



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

December 26, 2019

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President and Members of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott Saiki
Speaker and Members of the House
of Representatives
Thirtieth State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 36 (2019)
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE TO PRIORITIZE HOMELESSNESS
EFFORTS IN THE AREA SURROUNDING THE HAWAII CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY
CENTER.

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and members of the Legislature,

Attached is the following report submitted in accordance with:

- HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 36 (2019) ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE TO PRIORITIZE HOMELESSNESS EFFORTS IN THE AREA SURROUNDING THE HAWAII CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY CENTER.

In accordance with section 93-16, HRS, copies of these reports have been transmitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau Library and the reports may be viewed electronically at <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cathy Betts", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cathy Betts
Deputy Director

December 26, 2019

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Ecopy only:

Office of the Governor

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Department of Budget & Finance

Legislative Auditor

Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Report to the Thirtieth Hawaii State Legislature 2020

**In Accordance with
House Concurrent Resolution 36 (2019) on the Establishment of a Task
Force to Prioritize Homelessness Efforts in the Area Surrounding the
Hawaii Children's Discovery Center**

**Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness
Department of Human Services
December 2019**

House Concurrent Resolution 36 (HCR 36) (2019), requests the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness to convene a task force to develop strategies and a plan that will assist individuals and families facing homelessness around the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center in Kakaako Makai. The resolution requests the task force develop strategies and a plan that will protect the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center and surrounding areas by preventing unsanitary conditions, littering, vandalism, property damage, trespassing, unlawful entry, and other criminal or illicit activity.

Pursuant to HCR 36 (2019), the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness (Coordinator) established a task force to carry out the requested activities. As Chair of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), the Coordinator also convened a meeting of the HICH and established the task force as a permitted interaction group of the council. The task force met during the summer and fall of 2019, as jurisdictional changes were occurring in the Kakaako Makai area immediately surrounding the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center.

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the HCR 36 (2019) task force, and provides an overview of the status of homeless activities in Kakaako Makai.

I. Overview of the HCR 36 (2019) task force.

A. Purpose.

The purpose of the task force is as follows:

- To prioritize homelessness efforts in the area surrounding the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center;
- To develop strategies that will “assist individuals and families facing homelessness around the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center and outline the tasks and responsibilities of each stakeholder;” and
- To develop strategies that will “protect the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center and surrounding areas by preventing unsanitary conditions, littering, vandalism, property damage, trespassing, unlawful entry, and other criminal or illicit activity.”

The task force shall also submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2020.

B. Task Force Membership.

The task force consists of the following members, including representatives from the HICH, government agencies, legislative offices, law enforcement agencies, social service providers, community advocacy groups, and individuals experiencing homelessness:

- Mr. Scott Morishige, Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness (Chair);
- First Deputy Sheriff Reid Ogata, Hawaii Department of Public Safety;
- Ms. Kim Bowman for Speaker Scott Saiki, Hawaii House of Representatives;
- Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Hawaii State Senate;
- Councilmember Carol Fukunaga, Honolulu City Council
- Ms. Loretta Yajima, Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center;
- Ms. Lindsey Doi, Hawaii Community Development Authority;
- Mr. David Rolf, Business Sector Members of the HICH;
- Ms. Laura E. Thielen, Partners in Care;
- Captain Mike Lambert, Honolulu Police Department;
- Major Ryan Nishibun, Honolulu Police Department; and
- Mr. Marc Alexander, Executive Director of the City & County of Honolulu Office of Housing
- Mr. Alani Apio, Hui Aloha
- Mr. John Kaulupali, Ka Poe O Kakaako

C. Task Force Meetings

The task force met four times during the summer and fall of 2019 on:

- June 24, 2019,
- July 25, 2019,
- September 4, 2019, and
- December 12, 2019.

II. Discussion of the Task Force.

A. Jurisdiction of Kakaako Makai Parks.

During the period that the task force met, the jurisdiction of the Kakaako Makai Parks – including Kakaako Waterfront Park, Kakaako Gateway Parks, and the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center – was in the process of being transferred from the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) to the City & County of Honolulu (City). Much of the discussion of the task force was focused on the status of the transfer of jurisdiction between the two government entities.

The intent of the transfer of jurisdiction was to more clearly identify and delineate responsibilities for maintenance and law enforcement authority in Kakaako Makai. The transfer was completed on November 1, 2019, with the City & County of Honolulu taking responsibility for maintenance and law enforcement jurisdiction of the Kakaako Makai Parks. Prior to the transfer, maintenance and law enforcement responsibility was split between multiple agencies including the City, HCDA, Department of Public Safety (PSD), State of Hawaii, and the Honolulu Police Department (HPD).

After the City obtained full authority of the Kakaako Makai area, HPD, and City land management agencies worked to increase the frequency and scope of enforcement efforts to address sidewalk obstruction and park closure violations in the Kakaako area. The increased frequency of enforcement in Kakaako Makai contributed to a decrease in the number of homeless individuals setting up unauthorized encampments in the area.

B. Social Services for Homeless Persons in Kakaako Makai.

In June 2019, Partners in Care and HPD conducted a coordinated outreach to develop a “By Name List” of homeless individuals in Kakaako Makai. A total of 62 individuals were identified during the coordinated outreach.

Of the 62 identified individuals, only 14 had an active enrollment with a homeless program in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Of this number, 10 individuals had been assessed for housing using the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), which is a triage and assessment tool used by homeless service provider agencies.

A review of the 62 individuals also indicated that only half (31) had current health insurance coverage, with only one (1) individual receiving case management services through a managed care plan.

The task force discussed the results of the survey and determined that additional efforts were needed to strengthen connection to services for homeless individuals in the area. A suggestion was made to better connect representatives from the community advocacy organization Hui Aloha and the homeless community Ka Poe O Kakaako with service providers from Partners in Care (PIC). This suggestion resulted in the convening of a series of meetings between the three groups, as well as the convening of a targeted service fair held in September 2019.

As a result of the September service fair, and through more frequent discussions between service providers and the Ka Poe O Kakaako leadership, ten individuals from the encampment were connected to the Hale Mauiola navigation center for emergency shelter. Additionally, PIC and Ka Poe O Kakaako convened a second service fair in December 2019, which focused on connecting homeless individuals to long-term case management and substance abuse treatment services.

C. Resource needs of the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center.

A number of concerns were identified by the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center related to vandalism and criminal activities that were not necessarily connected to the neighboring homeless encampments in the area. During discussions related to these concerns, the Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center shared the need for additional resources to support security for center staff and visitors, including additional fencing and lighting for the area, and additional security surveillance equipment.

The task force followed up on a Grant-in-Aid that was awarded to address the security concerns, and the Governor released funding for the Grant-in-Aid in September 2019. The Hawaii Children’s Discovery Center is currently in the process of contracting for necessary security measures with funding provided by the Grant-in-Aid.

II. Task force recommendations.

The task force agreed to the following specific recommendations to assist homeless individuals and families, and to respond to concerns related to vandalism and other criminal activities in Kakaako Makai:

- Support additional security improvements to the Children’s Discovery Center (e.g. fencing and increased lighting);
- Support for law enforcement and land management resources to address encampments is critical;
- Sustain and strengthen partnerships between law enforcement and social service providers through continuation of the Honolulu Police Department’s Health, Efficiency and Long-Term Partnerships (HELP) outreach program and targeted outreach fairs;
- Sustain and strengthen partnerships between social service providers and the houseless community;
- When practical, utilize the skills and expertise of individuals with lived experience as peer specialists to assist with engaging and strengthening relationships with individuals directly experiencing homelessness; and
- Activate the Kakaako Makai parks for public use through repair and maintenance projects, and the engagement of community stakeholder groups.

In addition, the task force recommends sustained levels of funding to maintain key homeless services necessary to address homelessness in the Kakaako Makai area, such as:

- Homeless Outreach;
- Emergency Shelter;
- Housing assistance programs that provide financial assistance to assist with necessary housing costs, such as Rapid Rehousing, Housing First, and the State Rent Supplement Program; and
- Programs that divert homeless individuals from the criminal justice system, such as the Community Outreach Court or Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD).

III. Intersection with the HICH.

The Coordinator, who serves as chair of the HCR 36 task force, also serves as the chair of HICH. At the June 2019 regular meeting of the HICH, a recommendation was

made to formalize the task force as a permitted interaction group of the HICH, and to forward any recommendations of the task force to the HICH for formal adoption and further action.

At its regular meeting in December 2019, the findings and recommendations of this task force were shared with HICH, and a recommendation was made to incorporate the suggestions of this task force as part of the legislative priorities adopted by HICH for the 2020 legislative session.