



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

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



GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

As a state we have faced extraordinary challenges — from rising costs, funding cuts and a housing crisis, to wildfires that reshaped Maui forever. And yet, through those challenges, we have proven something essential: when we act with purpose, compassion and resolve, we can continue to move our state forward.

My administration began with a vision for Hawai'i that is bold, realistic and rooted in our values. It is a vision where working families can afford to live here, raise their children and care for their kūpuna; where young people see opportunity in the islands they love; where our economy grows in ways that strengthen communities; and where we protect our 'āina, our water and our way of life, for generations to come.

Over the past three years, we have taken decisive action to lower the cost of living, expand affordable housing, reduce homelessness and strengthen healthcare access, all while investing in climate resilience. We cut through decades of red tape to build more housing than seen in generations and established kauhale villages statewide — treating housing as healthcare and restoring dignity to those left behind. We did this not because it was easy, but because it was necessary.

Still, vision without action is just words on a page. We stand at a defining moment now. The work ahead will continue to demand our discipline, courage and tough choices in service of the common good. Federal uncertainty, climate risk and long-standing inequities require us to govern responsibly. We must work together — guided by our values: aloha, kuleana and a shared sense of responsibility — Hawai'i can be a model of what is possible: a state that grows sustainably, cares for its people and protects what makes this place special. Let our actions, not our words show the nation that we lead with compassion and aloha.

To the people of Hawai'i, mahalo for your strength, resilience and trust. By standing united and embracing our shared responsibility to one another and to this place we call home, we will keep building a Hawai'i where everyone has the chance to thrive.

Mahalo,

Governor Josh Green

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.



Scan the QR code to view our digital newsletter.



Governor Josh Green delivered the final State of the State Address of his first term on January 26, doubling down on the bold priorities he has continued to pursue since he took office. The address highlighted three years of progress — from tax cuts and housing production, to healthcare expansion and Maui recovery — and laid out a forward-looking agenda to ensure every family in Hawai'i can afford to live, work and thrive in the islands they call home.



LOWERING THE COST OF LIVING

- Expanded tax relief for working families, including doubling the Earned Income Tax Credit and Food Tax Credit to save families \$88 million per year in taxes.
- Delivered the largest income tax cut in state history, while preserving the state's long-term fiscal health.
- Historic income tax cuts were preserved for 2026 while increasing the state's fiscal reserves to offset federal cuts.
- Proposed a strategic pause for future cuts to restore \$1.8B for essential services to be preserved for food security and child care needs.
- Increased support for food security through expanded SNAP matching funds and regional food hub investments.
- Launched Sun Bucks, in partnership with the USDA, to provide summer food benefits to eligible children statewide to ensure keiki don't go hungry at school.
- Strengthened child care support to help families keep more of what they earn.
- Expanded regional kitchens and food hubs to strengthen food security, improving emergency preparedness.

2026 STATE OF THE STATE

BUILDING HOUSING AT A HISTORIC SCALE

- Delivered the most significant housing regulatory and zoning reforms in over 40 years.
- Record housing production with thousands of affordable homes completed and many more underway.
- Entitled 5,500 affordable units and more than 6,500 affordable units since entering office.
- Over 62,000 housing units in the statewide pipeline, including 46,000 affordable units.
- More than 20,000 units planned on state lands; expanding workforce housing statewide.
- Historic homestead leasing on Hawaiian Home Lands with over 2,500 leases granted in 2025 — the most awarded in a single year in DHHL's 100-year history.
- Continued transformation of public housing and leasehold programs to expand long-term affordability.



ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS WITH A HEALTHCARE APPROACH

- Twenty-five kauhale tiny home villages have been opened to date, with 30 villages expected by the end of 2026.
- Nearly 1,000 new beds in supportive housing communities.
- Healthcare costs for formerly homeless individuals have dropped significantly following permanent housing placement.
- Continued \$50M/year investment in housing first solutions (kauhale), outreach and civil legal services.
- Integration of mental health care and addiction treatment into homeless strategy for improved outcomes in breaking the cycle.
- Goal to cut chronic homelessness in half this year.



GROWING THE ECONOMY AND CREATING LOCAL JOBS

- Hawai'i maintains one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates.
- Strong increases in GDP, personal income and visitor spending, with GDP forecast to be 5% higher in 2025 than in 2019.
- Personal income is forecast to be 11% higher and visitor spending is now the highest ever recorded
- Expansion of film and TV tax credits to boost local hiring and keep creative industries in Hawai'i alive.
- Diversified growth with investments in career pathways like healthcare, conservation, construction and education.
- Workforce pipelines strengthened with public-private partnerships in healthcare, energy and education sectors.



PROTECTING HAWAII'S ENVIRONMENT

- Safe removal of 104M gallons of fuel and permanent closure of Red Hill ahead of schedule.
- Reestablished the State Fire Marshal and upgraded emergency alert systems.
- Deployment of wildfire and extreme weather sensors statewide.
- Implementation of the nation's first Green Fee to generate \$100M+ annually for climate resilience and environmental protection.
- Formed an environmental advisory council to help guide a comprehensive strategy for resilience and climate mitigation.
- Nearly 500 community-driven proposals submitted to guide environmental investments.

STATE ADDRESS RECAP

STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE STATEWIDE

- Launched HELP — a state-funded initiative providing educational loan repayment for more than 900 providers licensed or certified to practice in Hawai'i.
- Directed more resources to Medicaid rate increases, improving care for almost 400,000 of the most vulnerable people in our state.
- Budget includes \$16.5 million to cover the cost of preserving enhanced ACA tax credits for Hawai'i families.
- Nearly \$190M secured in federal funding for our Rural Health Transformation Program to modernize rural access to care, grow our economy and create thousands of good jobs across our state.
- Five-year, nearly \$1B effort underway to stabilize and grow healthcare capacity across the islands.



MAUI RECOVERY

- Governor personally engaged federal leadership to secure a FEMA housing extension through February 2027.
- Thousands of temporary housing units delivered for wildfire survivors.
- More than 1,200 interim homes built; rental support provided for displaced residents.
- Over \$2B in federal disaster funding secured.
- Another 1,200 interim housing units and 2,200+ permanent homes planned, including hundreds of affordable units.
- Continued support for those in transitional housing into 2027 to give them more time to rebuild their lives.
- Continued wildfire mitigation, infrastructure upgrades and community rebuilding efforts.



DAGS, DLNR Partner to Host January Blood Drive



DAGS Comptroller Keith Regan and DLNR Acting Chair Ryan Kanaka'ole smile in front of the blood mobile. Photo courtesy: DAGS.

Twenty-eight state workers and other members of the public — including Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi — donated blood to the Blood Bank of Hawai'i at a blood drive in January. The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) coordinated the event that was conducted outside their building on Punchbowl Street.

Department heads Keith Regan and Ryan Kanaka'ole made time to thank their employees for participating. "Every time we give blood, it's going to benefit someone that's in critical need, whether they be at one of our hospitals throughout the state, here on O'ahu or anywhere else, and it's just one way of being able to give back and do something positive," said DAGS Comptroller Regan, who shared he is a regular donor.

DLNR Acting Chair Ryan Kanaka'ole said, "There's always a demand for blood, whether it's trauma victims, people with chronic illness, or newborns. There's a need every single day, and I'm just glad people are showing up and donating."

The departments offered free Spam musubi to the first 35 donors. This is an event they organize regularly; check out DAGS' or DLNR's social media for the next blood drive date.

Think you're ready to buy your first home but could use just a little help?



The state-sponsored Hale Kama'aina Mortgage Program helps qualifying Hawai'i residents become homeowners by offering them rates that are competitive, if not lower interest rates than typical market programs. While the program is designed primarily to assist first-time homebuyers who need a lower monthly mortgage payment, Hale Kama'aina may also provide downpayment assistance.

Those wishing to qualify must be first-time homebuyers, bonafide Hawai'i residents and agree to be owner-occupants. Go to HHFDC's home page at <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hhfdc/hk-mortgage-program/> to learn more.

DCCA Launches Kaua'i HI-WiFi Starlink Program

The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA), in partnership with the County of Kaua'i, has launched the Kaua'i HI-WiFi Starlink Program, to expand reliable internet access in some of the island's most remote and underserved areas. The initiative uses Starlink satellite technology to provide free public Wi-Fi in locations with limited or no traditional communications infrastructure, including remote parks, recreation areas and places with poor cellular coverage.

This program enhances connectivity for residents, visitors, lifeguards, hikers, park rangers and state and county employees, while also strengthening emergency communication and public safety capabilities. By ensuring reliable access to information and communication tools, the project supports equity, resilience and preparedness across Kaua'i's communities.



Above: Randy Leong, state cable television administrator. Photo courtesy: DCCA.

The rollout is being led by the Kaua'i Emergency Management Agency, which will help maintain the system to ensure readiness during emergencies. The program builds on previous broadband expansion efforts statewide, including community center Wi-Fi installations and public hotspot projects.

The Kaua'i HI-WiFi Starlink Program draws on lessons learned from Starlink's effective deployment following the Maui wildfires, when satellite connectivity proved critical after traditional infrastructure failed. Initial installation sites include parks and athletic facilities across the island, with additional locations planned. Funded by DCCA and supported by Kaua'i County, the initiative reflects a continued commitment to expanding access to reliable, resilient connectivity for all of Hawai'i.



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

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