

Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH)

Joint In-Person and MS Teams Virtual Teleconference:

300 Rodgers Blvd. #12 Honolulu, HI 96819

Thursday, October 26, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Council Attendees:

Mr. James Koshiba	Chair
Mr. Joseph Campos for	Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS)
Mr. Harold Brackeen III	Administrator of the Homeless Programs Office (HPO) of DHS
Ms. Yara Sutton for	Director of the Department of Health (DOH)
Mr. Jade Butay	Director of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR)
Ms. Monica Lortz for	Director of the Department of Public Safety (PSD)
Mr. Scott Murakami for	Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, & Tourism (DBEDT)
Mr. Kalani Fronda for	Director of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)
Mr. Bruce Oliveira for	Adjutant General of the Department of Defense (DOD)
Mr. Grant Nakaya for	Chairperson of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)
Mr. Hakim Ouansafi	Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA)
Ms. Lila King for	Attorney General
Senator Joy San Buenaventura	Hawai'i State Senate
Mr. Anton Krucky for	Mayor of the City & County of Honolulu
Mayor Mitchell Roth	Mayor of the County of Hawai'i
Ms. Naomi Crozier for	Mayor of the County of Maui
Ms. Farah Aquino for	Mayor of the County of Kauai
Ms. Laura Thielen	Continuum of Care for the County of Honolulu
Ms. Brandee Menino	Continuum of Care for the County of Hawai'i
Ms. Makana Kamibayashi	Continuum of Care for the County of Kauai
Ms. Maude Cumming	Continuum of Care for the County of Maui
Mr. Andrew Dahlburg	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Mr. Mark Chandler	U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)
Pastor Amy Wake	Faith-Based Representative

Absent: Hawai'i State House of Representatives; Business Community Representative

Staff: Ms. Sarielyn Curtis, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Lindsay Pacheco, Homelessness Community Development Specialist; Ms. Vanessa Khachik, Homelessness Assistant; Ms. Lily Young, Deputy Attorney General

I. Call to Order, Taking of the Roll [0:00]

Roll was taken and there was a quorum established with 25 out of 27 members. This meeting was called to order at 10:23 a.m. by the Chair.

[13:10] Chair Koshiba welcomed everyone and reviewed several general housekeeping items, relating to the meeting packet, parking validation, and the virtual teleconference platform. Members attending virtually were asked to keep their cameras on for the duration of the meeting and to notify the chat when leaving. All attendees then received Lindsay Pacheco's number to contact in the case of technical difficulties. The Chair reminded members that these housekeeping items are required under Hawai'i's Sunshine law, and that Deputy Attorney General Lili Young was there to assist in making sure that the laws are followed.

II. Overview and Approval of Agenda [14:56]

Chair Koshiba acknowledged that it had been about a year since the council had last met, and shared his intention behind the agenda, which was to level set and ensure that all members are on the same page. The Chair then noted that there would be opportunities for public testimony and invited all attendees to provide comments, questions, and feedback after each agenda item.

[16:38] The Chair requested a motion to approve the agenda. [16:42] Mr. Fronza moved and [16:43] Ms. Menino seconded to approve the agenda as presented. [16:56] Seeing no additions or corrections, the Chair called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes [17:40]

Chair Koshiba informed the council that the minutes from the prior council meeting on November 21, 2022, must be approved to continue with the new business. The Chair stated that his staff had found an error in section two, the date written as November 19th, 2022, rather than September 19th, 2022. The Chair indicated that this correction would be made, as well as an update to the signature lines to reflect the change in the HICH Chair. The Chair provided time for members to review the minutes and asked if there were any additional additions or corrections.

[19:40] The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes. [19:42] Ms. Menino moved and [19:43] Mr. Fronza seconded to approve the minutes with the corrections that the Chair had identified. [19:49] Seeing no further additions or corrections, the Chair called the question. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Campos left the meeting at 10:42 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 24 of 27 members present. Mr. Campos joined the meeting again at 10:48 a.m., and the quorum was updated accordingly.

IV. Public Testimony [20:17]

Chair Koshiba opened the floor to public testimony and reminded attendees that public testimony will be accepted after each agenda item.

a. Mr. Mike Peacock, Vet 2 Vet

- [21:40] Mr. Peacock commented on his concern for people receiving housing through programs such as Housing First or Section 8, and their return to negative behaviors and products after reintegration into the community. Mr. Peacock shared his difficulties in assisting them due to the tenant's rights that are currently in place.

b. Ms. Connie Mitchell, Institute for Human Services (IHS)

- [22:22] Ms. Mitchell dispersed a letter to the HICH members that stressed the need for data driven solutions, observations from the IHS shelters and homeless programs, and suggestions for the future. Ms. Mitchell commented on the need for better data to better plan and integrate into services that people need. Ms. Mitchell then expressed her concern for seniors experiencing homelessness, which comprise 40% of the IHS adult shelter population. Ms. Mitchell then stressed the need to keep the seniors in mind when planning and creating public assisted housing.

V. New Business [25:35]

a. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair recognized that members had already given introductions during the roll call, so this agenda item was no longer necessary.

b. Governor’s Priorities on Homelessness- Presentation by James Koshiba [26:14]

Chair Koshiba provided context into his background and perspective, which is what helped him, and Governor Green set the priorities. For the past 8 years prior to his position as the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH), the Chair was doing street outreach and community building with individuals experiencing homelessness. The Chair shared his goal throughout those 8 years, which was to listen to their perspectives on our systems and solutions, and to hear their ideas on what solutions should be used in the future. The Chair highlighted the friendships that he made while on the streets, specifically thanking Ms. Lindsay Pacheco, Ms. Twinkle Borge, Pu’uhonua o Waianae (POW), and individuals living in various encampments across the islands.

[28:49] Chair Koshiba noted that one of the first things that he did as the GCH was to set priorities with Governor Green. The Chair felt that this was important because it is an issue that is very visible and emotional, and he anticipated demands that would pull the efforts in many different directions. The Chair then thanked Vanessa Khachik for handling the many different calls and complaints that are brought to the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS).

[30:02] Chair Koshiba presented a common misconceptions relating to homelessness. These include:

1. Individuals experiencing homelessness are service resistant.
2. Increase in mental health & addiction are the driving forces behind homelessness.
3. Services alone will end homelessness.

[34:08] Chair Koshiba presented the three root causes behind homelessness. These include:

1. The loss of family and community.
2. The lack of deeply affordable space.
3. The lack of space for those with special needs.

[37:20] Chair Koshiba presented the Governor’s five priorities on homelessness. These include:

1. Create deeply affordable space- Conventional Housing Models

- Chair Koshiba stated that existing affordable housing and rent subsidies must be truly affordable and accessible for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Chair stated that we must also create housing, specifically permanent supportive housing, which pairs affordable housing with support services.

2. Deeply Affordable Space- Kauhale (Community Housing)

- Chair Koshiba stated that we must experiment and test new solutions for long-term affordable communities, specifically through the Governor’s Kauhale initiative. The Chair noted that Kauhale’s are not strictly tiny home villages or only for individuals experiencing homelessness, rather each Kauhale may look different.

Kauhale provides a sense of community, belonging, and responsibility to give back to the community and to care for the place, which many people would benefit from. The Chair also noted that the lack of community can lead some individuals back to the streets, using housing vouchers as an example.

3. Space for Mental Health & Substance Use Healing

- Chair Koshiba stressed the need for spaces for those with serious mental and behavioral health needs. The Chair also noted that the Hawai‘i State Hospital is overflowing, and that community spaces that provide services are in short supply.

4. Clear the Obstacles Along the Pathway from Street to Home.

- Chair Koshiba stated that there are obstacles in our continuum of care that are preventing people from making their way home, one reason being that the system is dramatically under resourced. The Chair used homeless outreach workers as an example of this, as the current ratio is 1 outreach worker attempting to serve 200-400 unhoused people. The Chair noted that this is an issue he has discussed with Mr. Harold Brackeen III, and others at DHS about, and that increasing funding for core homeless services is included in priority #4.

5. Call Everyone Back to Community and Aloha.

- Chair Koshiba stressed the need to call community members away from the attitudes of NIMBYism (Not in my backyard) and turn them into YIMBYism (Yes in my backyard). The Chair stated that without community help and support, we will not be able to reduce and end homelessness.

[45:20] Chair Koshiba came back to the Kauhale Initiative to elaborate further. The Chair explained that Kauhale will provide lasting affordability while bringing people home and building community. If people have a sense of belonging in their community, they will take kuleana for taking care of each other and the place, which will decrease operating costs for needs like security, repair, maintenance, and more. The Chair used POW as an example, where 250 people are currently living unhoused at the Waianae Boat Harbor. The village will never have to pay for security, because they have a nightly neighborhood watch, with each section of the village being patrolled by members of the community. “Kuleana wakes up mana, responsibility wakes up the spirit” is Twinkle Borge’s (the leader of POW) mantra and is a guiding principle of Kauhale. The Chair also noted that this communal responsibility not only decreases operating costs but plays a key role in people’s healing and growth.

[45:59] Chair Koshiba shared pictures of POW, Aunty Blanche’s Hui Mahi‘ai ‘Āina in Waimānalo, and Lindsay Pacheco’s old encampment, Ka Po’e o Kaka’ako.

[49:12] Chair Koshiba thanked the legislature for the resources given to support the Kauhale Initiative. There is an appropriated \$15,000,000 for FY23, and \$33,000,000 for FY24. The Chair shared the Governor’s goal to create 12 Kauhale’s by the end of 2026, with 6 on Oahu and 2 on each neighboring island. The Chair noted that this is not the maximum Kauhale’s possible, and the hope is to stretch Kauhale dollars further to create as many deeply affordable communities as possible.

[50:08] Chair Koshiba reiterated the need to increase front line staff and give them the resources to adequately serve our unhoused neighbors, which will clear away hurdles for priority number 4. The Chair also reiterated that the SOHHS receives many calls demanding sweeps, but without community support and deeply affordable spaces, we cannot end homelessness.

The Chair noted that the Governor’s priorities are a living document, and that feedback is appreciated to help shape and improve them.

Mr. Campos left the meeting at 11:01 a.m. Quorum was updated to reflect 24 of 27 members present. Mr. Campos joined the meeting again at 11:03a.m., and the quorum was updated accordingly.

Chair Koshiba opened the floor to public testimony [53:48]

1. Mr. Mike Peacock, Vet 2 Vet

- [53:51] Mr. Peacock shared that he is a Hoku peer trainer, assisting people to reenter the workforce. Mr. Peacock stressed the need to integrate more peer support specialists into services, because currently much of it is done by licensed social workers. Peer support specialists also need to have the ability to independently bill for services, which they cannot do in the current billing system. Mr. Peacock then stressed the need for an increase in treatment facilities, funding, and expedited licensing, which will help with reintegration. Mr. Peacock noted his experience as a property manager and shared his concerns with individuals receiving section 8 vouchers, receiving housing, and returning to substance abuse. Owners of properties are upset because they can’t evict residents that have damaged units due to tenant’s rights, even with the access to funding to repair the units. Mr. Peacock expressed that he was glad to see that there is funding for the Kauhale Initiative and his hope to switch NIMBY to YIMBY within Governor’s term.

[57:20] Chair Koshiba noted that SOHHS has been working with the Med-Quest division of DHS to explore using Medicaid dollars to compensate peer support specialists. Peer support specialists and people with lived experience can play an important part in switching people’s attitudes from NIMBY to YIMBY.

2. Ms. Connie Mitchell, Institute for Human Services (IHS)

- [58:15] Ms. Mitchell praised Chair Koshiba for the priorities that he shared, specifically emphasizing the need for community. Ms. Mitchell shared her concern for the resignation of the Governor’s Chief Housing Officer, Ms. Nani Mederios, who had a commitment to breaking down barriers for development of housing. Ms. Mitchell shared her hope that this commitment will continue. After 17 years of providing homeless services, the lack of place for people to go has always been an issue. As we test new solutions for housing, Ms. Mitchell would like to use IHS’s Kahauiki Village as a model. The village is comprised of 139 1-2 bedroom units, with over 600 people building a sense of community, connection, and responsibility. Ms. Mitchell shared her hope for the funding of supportive services for the village, as people continue to need assistance in understanding responsibilities and shifting towards an entrepreneurial mindset. IHS has been able to ensure low rent for the village, but the extra services require more support. Ms. Mitchell thanked Chair Koshiba for recognizing and prioritizing space for those with mental and behavioral health needs. Ms. Mitchell also emphasized how destructive meth addiction is in Hawai’i, and how we must recognize this as we create space for individuals with substance abuse disorders. Ms. Mitchell agreed with Mr. Peacock that workforce development must play a bigger part in the solutions to end homelessness. Ms. Mitchell finished her testimony by emphasizing the need for more resources dedicated to homeless prevention. IHS has a 12 month contract for homeless prevention with the Homeless Program’s Office, and though it has only been 4 months, the entirety of the funding has been expended.

i. Discussion from Members [62:50]

[62:56] Mr. Grant Nakaya, speaking on behalf of OHA, applauded the Governor's priority to use non-traditional solutions to solve the homelessness crisis, such as Kauhale. Mr. Nakaya emphasized that any housing solution used must be culturally and community appropriate, noting that each community across the State of Hawai'i will have different needs. Mr. Nakaya stressed that through the creation of any Kauhale, the voices of community members need to be heard.

[64:27] Chair Koshiba thanked Mr. Nakaya and agreed with his comments. The Chair reminded everyone that feedback, ideas, and ways to improve priorities are always welcome. The Chair noted that for future HICH meetings, he would like to invite other members to share their priorities as well.

c. Policy Priorities Relating to Homelessness for the 2024 Legislative Session [65:30]

Chair Koshiba opened the floor to members to share their priorities that they plan to advocate for at the upcoming legislative session. The Chair stated that he would like this to be a time to explore if there are ways to collaborate and coordinate efforts. For the SOHHS, the top priority is to advocate for an increase in the core homeless services budget. The Chair recognized that this may be difficult due to it being the second year of the biennium, and resources need to go to Maui. Regardless of whether the increase is possible this year, the Chair stressed that the legislature must begin discussing it.

[67:22] Mr. Nakaya shared OHA's priority to end homelessness for Native Hawaiians. Mr. Nakaya noted that OHA will need to ensure housing is available, but they will also need to focus on dismantling the imposed settler colonial structures that continue to cause inequities and disparities that disproportionately effect Native Hawaiians and contribute to homelessness. Mr. Nakaya provided three examples of areas that OHA will work to improve: Workforce development, economic development, and access to healthcare. A second priority for OHA is to eliminate the budget cap, which severely limits the funding and services that can be provided.

[68:48] Chair Koshiba asked Mr. Nakaya to clarify that the following are OHA's priorities:

1. Resources for workforce development.
2. Resources for economic development.
3. Healthcare for Native Hawaiians.

[69:01] Mr. Nakaya confirmed that these are OHA's priorities, as well as eliminating the budget cap.

[69:10] Chair Koshiba asked Mr. Nakaya to clarify whether these priorities are specific to Native Hawaiians experiencing homelessness.

[69:20] Mr. Nakaya clarified that these priorities are for the entire Native Hawaiian community, however OHA recognizes that Native Hawaiians are disproportionately represented among the homeless population. Mr. Nakaya further explained that Native Hawaiians represent a special population that needs assistance to address homelessness, because it is distressing that Native Hawaiians are homeless in their homeland.

[69:53] Ms. Twinkle Borge, the leader of Pu'uhonua o Waianae, asked Mr. Nakaya when OHA will begin to implement these priorities for the houseless community, especially for those who are Native Hawaiian. Ms. Borge emphasized that this is the first time she has ever heard of OHA's priorities, and asked if OHA will truly begin to help. Ms. Borge acknowledged her feelings of anger and shared that throughout her 23 years of being houseless, never once has OHA been present. OHA's lack of help has also led her to wonder whether NIMBYism has become a part of their culture. Ms. Borge asked again if these priorities will help the houseless community, and how the help will come.

[71:20] Mr. Nakaya thanked Ms. Borge for her comments and shared that he had visited Pu'uhonua o Waianae in August or September with his manager Zuri Aki. Mr. Nakaya acknowledged that this was the first time that OHA has ever visited or spoken to anybody in the village, and that OHA has been missing in the past. Mr. Nakaya shared OHA's commitment to rectify areas that OHA has absent from in the past, including homelessness. Mr. Nakaya also shared that OHA is currently working on a housing focused campaign that will include homelessness as a priority.

[72:40] Chair Koshiba asked if there were any other members who would like to share their legislative priorities.

[72:47] Ms. Laura Theilen shared Partners in Care' (PIC) three main priorities, noting that they are not very different from previous years, but they still need to be advocated for.

1. Maintain and perpetuate proven core homeless services, specifically including unhoused youth and minors.
 - Ms. Theilen explained that resources are very limited due to the little payment for frontline workers, making it very difficult to provide services. Services and housing for unhoused youth and minors must be a focus for this priority because there are not enough resources currently.
2. Supportive Housing Stability Services.
 - Ms. Theilen stressed that wrap around services must be provided long-term to ensure successful housing. Many times, supportive services will accompany housing for a couple of years, and then will discontinue.
3. Creation of Affordable Housing.
 - Ms. Theilen shared that PIC would like to increase partnerships with affordable housing developers. PIC also supports the city of Honolulu's bill's 6 and 7, which will help build the housing. Ms. Theilen expressed her difficulties in working with the Department of Permitting and Planning, due to it taking over 18 months to be granted a permit. Ms. Theilen also shared that many buildings are built before even receiving a permit, and this is not the way that it should be working.

[75:27] Chair Koshiba asked if there were any questions for Ms. Theilen and if any other members would like to share their policy priorities.

[75:38] Mr. Alani Apio, Hui Aloha Board President, stressed the need to turn around the narrative for those experiencing homelessness, specifically with their own neighbors. Mr. Apio shared that he witnessed his community members and friends stop the affordable housing development in

Kailua. Mr. Apio asked Ms. Theilen if the Continuum of Care (COC) will plan to publicly advocate to switch this narrative, because he would love to see more advocacy from service providers themselves.

[77:33] Ms. Theilen agreed with Mr. Apio's comments and shared her experience attending the neighborhood board meetings for the affordable housing development in Kailua. Ms. Theilen witnessed her community members' anger towards the people who would be housed there, which was very disappointing. Ms. Theilen stated that the community must take the initiative to the government to insist that every community has truly affordable housing. Ms. Theilen stated that many unhoused people are expected to leave their communities behind to find affordable housing, using individuals living at Waimānalo beach park as an example. Ms. Theilen noted that neighborhoods are also saying no to the development of mental health treatment, care homes, and similar programs. Ms. Theilen noted that there hasn't been an affordable housing project in Kailua for the past 12 years. Ms. Theilen emphasized that the COC supports this advocacy and will additionally be supporting another affordable housing project.

[75:23] Chair Koshiba thanked Ms. Theilen for her comments and asked if any other members would like to share policy priorities.

[79:41] Ms. Theilen shared that PIC is also working on the True Coast Initiative, which is recognizing that core homeless services haven't changed for many years, as well as the difficulties that nonprofits have with staying open on the existing funding. Government grants must recognize that for nonprofits to exist and to keep their employees, they must recognize the true cost to operate.

[80:29] Senator Joy San Buenaventura expressed that it will be difficult to receive an increase in funding due to resources being directed towards Maui unless the source of funding was separate from the general funds. Senator San Buenaventura noted that there are programs that rely on federal funding, such as the rapid rehousing and housing first programs, and we must work with DHS to see if we can increase them. Senator San Buenaventura further noted that the Governor also line-item vetoed several budget requests, which meant that the Governor had already thought that the budget did not reflect what the state could afford.

Senator San Buenaventura listed the following as her priorities:

1. Increase the availability of behavioral health treatment.
 - Senator San Buenaventura stated that part of this priority is to develop partnerships with the counties. Senator San Buenaventura noted that she had already reached out to Hawai'i County Council to speak about the need for behavioral health centers.
 - Senator San Buenaventura noted that the existing systemic issues must be addressed, specifically referencing the State of Hawai'i Kaneohe Mental Health Hospital. Over the past few months, several people who were leading the Hospital's efforts have resigned or transferred. Senator San Buenaventura noted that the legislature had failed to find funding for behavioral health centers legislative session and requested help from Chair Koshiba and others to achieve this.
2. Support Kauhale's that were covered under the previous administration's Emergency Proclamation on homelessness (EP).

- Senator San Buenaventura explained that before Governor Green reset the EP, the existing Kauhale's covered under the previous EP were in danger of being removed. Senator San Buenaventura noted that she needs support to grandfather these Kauhale's in, because she had none in the previous legislative session.
- Senator San Buenaventura also noted that the EP can't be never ending, due to constitutional reasons, and that she is surprised no one has challenged it already. Senator San Buenaventura stressed that we must fix this problem, because future Kauhale's and communities will need stability and room to grow.

Senator San Buenaventura finished her comments by stating that she is currently looking at federal monies for Maui to see if they can be used for a Maui behavioral health center, and that she hopes that the counties will help with others.

[85:30] Chair Koshiba thanked Senator San Buenaventura for sharing her priorities. Chair Koshiba stated that he and the SOHHS are happy to work with her on the issues relating to the EP, as well as the city partnerships. The Chair noted that he had started these conversations with the counties. The Chair asked again if any other members wanted to share policy priorities.

Mr. Anton Krucky left the meeting at 11:34a.m. The Quorum was updated to reflect 24 of 27 members present. Mr. Krucky joined the meeting again at 11:36a.m., and the quorum was updated accordingly.

VI. **Continuing Business**

- a. None at this time

VII. **Permitted Interaction Group**

- a. None at this time.

VIII. **General Announcements [86:25]**

- a. Announcements by Members shall be given at this time.

Chair Koshiba opened the floor up to members for general announcements; there were none.

IX. **Topics for Upcoming Meetings [86:52]**

- a. Open for Council Suggestion.

Chair Koshiba stated that he would like to have the counties share their priorities in future meetings.

[87:33] Ms. Brandee Menino stated that she would like to hear about opportunities and projects that State Departments are working on together. Ms. Menino used discharge planning after incarceration and homelessness prevention as two examples of plans that she would like to hear about.

[88:05] Chair Koshiba asked Ms. Menino to clarify that she would like to hear from State Departments about points of collaboration, one example being discharge planning. Ms. Menino agreed that this was correct.

[88:41] Mr. James Pakele, President of POW's nonprofit Dynamic Community Solutions, introduced himself as Ms. Twinkle Borge's mascot. Mr. Pakele shared that he would like to hear what is being

done for individuals with mental health disorders. Mr. Pakele explained that part of the unhoused population could manage a house if it was affordable, but some may never be able to maintain a house, even it was given to them, due to mental illness. Mr. Pakele further explained that he believes that a lot of the NIMBYism comes from the public seeing unhoused people with mental health issues. Mr. Pakele stressed that he refuses to believe that because a person doesn't have mental capacity, they should be sleeping next to a fire hydrant. Mr. Pakele shared a story of a man living alone in his house in Waianae after his family abandoned him. Due to his mental health issues, he can't maintain the house. Mr. Pakele stressed how important it is that mental health portion of houselessness must be addressed.

X. **Meeting Schedule [91:20]**

a. HICH will meet quarterly and will notify it's Members and the Public when scheduled.

XI. **Adjourn [91:13]**

Chair Koshiba thanked everyone for attending and actively participating, extending a special mahalo to individuals who testified.

[91:33] The Chair requested a motion to adjourn [91:34] Mr. Kalani Fronda moved and [91:36] Ms. Brandee Menino seconded. [91:40] The Chair called the question, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

MINUTES CERTIFICATION

Minutes Prepared by:

Sarielyn Curtis
Homelessness Community Development Specialist

Date

Approved by the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness at their Regular Meeting on October 26, 2023.

[] As Presented [] As Amended

James Koshiba
Chair, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

Date