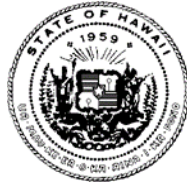


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



DEPT. COMM. NO. 307

CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

DR 22.049

December 30, 2022

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

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker
and Members of the House of
Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

Enclosed is the following report submitted under provisions of Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, Related to the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Pilot Project.

In accordance with section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the report is available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Betts".

Cathy Betts
Director

Enclosure

c: Governor's Office
Lieutenant Governor's Office
Department of Budget & Finance
Legislative Auditor
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)
Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (2 hard copies, 1 electronic copy)
Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (1 hard copy)

**REPORT TO THE THIRTY-SECOND HAWAII STATE
LEGISLATURE 2023**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACT 177, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII
2018, THE EAST HAWAII CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PILOT
PROJECT**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Social Services Division
Child Welfare Services Branch
December 2022**

This report is submitted per provisions of Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018 (Act 177), related to the East Hawaii Child Welfare Pilot Project.

I. Purpose

Act 177 established a five-year pilot project within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to ensure the safety and well-being of at-risk children and families in East Hawaii on Hawaii Island. Act 177 appropriated funds for four full-time equivalents (4.0 FTE) child/adult protective service specialists, administrative costs for the East Hawaii child welfare services section, and travel costs for the child welfare services branch to train new hires.

II. Act 177 (SLH 2018) Positions

Three units comprise the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section (Section): East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 1/36 (EHCWSU1), East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 2/37 (EHCWSU2), and East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 3/72 (EHCWSU3). Two of the pilot positions were assigned to EHCWSU1 and EHCWSU2. The third and fourth positions are assigned to EWCWSU2 and EHCWSU3, respectively.

East Hawaii Unit 1	East Hawaii Unit 2	East Hawaii Unit 3
Assigned 2 Positions	Assigned 1 Position	Assigned 1 Position
Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122786 Hire Date: January 1, 2020	Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122788 Hire Date: November 12, 2019	Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122789 Hire Date: October 1, 2021
Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122787 Hire Date: October 1, 2019		

As of December 15, 2022, East Hawaii has filled all pilot positions.

However, with the inclusion of the four pilot positions, now permanent positions, East Hawaii's November 2022 position inventory indicates a total of 45 positions in the Section with 13 vacancies. There are four more vacancies this year compared to the December 2021 position inventory, including caseworker and non-caseworker positions. Any vacancy within the Section impacts the caseloads and the ability of the caseworkers to provide quality services and engage families well.

Year	Total Number of Vacant Positions (both caseworker and non-caseworker positions)
2019	5
2020	11
2021	9
2022	13

III. Findings of Caseload Evaluation

At this time, there has been no reduction in caseloads in East Hawaii. As of December 15, 2022, the breakdown of cases managed per permanency caseworker ranges from 15 - 24. This range is an increase of 41% over the previous year, which was 10 - 18 cases per caseworker. The number of children per caseload currently ranges from 31- 50, an average increase of about 35%, compared to the previous year of 21 - 40 children.

Year	Average Caseload per Permanency Caseworker	Average Number of Children on Each Worker's Caseload
2019	10 – 22	21 - 46
2020	10 – 18	21 - 46
2021	10 – 18	21 - 40
2022	15 - 24	31 - 50

IV. Findings of Performance and Employee Satisfaction Evaluations

CWS cannot draw a direct correlation between the added pilot project positions and funds to caseworker caseloads. Other ongoing variables that impact caseworker caseloads include vacancy rates, the work required to complete the Program Improvement Plan, ongoing efforts to improve relationships between CWS and the Judiciary, changes in leadership positions, the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on health, economics, and changes in processes, media, and other factors contributed to the outcomes reported.

However, although challenged, social workers have increased monthly visits to children, adoptions are processed timelier, complaints about staff have decreased, and the Family Court did not impose any financial sanctions this past year.

DHS surveyed East Hawaii CWS staff in 2022 to measure the change in satisfaction due to the size of their caseload and the effects on staff performance, satisfaction, and attrition.

Thirty-six individuals completed the staff survey in 2022. Of those respondents, twelve (12) staff have worked at Child Welfare Services for 11-35 years. Additionally, 55% (20) of staff planned on remaining with CWS for the next five (5) years.

A survey question asked whether they felt a reduction in their workload/caseload between January 2020 and January 2022. Three (3) caseworkers indicated they felt there was a reduction in caseload. The remaining 33 respondents did not feel a reduced workload/caseload. Therefore, the follow-up questions were not applicable, and those questions addressed improvement in engagement, engagement, and performance.

When asked what about changes to improve the CWS work environment for staff, the East Hawaii staff shared the following suggestions:

- hire more staff,
- raise salaries,
- add more specialist positions,
- improve office space,
- allow more teleworking,
- implement shortage differential pay,
- improve in-person meetings and training,
- create additional units,
- eliminate hiring freeze, and
- add support staff (level V).

V. Court Sanctions for late reports

In 2022, the Family Court in East Hawaii did not impose any financial court sanctions for late reports. However, there was an instance in which a court report was late, resulting in the Family Court judge ordering the Social Services Division Administrator and Branch Administrator to attend a court hearing to explain why the report was not timely submitted.

Year	Number of Court Sanctions
2013	2
2014	0
2015	0
2016	1
2017*	5
2018	21
2019	6
2020	0
2021	5
2022	0

* September to December 2017 information only and is based on supervisors' recollection

VI. Legal Claims

Currently, there are two active civil lawsuits stemming from cases in East Hawaii; one case was previously included in prior legislative reports.

Year*	Total Number of Litigated Cases**
2013	Data currently unavailable
2014	Data currently unavailable
2015	Data currently unavailable
2016	Data currently unavailable

2017	Data currently unavailable
2018	Data currently unavailable
2019	2
2020	2
2021	1
2022	2

*For 2013 – 2018, the number of cases can be provided in a supplemental report if needed; it will require additional staff time to search records.

**The total number of cases may be duplicated cases that carry over to the following year.

VII. Provider Experience

DHS receives quarterly reports from service providers in the East Hawaii area. These reports include both quantitative and qualitative information. None of the data in the reports indicates that the pilot project has negatively or positively affected families.

VIII. Additional Analysis

As discussed above, it is difficult to determine a direct correlation between the added four positions and funds and any impacts on employee morale, social work practice in the East Hawaii CWS offices, and an increase in caseloads per caseworker.

CWS's data system is more than thirty (30) years old and uses antiquated processes. CWS has been in the planning and approval process with the federal administration and has made executive budget requests for positions and state-match funds to modernize CWS IT infrastructure. As CWS begins this significant IT and business process effort to phase in the implementation of the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), CWS aims to have the capability to store and extract data to conduct data analytics on this pilot and other projects.