



Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

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



Governor's Message



Efforts are continuing across my administration to uplift the people of Hawai'i and move us toward a safer, more secure and resilient future, filled with opportunity and kindness.

Over the past several weeks, our state has faced a significant challenge — two back-to-back Kona Low storm systems that struck beginning March 10 and again on March 19, bringing catastrophic flooding, landslides and widespread damage across every county. These storms have tested us, but they have also revealed what we already know to be true: the strength of Hawai'i lies in its people.

My administration has taken action on multiple fronts — from submitting a formal request to the President for a Major Disaster Declaration to coordinating temporary housing for displaced families across all islands. If approved, the declaration would unlock critical federal funding through FEMA, including assistance for debris removal, infrastructure repair and direct help for affected residents. We are working closely with county mayors, state legislators, the Hawai'i National Guard and

community partners, to accelerate recovery and ensure no family is left without support.

On the ground, our teams have been working around the clock — clearing roads, deploying water resources to impacted communities and standing up mobile clinics to serve residents in need. The scale of these storms has been immense and the dedication of our first responders, volunteers and state workers has been nothing short of remarkable.

What has moved me most, however, is what I witnessed firsthand in storm-impacted communities — neighbors stepping up to help neighbors, many volunteers coming forth and the enduring spirit of aloha. The spirit that defines who we are will carry us through tough times.

Residents in need of assistance are encouraged to call Aloha United Way at 211 or visit ready.hawaii.gov.

Thank you for your continued partnership and participation as we move forward together with aloha and shared kuleana.

Mahalo,

Josh Green M.D.

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.



Kona Low Storm Recovery

The state has been working closely with Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi and North Shore area lawmakers and we have secured 80 rooms at the Inn at Schofield in Wahiawā through April 30. The city is also making available more than 50 additional housing units. On the neighbor islands, the state is working to utilize Hale o La'i'e and short-term rentals for households whose homes were rendered uninhabitable by storm damage. The Major Disaster Fund will be used to cover the cost of hotel stays for residents displaced by the recent storms. Residents who need assistance are encouraged to call Aloha United Way at 211 or register at ready.hawaii.gov.

The Hawai'i National Guard carried out evacuations at Otake Camp during severe flooding. The Guard continues to support debris removal and emergency logistics statewide.

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation has worked tirelessly to reopen highways blocked by mudslides and fallen trees, as well as remove large debris and hazardous materials. The state and county deployed water buffaloes to communities in Waialua, Hale'iwa and at Sunset Elementary to ensure continued access to safe water.

Furthermore, mobile clinics were stood up on the North Shore and on Maui, with Kaiser Permanente deploying support to Kula following the relocation of patients from Kula Hospital.

For those who would like to volunteer, there are opportunities available through trusted local nonprofit organizations. Please contact the organizations directly to learn more about their current needs and sign-up opportunities.



Hawai'i's 2026 Production Slate Fuels Creative Industry Growth

Hawai'i's creative economy is seeing a welcome uptick in film and TV productions with a vibrant slate of projects taking shape in the islands. Productions include Season 2 of Netflix's "UNTAMED," starring Eric Bana — now shifting its thrilling storyline to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park; Sony's "Jumanji 3," filmed on O'ahu and starring Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart and Karen Gillan, and the Netflix feature "Protecting Jared," starring Jason Momoa and Andy Samberg, also shot on O'ahu.

"Keeping Hawai'i primed for production to meet and continually attract these opportunities is essential to our creative economy and workforce and for generating the positive impacts across other key sectors," said Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) Director James Kunane Tokioka.



From right to left: DBEDT Director James Tokioka, actor Eric Bana, Governor Green and Showrunner and Executive Producer Elle Smith.

Each production brings an exciting lift to Hawai'i's creative industry. Film and TV projects fuel opportunities for local talent, crew members and production vendors, while also driving increased business for small companies statewide. The resulting ripple effects strengthens communities, supports livelihoods and reinforces Hawai'i's reputation as a world-class filming destination.

"The combination of these productions and others launching this year is restoring a vibrant anchor of our creative economy in the state," said Georja Skinner, chief officer at DBEDT's Creative Industries Division. This momentum continues to build confidence among studios looking to base their projects in Hawai'i and reinforces long-term investment in the industry. The state continues to expand pathways for Hawai'i creatives to bring their stories and original intellectual property to global markets, growing opportunities for homegrown talent.



DAGS Receives Records of Portuguese Arrivals in Hawai‘i

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) Hawai‘i State Archives division received a gift from the Consulate General of Portugal in San Francisco which contained several thousand immigration records of the Portuguese who migrated to Hawai‘i from 1878 to 1934.

“These logs have the names of all Portuguese citizens who, upon arrival, registered with the consulate,” noted Hawai‘i State Archives Administrator Adam Jansen, Ph.D. “Because they are chronological, they correspond generally to the arrival of the various plantation-era ships.”

Jansen says he is excited to add this collection to the archives. “It was some of these very same immigrants that, after their three-year contracts working the fields expired, stayed and not only



From left to right: San Francisco Consul General Dr. Filipe Ramalheira, Honorary Consul of Portugal in Hawai‘i Tyler Dos Santos-Tam and Hawai‘i State Archives Administrator Adam Jansen, Ph.D., hold up the newly signed Deed of Gift forms giving the archives copies of the logs. Photo courtesy: DAGS Hawai‘i State Archives.

contributed to society, but invented the ‘ukulele by combining their native Portuguese instruments — specifically, the rajão and machete. The Hawai‘i State Archives has a massive collection of vintage ‘ukulele and partnered with the

‘Ukulele Hall of Fame to document this story and make these resources available to musicians, luthiers and researchers.”

He noted that the 150th anniversary of the Portuguese immigration to these Islands is coming up in two years and that the consulate, together with Honorary Consul of Portugal in Hawai‘i Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, is working with Portuguese clubs on each island to coordinate festivities. Dos Santos-Tam himself found two of his ancestors in the logs.

San Francisco Consul General Filipe Ramalheira was in Honolulu and signed over the scanned copies of its consular records to the archives so they can be made available to the public for genealogical and historical research.

Currently, the archives staff is working on uploading these documents to its website for public use.

Hawai‘i National Guard Collaborates on Chaplain Subject Matter Expert Exchange with the Armed Forces of the Philippines

Religious and legal leaders from the Hawai‘i National Guard joined counterparts from the Armed Forces of the Philippines for a subject matter expert exchange from Feb. 18–21 at Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, strengthening alliance cooperation and interoperability in the Indo-Pacific.



Armed Forces of the Philippines Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Virgenes speaks to fellow chaplains from the U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces during a Subject Matter Expert Exchange. Photo courtesy: U.S. Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Orlando Corpuz

Conducted under the National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP), the engagement brought together chaplains, judge advocates general, officers and noncommissioned officers to share professional expertise and reinforce long-standing security ties between the partner forces. The SPP links U.S. states and territories with partner nations to build long-term, mutually beneficial security relationships.

“The Indo-Pacific is a geographic area that the Philippines and Hawai‘i call home,” said Chaplain Christopher Guadiz, Hawai‘i

National Guard command chaplain. “We are all stakeholders in ensuring we can achieve peace through our collective strength.”

The exchange highlighted the complementary roles of legal and religious advisors, who traditionally serve on a commander’s special staff and provide guidance on ethical, legal and spiritual matters. “Historically, ethical military leaders have relied upon these two specialty branches of the military for advice and counsel,” said Guadiz.

Training blocks focused on practical skills that directly support mission readiness and ethical leadership. Judge advocate teams discussed maritime law and the legal considerations involved in maritime military and law enforcement operations, while chaplains collaborated on doctrine and solution-focused counseling techniques intended to improve service member care and resilience.

Beyond technical training, attendees highlighted the importance of professional relationships and cultural connections among the forces. Many participating Guard personnel share Filipino heritage, reinforcing personal ties alongside military cooperation.

“As a proud Filipino American, it’s been a true honor to be part of such an endeavor, the cultural ties that the Hawai‘i National Guard share with the Philippines cannot be overlooked,” Guadiz said.

By the end of the four-day exchange, participants identified practical tools they could apply in their respective commands and reaffirmed their commitment to collective defense and cooperation.



Furry Connections Help Inmates' Lives

On a Wednesday afternoon, inmate Sherri Ann Johnston softly stroked the head of an orphaned kitten as she held the young feline in her arms against her chest at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC).

Johnston is one of two women at WCCC who is taking care of orphaned kittens from the Hawaiian Humane Society (HHS) as part of a 12-month foster pet pilot program called Transforming Animal and Incarcerated Individuals' Lives. (TAIL) The program is a partnership between the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) and Hawaiian Humane Society.



Photo courtesy: DCR.

Under the program, the HHS Foster Care team trained Johnston and Paulich, both minimum custody inmates, on how to tend to the orphaned kittens. The pet foster mothers learned how to properly feed the furry animals as well as safely administer medications and treatments to vulnerable kittens.

Twenty-five orphaned kittens from HHS that Johnston and Paulich cared for have been adopted since the program kicked off in October of 2025.

Through the program, Johnston said she has become more compassionate, patient and responsible. "They depend on me," she said of the kittens.

Sen. Glenn Wakai, who championed the pilot program when he served as chair of the Senate Public Safety and Military Affairs Committee, said, "The cats provide that level of rehabilitation by providing empathy, by providing kindness, by providing compassion, by teaching women a little bit more about responsibility. Those are important lessons to be taught by our furry friends."

HHS President and Chief Executive Officer Anna Neubauer said, "This program demonstrates the profound impact that compassion and dedicated care can have on both animals and people.

Johnston said she's so glad to have the opportunity to participate in the foster pet pilot program. Being a pet foster mother to the orphaned kittens has sparked her interest in pursuing veterinary programs when she reenters the community upon her release.

ETS Mainframe Modernization Madness: Powering the Transition Forward

For more than 50 years, the state of Hawai'i's central mainframe has quietly powered some of our most critical government functions. While it may be considered "legacy" technology, it remains essential to the daily delivery of public services such as processing unemployment benefits, calculating and issuing child support payments and administering payroll and vendor payments statewide. It is built for reliability, capable of handling millions of transactions and sudden demand spikes, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Modernizing this system is a vital component of our broader legacy system strategy. The mainframe is aging, increasingly expensive to maintain and more difficult to support over time. We are actively planning for a full transition to modern, cloud-based systems, with a projected completion by June 2030. However, we cannot retire the mainframe overnight without risking service disruptions that would directly impact residents and state employees.

Our path forward requires partnership with departments, policymakers and stakeholders to align on funding, schedules and communication. ETS will continue providing 24/7 support to ensure continuity of service while guiding this transition thoughtfully and responsibly.

This modernization is about strengthening resilience, improving efficiency and building a more sustainable digital foundation for Hawai'i's future.

Take the 2026 Hawai'i Quality of Life Survey Today!

Researchers at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Health Policy Initiative, in partnership with the Office of Wellness and Resilience, invite you to participate in the 2026 Hawai'i Quality of Life Survey. This confidential, anonymous, 10-20 minute survey is for Hawai'i residents 18+ years old. It asks about everyday experiences related to health and well-being, work, education, cost of living and more. It builds on a similar 2024 survey that created a public dashboard used by policymakers, state agencies and community organizations to improve quality of life in Hawai'i. Participation helps ensure the findings reflect your community and our diverse experiences! Take the survey today at health-study.com.



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

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