA Kaua'i	Kaua'i	18
14	Alana Ola Pono — Iwilei	O'ahu	45
15	Iwilei Center — Mental Health Koku	O'ahu	50
16	Kumu Ola Hou — Iwilei	O'ahu	50
17	Kauhale Opio	O'ahu	16
18	Punawai Medical Respite	O'ahu	18
19	Kipuola Kauhale/Pu'u honua O Nēnē	Maui	128
20	Kūlia I Ka Nu'u Kauhale	O'ahu	31
21	Village of Redemption 1 and 2	O'ahu	47
	Total kauhale		874
	'Ohana Zones		
1	Kaua'i County Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Kaua'i	52

2	Maui County PSH	Maui	12
3	Honolulu County PSH	O‘ahu	60
4	Hawai‘i County PSH	Hawai‘i	25
	Total ‘Ohana Zones		149
	Grand Total		1023

Conclusion

Tackling homelessness in Hawai‘i is a complex challenge that demands a comprehensive, multifaceted approach. The administration’s ongoing efforts, particularly through initiatives like the kauhale, reflect a strong commitment to addressing not only the immediate shelter needs but also the underlying issues contributing to homelessness. By creating sustainable housing solutions that emphasize community, support and belonging, we can foster environments where individuals find not just shelter but also access to vital resources such as healthcare, job training and social services.

Continued investments in innovative programs focused on outreach, prevention and transitional services will be crucial as we strive to reduce Hawai‘i’s homeless population. By prioritizing the unique needs of our most vulnerable community members, we can foster a more equitable society. Through compassion and dedicated action, we have the opportunity to create a brighter future for all residents of Hawai‘i, ultimately working toward a state where everyone can live in a safe and supportive environment.



Chapter Five

HAWAI‘I’S RESILIENT ECONOMY

Growth Against All Odds



Inflatable “Made in Hawai‘i” balloon displayed at the Tokyo International Gift Show Opening Ceremony. (Sept. 4, 2024)

Since the beginning of this decade, Hawai‘i has faced unprecedented challenges: The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown slowed Hawai‘i’s No. 1 economic driver, tourism, to a crawl while rising interest rates, inflation and supply-chain disruptions resulted in a spike in the costs of goods and services here and threatened the profitability of Hawai‘i’s No. 2 industry, construction. Then came the deadly Maui wildfires, which killed 102 people in Lahaina, caused an estimated \$5.5 billion in damage, destroyed over 2,000 homes and displaced over 8,000 residents.

But now at mid-decade, Hawai‘i’s economy is emerging from this post-COVID slumber with renewed strength and resilience that exceeds many of the most optimistic expectations.

The statewide unemployment rate of 3.0%⁹ remains among the lowest in the U.S. and well below the national average. Adjusted for inflation, Hawai‘i’s Gross Domestic Product and personal income growth — the widest measures of statewide economic activity — are expected to enjoy modest increases this year.¹⁰

⁹ <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/unemployment-statistics/>

¹⁰ <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/qser/outlook-economy>

Although overall visitor arrivals have been nearly flat in 2024, year-to-date visitor spending is actually up significantly when compared to the same period in pre-pandemic 2019.

Actual and Forecast of Key Economic Indicators for Hawai‘i: 2023 to 2028¹¹

Economic Indicators	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
	Actual		Forecast			
Total population (thousands) ²	1,441	1,446	1,449	1,452	1,456	1,460
Visitor arrivals (thousands) ³	9,658	9,689	9,786	9,982	10,201	10,416
Visitor days (thousands) ³	86,426	84,340	84,938	86,284	87,843	89,487
Visitor expenditures (million dollars) ³	20,866	20,819	21,343	22,080	22,895	23,747

The Japanese market is also showing some signs of rebounding. Despite the weak yen, Japanese arrivals are up more than 22% in 2024 compared to 2023.

The Japanese tourism market will further benefit from the recent expansion of the Global Entry program for Japanese citizens. The Global Entry program is a major game-changer for Hawai‘i and the local travel industry because it will reduce airport wait times and further encourage additional travel to the state of Hawai‘i, facilitate business exchange and make it easier for Japanese visitors who frequent the isles to return. Previously, the Global Entry program was being conducted on a pilot basis for Japanese citizens which limited the number of participants. The recent expansion removes this cap, making the program available for all Japanese travelers to apply.

¹¹ <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/qser/outlook-economy/>



During a trip to Japan to engage in cross-cultural exchanges and attend business meetings, Governor and First Lady Green also lead a delegation of local businesses at the Tokyo International Gift Show Opening Ceremony at Haneda Airport. (Sept. 4, 2024)

Beyond visitor promotion, this administration is aggressively moving to rebuild private-sector relationships and increase the inflow of foreign direct investment from Japan into the state.

Meanwhile, the state's second largest industry, construction, remains strong, with many large public and private sector projects underway or about to enter the pipeline. Private building permit values increased 19.1% during the first seven months of calendar year 2024 vs 2023, while government contracts have averaged \$1.3 billion per year since 2009.

Right now, there are \$15 billion to \$20 billion worth of large-scale state, county and federal government construction projects that are in the pipeline that will be completed over the next decade or so.

For example, the state's Kapālama Container Terminal project and the redevelopment of Aloha Stadium is bringing in more than a billion dollars in new construction. Meanwhile, the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard dry dock project and the redevelopment of wildfire-ravaged Lahaina — not to mention the continued work on the rail project — will add billions more in local construction activity.

This amount of construction work hasn't been seen in the isles since the late 1980s Japanese investment boom, when many of Hawai'i's biggest hotels were built — only this time, most of the construction work will benefit local families and will help diversify Hawai'i's economy.

The building boom is expected to create more than 8,000 construction jobs each year – or nearly a quarter of the building industry’s statewide workforce, which is already at record-high levels of employment.

Keeping this economic engine is going to be a challenge — given the tight labor market, the rising costs for building materials and supply-chain disruptions. That’s why our administration is focused on supporting the trades through extensive educational programs provided by the University of Hawai‘i community college system.

Governor Green also signed the Hawai‘i Project Labor Agreement (PLA) in February 2024, to ensure that Hawai‘i’s construction industry has a steady labor supply during this period of expansion.

PLAs help contractors with recruiting, hiring and training of local workers and prohibit labor disruptions so that construction projects are efficiently completed on their deadlines. They also require out-of-state contractors to exhaust the supply of local workers before importing labor from the mainland.

The increased economic activity translates into better-than-expected growth.

At its Sept. 5, 2024 meeting, the Council on Revenues (COR) lowered its FY 25 general fund tax revenue growth rate forecast from 4.8% to 3.5% and reduced its forecasts from 4.5% to 2.2% for FY 26; 4.0% to 3.5% for FY 27; 3.5% to 3.1% for FY 28 and FY 29; and 3.5% to 1.9% for FY 30. The COR also added its projection for FY 31 of 3.1%.

But at its Jan. 8, 2025 meeting, the Council raised its forecast to 6.4% thanks in part to a one-time, \$308 million estate tax payment that the state received last year. The unexpected windfall was not factored into the COR’s Sept. 5, 2024, general fund tax revenue growth rate of 3.5% in FY 25 and 2.2% in FY 26.

Due to the recovery of Maui tourism from the August 2023 wildfire, an expected gradual return of Japanese visitors, and a strong construction outlook, the COR is forecasting growth of 2.9% and 2.5% in fiscal years 2027 and 2028 — following a slight 1.5% dip in fiscal year 2026.

Conclusion:

Despite facing significant challenges in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic and devastating wildfires, Hawai‘i’s economy is showing resilience and growth. With a low unemployment rate, increased visitor spending and a robust pipeline of construction projects, the state is poised for a strong recovery. The expansion of initiatives like the Global Entry program for Japanese travelers and strategic efforts to attract foreign direct investment further enhances Hawai‘i’s economic landscape. As Hawai‘i continues to adapt and innovate, the foundation for a sustainable economic future is being established through these bold initiatives.



Chapter Six

CELEBRATING UNITY AND CULTURE

Highlights from the 13th Festival of the Pacific Arts & Culture in Hawai‘i



Tahiti performs at the FestPAC opening ceremony's Parade of Nations. (June 6, 2024)

The 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FestPAC), which Hawai‘i hosted for the first time in the festival's 52-year history, attracted over 500,000 people to events at the Hawai‘i Convention Center.

“This is one of the most magnificent events this administration has been part of and we hope the legacy of FestPAC will continue to grow in our state,” Governor Green said.

“We were honored to host this historic event, which brought thousands of people together from across the Pacific and fostered unity and collaboration between so many communities.”



Governor and First Lady Green addressed FestPAC attendees from across the Pacific at the closing ceremony. (June 16, 2024)

The 10-day festival and cultural exchange in June — dubbed the world’s largest celebration of indigenous Pacific Islanders — included more than 2,200 delegates from 25 Pacific Island nations from as far away as Rapa Nui to Australia and Taiwan. It also featured dozens of cultural exhibits, public speeches, traditional dance and chanting performances along with art demonstrations like kapa making, weaving and jewelry crafting.

“This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the very best in Pacific culture and artistic expression and to share our rich, cultural heritage with the world,” said First Lady Green.

The opening ceremonies and first-day events at the Convention Center were attended by more than 100,000 people. Highlights included the wa‘a, or canoe arrival ceremony, at Kualoa Regional Park and a gift carving by members of the Rapa Nui delegation for the victims of Lahaina and the people of Maui during the closing ceremony.



A photo of one of the canoes at the wa'a arrival ceremony. (June 5, 2024)

Additional FestPAC events included art exhibits at Capitol Modern, a carving and tattoo showcase at the Bishop Museum, and conferences and symposia at the Convention Center.

Since its inception in 1972, FestPAC has served as an essential venue for cultural preservation, revitalization, creativity, innovation and diplomacy for the Pacific community. In collaboration with the Pacific Community and the Council of Pacific Arts and Culture, FestPAC takes place every four years in a different Pacific Island nation.

Along with promoting cultural exchange and understanding among the participating nations, FestPAC also provides opportunities for artists and cultural practitioners to learn from each other, share stories, forge lasting connections and serve as a reminder of the common heritage that binds Pacific Island nations.



Members of the Rapa Nui delegation arrive at the wa'a ceremony. (June 5, 2024)

Hawai'i was originally scheduled to host FestPAC in 2020, but it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was funded through the generous support of the state Legislature, which appropriated \$5 million in matching funds for the event.

“We are hoping to build on these ceremonies by bringing back smaller delegations in the future to further strengthen our ties in the Pacific community,” Governor Green said.



Individuals from Micronesia take part in a sakau ceremony for the King of Micronesia, Governor Green, and other leaders of the Pacific. (June 14, 2024)

Conclusion:

Hawai‘i’s resilient economy is closely tied to our administration’s core philosophy of building more affordable housing, upgrading our infrastructure, ensuring a steady flow of labor for high-paying jobs and of taking a more prominent leadership role in the Asia–Pacific region to promote travel and trade. Pursuing these goals will lay the groundwork for further economic gains for years to come.



Chapter Seven

ACT 90, SLH 2003



A photo of Kapāpala Ranch, one of the agricultural plots transferred to DAB. Photo courtesy: DLNR.

Local food production is a cornerstone of Hawai‘i’s sustainability and resilience. By increasing the availability of locally grown food, the state can reduce its heavy reliance on imported goods, which currently accounts for 85–90% of the food consumed in Hawai‘i. Strengthening local agriculture supports food security — especially in times of global supply chain disruptions — and fosters economic growth by keeping resources within the local economy. Moreover, prioritizing local food production contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing the carbon footprint associated with transporting goods from the continental United States or overseas.

Act 90, SLH 2003, plays a critical role in advancing these goals by ensuring that agricultural lands are managed with the specific purpose of promoting farming and ranching. Act 90, passed in 2003, supports the sustainability and growth of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector by transferring state-owned agricultural lands from the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB). This initiative aligns with Hawai‘i’s commitment to increasing local food production and reducing reliance on imports. By placing these lands under

the management of DAB, the act ensures that agricultural resources are prioritized and supported with the specific expertise and stewardship needed to foster farming and ranching activities.

Since the enactment of Act 90, significant progress has been made. As of 2024, more than 24,550 acres of land have been transferred to DAB. These lands represent a vital resource for local farmers and ranchers, enabling the long-term development of Hawai'i's agriculture industry while promoting food security and self-sufficiency.

Conclusion:

Prioritizing local food production through initiatives like Act 90 is crucial for enhancing Hawai'i's sustainability and resilience. By strengthening the agricultural sector and reducing reliance on imports, the state can improve food security and promote economic growth while protecting the environment. The significant land set aside for local farming supports current needs and ensures a self-sufficient future, helping Hawai'i maintain its cultural heritage and ecological balance in a changing world.



A photo of Parker Ranch. Photo courtesy: DLNR.



CONCLUSION: THE PATH FORWARD FOR HAWAI‘I

“RESULTS FOR OUR PEOPLE”

The journey we have undertaken since December 2022 has been incredibly challenging but also extremely rewarding. It is a testament to the resilience and strength of our community.

The people of Hawai‘i have the kuleana (responsibility) to care for each other and protect our islands.

We must continue to uplift each other through the challenges we face from affordable housing and economic sustainability to homelessness and public safety.

The unfolding narrative of rebuilding and renewal is not simply a response to loss; it is an opportunity to forge a stronger, more unified future.

We stand together, not only to support Maui in its healing journey but to ensure that every individual and family has a place to call home and a chance to thrive.

This book serves as a reflection of the progress that has been made and what lies ahead. It reflects our commitment to working together as one ‘ohana, to build a Hawai‘i where everyone can flourish.

It inspires us to honor the values that bind us, guiding our collective efforts toward a future that's resilient and infused with hope and possibility.

Let us continue to unite in purpose and action, so that the Hawai‘i we create today becomes the foundation for the generations to come.



Governor Green and staff members of the Office of the Governor.

