

## Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH)

MS Teams Virtual Meeting and Teleconference

Monday, March 15, 2021

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Council Attendees:

Mr. Scott Morishige	Chair
Mr. Joseph Campos for	Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS)
Mr. Harold Brackeen III	Administrator of the Homeless Programs Office of DHS
Ms. Yara Sutton for	Director of the Department of Health (DOH)
Ms. Allicyn Tasaka for	Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)
Mr. Tommy Johnson for	Director of the Department of Public Safety (PSD)
Mr. Francis Keeno for	Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT)
Ms. Cynthia Rezendes for	Chair of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)
Mx Jen Jenkins for	Chair of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Bruce Oliveira for	Adjutant General of the Department of Defense (DOD)
Ms. Toby Portner for	Director of the Department of Education (DOE)
Ms. Melissa Lewis for	Department of the Attorney General (AG)
Rep. Ryan Yamane for	Hawaii State House of Representatives
Sen. Joy San Buenaventura for	Hawaii State Senate
Ms. Lori Tsuhako for	Mayor of the County of Maui
Mr. Anton Krucky for	Mayor of the City & County of Honolulu
Mr. Adam Roversi for	Mayor of the County of Kauai
Ms. Sharon Hirota for	Mayor of the County of Hawaii
Mr. Mark Chandler	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), Office of Community Planning & Development
Mr. Hakim Ouansafi	Executive Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Mr. Arthur Minor for	Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Ms. Brandee Menino	Continuum of Care for the County of Hawaii
Ms. Laura Thielen	Continuum of Care for the County of Honolulu
Ms. Makana Kamibayashi	Continuum of Care for the County of Kauai
Ms. Maude Cumming	Continuum of Care for the County of Maui
Mr. Dave Rolf	Business Community Representative
Pastor David Kaneshiro	Faith-Based Community Representative

Absent: None.

Staff: Mr. Justin Limasa, Homelessness Assistant; Mr. Jason Kasamoto, Homelessness Special Assistant and Public Affairs; Ms. Emma Grochowsky, Homelessness Community Development Specialist; Mr. Jonah Saribay, BSW Practicum Student; Ms. Lili Young, Deputy Attorney General

Special Guests: None.

- I. **Call to Order. Taking of the Roll.** Roll was taken and there was a quorum established with 20 out of 27 members. The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by the Chair.

Chair Morishige welcomed everyone and thanked the Council and staff for their patience and flexibility. The Chair reviewed several general housekeeping items related to the virtual teleconference platform. Attendees were asked to keep their device on 'mute' unless speaking, and members were asked to notify staff when leaving the meeting. The Chair explained that voting will be conducted via a general voice vote unless otherwise specified, and members

should vote verbally or using the chat feature. The Chair noted several technical issues with the MS Teams platform and reminded the Council that the meeting will not be recorded.

The Chair thanked the Council for their continued patience throughout the past year, noting that it has been one year since the closure of non-essential businesses at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair recognized the work of the Department of Health and other leaders who quickly mobilized testing, isolation and quarantine, and supportive services.

The Chair also recognized GCH staff members and six Social Work practicum students from the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work.

Mr. Krucky, Ms. Menino, Chair Yamane, and Chair San Buenaventura were recognized at 10:12 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 24 out of 27 members present.

- II. **Overview and Approval of Agenda.** The Chair presented the agenda for review. Mr. Ouansafi moved and Mr. Krucky seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

The Chair called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

- III. **Approval of Minutes.** The Chair reminded members that the December 21, 2020, meeting minutes were available electronically. The Chair provided time for members to review the minutes and asked if there were any additions or corrections.

Mr. Campos moved and Mr. Ouansafi seconded to approve the minutes as presented. Seeing no additions or corrections at this time, the Chair called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

- IV. **Public Testimony.** Chair Morishige opened the floor to public testimony. There was none.

- V. **New Business.**

- a. **Discussion on 2021 legislative priorities and updates on the 2021 session of the Hawaii State Legislature, including specific policies or proposals to address homelessness.**

Presentation by Chair Ryan Yamane, House Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness.

The Hawaii State House has focused on many issues related to the budget, and has been communicating with the Hawaii State Senate to work through several issues related to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Health (DOH) budgets, including the consolidation of the Med-QUEST Division budget and reworking of certain fees. Chair Yamane noted that a bill to provide free vital records to people experiencing homelessness did not move forward, but DOH has confirmed that they will maintain the no-cost birth certificates for people experiencing homelessness going forward.

Chair Yamane also noted additional measures related to public health, including initiatives to support EMS and to include additional locations for individuals who need stabilization services due to increased health needs.

Chair Morishige thanked Chair Yamane for providing these updates and for working so closely with DOH. Chair Yamane also added that the Hawaii State House has looked into the use of CARES funds to create additional homelessness and behavioral health resources.

Ms. Sutton's attendance was recognized at 10:26 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 25 out of 27 members present.

Presentation by Chair Joy San Buenaventura.

Chair San Buenaventura stated that there have not been any budget cuts to the Department of Human Services homelessness core services, although there are still no Grant in Aid (GIA) funds. Chair San Buenaventura has been in discussion with Deputy Director Edward Mersereau with the Department of Health Behavioral Health Administration to remove duplication of services without layoffs and noted there will be a major overhaul within the BHA.

The Hawaii State Senate has a bill that will remove the Oahu region of hospitals for Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, which will aid in the implementation of the behavioral health plans for Leahi Hospital and Maluhia facility. Additional behavioral health projects in Kaneohe and at the old Kona Courthouse continue to move forward, and Chair San Buenaventura added that the momentum regarding behavioral health from the 2020 legislative session is continuing despite a bleak budget outlook.

Chair San Buenaventura also provided updates on several bills related to behavioral health, including the Assisted Community Treatment overhaul (SB 199 and HB 345, respectively) and involuntary treatment and medication (HB 310). Chair San Buenaventura commented that the revisions to the guardian ad litem may result in a deferral of the bill, and that there are constitutional questions regarding the definition of "imminently dangerous" proposed in HB 310.

Seeing no questions, Chair Morishige thanked Chair San Buenaventura and reminded the Council that anyone interested in advocacy tracking is welcome to attend the joint Partners in Care and Bridging the Gap Advocacy Meetings on Fridays at 3:30 p.m.

Ms. Rezendes left the meeting at 10:26 a.m. Pastor Kaneshiro's attendance was recognized at 10:29 a.m. Chair Yamane and Chair San Buenaventura left the meeting at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Rolf left the meeting at 10:34 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 22 out of 27 members present.

- b. Discussion regarding the use of federal funding to address homelessness through supplemental Emergency Solutions Grant Round 2 (ESG-CV2) funding provided from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.**

Presentation by Ms. Laura Thielen.

Ms. Thielen acknowledged the work being done across the CoC to pivot efforts to respond to crisis. PVH has been a key partner during every step of the process. Ms. Thielen noted the transition of the Temporary Quarantine and Isolation Center (TQIC) to the Waikiki Beachside – Palekana `Elima, a partnership between the Department of Health, the City & County of Honolulu, and the Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center. The facility contains 36 rooms and is structured to maintain security during the isolation and quarantine process. Referrals are available through Hawaii CARES, and transportation and meals are provided. The facility has served 187 residents since October 2020 and 96% of individuals have been transitioned to community resources after completing the program. Ms. Thielen stressed the importance of successfully transitioning individuals from the isolation and quarantine centers and into appropriate resources as quickly as possible and thanked DOH and HHHRC for prioritizing this goal.

Ms. Thielen reviewed the Oahu Continuum of Care's vaccine recommendations to DOH, including the option of choosing between the single dose or two dose options for vaccines, including all people experiencing homelessness in Tier 1C, and supporting localized vaccination hubs within the community. Ms. Thielen appreciated DOH's acceptance of the proposed recommendations, resulting in a rapid implementation of a vaccine distribution schedule for the

island of Oahu. Currently, Project Vision Hawaii will be conducting small clinics for people experiencing homelessness on Mondays and Fridays, alternating the focus between urban and rural areas.

The Oahu ESG-CV Investment Plan emphasizes rehousing, prevention, and enhanced sheltering. One of the main projects is the Oahu Housing Now Rapid Rehousing program, which aims to rehouse 300-350 households experiencing homeless on Oahu. Partners in Care has been awarded as the lead agency for this project, and Housing Solutions Inc. will be administering the rental assistance. Case management services will be provided by Alternative Structures International and Family Promise of Hawaii. The Landlord Engagement Program has been assisting with the acquisition and identification of units, using a new database to track available units and landlords. LEP has identified over 100 units to date. Program participants will be receiving 12 months of rent and utility assistance.

Oahu Housing Now will slow the spread of COVID-19 by providing non-congregate spaces for households to live while they await access to vaccines. During this time, the program will be paying their rent, which allows households to work toward financial self-sufficiency.

The Chair thanked Ms. Thielen for the overview of Oahu's ESG-CV-2 plan and added that partnerships with the private sector have been helpful for supporting aspects of the project. In addition, the Chair noted that many of these programs are utilizing a variety of braided funding sources.

Presentation by Ms. Maude Cumming.

The funding allocation for ESG-CV-2 for the neighbor islands was approximately \$8M, which was divided by percentage among the counties: Hawaii (40%), Maui (40%), Kauai (20%).

Hawaii island programming will include expansion of street outreach and street medicine teams, expanding and continuing temporary emergency shelters (e.g. Hale Hanakahi through the end of March and Ka Lamaku through the end of August), medical respite, homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing.

Kauai island will be expanding its limited outreach services, creating a temporary emergency shelter for individuals transitioning into housing, and enhancing homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing efforts.

Maui will also be increasing street outreach and continuing the pallet shelter emergency sheltering program, which focuses on moving people into permanent housing directly from the program. Rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention funds will assist with providing temporary subsidies to households who need support as they transition into permanent housing. Maui intends to pair deep subsidies with time-limited programs to create pathways to housing.

The Chair thanked Ms. Cumming and extended appreciation to Mr. Harold Brackeen III and Mr. Mark Chandler for their support in creating a work plan. The Chair recognized the efforts of CoC leadership to utilize ESG funds to build capacity in each County based on their unique needs.

**c. Discussion regarding housing programs to address COVID-19 and the anticipated impact of potential federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.**

Presentation by Mr. Benjamin Park.

Mr. Park reviewed the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's use of CARES funds to support the needs of elderly, disabled, and children in families during COVID-19. HPHA distributed tens of thousands of units of PPE and worked on Emergency Rules to reduce person-to-person contact,

expediting repairs to vacant units, and utilizing HUD waivers to keep households stably housed during the pandemic. In addition, HPHA added free Wi-Fi at ten locations, many of which were in rural areas, to increase access to distance learning and telehealth for residents. The Hawaii State Department of Health Public Health Nurses partnered with HPHA to conduct door-to-door outreach, COVID-19 testing, and education on both Oahu and Hawaii island. HPHA continues to work with DOH, the City & County of Honolulu Department of Community Services Elderly Affairs Division, and many other community partners to bring vaccination clinics to public housing projects.

HPHA has also opened the Section 8 wait list for a “lease in place” preference, which allowed HPHA to enroll 838 families into the program. Typically, only 40 households per month are awarded a Section 8 voucher. HPHA is in the process of opening the Section 8 wait list for “mainstream” vouchers to assist non-elderly persons with disabilities, particularly those who are transitioning out of institutional or other settings, at risk of institutionalization or homelessness, or who are currently homeless or being housed through a permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing project.

In partnership with HI-EMA, HPHA supported the Aloha Cares Emergency Feeding Program, which distributed approximately 500,000 meals to elderly and disabled households. HPHA is grateful for the dedication of its own staff who continued to provide essential services during the pandemic. Director Ouansafi thanked HPHA’s many partners who have supported their staff and residents, which allowed the Department to serve more households in the past year than in years before.

Chair Morishige thanked Director Ouansafi and Mr. Park for their presentation and thanked the various partners, including members of the Oahu Continuum of Care, who provided support to HPHA as they applied for additional Section 8 vouchers.

Ms. Tsuhako asked if COVID-19 testing was available at Maui County public housing properties, and Chair Morishige asked if testing was also available at Kauai properties.

- Director Ouansafi stated that the COVID-19 testing offer was statewide, and Mr. Park added that the testing was based on community needs and requests from the local District Health Offices.

Ms. Rezentes rejoined the meeting at 11:14 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 23 out of 27 members present.

Presentation by Ms. Cynthia Rezentes.

Ms. Rezentes provided a brief overview of the additional rental assistance funds available to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands through the federal government. Approximately \$5M will be available through NAHASDA, and may include rental arrears, utilities, and other household expenses related to housing. The Department’s rental assistance program has been accepting applications since February 8<sup>th</sup> and expects to expend its \$2.4M from the previous consolidated appropriations act by next month. Approximately 100 households who are not on the DHHL wait list have been instructed to apply for county rental assistance programs when they are available. The upcoming round of assistance will also include assistance for homeowners, which may include mortgage payments, reducing principal balances, facilitating interest rate reductions, insurance and HOA payments, etc. DHHL will be targeting a few of these areas to support due to the limited amount of funding available and the broad categories of assistance that are considered eligible costs. Funding for additional supportive services will also be available. DHHL recognizes the challenges non-profits have raised regarding administering these programs using only a 10 percent administration fee and noted that the next round of funding will permit administrative costs up to 15 percent in some circumstances.

Chair Morishige thanked Ms. Rezendes for the update and added that GCH has had recent discussions with the State's federal delegation, and they have communicated their praise for DHHL's efforts to rapidly implement programs for beneficiaries.

Ms. Hirota's attendance was recognized at 11:34 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 24 out of 27 members present.

VI. **Continuing Business.**

- a. **Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the Hawaii State Framework to Address Homelessness and ten-year strategic plan to address homelessness, including specific strategies, tactics, and metrics and examining the intersection between local initiatives and federal initiatives to address homelessness.**

Presentation by Ms. Emma Grochowsky.

Ms. Grochowsky briefly reviewed the previous presentation of the Statewide Homeless Services Fiscal Map to the Council, noting that new members of the Council might not be familiar with this material. The purpose of the updated presentation is to capture some of the additional federal funds being allocated toward eviction and homelessness prevention programs.

Ms. Grochowsky summarized several key differences between eviction prevention programs and homelessness prevention programs and shared an overview of federally funded assistance programs related to CARES Act supplemental funding. Ms. Grochowsky noted that the County-level rental and utility assistance programs will be launching in the coming weeks and more information will be available as the details are made public.

VII. **Permitted Interaction Group.**

- a. **Report and discussion of the permitted interaction group established pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (H.R.S.) §92-2.5 to review and recommend potential revisions to the ten-year strategic plan to end homelessness, and the Hawaii State Framework to Address Homelessness.**

Chair Morishige summarized the key recommendations of the Permitted Interaction Group, including:

- Continuing to solicit feedback on development of draft ten-year plan for 2021-2031.
- Aligning efforts of the four counties and the two Continua of Care, while considering new leadership and federal priorities.
- Investing in strengthening the capacity of our housing-focused system.

The Chair added that several recommendations have been adopted by the House COVID-19 Subcommittee on Housing and Homelessness.

- b. **Report and discussion of the permitted interaction group established pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (H.R.S.) §92-2.5 to explore the intersection between homelessness and health and make recommendations to the full council for action.**

The Chair informed the Council that this Permitted Interaction Group has been incorporated into Mental Health Task Force convened by Chair Yamane and Department of Health staff and will be phased out.

VIII. **General Announcements.**

- A. **Chairperson and Staff Reports: January / February / March 2021**

The Chair summarized several key indicators:

- **Count:** 6,458 people (2020 PIT Count)
  - No unsheltered PIT Count in 2021 due to COVID-19, but Continua of Care are looking at other ways to count people experiencing homelessness and accessing homeless programs.
- **Bed Capacity:** 3,744 beds (2020 HIC inventory)
  - Housing Inventory County does not include temporary programs such as the Provisional Outdoor Screening & Triage (POST) that enable short-term stays.
  - Transitional shelter beds have steadily decreased, reflecting a change in federal, state, and county funding and policy.
- **Housing Placements:** 58% (January 2021)
  - Housing placements continued at a high rate even during the pandemic.
  - Rate of housing placement remained level between 2019 and 2020.
  - In January 2021, housing placement rate is 58% statewide.
- **Length of Stay:** 179 days
  - Length of stay in emergency shelters fluctuates by island but tends to be longer on Oahu and Hawaii island.
  - The Chair noted that the 3-day length of stay in Kauai emergency shelters is an outlier due to only one reported exit in January 2021.

The GCH office is continuing to host a monthly webinar series to bring homeless and behavioral health service providers together for information sharing and updates. Additional infographics and materials created by Social Work practicum students are also available on the GCH website at <http://homelessness.hawaii.gov>.

Mr. Krucky left the meeting at 11:43 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 23 out of 27 members present.

#### **B. Written Reports from Council Members.**

The following written updates are provided for the Council's consideration and review (the full write-ups for each representative will be provided):

- *Department of Human Services, Homeless Programs Office*
- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Labor & Industrial Relations*
- *Department of Public Safety*
- *Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism*
- *Department of Hawaiian Home Lands*
- *Department of Defense*
- *Office of Hawaiian Affairs*
- *Department of the Attorney General*
- *Department of Education*

- *Hawaii State House of Representatives*
- *Hawaii State Senate*
- *Hawaii Public Housing Authority*
- *County of Hawaii*
- *County of Kauai*
- *County of Maui*
- *City & County of Honolulu*
- *Continuum of Care for Oahu, Partners in Care*
- *Continuum of Care for Hawaii Island*
- *Continuum of Care for Maui*
- *Continuum of Care for Kauai*
- *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*
- *U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs*
- *Faith-based community*
- *Business community*

Mr. Johnson left the meeting at 11:57 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 22 out of 27 members present.

IX. **Executive Session**

Pursuant to H.R.S. §92-7(a), the Council may, when deemed necessary, hold an Executive Session on any agenda item without the written public notice if the Executive Session was not anticipated in advance. Any such Executive Session shall be held pursuant to H.R.S. §92-4 and shall be limited to those items described in H.R.S. §92-5(a). Discussions held in Executive Session are closed to the public.

The Chair stated that an Executive Session is not necessary at this time.

X. **Topics for Upcoming Meetings**

The Chair asked members to contact his office with additional suggestions for upcoming meetings. The office can be reached at 586-0193 or by e-mail at [gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov).

XI. **Meeting Schedule**

The following Council meetings are proposed for the 2021 calendar year:

- Monday, June 21, 2021, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Monday, September 20, 2021, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



- Monday, December 20, 2021, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

XII. **Adjourn**

Chair Morishige entertained a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Ms. Tuhako and seconded by Ms. Hirota. The Chair called for the question. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

**MINUTES CERTIFICATION**

Minutes prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Emma Grochowsky  
Homelessness Assistant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved by the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness at their Regular Meeting on June 21, 2021.

[ ] As Presented    [ ] As Amended

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott S. Morishige, MSW  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

