



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • January 2026

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green

As we begin the New Year, I want to wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy 2026!

The turning of the calendar is a moment to reflect on how far we've come and to recommit ourselves

to the work ahead. While the challenges facing our state remain complex, our priorities are clear and unchanged. We continue to focus on expanding access to safe, affordable housing; strengthening our healthcare system; addressing homelessness with compassion and urgency; and taking meaningful action to protect our climate for future generations.

These priorities guide our decisions and shape the work we do every day on behalf of our communities. In the weeks ahead, we are looking forward to the start of the legislative session. This is an important opportunity to work collaboratively with the Legislature, community partners and stakeholders to advance policies that move our state forward. With open dialogue, cooperation and a focus on common ground, we can continue building progress together.

Thank you for your engagement and for being part of this work! I am optimistic about the year ahead and grateful for the opportunity to serve Hawai'i.



Happy New Year!

Josh Green M.D.

HPHA Groundbreaking for Phase One of Kūhiō Park Low Rises



From left to right: Governor Green, Highridge Costa Development Senior Vice President of Capital Markets Brian Suess, Hawai'i Public Housing Authority Executive Director Hakim Ouansafi, Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi and Kahu Cordell Kekoa.

The state of Hawai'i marked a historic milestone in its commitment to community housing with the groundbreaking of Phase one of the Kūhiō Park Low Rises and Homes development. This project highlights the state's ongoing dedication to creating inclusive, sustainable and affordable living spaces for residents.

The new development aims to support those who qualify for Project-Based Vouchers and renters earning between 30% to 80% of the Area Median Income. It will replace outdated structures with modern, accessible units that meet current safety standards, while also expanding open spaces and community amenities.

Phase one will feature approximately 304 affordable housing units, along with amenities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, a community meeting room, management offices, elevators, laundry facilities, internet-enabled computers, walking and fitness paths and community gardens — fostering a vibrant, accessible neighborhood for all.

In addition, Governor Green officially proclaimed December 2025 as "Hawai'i Public Housing Authority Month" to honor the agency's 90 years of service and its ongoing efforts to provide affordable housing solutions across the state.

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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Holiday 'Ohana Day event at WCCC

Holiday merriment filled the air at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), where the facility hosted a "Star Light, Star Bright" 'Ohana Day event for inmates and their loved ones.

Approximately 40 incarcerated women reunited with their family members at the facility's Maunawili Cottage courtyard for the Christmas-themed gathering on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. More than 70 family members attended the festive occasion.

The Pu'a Foundation and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu's Prison Ministry sponsored the three-hour event thanks to donations. The donations also helped support flight expenses to O'ahu for more than a dozen families from the neighbor islands.

It's all about family, said Pu'a Foundation Executive Director Toni Bissen. "It's important to have this opportunity to eat together, to have fun together in this festive time," she added.

The organizations have been working with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR), for more than 20 years to assist incarcerated mothers in reconnecting and maintaining bonds with their keiki.

Facility staff and volunteers decked the Maunawili Cottage courtyard with a Christmas tree, festive garland, balloons and streamers. Holiday music resonated from a portable speaker as inmates played with their children and spent quality time with their loved ones.

Families also enjoyed a visit by Santa Claus, a puppet show, arts and crafts and wholesome family activities.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson thanked WCC corrections officers and staff, community partners and volunteers for their hard work organizing the event. "'Ohana Day reminds those in our custody and care what's important — family connections and reunification," he said.

Studies show that family support is a key factor in reducing recidivism for justice-involved individuals.

State Releases \$18M in Loan Capital for Underserved Ratepayers

The Hawai'i Green Infrastructure Authority (HGIA) is thrilled to announce the availability of \$18 million in Green Energy Market Securitization (GEMS) loan capital to expand access for nonprofits, small businesses, rural health centers and Hawai'i's underserved ratepayers to participate in the clean energy transition and lower their utility costs. The funding comes at a pivotal moment as federal Solar For All funds remain the subject of ongoing litigation and federal tax credits for homeowner-owned systems expired at the end of 2025.

The additional loan capital was made available through Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission Order No. 42129, which modifies Order No. 34930 to allow HGIA to immediately deploy the funds to finance clean energy improvements.

The GEMS program was created by Act 211 (SLH, 2013) to provide inclusive financing at below-market rates and flexible terms to support clean energy projects, specifically for underserved ratepayers, defined as low- to moderate-income homeowners, renters, nonprofits, small businesses and multi-family projects.



The WCCC hosted a special holiday event where inmates reunited with their family members. The Pu'a Foundation and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu's Prison Ministry sponsored the "Star Light, Star Bright" 'Ohana Day event. Photo courtesy: DCR.

Funds are deployed through the Green Energy Money Saver (GEM\$) program, an on-bill repayment financing program. Eligible customers can install clean energy upgrades such as solar photovoltaic systems, battery energy storage systems, solar water heaters, heat pump water heaters and commercial energy efficiency retrofits.

Despite the end of federal tax credits for homeowner-owned systems, homeowners can still see significant electric utility bill savings through the GEM\$ program. HGIA does not incorporate tax credits to determine estimated utility bill savings, nor rely on it to approve financing.

This state investment in clean energy will aid in lowering electricity bills for participating customers, catalyze growth in the state's energy sector and advance the state of Hawai'i's goal of 100% clean energy by 2045.



Supporting Keiki Health With a \$50 Wellness Incentive

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is encouraging families statewide to participate in the Hawai'i Child Wellness Incentive Program (HCWIP), a pilot initiative designed to support regular well-child checkups and strengthen the long-term health of Hawai'i's keiki. Through this program, parents enrolled in Medicaid or Med-QUEST may receive a \$50 incentive card for each child who completes a well-child examination once a year.

DHS launched HCWIP as part of a legislative effort to help families stay connected to preventive care. Well-child visits play a vital role in monitoring growth, developmental milestones, vision and hearing, behavioral health, immunizations and early indicators of potential illness. These screenings help ensure that children receive the care they need, when they need it.

"Every child in Hawai'i deserves the chance to grow up healthy and supported," said Ryan Yamane, director of DHS. "This program helps families stay connected to regular checkups that protect the long-term well-being of our keiki and strengthen the health of our communities."

Parents who are currently receiving Medicaid or QUEST for a child under 18 years old may be eligible for the \$50 incentive. The child does not need to be on Medicaid to qualify. After a well-child exam is completed by a Licensed Health Care Professional, providers certify the visit and DHS mails out a

prepaid \$50 card within four to six weeks. The card can be used at any U.S. retailer that accepts debit cards and may be applied toward food and household necessities.

Families can learn more, submit applications, or access customer support at <https://medquest.hawaii.gov/cwip>. The HCWIP Customer Service Line is available at 833-909-3631, with additional support for families needing accommodations due to disabilities.

By supporting preventive care and wellness today, DHS continues to invest in a healthier future for Hawai'i's keiki, families and communities.



Kids playing in the waves. Photo courtesy: DHS.

Celebrating a Decade of Innovation: Winners Announced for the 10th Annual Hawai'i Annual Code Challenge

Hawai'i's next generation of technology leaders took center stage as winners were announced for the 10th Annual Hawai'i Annual Code Challenge (HACC), marking a milestone year for one of the state's most impactful civic technology events. Held on November 22 at the University of Hawai'i–West O'ahu, the 2025 competition brought together high school students, college teams and IT professionals to design innovative solutions addressing real-world challenges faced by state agencies and the community.

Organized by the Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) in partnership with the University of Hawai'i, the HACC has spent the past decade inspiring participants to apply their technical skills in service of modernizing government and strengthening Hawai'i's local tech ecosystem. This year, nine finalist teams were selected to present their projects before a panel of judges, competing for a total of \$18,000 in awards.

The four challenge areas reflected pressing needs in workforce development, project oversight and higher education support. Their solutions demonstrated not only technical creativity, but also a strong understanding of how technology can improve public services and everyday experiences in Hawai'i.

Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke opened the event with encouraging remarks, commending participants for using technology to address issues that directly impact the people

of Hawai'i. She noted that over the past 10 years, the HACC has consistently shown how innovation and creativity can help build a stronger future for the state.

State Chief Information Officer Christine Sakuda echoed that sentiment, emphasizing the value of collaboration between government, education and the broader community. She highlighted the HACC as a powerful platform for nurturing local talent and generating fresh ideas that can transform how government serves the public.

As the HACC celebrates its 10th anniversary, the program continues to advance the state's goals of expanding the local IT workforce, encouraging civic-minded innovation and investing in the next generation of technology leaders across the islands.



From left to right: State Chief Information Security Officer Vincent Hoang, Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke and Chief Information Officer Christine Sakuda. Photo courtesy: ETS.



OWR Deputy Director Chosen for Prestigious Psychology Leadership Program

Congratulations to Trina Orimoto, Ph.D., deputy director of the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR), for being chosen for the 2026 cohort of the American Psychologists Association's Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology. The program vision is a world with equitable systems led by diverse individuals with leadership training based in psychology and principles of gender equity. Her background in clinical psychology and work on social health and trauma-informed care within OWR aligns well with the program's overall mission and goal to create positive organizational and societal change.

Volunteers Help Beautify Public Parking Garage

You'll be greeted with a new, big burst of color if you park in the basement of the Kalanimoku Building, which serves as the headquarters for the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Director and Comptroller Keith Regan invited the public to help paint the 100-yard-long wall, which had been white for decades, since the building was built in the 1970s. Forty community volunteers spent a Saturday in November beautifying the space.

Central Services Division Administrator James Kurata says the idea came to him when it was time to clean the walls; "it was an opportunity to brighten up the environment for the visitors and the employees," he explains.

He enlisted the help of Solomon Enos, the Artist-In-Residence for DAGS' attached agency State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. Enos came up with an abstract concept of triangles that represent a fishing net, because "nets are used to carry, nets are used to connect and network and all of those different kinds of connotations are poetic expressions of the work that happens in this building," describes Enos.

The rainbow of hues on the walls represents the many colors



Photo courtesy: DAGS



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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