

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 6, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1834 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: Friday, February 9, 2024, 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, provided that any appropriation does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget. DHS notes that the executive budget includes a request for \$1,320,000, which is a 5% increase in funding for homeless services contracts. DHS respectfully requests that the appropriation be through the executive budget and is recurring.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to increase the department of human services' homeless programs office budget.

DHS agrees that additional funds are needed for homeless services contracted by the Homeless Programs Office (HPO). The total funding currently going towards HPO contracts is \$26,425,616, which includes contracted services in the base budget and services that are currently funded only for the current fiscal biennium. While DHS is requesting a 5% increase in

the executive budget, an increase of 20%, or \$5,285,123, would better reflect increases in operating costs for providers over the past nine years.

DHS currently contracts for a broad range of homeless services, including shelter, outreach, civil legal services, housing placement, state emergency grant program, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing (Housing First). While the contracted services are core components of the homeless service system, the last major increase in funding was in 2016.

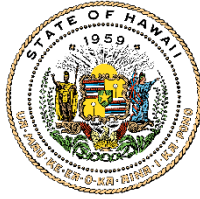
Since 2016, operating costs for providers have increased dramatically. For example, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average weekly wage in Hawaii increased nearly 36% between 2016 and 2023 – from \$896 in the first quarter of 2016 to \$1,218 in the first quarter of 2023. Other operating costs, such as transportation and utility costs, have also increased by an estimated 30% during this same period.

The number of people experiencing homelessness is also increasing after years of steady decline. Between 2022 and 2023, the statewide Point in Time count found that homelessness increased by 4%, from 5,967 to 6,223 individuals. DHS anticipates that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness will likely continue to increase due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent Maui wildfires.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committees on
HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS
And
HUMAN SERVICES

Friday, February 9, 2024
8:30 AM

State Capitol Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

In Consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1834
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

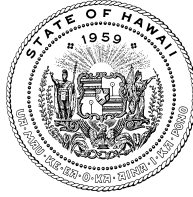
House Bill 1831 proposes to increase funding for the Department of Human Services (DHS) homeless service contracts. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) supports this bill.**

The DLNR has increasing numbers of homeless on most of its properties. The Department's mission is to "enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawai'i nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors." This mission does not include connecting people with social services, housing or mental health care. Although we dedicate one full time, and one part time staff to homelessness, their focus is on ensuring our lands are managed in furtherance of our mission. Thus, we rely on the services contracted by DHS to guide people on our lands out of homelessness.

During the past two years, we have noticed a decreasing ability of the agencies to service our homeless populations. Shelters are often full, or unavailable due to a lack of adequate staff. Staff turnover has led to loss of records, meaning that homeless individuals lose their place in line for housing or fall out of housing and cannot get back in because there are no records. When a case manager leaves, or even worse, the whole agency goes under, the people who had history with the homeless population in their service area are gone, and all progress goes away. The homeless people living on our lands get frustrated with the process and give up. As land managers we are left with a homeless population who has no place to go and is receiving no assistance while they wait.

There is housing available if you understand the process, and with the Governor's focus on housing local people, the situation may get better. However, if there is housing but we lack the people who connect the homeless to the housing, the addition of housing units becomes futile. Additional funding for contractors will address the problem of turnover, perhaps lead to better candidates, and allow people to stay in these important jobs. Without good and consistent staffing at the service agencies, we will never solve our homeless problem.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment in support of this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of **John Mizuno**
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness
Before the
House Committee on Health and Homelessness
February 9, 2024
8:30 a.m., Conference Room 329

In consideration of
House Bill No. 1834
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of this measure, provided that any appropriation does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget. Additionally, I humbly request that the appropriation be through the executive budget and recurring.

One of the five priorities that Governor Green established for the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) is to **clear the obstacles along the pathway from street to home**. This measure will provide the resources to service providers to cover the true cost of services, which will reduce understaffing issues and high turnover.

In September my office conducted one-on-one interviews with the state contracted homeless service providers to better understand the State's response to homeless services, the obstacles, and to identify the improvements that are necessary to better serve our homeless population. The common theme was identified amongst all interviews: **The current funding is inadequate and has not been increased for 6-12 years**. The following are a few of the obstacles service providers are facing:

- Low employee retention rates due to the inability to pay living wages and benefits.
- The inability to staff adequately, due to contracts only allowing for a small number of staff. This has resulted in an overwhelming provider to client ratio.
- Administrative and maintenance costs are not always covered by the contracts, which has forced service providers to seek outside funding.

Providers want to continue to serve and decrease the homeless population, and we must provide them the resources to do so. I appreciate the legislature for addressing this issue and am in strong support of this measure.

Mahalo,

John Mizuno
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

John C. (Jack) Lewin, M.D.
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea St., #402, Honolulu, HI 96813 Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

**House Committee on Health and Homelessness and
House Committee on Human Services**

H.B. 1834 Relating to the Department of Human Services

**Testimony of John C. (Jack) Lewin, M.D.
SHPDA Administrator**

**Friday, February 9, 2024
8:30 a.m.**

1 **Agency's Position: Support**

2 **Fiscal Implications:** None

3 **Purpose and Justification:** Homelessness is a rampant and increasing problem in Hawai'i
4 and the nation at large. The DHS is saddled with a huge responsibility in these regards and
5 needs adequate funding to reach out effectively to this population of people who have
6 worrisome but preventable health risks and higher morbidity, mortality, and lower longevity.

7 SHPDA strongly supports the funding request of HB 1834 as sorely needed if we are to
8 achieve the Governor's vision of "Hawaii the Health State."

9 Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



HB1834
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
House Committee on Health & Homelessness
House Committee on Human Services

February 9, 2024

8:30 AM

Conference Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1834** which appropriates funds to increase the Department of Human Services' (DHS) homeless programs office (HPO) budget and to ensure that service providers contracted through the HPO can address their employees' needs related to the high cost of living in Hawai'i. **OHA believes that these services are critical to addressing the severe social and economic disparities faced by Native Hawaiians.**

Native Hawaiians are consistently overrepresented in homelessness, comprising the single largest ethnic group of those experiencing homelessness in Hawai'i. On O'ahu, Native Hawaiians accounted for 41% of those experiencing homelessness in 2023. This represents an increase of 16% from 2022 in total number of Native Hawaiians counted in the Point in Time (PIT) count with a 39% increase in the number of unsheltered Native Hawaiians counted, and a 2% increase in the number of sheltered Native Hawaiians counted. In the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kauai, Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders accounted for approximately 28.79% of all people experiencing homelessness.

Homeless Programs Office contracts for critical services to address homelessness. We support increased funding for the programs they fund. We know that the programs they fund only succeed when they are able to retain dedicated staff. OHA supports increased funding for the programs and especially for the hard-working staff that administer those programs. We believe that increased, sustained funding for HPO can really help move the needle and ultimately improve outcomes for Native Hawaiians.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to share our mana'o and urges the Legislature to **PASS HB1834**. Mahalo nui loa.



The Institute for Human Services, Inc.
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

TO: Honorable Rep. Della Au Belatti
Chair, House Committee on Health and Homelessness

Honorable Rep. Lisa Marten
Chair, House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Connie Mitchell, Executive Director
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

RE: [HB1834](#) - Relating to the Department of Human Services.

HEARING: Friday, February 9, 2024 at 8:30 AM.

POSITION: IHS **strongly supports** the passing of HB1834 with amendments.

For over 45 years, The Institute for Human Services (IHS) has offered critical support to those experiencing homelessness, from emergency shelter and meals to healthcare, job training, and housing. Such services come at a cost that often cannot be passed onto our clients, so we rely on government contracts supplemented with private donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations.

Currently, the HPO contracts are meant to cover core services such as emergency shelters, general outreach, case management and housing navigation, homeless prevention for those at risk for eviction and rapid rehousing programs for those already unsheltered. However, these government contracts have increased minimally over a decade and have not been adjusted for inflation.

HB1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5%. While this amount is appreciated, **we suggest an increase of 20%**. This increase will not only assist in helping the HPO increase their administration staff, but it will also help fill the funding gap predominantly shouldered by our frontline staff: guest services, shelter case managers, and housing navigators and specialists. With a narrowed funding gap, we can increase the wages for these critical positions to be competitive with the current workforce demand.

To truly end cycles of homelessness, wraparound, holistic solutions are needed. Thus, IHS operates a comprehensive approach to homelessness, including supportive medical and psychiatric care. Our services are rooted in a mission to equip individuals with the skills and resources to live independently in permanent housing for the long term. Hence, we have begun to tap into Medicaid funding to help fill some of the gaps, allowing us to continue delivering our programs. However, the administrative burden of doing so requires building greater capacity to do so and also funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1834 WITH COMMENTS: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: House Committee on Health & Human Services and the
House Committee on Human Services
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)
Hearing: **Friday, February 9th, 2024 at 8:30am, Room 329 & via videoconference**

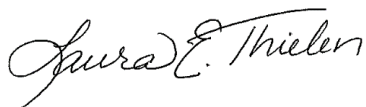
Chair Della Au Belatti and Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services
Chair Lisa Marten and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Partners In Care (PIC) is a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers, individuals with lived experience and concerned community members. The **CRISIS** of homelessness makes this measure so important to pass. HB 1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320,000. While this amount is appreciated, we respectfully **request an increase of 20%**. For the last decade, agencies focused on addressing the needs of our neighbors on the streets, have been working with the same budget despite increases in operational costs. Retention of front line staff has been difficult for agencies and the increased demands from the community have made this field untenable for many. Expectations of addressing homelessness in Hawai'i needs the dedicated programs and individuals able to work with enough resources available to them.

PIC is a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition which is comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawaii nonprofit organizations. Increases in budgets at the State Department of Human Services and the State Department of Health will enable the system to provide services to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Polls conducted by the True Cost Coalition have shown that many non profits are working at a budget deficit for state contracts and they are unable to apply certain costs that are encumbered during the contract cycle. Addressing these costs will benefit the entire state and those receiving services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support HB 1834** Relating to the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Thielen
Executive Director
Partners In Care

Hawai`i True Cost Coalition

DATE: February 9, 2024
TIME: 8:30AM
PLACE: Via Videoconference and Conference Room 329
BILL: HB1834, Relating to the Department of Human Services
Committee: House Committee on Health & Homelessness and House Committee on Human Services

Aloha Chairs Belatti and Marten, Vice Chairs Takenouchi and Amato, and members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Hawai`i True Cost Coalition (TCC), we are writing in support of HB1834 which would appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services' (DHS) homeless programs.

The TCC is comprised of over 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai`i nonprofit organizations.

We applaud the Legislature for recognizing the need to increase funding for DHS' homeless service contracts with nonprofit organizations. As the bill's preamble states, these contracts have not been increased for over a decade, while program expenses including wages, utilities and administrative costs have all increased. Despite the rising costs, local nonprofits have continued to provide these critical services, relying on their own resources to fill this gap, which is no longer sustainable. This bill will help to ensure the continuation of these services.

We also encourage the Legislature to support the Department of Human Services' and Department of Health's budget requests which includes increased funding for other purchase of service contracts that have also not been increased in many years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1834.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: House Committees on Health & Homelessness, and Human Services
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Friday, 2/9/24; 8:30 AM; CR 329, & videoconference**

Chair Belatti, Chair Marten, Vice Chair Takenouchi, Vice Chair Amato, and Members,
Committees on Health & Homelessness and Human Services:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 1834**, which appropriates funds to increase the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Homeless Programs Office budget. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

We are a member of the Hawaii True Cost Coalition. We encourage the Legislature to support the Department of Health's and Department of Human Services' budget requests which includes additional funding for rate increases for purchase of service contracts for service providers.

The [Hawaii True Cost Coalition](#) is comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state. We have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations

Catholic Charities Hawai'i respectfully requests that you support on increase of 20% for the base budget of the DHS/Homeless Program's Office (HPO). This amount is needed to both maintain services and expand them to more fully address our housing crisis. Many contracts have not been increased in over 10 years. Inflation and competition for workers has made it very difficult for homeless service providers to recruit and then maintain dedicated workers. These workers are key to gaining trust and then helping people to move from the streets to housing. Some programs may have had to decrease services due to budget constraints. Catholic Charities Hawaii is also experiencing difficulties hiring and retaining workers for these demanding positions. Increased funding to the base budget of DHS/HPO is essential to significantly reduce homelessness.

Local communities all over our State are demanding action to end homelessness. This requires adequate increased funding to organizations to ensure that they can address the high cost of living for their employees. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.





HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Big Island Substance Abuse
Council*

*Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i
Collins Consulting, LLC
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*

*Family Programs Hawai`i
Family Support Hawai`i
Friends of the Children's Justice
Center of Maui*

*Get Ready Hawai`i
Hale Kipa, Inc.*

*Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.
Hawai`i Children's Action
Network*

*Hawai`i Health & Harm
Reduction Center
Hawaii Island Community'
Health Center*

*Ho`ola Na Pua
Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i
Ka Hale Pomaika`i
Kahi Mohala*

*Kokua Kalihii Valley
Kaua`i Planning and Action
Alliance*

*Maui Youth and Family Services
Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native
Hawaiian Health Care
Systems*

*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together
PHOCUSED*

*PFLAG – Kona, Big Island
Planned Parenthood of the
Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*

*Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)*

*Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services*

*Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center*

The Catalyst Group

February 8, 2024

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
And members of the Committee on Health and Homelessness

Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports HB 1834 Relating to Homelessness.

The funding for homeless services is inadequate. We recommend that the homeless services budget be increased by 20%.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director



TO: House Committee on Health & Human Services and the House Committee on Human Services
FROM: Dynamic Healing Center
Hearing: Friday, February 9th, 2024, at 8:30am, Room 329 & via videoconference
Chair Della Au Belatti and Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services Chair Lisa Marten and Members of the House Committee on Human Services

Dynamic Healing Center is a local nonprofit agency with a mission to instill hope and healing to individuals, children, and families by providing a variety of supportive services to increase Self Esteem and Personal Development. We provide a variety of services in our community to include Substance Abuse Treatment Services for Oahu and American Samoa, various transitional Clean and Sober housing for Women and Children, Substance Abuse services for incarcerated individuals in Oahu and Domestic Violence services for individuals and families using a Cultural Agricultural approach. DHC also provides the only Emergency Shelter for Homeless Seniors 60 and older for individuals and couples in Oahu known as Kulaokahua Emergency Shelter located at 1311 Ward Avenue in Honolulu. The Emergency Shelter program is through a contract provided by the Homeless Programs Office.

We feel very blessed to have this opportunity to steward and provide services to our kupuna as we are aware that seniors are the number one growing homeless population in our state. Roughly 1 in 5 people experiencing homelessness on Oahu in 2023 were over the age of 60 — a staggering increase from previous years that could present challenges for a homeless care system not designed to meet the needs of seniors. Providing care for our seniors that are homeless is very complex. Approximately 90% admitted into the shelter have complicated medical and psychiatric needs such as untreated diabetes, hypertension, cancer, staph infections, substance abuse or early signs of dementia. In addition, most have limited family support for several reasons. It is exceedingly difficult to provide them with the full comprehensive care they deserve and needs to include access to medical attention by nursing staff and psychiatric care with our limited annual budget of \$285,336.00. With this



budget, we are expected to provide available staff 24 hours 7 days a week, on site case management services to assist with access to financial resources, vital documentation and permanent housing support, repair and maintenance costs of the facility, security systems, and utilities to include electricity, water, and trash. We were aware of the limited budget when we accepted this contract because we wanted to provide this specific service and because we knew this was a grave concern within our community. We also accepted it with the hope that a change would occur through Legislation within the following year. However, our contract has remained the same for three consecutive years.

With increases in minimum wage locally, increases in insurances, utilities, and food cost, it has been difficult to continue to maintain services. To sustain this project, DHC has had to utilize other funding sources to include additional funds from other grant monies or private donations to offset costs.

Our intent is not to complain about the opportunity that we have been afforded as every individual involved within our agency has remained focused, steadfast, mission driven and passionate to serve our kupuna and community members daily. It is with this drive to make a difference in the lives of others that motivates us to continue the work. With this limited budget, prioritizing services has become necessary and we have been unable to provide nursing and medical staffing due to financial constraints. Our hope is that with the support of our community leaders, we can continue to provide the services in a more efficient and comprehensive manner to address ALL the needs of our homeless individuals. Addressing these costs will benefit the entire state and those receiving services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support HB 1834 Relating to the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,

Dr. Annie Anderson, Psy.D., M.S., ICSAC
Founder | Executive Director



Office: 808-425-4245

Fax: 808-425-4889

Cell: 808-489-2486

Email: drannie.anderson@gmail.com



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Ph: (808) 782-4342

admins@kwohawaii.org

Mission
Provide Comprehensive services with Aloha
to individuals & families in need so they can
become Self-Sufficient

Vision
Healthy Self-Sufficient Resilient Individuals
& Families

Values
Understanding
Respect
Responsibility
Integrity
Compassion
Honesty

Partnerships in Building Community

"I put my hand in your hand, what I cannot do alone, we will do together"

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1834 WITH COMMENTS: RELATING TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

To: House Committee on Health & Human Services and the
House Committee on Human Services

From: Kealahou West Oahu (KWO)

Hearing: Friday, February 9th, 2024 at 8:30am, Room 329 & via videoconference

Chair Della Au Belatti and Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services
Chair Lisa Marten and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

For the past 3 decades, Kealahou West Oahu (KWO) has provided services to the unsheltered, sheltered and the at-risk of becoming homeless located on Oahu. As agencies continue to focus on addressing the needs of those experiencing homelessness, operating with the same budget despite the increase in operational costs is becoming unbearable for many. Retaining front line staff has been difficult for agencies and the increased demands from the community have made this field untenable. HB 1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320,000. While this amount is appreciated, we respectfully request an increase of 20%. Expectations of addressing homelessness in Hawai'i need dedicated programs and individuals able to work with enough resources available to us. Increases in budgets at the State Department of Human Services and the State Department of Health will enable the system to provide services to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 1834 Relating to the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,

Tanya Tehotu
Executive Director
Kealahou West Oahu

HB-1834

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 2:47:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/9/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Chamness	PIC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1834 WITH COMMENTS: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: House Committee on Health & Human Services and the House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Partners In Care (PIC) member individual

Hearing: Friday, February 9th, 2024 at 8:30am, Room 329 & via videoconference

Chair Della Au Belatti and Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services

Chair Lisa Marten and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Partners In Care (PIC) is a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers, individuals with lived experience and concerned community members. The CRISIS of homelessness makes this measure so important to pass. HB 1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320,000. While this amount is appreciated, we respectfully request an increase of 20%. For the last decade, agencies focused on addressing the needs of our neighbors on the streets, have been working with the same budget despite increases in operational costs. Retention of front line staff has been difficult for agencies and the increased demands from the community have made this field untenable for many. Expectations of addressing homelessness in Hawai'i needs the dedicated programs and individuals able to work with enough resources available to them.

PIC is a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition which is comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawaii nonprofit organizations. Increases in budgets at the State Department of Human Services and the State Department of Health will enable the system to provide services to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Polls conducted by the True Cost Coalition have shown that many non profits are working at a budget deficit for state contracts and they are unable to apply certain costs that are encumbered during the contract cycle. Addressing these costs will benefit the entire state and those receiving services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support HB 1834 Relating to the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,

Anne Chamness



HAWAI' APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
SUPPORT HB1834 – Relating to the Department of Human Services
House Committees on Health & Homelessness and Human Services
Friday, February 9, 2024 at 8:30 AM, Conference Room 329

Dear Chairs Della Au Belatti and Lisa Marten, and members of the House Committees on Health & Homelessness and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting HB1834 and an increase in funding for the Department of Human Services' Homeless Programs Office. This funding increase is not only important to ensure support for the critical homelessness services described below, but also to ensure that the funding for these programs adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations.

Currently, the amounts paid to nonprofits under these government contracts are often insufficient to cover the actual costs of administering the programs, requiring Hawai'i nonprofits to engage in separate fundraising efforts to supplement contract amounts, and making it increasingly difficult to pay program staff a living wage. As a result of inadequate contract amounts, government programs intended to provide support and increase financial stability of struggling Hawai'i residents can perpetuate the very problems the legislature has been working diligently to address with its work on "ALICE" (Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed) and the challenges faced by Hawai'i's struggling working families. To create a healthier economic ecosystem, it is critical that contract amounts for governmental services be increased so that Hawai'i's nonprofits can be on solid financial footing and their staff can earn living, thriving wages.

While Hawai'i Appleseed does not perform direct services under the contracts covered by this bill, recognizing the importance of adequately funded social services contracts, we are supportive of the efforts of the [Hawaii True Cost Coalition](#), comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations. We join them in requesting your support on HB1834.

The programs that HB1834 would support have played a critical role in reducing Hawai'i's homelessness rates over recent years, and these services are as important as ever. The programs funded by HB1834 include the following:

Outreach and Civil Legal Services: Without outreach services, we could not connect people to the proven effective programs such as Housing First that bring them out of homelessness. Outreach teams connect those on the streets—youth, families, kupuna, adults, and people suffering from mental illness—to all available housing options: Emergency Shelters, Transitional Shelters, Housing First, Rapid Rehousing with rent stipends, and/or treatment (i.e., substance use). For many chronically homeless mentally ill persons, it can take 50 or more individual outreach contacts spread out over several months or even years to build up trust and move them off the streets. Outreach

teams may also do wound care, distribute hygiene kits or snacks, and offer to obtain identification documents.

Rapid Rehousing: Rapid rehousing is designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing by providing, rental stipends, assistance in finding housing, and case management services. The Urban Institute released a 2018 report that found Rapid Rehousing to be successful in helping families and veterans to move into housing units in the private rental market faster than they would on their own and for a lower cost. Most do NOT become homeless again, although many struggle with ongoing housing affordability, like many other low-income renters. According to the report, “Rapid Rehousing could be a scalable and cost-effective crisis response intervention that could help communities address homelessness more effectively.” This is a program that works, and it should be consistently and adequately funded.

Housing First: Housing First targets chronically homeless individuals and families with disabling conditions (mental health, substance use, and physical disabilities). It provides subsidized housing, case management services, and other support services. According to a UH Center on the Family study, Housing First saves an estimated \$6,197 per month in health care costs alone, for each homeless participant in Housing First. For a projected 301 participants, that could add up to over \$22 million each year in savings. On average nationally, the Housing First program has kept its clients in permanent housing 85 percent of the time, and local data suggests an even higher success rate in Hawaii.

For the reasons listed above we urge the passing of HB1834, with appropriations sufficient to cover the true costs of the homeless programs covered by the bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1834

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:11:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/9/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Normann	Community Alliance Partner	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The Community Alliance Partners (CAP) is a Hawaii County coalition of Service Providers, Government, Churches, Businesses, and Concerned Citizens working together to prevent and solve homelessness.

The Community Alliance Partners supports HB 1834, which funds essential homeless services. While the bill does increase funding by 5% this is insufficient to address the real costs of homeless services after years of a stagnant budget. At minimum, the bill should be modified to include at least a 20% increase in funding for essential homeless services.

Everyone is frustrated by homelessness. Yet homeless programs, shelters, and housing projects have consistently been underfunded.

Passing HB 1834 with a minimum of 20% increase in funding will help prevent a reduction of homeless services — because of insufficient funding — at a time when homelessness continues to increase and become more visible.

Paul Normann

Chair, Community Alliance Partners



LGF CONSULTING
HAWAI'I

February 8, 2024

Re: HO1834

Aloha Committee Members:

I am a small business owner on Hawai'i Island, providing employment services, training, and supports to our residents. I am also a member of Community Alliance Partners, a coalition of stakeholders working toward ending homelessness in our communities on the island.

I am writing in support of HB1834, the Department of Human Services Homeless programs office budget appropriation, which would increase their budget by 5%. This is an important increase, but I believe it is not a sufficient response to the growing need across our state. I believe that in order to address the growing issues of lack of affordable housing, mental health crisis, lack of support programs and systems, and especially the growing anger in the community, our state needs to allocate at least a 20% increase to reflect the actual costs of services needed to address these realities.

There are many needs across our state, and basic needs are not being met. Shelter, healthcare, and food are basic to healthy communities. Please support this measure and in addressing those basic needs.

Mahalo,

Lori Ferrin
Owner and Director of Employment Program Development



COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

BILL HB1834
POSITION: SUPPORT with Comments

Hearing Date: February 9, 2024

Aloha Chair Au Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members
Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports HB1834, which appropriates funds to increase the department of human services' homeless programs office budget.

There is a serious homeless epidemic occurring in Hawai'i, and it needs to be improved and eliminated entirely in order for our community to thrive and be supported. Increasing the base budget of the department of human services homeless programs office's homeless service contracts will secure homeless outreach, shelter, case management, and all the attendant services to transition homeless individuals from the street to transitional housing. The main goal would enact some form of supportive or permanent housing for homeless individuals, and provide them with long-term housing and financial security.

HB1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320.00. This amount would be beneficial, however, an increased 20% would be more reflective of the true cost needed for this department to be impactful in the work that they do. Operation costs continue to rise each year, putting departments like this at a disadvantage should their budgets continue to fall short.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support ALICE households and families across Hawaii by passing HB1834.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

Kayla Keehu- Alexander
Vice President, Community Impact
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way

HB-1834

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:51:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/9/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1834.

HB-1834

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 4:42:54 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/9/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Rezendes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The service providers who do the field work in running outreach services and managing shelters are being underpaid for the responsibilities that they have. In many cases, once trained to do their jobs, other organizations come along and offer these same individuals higher salaries than what can be accommodated per the contracts with the initial service provider thereby causing a cyclical, neverending battle of attempting to find people who would be interested in the job, being trained for the position and then highjacked by more money elsewhere. Also, if you recall the last article with respect to what Walmart is proposing to fund initial employees, these trained individuals would make less money than a shelf stocker. Why would they even want the headaches of being an outreach provider or shelter employee? Please seriously consider the entire picture of where these folks stand with respect to other jobs in the private sector.

Mahalo,

HB-1834

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:42:57 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/9/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maggie DeRego	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposal to increase the salaries of members serving on the [Oversight Commission Name]. As a concerned citizen deeply invested in the well-being and efficacy of our local government, I believe that adequately compensating members of the oversight commission is essential for ensuring their commitment, dedication, and impartiality in fulfilling their duties.

Oversight commissions play a pivotal role in upholding transparency, accountability, and integrity within our governmental institutions. They serve as a critical check on the exercise of power, ensuring that public resources are utilized responsibly and that decisions are made in the best interests of the community.

However, the effectiveness of any oversight commission is inherently tied to the caliber of individuals willing to serve on it. These roles often require significant time, expertise, and effort to carry out effectively. Yet, the current compensation levels fail to reflect the true value of the work performed by commission members.

By increasing salaries for commission members, we can attract a broader and more diverse pool of candidates, including professionals with the requisite skills and experience to navigate complex policy issues and oversight responsibilities. Adequate compensation also acknowledges the sacrifices made by commission members who dedicate their time and energy to serving the public interest, potentially reducing financial barriers that may prevent individuals from participating in this vital aspect of civic engagement.

Moreover, fair compensation fosters greater independence and impartiality among commission members, reducing the risk of conflicts of interest or undue influence from external sources. It allows them to focus wholeheartedly on their oversight duties without being unduly swayed by outside pressures or concerns about financial stability.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the proposal to increase the salaries of members serving on the [Oversight Commission Name]. By doing so, we can strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of our oversight mechanisms, ultimately enhancing public trust in our governmental institutions and promoting good governance for the betterment of our community.

Thank you for considering my input on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Les Estrella, Going Home Hawai'i



LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

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Connect via email: info@hopeserviceshawaii.org

HOPE Help Line: 808-935-3050

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Members
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawai'i, Inc.
Hearing: HLT/HUS on 02-09-24

Aloha,

My name is Brandee Menino and I am the CEO of Hope Services Hawai'i, which is Hawai'i Island's largest nonprofit homeless services provider. We work in collaboration with providers across Hawai'i Island, using evidence-based practices to help our neighbors avoid and overcome homelessness, and achieve above-average results in helping people get housed and stay housed. **We could not serve people at the level we do without the support of our partners in state government, especially at the Department of Human Services (DHS), and specifically at their Homeless Programs Office (HPO).**

I am writing to support HB 1834, the Department of Human Services' Homeless Programs Office budget appropriation. This bill would increase their budget by 5%. However, I **request an amendment to increase their budget by 20% to reflect the actual costs of the services they provide.** This reflects increased operating costs and increased numbers of people utilizing their services, including people experiencing homelessness.

Please support this measure and increase DHS' HPO budget.

Mahalo,

Brandee Menino,
Chief Executive Officer

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Chief Executive Officer
Brandee Menino

HB-1834

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:51:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/9/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corrinna Theresa Oandasan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Corrinna Oandasan and I am a community stakeholder on Hawai'i Island working with Community Alliance Partners towards ending homelessness in my community.

I am writing to support HB1834, the Department of Human Services homeless programs office budget appropriation. This bill would increase their budget by 5%. However, I request an amendment to increase their budget by 20% to reflect the actual costs of the services they provide. This reflects increased operating costs and increases in people utilizing their services, including people experiencing homelessness.

Please support this measure and increase DHS' HPO budget.

Mahalo

Corrinna Oandasan

Kailua Kona, HI