



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

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

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green

Rooted in resilience, we continue to find ways to celebrate — even in the face of adversity. Our state is pushing boundaries, centering transparency and expanding accessibility.

The federal government shutdown has forced our nation to confront financial instability and distrust in leadership. The state of Hawai'i is working tirelessly to ensure people are fed, cared for — and most importantly, heard. We recently announced that \$100M in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds will be deployed for rent and utilities assistance under the Hawai'i Relief Program (see last page for more details). This is one of many programs in our protective pipeline, along with \$50M for nonprofits struggling due to federal funding cuts.

In this edition, we celebrate Hawai'i's successes — from recognition of our most devoted public servants via the Governor's Awards, to the landmark opening of our first neighbor island kauhale and the signing of clean energy agreements.

We're also excited to mark the opening of our 100th pre-kindergarten classroom, a testament to our ongoing commitment to a brighter future for Hawai'i's keiki. Together, these achievements reflect our shared vision for a resilient, innovative and thriving state.

We wish everyone a joyful and safe Thanksgiving as we continue to move forward together!

Mahalo,

Josh Green M.D.

Restoring Maui: Housing Solutions for Wildfire Survivors and the Homeless

After the Maui wildfires, Governor Green launched the largest non-congregate shelter program in U.S. history, partnering with hotels, the Red Cross and FEMA to quickly house survivors in private rooms instead of mass shelters. Within two weeks, every survivor seeking shelter was relocated — and about 80% were housed in hotels, forming a national model for disaster response.

To further support recovery, the state established Ka La'i Ola, "A Place of Peaceful Recovery," Maui's largest interim housing community for wildfire survivors. This 57-acre village includes 450 homes where roughly 900 survivors currently live, with the capacity to serve up to 1,500 individuals.

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Governor Green and Maui Mayor Richard Bissen, along with leaders of Ka La'i Ola and UFC.

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



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Kīpūola Kauhale. Photo courtesy: HomeAid Hawai'i.

Restoring Maui: Housing Solutions for Survivors and the Homeless

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In addition, the state built Kīpūola Kauhale, the first kauhale village on a neighbor island and largest overall. This project marks a major step forward in Hawai'i's innovative approach to deeply affordable housing and expands the successful kauhale model statewide. Built from the ground up on Maui, Kīpūola, meaning "to enfold oneself with life, health and well-being," will provide 64 tiny homes and a pathway to stability and economic mobility for wildfire survivors and individuals experiencing homelessness.

This achievement was made possible only through the collective effort of many partners united by a shared mission. Department of Business and Economic Development and Tourism Director Jimmy Tokioka led hotel partnerships,

Department of Human Services (DHS) Deputy Director Joseph Campos advanced Ka La'i Ola, and DHS Deputy Director Trista Speer supported resiliency counseling for survivors. Together with HomeAid, Family Life Center and Bridging the Gap, the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions helped make Kīpūola a reality.

As Governor Green stated, "The kauhale initiative has proven to be one of Hawai'i's most innovative and effective solutions to homelessness. Kīpūola Kauhale not only provides homes, it provides dignity, stability and opportunity. It is how we honor Maui's resilience and commitment to rebuilding stronger, together."

Hawai'i Reaches Milestone with 100th Public Pre-Kindergarten Classroom

Hawai'i has reached a major milestone in expanding access to early childhood education by the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) opening the state's 100th public pre-kindergarten classroom — at Maunawili Elementary School in Kailua on O'ahu.

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, who leads the Ready Keiki initiative, joined EOEL to celebrate the achievement and recognize the state's continued investment in Hawai'i's youngest learners.

"Just a few years ago, there were only a few dozen public pre-K classrooms statewide," said Lt. Gov. Luke. "Now, we're celebrating our 100th. This milestone reflects Hawai'i's commitment to every child, every family and every community."

Since the launch of Ready Keiki in January 2023, EOEL and its partners have more than tripled the number of public pre-K classrooms statewide from 37 in 2022 to 117 classrooms across 89 locations today.

"Every new classroom represents a doorway to opportunity for families. Our goal is to ensure every keiki in Hawai'i has access to a strong start," said EOEL Director Yuuko Arikawa-Cross.

With Hawai'i's high cost of living, these free public pre-K classrooms provide families with an invaluable opportunity. Parents can give their children a high-quality early learning experience — one that might otherwise be out of reach —

helping keiki develop critical skills, confidence and a love for learning. Tuition-free pre-K allows parents to contribute to the workforce or pursue higher education, strengthening communities across the islands.

Each public pre-K classroom serves up to 20 children, ages 3 and 4, with priority for those in at-risk circumstances. Families can learn more about EOEL public pre-kindergarten or apply online at earlylearning.hawaii.gov.



Lt. Governor Sylvia Luke and the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) celebrate the 100th EOEL public pre-K classroom, at Maunawili Elementary, led by teacher Sara McCoy and assistant Dustin Kavanagh. The event was also attended by Department of Education Complex Area Superintendent Lanelle Hibbs and State Representative Mike Lee. Photo courtesy: EOEL.



Celebrating Excellence in Public Service: 48th Annual Governor's Awards

The Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) proudly hosted the 48th Annual Governor's Awards Ceremony in September, honoring outstanding individuals and teams across our state government. Each department nominates candidates for three prestigious categories: State Employee of the Year, State Manager of the Year and State Team of the Year. A selection committee composed of community members carefully reviews each nominee's accomplishments and the positive impact they've made on their department and the broader community.

The nominees exemplify the highest standards of public service and unwavering dedication to the people of Hawai'i.

STATE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: Marly Jane Nakamura, Corrections Education Supervisor, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

STATE MANAGER OF THE YEAR: Kathryn Tipton, Librarian, Hawai'i State Public Library System

STATE TEAM OF THE YEAR: Med-Quest Program and Policy Development Office, Department of Human Services

"These award winners have gone above and beyond in service to our community," said Governor Green. "Through their leadership, creativity and compassion, they have enriched lives, opened doors of opportunity and improved health and well-being across our islands."

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to this year's winners and each of the exceptional nominees. Mahalo for your commitment and service to the state of Hawai'i!



A group photo with all of the 2025 awardees. Photo courtesy: DHRD.



Hawai'i Strengthens Clean Energy Partnerships with Japan and Okinawa

In October, Governor Josh Green and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green led a Hawai'i delegation through Tokyo, Osaka and Okinawa, establishing and renewing partnerships to ensure affordable and reliable energy for Hawai'i residents.

A Strategic Partnering Agreement signed by Governor Green on October 6 establishes a framework for collaboration among JERA Co., Inc., JERA Americas Inc., and the state of Hawai'i, advancing clean energy initiatives recommended in the Alternative Fuels, Repowering and Energy Transition study published by the Hawai'i State Energy Office in January 2025.

JERA, the largest power producer in Japan and one of the largest globally, has committed to eliminating carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from its domestic and international operations by 2050. JERA brings unparalleled expertise in energy infrastructure and strategic investment, supporting the diversification of Hawai'i's energy portfolio and its shift away from petroleum-based fuels.

In Okinawa, Governor Green and Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki signed a five-year Memorandum of Cooperation on Clean Energy, renewing a partnership that began in 2010 that advances shared goals for renewable energy, clean transportation and grid innovation.

In the electricity sector, these partnerships build upon the leadership and contributions of Hawaiian Electric, Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative and energy stakeholders, solidifying Hawai'i's role as a national and global leader in energy transition policy and deployment.

Memorandum of Cooperation regarding the Hawai'i-Okinawa Partnership on Clean Energy" Renewal Ceremony
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Governor Green and Governor Tamaki signing the Clean Energy Memorandum in Okinawa.



Governor Green and Okinawa Governor Tamaki along with their Chief Energy Officers pose for a photo with the signed memorandums.

State of Hawai'i Named an Overall Winner in the 2025 Government Experience Awards

The state of Hawai'i has been honored by the Center for Digital Government (CDG) as an overall winner in the 2025 Government Experience Awards. CDG is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government.

This year, the winning jurisdictions in the CDG Government Experience Awards focused on making government more accessible through technology — and that work is not limited to websites and apps. Notably, all the winning jurisdictions are employing artificial intelligence with caution and inquisition, ensuring they are adopting it for the right reason: to help people.

"We're honored to be named an Overall Winner in the 2025 Government Experience Awards, said Comptroller Keith A. Regan. "This recognition reflects our team's commitment to creating accessible, equitable and innovative digital services for the state of Hawai'i."

The program highlights states, cities, counties and agencies that are setting the standard for people-first services, using technology creatively to build trust with residents. Winners were celebrated at the GovX Summit on September 25, a virtual event highlighting innovation in public service.

Resources for Families Impacted by the Federal Shutdown

Governor Green recently announced new coordinated state actions to protect Hawai'i families from the impacts of the ongoing federal government shutdown and disruption to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

To provide necessary support, the state will issue a \$250 emergency relief payment per eligible individual by November 14. Governor Green also directed \$2 million in state support through the Department of Human Services to Hawai'i's food banks to maintain essential operations and food distribution across every island.



Expanded Relief and Family Assistance

The Hawai'i Relief Program, launched with \$100 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding, provides up to four months of housing and utility assistance for families with children facing financial hardship. DHS has contracted Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) and Maui Economic Opportunity Inc. (MEO) to administer the program statewide.

Applications opened October 29. Families do not need to be SNAP recipients to qualify.

For more information or to apply for the Hawai'i Relief Program, visit the appropriate website. Families seeking help can also contact Aloha United Way's 211 to be directed to CCH and MEO.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (Kaua'i, O'ahu, Hawai'i Island)

Website: catholiccharitieshawaii.org/hawaii_relief_program

Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. (Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i)

Website: meoinc.org

Support for Students and Schools

Students certified for free meals through SNAP or TANF will continue to receive free breakfast and lunch for the entire school year despite the shutdown. Families newly applying for SNAP or experiencing income loss are encouraged to apply for subsidized student meals to ensure no child goes hungry.

Community Support and Volunteer Efforts

Families seeking help can contact Aloha United Way's 211, available daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., including holidays. The hotline connects callers with food, housing, healthcare and other vital services.

- Call: 211 anywhere in Hawai'i
- Text: 877-275-6569 (for deaf or hard of hearing)
- Live Chat: auw211.org

Support from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs has committed \$6.1 million in emergency relief funds to assist Native Hawaiian families experiencing food insecurity, loss of utilities or housing instability.



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

We invite you to stay connected with us!

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