



Pressing the Levers of Change:

Hawai'i State Framework to Address Homelessness



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Hawai'i State Capitol
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GOVERNOR DAVID IGE'S PRIORITIES FOR HAWAI'I

OUR VISION

To have a state government that is honest, transparent and responsive to its citizens.

OUR MISSION

To change the trajectory of Hawai'i by restoring faith in government and establishing the Hawaiian Islands as a place future generations choose to call home.

Effective, Efficient, and Open Government: Restore the public's trust in government by committing to reforms that increase efficiency, reduce waste, and improve transparency and accountability.

Housing: Build homes that people can afford, including rentals, to address the needs of those entering the work force. Renovate the state's public housing facilities. On O'ahu, identify state lands near transit stations for housing, employment centers, daycare, senior centers, and community facilities.

CORE VALUES

Our core values are centered on collaboration and integrity, guiding the state's new trajectory.

Aloha: We treat everyone with dignity, respect and kindness, reflecting our belief that people are our greatest source of strength.

Kuleana: We uphold a standard of transparency, accountability and reliability, performing our work as a government that is worthy of the public's trust.

Laulima: We work collaboratively with business, labor and the community to fulfill our public purpose.

Kūlia: We do our very best to reflect our commitment to excellence.

Pono: We strive to do the right thing, the right way, for the right reasons to deliver results that are in the best interest of the public.

Lōkahi: We honor the diversity of our employees and our constituents through inclusiveness and respect for the different perspectives that each brings to the table.

Ho'okumu: We continually seek new and innovative ways to accomplish our work and commit to finding creative solutions to the critical issues facing this state.

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INTRODUCTION

The Hawai'i State framework to address homelessness is based upon 'Ohana Nui, a multigenerational approach that invests early and concurrently in children and families to improve health, education, employment, and other outcomes. Concurrently and in alignment with 'Ohana Nui, the State strategically presses on three levers to address homelessness: *Affordable Housing, Health & Human Services, and Public Safety.*



In 2015, Governor Ige established the Leadership Team on Homelessness to align efforts to address homelessness at all levels of government.

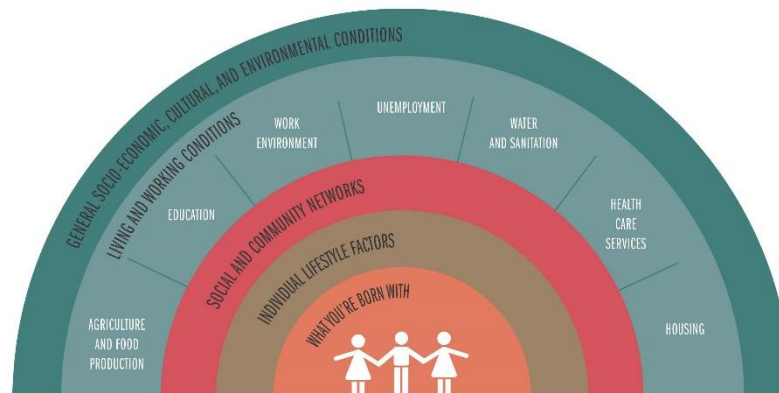
Scope of homelessness.

Hawai'i has the highest rate of homelessness among the 50 states with the number of homeless people in the islands increasing steadily over the past five years. According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the total point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness in Hawai'i was 6,188 in 2011 and 7,620 in 2015, a 23% increase during that time period.¹ The increase is especially alarming for the neighbor islands, which saw a 39% increase during this same period. The increase in homelessness is not only reflected in numbers, but it is visible on the streets and sidewalks of Honolulu, where tent cities have become almost commonplace.

Building on past efforts.

Homelessness has long been an issue in our state. In 2012, the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) adopted a Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, which was implemented over the past four years. The 2012 plan began to re-tool the crisis response system for homelessness in Hawai'i, and streamline the referral process through the adoption of a common assessment form by homeless service providers. Governor Ige and his administration are building upon the strong foundation of the 2012 HICH plan and other previous plans – both government and nongovernment in origin – to move Hawai'i forward in a way that is pono (Hawaiian for good, upright, righteous, correct, or proper).

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *CoC Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports*. Available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/manage-a-program/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/>. Accessed April 23, 2016.



The social determinants of health represent the variety of different factors – including education, work environment, health care, and housing – that impact a family’s well-being.

‘Ohana Nui: Addressing the social determinants of health.

To address homelessness, we must address the root causes or social determinants of health (e.g. food, housing, employment, healthcare, education, safety, and living work/environments) to improve outcomes. When these root causes are addressed, the greatest return on investment is in children ages zero to five years because research shows that living in toxic stress situations impact early childhood brain development, and health throughout the lifespan. Integrating ‘Ohana Nui into the State framework for homelessness addresses Governor Ige’s priorities of investing in families; improving government efficiencies; ensuring that the community comes first; and bringing aloha to everything we do.

Identifying a Housing First system as our goal.

Across the country, **Housing First** has become a common goal. This refers to a systemic and evidence-based approach that addresses a homeless person’s basic needs by placing them into permanent housing as quickly as possible and providing appropriate supports to maintain housing over time. The strategies outlined in this framework provide a roadmap to establishing a Housing First system over the next four years, and focuses on three critical lever points: *Affordable Housing, Health and Human Services, and Public Safety*. No lever by itself can resolve our current homeless crisis; but, by pressing on all three levers simultaneously, Hawai‘i will focus attention on the root causes of homelessness and see measurable results.

Conclusion.

Over the next four years, the aim is to reverse the number of people teetering on the edge of homelessness, keep public spaces safe and open, and provide a clear path out of homelessness for those experiencing it. However, this framework is intended to be a living, breathing document with enough elasticity to allow for refinements and to incorporate continuous comment and feedback from the community.

THE GOAL: A HOUSING FIRST SYSTEM

By 2020, Hawai'i will transition to a **Housing First** system that connects people experiencing homelessness with the opportunity to move quickly into permanent housing. Following housing placement, supportive health and human service programs are offered to promote housing stability and well-being. Participation in these services is voluntary and not time limited. Research based experience shows that Housing First policies and practices are successful in reducing homelessness.

Benchmarks to achieving a Housing First system.

Today, Hawai'i does not have the capacity to house and assist the estimated **7,620** individuals without a home on a given night. Successful implementation of Housing First on a system-wide scale should result in significant progress. The goal is for Hawai'i to reach the point described as **functional zero**. Reaching functional zero does not mean there will be zero homelessness, but indicates that a community has an adequate supply of housing units and the appropriate types of interventions in place to rapidly respond to any person who is experiencing homelessness.

What is functional zero?

For the purposes of this plan, functional zero is defined as a point where:

- ✚ Hawai'i has **sufficient housing** for the number of homeless people; and
- ✚ Hawai'i has **appropriate services** to transition homeless people to permanent housing, regardless of their level of need.

Does achieving functional zero mean there will be no homelessness?

No. History tells us that additional people will fall into homelessness for a variety of reasons, from economic factors to mental illness, and family conflict. Achieving functional zero means that Hawai'i has the full capacity and resources needed to connect people to shelter or permanent housing.

What is a sufficient level of resources to address the need?

According to data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2015 Point in Time Count and Housing Inventory Count, Hawai'i currently has an estimated **1,898** more homeless people than bed spaces available in our continua of care.² This means that we lack the resources to house nearly one out of every four

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *HUD 2015 Continuum of Care Housing Assistance Programs, Housing Inventory Count Report*. Available at: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CoC_HIC_State_HI_2015.pdf. Accessed April 22, 2016.

people (24.9%) that comprise the estimated homeless population. By 2020, we intend to close this gap.

Today (2016)



Future (2020)



The darkened homes indicate a lack of available bed spaces for the estimated homeless population. Currently, our community lacks resources for nearly one-fourth of the population. By 2020, Hawai'i intends to address this resource gap by adding appropriate resources to our system.

More than adding beds: A system to place individuals on the right path.

Building capacity for Housing First is not simply about adding more beds in shelters or housing units to the inventory. For many homeless people, the current system is an overwhelming maze. We need navigators – outreach workers and case managers – to connect homeless people to appropriate resources that address individual, unique needs. Efficiency delivery of services by highly competent and compassionate people – from both government and private organizations – is an essential piece of the Housing First system.



There are a wide range of resources to assist people experiencing homelessness, which can often feel overwhelming. By emphasizing housing navigation and outreach services, and targeting resources appropriately to address individualized needs, Hawai'i will streamline access to permanent housing to quickly transition homeless people from the streets to a home. The goal by 2020 is to connect people directly to the most appropriate resource, as reflected in the diagram above.

THREE LEVERS OF CHANGE

To move Hawai'i to a **Housing First** system by 2020, we have identified three levers of change – specific areas where a continued and focused effort will result in a transformation from today's current state of emergency.

The three levers, illustrated to the right, represent the essential building blocks that create capacity and effectively connect people who are experiencing homelessness to housing and services. They are:

-  **Affordable Housing**
-  **Health & Human Services**
-  **Public Safety**

Affordable Housing

Build more permanent housing and maximize the use of rental subsidies and vouchers to better utilize existing inventory.

Health & Human Services

Implement data-driven and evidence-based services that emphasize permanent housing placement.

Public Safety

Coordinate law enforcement and human service efforts to quickly transition unsheltered persons in encampments to permanent housing.

Each lever consists of concrete, measurable actions that will be taken over the next four years.

Building a Housing First system for all of Hawai'i.

The following action steps are critical to implementing the three levers of change.



(1) Affordable Housing

Build new housing and increase access to existing housing.



(2) Health & Human Services

Provide appropriate supports to link homeless persons to homes.



(3) Public Safety

Maintain public safety, while keeping a focus on housing as the end goal.



Left to Right: Outreach workers conduct assessments at a local homeless encampment; A woman packs up her belongings in preparation to move to a homeless shelter; and staff at a homeless emergency shelter complete an intake with homeless families, which includes the development of a plan for permanent housing.

Three levers in action: Homeless in the morning, housed by evening.

While there is no silver bullet for breaking the cycle of homelessness, there is overwhelming evidence that the three levers of change work. The practical application of policies in three specific areas: affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety, changes lives.

“Roy” had been living in a makeshift encampment on Sand Island for many years.³ His life changed following the coordinated actions of human service personnel, public safety officers and a housing provider. In March 2016, the state coordinated closely with outreach workers who entered the encampment to assess each person’s situation and identify the most appropriate resource to connect them to housing. For several weeks the outreach workers built trust and rapport with the people living in the camp, and it paid off. When the Department of Land and Natural Resources moved in to enforce no-camping rules, two men from the encampment accepted help from the outreach workers. One of those men was Roy. He was immediately sheltered at the nearby Hale Mauliola facility, provided support services, and is now on the path to permanent, stable housing.

Roy’s family members had been looking for him for some time, and because he was stably sheltered at Hale Mauliola, he was able to reconnect with his family. Had it not been for the three levers of change: affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety, Roy and the other man who accepted help that day would still be unsheltered.

³ Roy is a pseudonym. He provided permission to share his story.

LEVER ONE: Affordable Housing

To fully implement a Housing First system, Hawai'i must build more affordable housing and maximize use of existing inventory. To achieve this, the full process of housing development – which typically lasts several years – has been closely examined. Key points have been identified where there are opportunities to accelerate productivity. In addition, the groundwork has been firmly established to engage landlords to rent to low-income and Section 8⁴ renters to increase the use of alternative housing across the state.

Action steps to lever change.

✚ Engage landlords.

When it comes to homelessness, most people want to help, but don't know how. One key group that can help are landlords. Landlord summits – where landlords learn about the benefits of offering their properties to low-income renters – will be convened in every county in close partnership with service providers.



In November 2015, a landlord summit brought together over 150 landlords to address the needs of homeless individuals.

✚ Streamline rules and processes.

Getting eligible residents into permanent, stable housing can sometimes be needlessly delayed by red tape and duplicative processes. In recognition of this, State housing agencies (e.g. Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, etc.) will coordinate rule changes to improve continuity and consistency in eligibility criteria.

✚ Align State-County development efforts.

Partnerships between the state and counties can accelerate housing development to better meet the needs of our housing continuum. While the state can provide gap financing⁵ for housing development, the counties can shape policy regarding urban planning and infrastructure development. In particular, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) on Oahu provides increased opportunities for public-private partnerships to develop rental inventory in Honolulu's urban corridor.

✚ Maximize financing opportunities for development.

Building housing requires significant financial resources, which will include a mixture of public and private funds. Housing agencies will work together to leverage funding from multiple streams, including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Rental Housing Revolving Fund, and Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund.

⁴ Section 8 refers to the Housing Choice Voucher Program. More detail is provided in the Key Terms and Definitions section of this plan.

⁵ Gap financing typically refers to various federal, state, and local subsidies that are intended to close the gap in financing for affordable housing development projects, which are not covered by a standard loan.

Monitoring progress.

There are clear and measurable objectives to track our progress, as Hawai'i addresses this lever of change:



Volunteer Russell Wozniak lends his time and energy to assist with design for a new Family Assessment Center in Kakaako.

✚ **Short-term objective (Now).**

A landlord summit will be convened in every county to increase the number of landlords working together to help solve homelessness.

✚ **Medium-term objective (2018).**

State housing agencies will align rules and processes in order to streamline housing development, and to ease access to affordable housing inventory.

✚ **Long-term objective (2020).**

A total of 10,000 new housing units will be developed by 2020.

Collaboration: A key to success.

An “all-of-the-above” approach is required to meet our goal of 10,000 new housing units by 2020. This requires all government departments working together with each other, as well as with private sector partners, to achieve success.

For example, Russell Wozniak, a local engineer and architect designer, lends his volunteer time and energy to assist with the design and construction of a Family Assessment Center in Kaka'ako, which will add capacity to house families with minor children in the Honolulu urban core. Mr. Wozniak is just one example of how private sector volunteers are engaged to move forward this important work.

State Departments and Agencies Addressing Lever One

- Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation
- Hawai'i Community Development Authority
- Hawai'i Public Housing Authority
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
- Department of Human Services
- Office of Planning

The case for more housing.

As an island state, Hawai'i has a limited supply of housing, with a significantly small amount of affordable housing. Over the years, affordable housing has not grown in proportion to the population. According to an April 2015 study, the projected demand over the next decade (2015 to 2025) is approximately 64,700 to 66,000 housing units.⁶ More immediately, it has been estimated that Hawai'i currently needs about 28,000 additional housing units, with low-income households making up two-thirds of that demand.⁷ This leaves low-income residents with few, if any, choices.

For homeless persons, the housing shortage can be insurmountable. According to the HUD 2015 Housing Inventory Count, Hawai'i has only 5,722 available beds to specifically accommodate homeless persons, compared to an estimated homeless population of 7,620.⁸ Not only is this number insufficient to meet the current number of homeless persons, but the majority of these beds are for emergency shelter or transitional housing, rather than permanent housing.



The chart above shows homeless population and bed count data for the past five years, which underscores the fact that homeless persons have far outpaced the number of available beds, and the gap is growing ever larger. To close this gap, Hawai'i will increase production of affordable housing inventory, and better maximize existing inventory through landlord recruitment efforts. Additionally, Hawai'i will focus on converting temporary shelter space into permanent housing in order to create long-term housing solutions for those most in need. This focus on permanent housing takes place with the knowledge that there will always be a need for emergency shelter in our continuum, and it is a critical part of the overall response to homelessness.

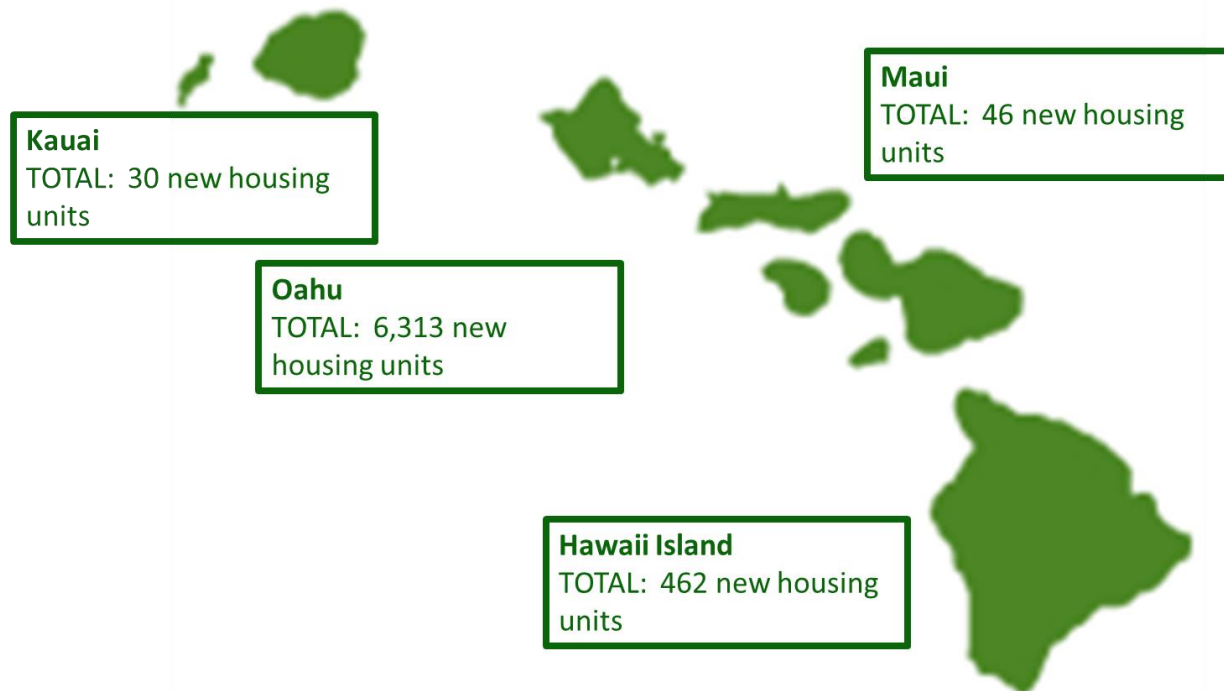
⁶ Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. *Measuring Housing Demand in Hawai'i 2015-2025*. April 2015, p. 3.

⁷ Dayton, K. "Three issues set to dominate coverage as year unfolds." *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, January 1, 2016.

⁸ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *HUD 2015 Continuum of Care Housing Assistance Programs, Housing Inventory Count Report*. Available at: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CoC_HIC_State_HI_2015.pdf. Accessed April 22,, 2016.

Projects underway to meet housing demand.

To begin to remedy Hawai'i's housing situation, Governor Ige has established a goal of building 10,000 new housing units over the next four years – of which **6,851 new housing units** are already under way. This number includes 3,738 new rental units statewide, which will be completed with the assistance of state funding and support through the Rental Housing Revolving Fund and other financing tools.⁹



As another way to spur additional housing production specifically for homeless persons, Governor Ige issued an emergency proclamation in October 2015, which enabled a number of county-funded housing projects to come online more quickly. In particular, a 32-unit permanent supportive housing project in West Hawai'i (Kona) is expected to be completed in the fall of 2016 – ahead of schedule. The proclamation also slashed the development time for three additional Oahu projects – bringing an additional 52 units, dedicated specifically for homeless persons, on the market up to a year ahead of schedule.

⁹ State housing agencies, including the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Hawai'i Community Development Authority, Hawai'i Public Housing Authority, and the Office of Planning compiled a listing of projects that have either requested state funding or assistance, and does not include units financed by the private sector.

LEVER TWO: Health & Human Services

To address the root of homelessness, there must be support for vulnerable homeless persons and their families. Hawai'i is implementing best practice approaches for services that move homeless persons quickly into permanent housing, and monitoring the results of these services.

Action steps to lever change.

- ✚ **Invest in evidence-based programs that emphasize rapid entry into permanent housing.**

Invest in programs, such as Housing First and rapid re-housing, which have been proven effective, and place a clear focus on moving homeless persons into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

- ✚ **Align contracts for Health and Human Services.**

Align contracts and services of the Departments of Health and Human Services, including the Office of Youth Services, with similar efforts funded by Federal and local government, as well as privately funded efforts. This will enable leveraging of multiple funding streams, and ensure that government and private resources are utilized in an efficient manner.

- ✚ **Establish clear and consistent performance metrics across all contracts.**

All existing contracts to service providers will be reviewed with clear performance metrics to monitor progress. Homeless service providers shall be required to input client and program information into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database for a more visible, transparent way to track the success of various programs and their impact on the homeless population.

- ✚ **Leverage mainstream resources (e.g. Medicaid, TANF, SNAP, etc.) to provide support services for clients.**

Make the necessary policy and rule changes to allow service providers to utilize mainstream resources and funding – such as Medicaid – for supportive services (e.g. case management, and move-in assistance). By better leveraging these funding streams, Hawai'i will bring permanent supportive housing programs, such as the state Housing First program, in alignment with the actual need.

- ✚ **Convert transitional housing to permanent housing.**

Work together with homeless service providers to identify transitional housing facilities that can be converted to permanent housing, while allowing homeless households to transition in place. This will increase housing inventory in the community, result in increased cost-efficiencies, and reflect alignment with federal strategies emphasizing permanent housing services.

✚ **Ensure that job development and training programs include opportunities for those who are experiencing or are most at risk of homelessness.**

Homeless services will include a focus on job development and training programs, which support economic self-sufficiency. The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), and the Department of Human Services (DHS), will work together to integrate job training and employment programs together with shelter, outreach, and other homeless services.

✚ **Integrate primary and behavioral health care services with homeless services and housing.**

Health care and housing are intrinsically linked. Housing has been demonstrated to improve health outcomes for individuals with physical and behavioral health concerns. Homeless services will focus on housing, as well as supportive services, to address health-related concerns.

✚ **Strengthen Coordinated Entry for services.**

Work together with homeless service providers to streamline referrals and access to housing services and support. As new programs and services are added to the Continuum of Care for homeless services, the coordinated entry system¹⁰ should adapt to ease connection to these additional services.

**State Departments and Agencies
Addressing Lever Two**

- Department of Human Services
- Department of Health
- Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
- Office of Youth Services
- Office of Community Services
- Department of Education

Monitoring progress.

These actions will achieve the following key objectives:

✚ ***Short-term objective (Now).***

Issue a new Request for Proposals for state homeless contracts, which are coordinated, performance-based, and focused on permanent housing.

✚ ***Medium-term objective (2018).***

Maximize efficiency by utilizing Medicaid and other funding streams for permanent supportive housing.

✚ ***Long-term objective (2020).***

Reduce the number of unsheltered homeless persons to Functional Zero by 2020 for specific sub-populations.

¹⁰ Provisions in the Continuum of Care program interim rule, 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8), require that CoCs establish a Coordinated Entry System, also referred to as a Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System. More detail is provided in the Key Terms and Definitions section of this plan.

The Coordinated Statewide Homeless Initiative: A new model of service delivery.

Homelessness is an issue that no single organization can solve alone. Employing an “all hands on deck” approach, the State recently entered into a unique public-private partnership with Aloha United Way (AUW).

The partnership, administered through the Department of Human Services, is focused on bringing resources and relief to those in need through short-term rental assistance, rapid re-housing, homeless intervention and prevention. The arrangement streamlines community access to a wide range of programs aimed to break the cycle of homelessness. The partnership includes the following components:

✚ *Rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention.*

Over \$4.6 million will be deployed to community agencies in every county through a contract with AUW. The funding will be used to provide up to three months of financial assistance to rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families, as well as to prevent at-risk households from falling into homelessness.

✚ *Housing coordination center.*

The partnership will also invest in the 2-1-1 hotline to quickly link those in need with appropriate housing and homeless services, and will better coordinate access to services for both the person in need and the agency providing service. Without this level of coordination, individuals must often call five or six agencies before being connected to the appropriate party.

✚ *Development of longer-term strategies.*

While Rapid re-housing, Homelessness Prevention, and the Housing Coordination Center address the immediate crisis, the partnership also invests in longer-term strategies by contracting AUW to facilitate strategic planning sessions among service providers and other key stakeholders, and make specific recommendations for longer-term strategies. In particular, AUW has been asked to recommend plans to address three especially vulnerable populations – unaccompanied homeless youth, individuals being discharged from jail or prison, and individuals being discharged from hospital settings.

The partnership not only brings together the public and private sectors, but also increases efficiency by contracting one master agency – AUW – to track overall performance and outcomes for the initiative. At the same time, by sub-contracting community-based agencies to directly deliver rapid re-housing and prevention services, the partnership recognizes that these nonprofits are already embedded in their local communities and recognize the unique needs of their respective constituents.

Rapid re-housing:¹¹ Addressing the needs of the working homeless.

Many households become homeless as a result of a financial crisis that prevents them from paying the rent, or because of a conflict that results in a family suddenly leaving their home without any resources or a plan for housing. Households in these situations have previously lived in independent permanent housing, and can generally return to housing and remain stably housed with very limited assistance.

Rapid re-housing is one intervention that plays a critical role in our overall strategy to address homelessness. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, rapid re-housing is targeted at individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and need temporary assistance to obtain housing and retain it. Through the Coordinated Statewide Homeless Initiative (CSHI), AUW and its community partners are implementing a pilot Rapid re-housing program that is intended to serve over 1,200 persons statewide.

In addition to the CSHI, rapid re-housing is currently funded in a limited scope through the federal Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grants programs. By aligning state resources to bring rapid re-housing to scale, Governor Ige and his administration hope to lift thousands of local families out of homelessness and into permanent homes.

Partner Agencies for the Coordinated Statewide Homeless Initiative (CSHI)

To receive assistance from CSHI, individuals may contact AUW at 2-1-1 and will be referred to the community partners listed below for Rapid re-housing and Homelessness Prevention aid:

Oahu

- Alternative Structures International
- Catholic Charities Hawai'i
- Gregory House Programs
- Kalihi-Palama Health Center
- The Salvation Army
- U.S. Vets
- Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center
- Waimanalo Health Center

Maui

- Catholic Charities Hawai'i
- Family Life Center
- Ka Hale A Ke Ola
- Maui Economic Opportunity

Hawai'i Island

- Catholic Charities Hawai'i
- County of Hawai'i
- Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council
- Hope Services

Kauai

- Catholic Charities Hawai'i
- Kauai Economic Opportunity

¹¹ Rapid re-housing is a specific homeless intervention, which is described in further detail in the Key Terms and Definitions section of this plan.

LEVER THREE: Public Safety

To truly have an impact, we must combine levers one and two – housing and human services – with public safety efforts in homeless encampments on public land. Hawai'i needs to coordinate law enforcement alongside homeless outreach services, so that homeless persons are not simply asked to vacate a specific area, but are approached with respect and given personalized options to quickly connect to appropriate services and permanent housing.

Action steps to lever change:

- ✚ **Develop uniform policy and procedures that ensure homeless persons are treated with dignity and compassion.**

When law enforcement becomes necessary to clear public spaces, State departments and agencies will implement procedures that respect all parties involved. The right response to encampments will ensure access to housing and supportive services, and provide temporary storage for any property that may be encountered.

- ✚ **Ensure that outreach services are integrated with law enforcement activities, so that homeless persons are diverted from the criminal justice system.**

Homeless outreach services will co-respond with law enforcement when addressing homeless persons who illegally remain on government property. Outreach workers will provide social service support, and assess homeless persons for appropriate housing resources.

- ✚ **Conduct trainings for law enforcement and other State employees regarding homeless services, and crisis response.**

Provide training for law enforcement and State employees responding to homeless encampments to outline the available homeless services (e.g. shelter, Housing First, etc.) and equip individuals in crisis response procedures. The training of staff will ensure that law enforcement and employees respond appropriately.

- ✚ **Provide specialized discharge planning when releasing at-risk individuals into the community from hospitals or public safety settings.**

Ensure discharge planning for individuals exiting hospitals or public safety settings – particularly those who are homeless or lack a stable place of residence – includes support services to prevent or break the cycle of homelessness. When possible, these discharge planning efforts should include direct input from housing and homeless service providers.



Monitoring progress.

There are clear and measurable benchmarks to track our progress, as Hawai'i addresses this lever of change:

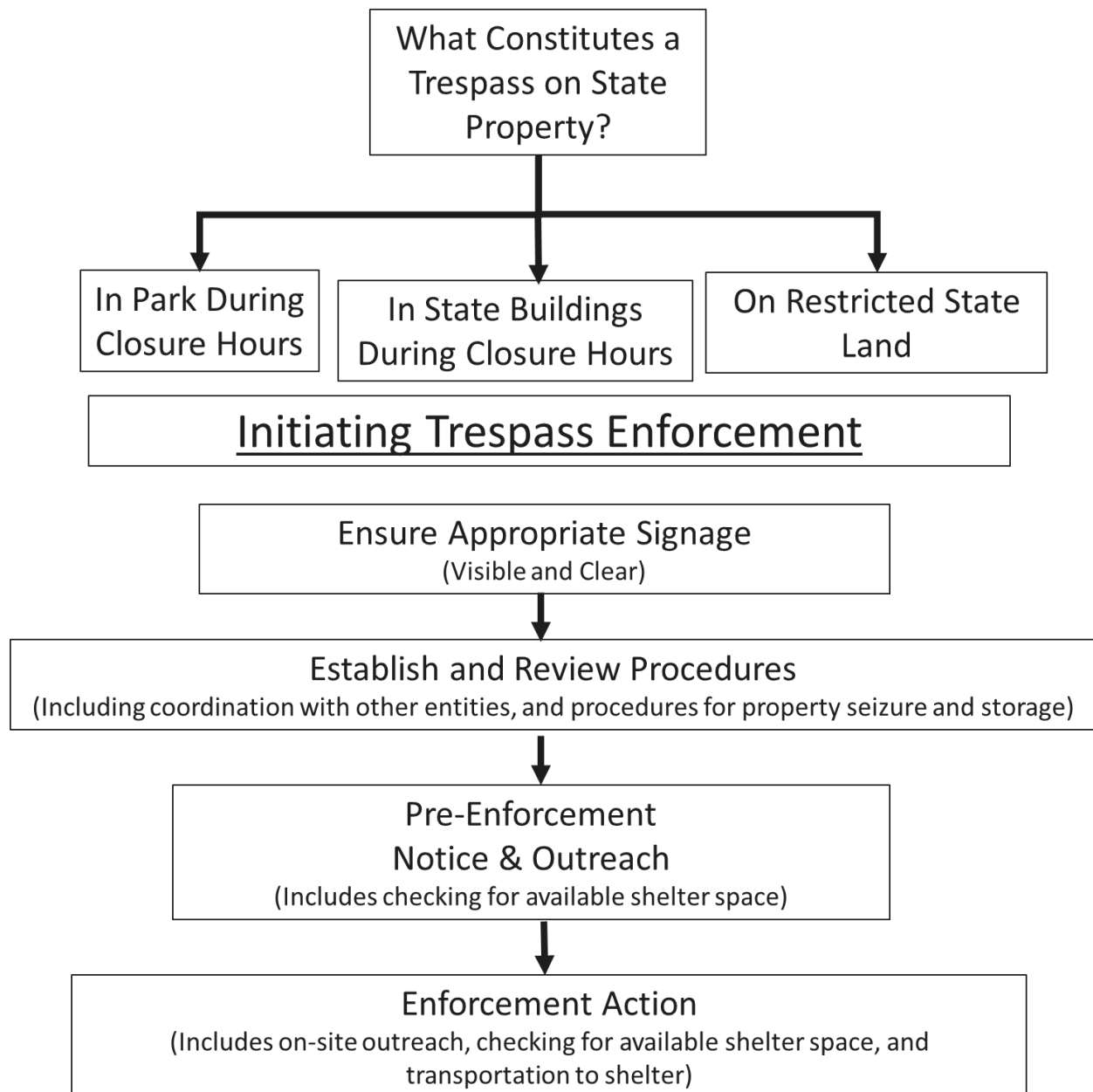
- ✚ **Short-term objective (Now).**
Implement a statewide policy, across all state departments and agencies, on how to respond to homeless encampments on public lands.
- ✚ **Medium-term objective (2018).**
Effectively divert homeless persons from the criminal justice system through implementation of a pilot project.
- ✚ **Long-term objective (2020).**
Reduce to functional zero the number of homeless encampments on public lands by 2020. This means that the community shall have sufficient resources to address the needs of homeless persons residing in these encampments.

State Departments and Agencies Addressing Lever Three

- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Land and Natural Resources
- Department of the Attorney General
- Hawaii Community Development Authority

Flow Chart of Enforcement Process on Public Lands.

Multiple state statutes and administrative rules prohibit people from remaining on government lands; including, but not limited to, parks and other areas restricted to the general public. When these statutes and rules are enforced, they can result in the displacement of homeless persons. The flow chart below illustrates the process used by State departments and agencies in determining how to appropriately respond to homeless persons who, without permission, are remaining on government land.



The Kaka'ako Phenomenon: Putting People First.

In July 2015, the homeless encampment in Kaka'ako Makai had grown to include nearly 300 persons. The residents of the camp represented a mixture of local families with children, single adults, and homeless youth. Many in the encampment had resided in the area for nearly a decade.

To better provide services, the state and homeless outreach providers partnered together to survey and assess each individual in the camp – getting to know every person by name and building trust in the process. The assessments revealed that income levels in the camp were extremely low, with a family of four typically earning a little more than \$500 per month.

Since August of 2015, outreach providers together with state and county staff – armed with data from the assessments – have systematically transitioned **280 people** out of the original encampment of 293 persons – from the streets and sidewalks of Kaka'ako into permanent, stable housing.

The approach utilized in Kaka'ako is a strategy that the State and its partners employ in every part of Hawai'i. At its core, this strategy relies heavily upon the skill and dedication of homeless outreach workers,¹² who serve as housing navigators. These navigators guide each individual person through the homeless system of care and connect them with the resource that is most appropriate to address their needs.

Homeless Outreach Providers

The following agencies are contracted by the Department of Human Services and Department of Health to provide homeless outreach:

Oahu

- Care Hawaii
- Hope, Inc.
- Institute for Human Services
- Kalihi-Palama Health Center
- Kealahou West Oahu
- Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center
- Waianae Community Mental Health Center
- Waikiki Health

Maui

- Family Life Center
- Mental Health Kokua
- The Salvation Army

Hawai'i Island

- Hope Services

Kauai

- Kauai Economic Opportunity
- Mental Health Kokua

¹² The outreach providers listed in the accompanying text box are contracted by the Department of Human Services, Homeless Programs Office. In addition to those listed here, the Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division contracts additional organizations to provide homeless outreach specifically to individuals with serious and persistent mental illness. There are also a number of organizations that provide homeless outreach, but are funded through private dollars.

CONCLUSION

As we put forward this strategy – one that requires coordination across all levels of government – it is clear that addressing homelessness will require both time and resources. It has also become clear that progress will require a focus on three levers that we know will impact change – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety.



It is not enough just to build housing (lever one), without also investing in supportive services (lever two). Conversely, it is not enough to invest in services alone, if there is not sufficient housing inventory. Meanwhile, we cannot ignore the growing number of homeless encampments (lever three), especially when they're located in areas that are unsafe for inhabitants. The three levers of change are interwoven and equally important.

To create change, it will take a concerted focus on permanent housing as the end goal. In addition, no one entity can lead this change alone. Transformation of this magnitude requires collaboration across all state departments and agencies, as well as from the federal and county governments, and the private sector.

In this plan, you've read the account of Ray, a man who left homelessness behind and is building a better life for himself. His story is one of many that are diverse and unique, but one thing is common among those who share Ray's decision – it all comes down to the moment a person decides to accept help. This is how it's done. One person at a time quietly says, "enough" and moves forward into a new chapter in life.

It is not done in front of an audience or on live television, but that doesn't mean it's not happening. It regularly occurs in homeless encampments across the state when trained and compassionate outreach workers offer housing and human services – along with respect – to those in need. We've seen it work – and this is why we're so committed to the three levers of change: affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety.

For more information, contact the Office on Homelessness at **(808) 586-0193** or gov.homelessness@Hawaii.gov.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Affordable Housing – In general, housing is considered “affordable” when the cost is less than 30 percent of a household’s income. When housing costs exceed this amount, a household is considered to be housing-cost burdened. With an estimated 57.5% of renters paying more than one-third of their income to rent, Hawai‘i has the second highest number of cost-burdened renters in the nation.¹³ The households who face the most severe lack of affordable housing are the extremely low income, who earn less than 30% Area Median Income (AMI), or less than \$28,750 per year for a household of four in Honolulu.

Bridging the Gap (BTG)– BTG is the Continuum of Care for the neighbor island counties, including Hawai‘i County, Maui County, and Kauai County. Membership for BTG includes service providers, county government, the Department of Human Services, and community members from within each county. BTG serves as a planning, coordinating, and advocacy body that develops recommendations for programs and services related to homelessness.

Chronically Homeless – A person who is chronically homeless is a homeless person with a disability who has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months, or has been homeless on at least four separate occasions over the past three years.¹⁴ A chronically homeless family is a family with an adult head of household who meets the definition for a chronically homeless person.

Continuum of Care (CoC) – A CoC is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding from HUD for homeless families and individuals. In Hawai‘i there are two CoCs – Partners in Care for the island of Oahu, and Bridging the Gap for the balance of the state. Each CoC includes membership from government agencies, homeless service providers, funders, and other interested members of the community. Each CoC is responsible for submitting an annual application for federal homeless assistance funds. The federal funding for homeless services are sometimes also referred to as “CoC funds.” In addition to applying for funding, the CoC is also tasked with administering the annual Point in Time Count of the homeless population and the annual Housing Inventory Count. These counts provide an overview of the state of homelessness in a CoC.

Coordinated Entry System – Coordinated entry is a process to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs. A coordinated entry system helps communities to prioritize housing and homeless assistance based on a homeless person’s vulnerability and the severity of their

¹³ Corporation for Enterprise Development. *Assets & Opportunity Score Card, Housing Cost Burden – Renters*. Available at: <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/latest/measure/housing-cost-burden-renters>. Accessed April 25, 2016.

¹⁴ Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining “Chronically Homeless.” 80 Fed. Reg. 75791. (December 4, 2015).

needs, so that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner. Federal law requires that CoCs establish a coordinated entry system.

Emergency Shelter – An emergency shelter generally is a facility with overnight sleeping accommodations that provides short-term, temporary shelter for homeless persons and does not require occupants to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. Emergency shelters differ from transitional shelters (also known as transitional housing) that typically allows a maximum stay of up to 24 months.

Functional Zero – This is a point where a community has both sufficient and appropriate housing resources to assist homeless persons encountered in their community. Functional zero does not mean that there is zero homelessness, but instead means that a community has the full capacity and resources needed to connect people to shelter or permanent housing.

Gap Financing – Many affordable rental housing projects are financed using the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC), which provides either a 9 percent or 4 percent credit against federal income tax liability. The proceeds from the sale of the tax credits to investors provide equity for the project. For most projects, the combination of bank financing and tax credits still results in a “gap” in financing. Gap financing, intended to close the gap, generally comes in the form of subsidies from federal, state, and local government. Two of the most used federal programs for gap financing are the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). A primary state program for gap financing is the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF), which is administered by the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC).

Hawai‘i Interagency Council on Homelessness – The HICH was formally established in July 2011 through executive order by then-Governor Neil Abercrombie. Hawai‘i was the first state in the nation to create a state interagency council patterned after the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. In 2012, the HICH was established in statute through Act 105 by the state legislature. Composed of state department directors, federal agency representatives, and community leaders, the HICH is tasked with providing solutions to end homelessness and strengthen the continuity of efforts to end homelessness across future state administrations. Housed administratively within the Department of Human Services (DHS), the HICH is chaired by Scott Morishige, appointed in August 2015 to serve as the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – The HMIS is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data, and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless persons and families, as well as persons at immediate risk of homelessness. The HMIS system is owned and administered by the Continua of Care – Partners in Care and Bridging the Gap.

Homeless Outreach – The work of homeless outreach includes meeting homeless persons on streets or sidewalks, or in remote rural areas that includes beaches and valleys. Outreach providers assist with the completion of program applications, the determination of program eligibility, housing search and placement, and work with the person to obtain identification and other vital documents (e.g. birth certificate or social security card).

Housing First – Housing First is a philosophy that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. In a Housing First approach, there is an immediate and primary focus on accessing and sustaining permanent housing for all homeless populations. In addition to the Housing First philosophy, the term is used to refer to specific permanent supportive housing programs operated by the state and the city and county of Honolulu. The state and city Housing First programs adopt the philosophy, but also specifically target chronically homeless households for services.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC) – The HIC is a point-in-time inventory of programs within a Continuum of Care that provide beds and units dedicated to serve persons who are homeless. The HIC includes beds for emergency shelter and transitional housing, as well as permanent housing beds.

Landlord Summit – A landlord summit is a gathering of landlords, property managers, and members of the public to share information on various housing and social services programs available through the community and government. The primary purpose of a landlord summit is to provide information, and to encourage increased utilization of housing and social service programs, such as Section 8 or the Housing First program.

Partners in Care (PIC) – PIC is the Continuum of Care for the City and County of Honolulu, which encompasses the island of Oahu. Membership for PIC includes more than 30 service providers, as well as local and state government agencies, and other community members. PIC serves as a planning, coordinating, and advocacy body that develops recommendations for programs and services related to homelessness.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) – PSH is a service delivery model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to enable homeless persons to attain and maintain permanent housing. PSH programs typically target chronically homeless persons, or homeless persons who experience multiple barriers to housing and are unable to maintain housing stability without supportive services. PSH programs have been shown to not only impact housing status, but also result in cost savings to various public service systems, including health care. The state and city Housing First programs that target chronically homeless persons are both examples of a PSH program.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count – A PIT count is an unduplicated count on a single night of the people in a community who are experiencing homelessness, and includes both the sheltered and unsheltered populations. HUD requires that communities receiving federal

funds for homeless services conduct a PIT count at least every other year. During these counts, communities are required to identify whether a person is an individual, a member of a family unit, or an unaccompanied youth under the age of 18. In addition, communities must identify if a person is chronically homeless.

Rapid re-housing – Rapid re-housing places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The duration of financial assistance provided in a rapid re-housing program can include either short-term (up to 3-months) or medium-term (6-months to 24-months) support. In general, the core components of rapid re-housing are housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management.

Section 8 – “Section 8” refers to Section 8 of the Housing Act, which authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords for low-income households. A common form of Section 8 assistance is the HUD Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as a Section 8 voucher, which provides direct rental payment to the landlord. Typically, a Section 8 voucher recipient will pay one-third of their income towards rent, with the remaining balance of rent provided by the Section 8 voucher payment.

Transitional Housing – Transitional housing, also referred to as transitional shelter, is designed to provide homeless individuals and families with temporary stability and support, so that they are able to eventually move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing is generally for a period of up to 24 months of housing with accompanying supportive services.