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February 16, 2023

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Status of the City Administration's Action Plan to
Address the Needs of Homeless Persons on O'ahu

We are pleased to submit the attached Report to the 2023 Honolulu City Council, pursuant to Resolution 22-2, CD1. The Report outlines the City's approach to homelessness by identifying building strategies that layer upon existing programs and services to form more comprehensive strategies. The Report recognizes that there are no "one-size-fits-all" solutions and seeks innovative ways to collaborate with other levels of government, nonprofits, and other community partners to ultimately create a system that meets an individual's specific needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Formby", written over a horizontal line.

Michael D. Formby
Managing Director

Attachment

Update on the Status of the City Administration's Action Plan to Address the Needs of Homeless Persons on O'ahu

Prepared by:
Mayor's Office of Housing
Department of Community Services
Department of Emergency Services
Office of Economic Revitalization
Honolulu Police Department

February 2023

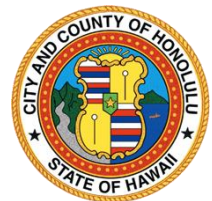


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2021, the City administration, under Mayor Rick Blangiardi, began the development of strategic action plans to address the public health, safety, and situational needs facing our communities and people experiencing homelessness.

The 2022 Point-in-Time Count estimates that there are 3,951 individuals experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness on O‘ahu. This represents a decrease of 11% from 2020, but is still far too many residents without one of the most basic human needs: shelter.

Individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless are facing challenges that need to be addressed. These can be standalone barriers or a combination of issues. Examples of these include but are not limited to economic issues, alcohol/substance use, mental health challenges, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, trauma, stalking, disabilities, and/or veteran issues.

To address the complex set of issues, the question becomes, how can we make our efforts scalable and effective? Two basic efforts need to be recognized:

1. *How can we affect an individual or family’s decision to engage in the process to end homelessness for themselves?* While some households may be responsive to a certain type of service or approach, others may not be. This can be caused by general preferences, previous negative experiences and traumas, or other factors. The City has developed a variety of services that can engage with people in different environments and provide unique assistance that can be a first step for people to engage further. Outreach programs such as Crisis Outreach Response & Engagement (CORE) and TEAM WorkHawai‘i, and resource centers such as Pūnāwai Rest Stop are opportunities to engage in services.
2. *When those decisions are made, how can we build a system of services, programs, and facilities to support those decisions?* For individuals and families that decide to engage in services, the City is working to provide programs to meet their needs and help them exit homelessness through access to service providers and case management, shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, work-to-rent, rent relief, and affordable housing. We are developing systems that can facilitate the supportive measures that people require when they are ready to accept them.

The challenge of addressing homelessness can feel vast and insurmountable, but with a clear plan we can make progress on this critical issue. Our goal is simple: make homelessness a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

Our approach centers around five strategies to break the cycle of homelessness by helping people exit homelessness and ensuring that those who are struggling have opportunities to remain stably housed. The City has formed these strategies to layer upon existing programs and services that work to build a more comprehensive system. These strategies are:

- Strengthening the Homeless Crisis Response System
- Integrating Healthcare
- Building Career Pathways to Exit Homelessness
- Housing
- Homelessness Prevention and Diversion

We recognize that the issues related to homelessness are too big for the City to tackle alone. We must leverage federal and state government support and seek innovative ways to collaborate with other levels of government, nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, and other community partners.

The administration recognizes that those experiencing homelessness are not a homogenous group and there are no “one-size-fits-all” solutions to this complex issue. We approach the issue from multiple viewpoints using the strategies outlined in this plan. We are building upon existing programs to ultimately create a system that can meet the individual’s specific needs, priorities, and goals so they will choose to engage in services and find pathways out of homelessness. Every small win, whether helping an individual onto the path of self-sufficiency or preventing a family from falling into homelessness, collectively moves us closer to our larger goal of ending homelessness.

INTRODUCTION

Housing is foundational to create a thriving community. Despite being one of the most basic needs, too many of O‘ahu’s residents do not have stable housing. The most recent data estimates that nearly 4,000 individuals on O‘ahu are experiencing homelessness (sheltered and unsheltered) – an unacceptable number that the City must address with urgency. This number does not include our individuals and families doubled-up with relatives or friends who are unable to afford housing costs on their own and may otherwise fall into homelessness.

The City and County of Honolulu is committed to tackling this perennial issue, in collaboration with other government agencies, nonprofit partners, faith-based organizations, and caring and concerned citizens, with an approach that addresses the root causes of homelessness and advances equity.

Current Landscape

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annual count to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night each year and is a crucial data source for planning efforts. The PIT Count also helps to assess estimates for specific populations, such as children, veterans, and chronically homeless, and measures the prevalence of underlying causes of homelessness. O‘ahu’s PIT Count is conducted by Partners in Care, O‘ahu’s Continuum of Care.

The 2022 PIT Count, which took place on March 9, 2022, counted 3,951 individuals experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness on O‘ahu, a decrease of 11% from 2020 (see Figure 1). The data indicated a significant reduction in sheltered homelessness, possibly due to COVID-19 related social distancing protocols, while the unsheltered population has remained steady.

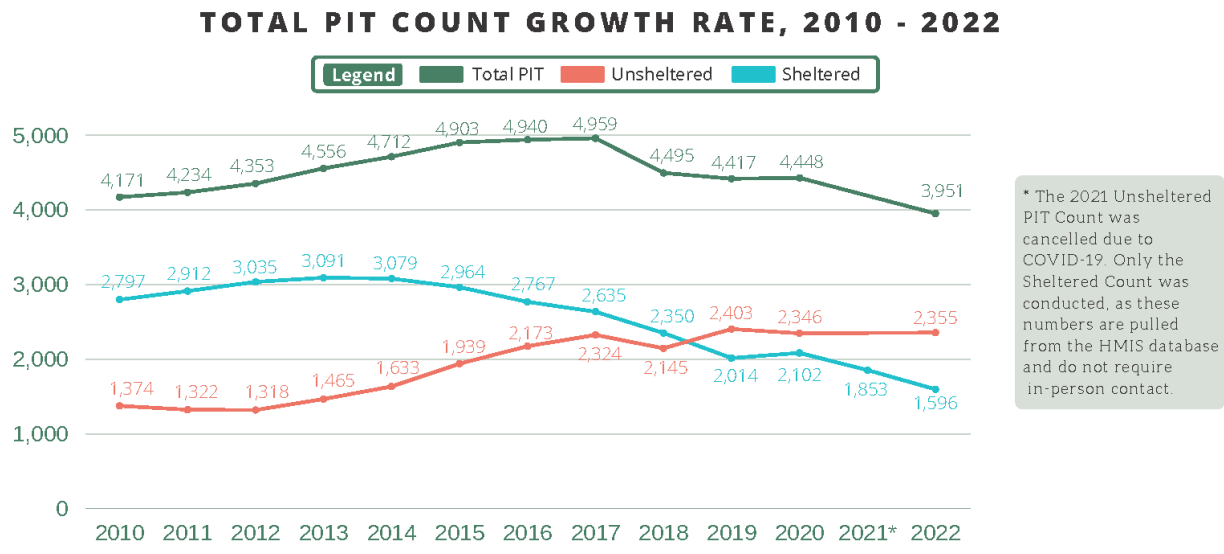


Figure 1: Point-in-Time Count Numbers, 2010-2022. Source: Partners in Care.

Distribution of O‘ahu’s unsheltered homeless population varies across regions, with Region 1 (Downtown Honolulu, Kalihi, and Nu‘uanu) and Region 2 (East Honolulu) having the largest percentages of O‘ahu’s unsheltered population and Region 5 (Upper Windward) with the smallest percentage of O‘ahu’s unsheltered population (see Figure 2). As the PIT Count offers a snapshot of O‘ahu’s homeless population on a single night each year, it is also essential to assess the trends over time. The full Point-in-Time Count Report offers more insights by region and can be viewed at <https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/pit>.

Percent of Total O‘ahu Unsheltered Population by Region (2,355)

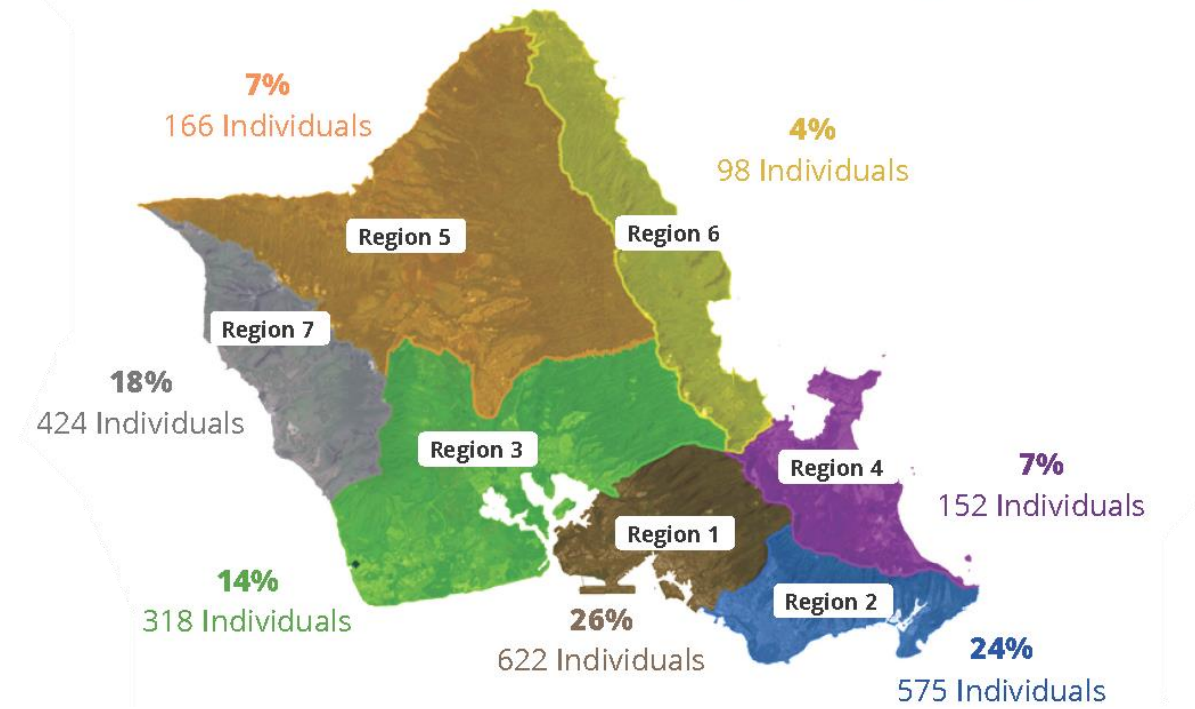


Figure 2: 2022 Point-in-Time Count Percentage of Unsheltered Population, by Region. Source: Partners in Care.

Analysis of the Point-in-Time Count demographic data revealed areas of progress, as well as opportunities for improvement. The data has shown that O‘ahu has made forward progress in supporting key sub-populations, including families with minor children, children experiencing homelessness, veterans, and chronically homeless individuals. However, the data also reveal racial disparities, with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders representing the greatest portion of the Point-in-Time Count population at 35%, which is disproportionate as compared to their percentage of the general population of 10% (see Figure 3).

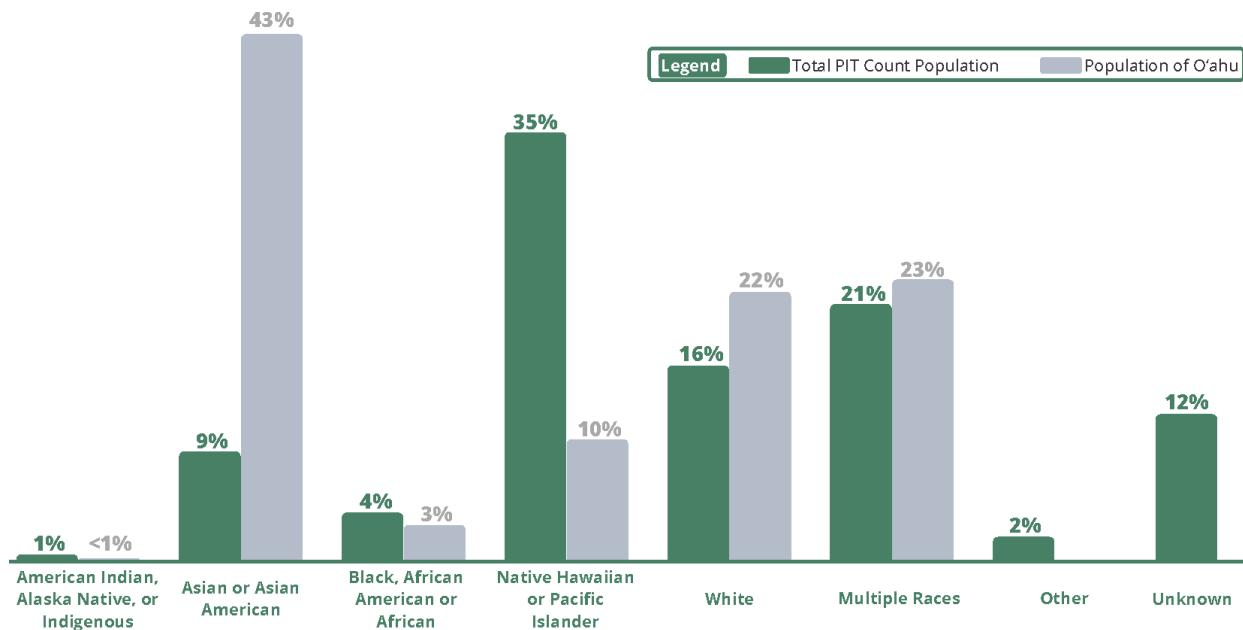


Figure 3: 2022 Point-in-Time Count Demographics, by Ethnicity, in Comparison to General Population. Source: Partners in Care.

We cannot end homelessness until everyone has an equal opportunity to live in safe, affordable housing that supports their needs. This will require a multi-pronged approach and collaborative partnerships that address the root causes of homelessness.

City and County of Honolulu’s Approach to Homelessness

In January 2021, the City administration, under the direction of Mayor Rick Blangiardi, began developing strategic action plans to address the public health, safety, and situational needs facing individuals experiencing homelessness. Ending homelessness is not a one-time goal, but an ongoing effort to create systemic changes so that every person experiencing homelessness has a pathway out and that those at-risk have ample opportunities to prevent themselves from falling into homelessness. Thus, the City’s overarching goal is to make homelessness a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

- *Rare* – Prevent people from entering homelessness whenever possible, so few people experience homelessness.
- *Brief* – If a person does fall into homelessness, help them exit as quickly as possible.
- *Non-recurring* – Stabilize people so they don’t fall back into homelessness.

To accomplish this goal, the City builds on previous plans that emphasized Housing First as the primary means to address homelessness. The City’s new approach still includes housing as a central strategy, but recognizes that we must address other drivers that cause homelessness and contribute to the difficulties in ending the cycle of homelessness, such as poverty, lack of employment, racism, trauma, incarceration, substance use, mental illness, domestic violence, and/or complex medical issues.

Building upon existing programs and services, these strategies include:

- Strengthening the Homeless Crisis Response System
- Integrating Healthcare
- Building Career Pathways to Exit Homelessness
- Housing
- Homelessness Prevention and Diversion

The following sections encompass the five strategies with corresponding City programs that fall within their scope, with some programs extending into multiple strategies.

The City cannot solve this problem alone – our strategy relies on a community-wide response, with collaboration and partnerships central to our approach. Our coordinated and intentional approach is used to determine how the City allocates funding for programs and services that support efforts to end homelessness.

Homelessness is also a significant concern for the Honolulu City Council, and resulted in the adoption of Resolution 22-2, which requested an update on the status of the City administration's action plan to address the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness on O'ahu. In response to Resolution 22-2, the City and County of Honolulu outlines its plan in the following sections.

STRATEGY: STRENGTHENING THE HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM

A strong crisis response system, which includes street outreach and emergency shelters, is critical to achieving our goal of making homelessness a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience. As the community's frontline response to homelessness, the homeless crisis response system quickly connects those experiencing homelessness with essentials like food, shelter, and personal hygiene through a coordinated entry system. This ensures that users are efficiently, effectively, and equitably connected with housing, resources, and supportive services.

Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE)

Frontline emergency responders such as police and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) receive a large volume of calls to help people experiencing homelessness. However, enlisting police and emergency services for situations that are not criminal or life-threatening often is not the most appropriate response and potentially diverts them from more serious emergencies.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are at-risk of many negative health-related occurrences simply from being unhoused, which is often compounded with the exacerbation of existing health conditions. As a consequence of being unhoused and in addition to other barriers caused by homelessness, individuals living on the streets often have to rely on emergency services for medical attention when conditions or wounds progressively get worse, including ambulances and emergency room care. These types of healthcare responses are not only more costly than preventative care, they often also are not adequately prepared to assist individuals experiencing homelessness with the plethora of challenges that they may face.

In light of these circumstances, Mayor Blangiardi and the Office of Housing and Homelessness (OHH) convened an advisory team of expert practitioners and others with a broad spectrum of experience in homeless issues and services. This includes representatives from the City and County of Honolulu's OHH, Honolulu Police Department (HPD), Department of Emergency Services (HESD), Department of Community Services (DCS), Department of Facility Management (DFM), and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). In addition, the State of Hawai'i's Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Department of Health, service providers, community representatives, and individuals that have experienced homelessness participated and provided their perspectives.

Through a series of highly productive meetings, data gathering, discussion, and extraordinary dedication, this team devised a plan for a Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) program. CORE was created with the aspiration of reducing a substantial encumbrance on emergency responders.

Through close collaboration and coordination with HPD and HESD in service to Honolulu's homeless population, CORE responds to homeless-related 911 calls from or within the community that are non-violent and do not require emergent medical assistance. CORE's response team includes EMTs and community health workers trained in relationship building, extending compassion, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

CORE is committed to supporting a more diversified response system that is truly adaptable to the needs of the client, the community, and the responders' resources. CORE seeks to engage the person in a way that builds a relationship of trust so that an individual will decide to accept services that are in their best interest. Once a decision has been made with respect to a crisis, CORE will deploy a client-centered follow-up routine by checking on the client's well-being and determining the effectiveness of CORE's services. In addition, CORE team members are able to collaborate with service providers that an individual may already be connected with to link them with other services that they may need.

As of December 2022, CORE had 234 initial contacts and 988 recurring visits with participants. The CORE hotline receives an average of 75 calls per month requesting various services, including calls for identification documentation and wellness checks.

CORE officially launched in October 2021, initially focusing its efforts in the Downtown Honolulu and Chinatown area and offering services Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In June 2022, CORE expanded its service area to include Waikīkī and its operational hours to seven days a week. As staffing capacity increases and funding allows, the CORE program will extend further to other communities on O'ahu to continue to be one of the various avenues for individuals experiencing homelessness to receive assistance and get connected to resources.

Teach, Encourage, Advocate, Motivate (TEAM) WorkHawai'i Outreach

Teach, Encourage, Advocate, Motivate (TEAM) WorkHawai'i was formed in July 2020 within the Department of Community Services using U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act to assist individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness, at-risk of homelessness, unemployed, or underemployed.

TEAM WorkHawai'i is a group of experienced and skilled outreach workers and housing coordinators that encounter unsheltered individuals and families, those preparing to transition from correctional facilities to the community, and others in community-based treatment programs. These individuals and families receive information on WorkHawai'i's housing and employment services, job training, and resources that will help them create a personalized pathway to financial and housing stability. Housing services include fundamental skills training (i.e., financial literacy) and housing search and placement. Employment services and training programs include occupational skills training, preparation to secure employment, and job search and placement. Resources include assistance with obtaining legal documents (i.e., state ID) and applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Med-QUEST benefits.

Honolulu Police Department's Community Policing Teams

Homelessness, while not criminal in nature, is frequently and unfairly portrayed as such by concerned community members, and often directed toward available emergency services, including the Honolulu Police Department (HPD). This provides a unique opportunity for law

enforcement to understand and provide possible options for those experiencing homelessness directly.

As frontline responders, the majority of calls for service regarding homelessness are handled by HPD's patrol officers. Traditionally, the only options available to patrol officers have been enforcing applicable laws or dispersing individuals from the area, which only provides temporary results. This ultimately may not change a person's behavior and only relocates the individual and their persistent challenges to another community.

Unfortunately, these law enforcement interactions do not address most of the core homeless-related issues. Such issues include, but are not limited to, a lack of affordable housing and shelter space or access to basic human needs (adequate food, clothing, and healthcare). These also do not adequately address alcohol or drug dependence and mental health-related issues.

This realization has shifted HPD's response to homeless-related issues and calls for service to a more strategic and holistic approach. HPD's Community Policing Teams (CPT) have a solid commitment to community outreach, while also expanding and strengthening the enforcement of applicable laws as needed.

HPD-CPT continues to create and strengthen existing partnerships with other City, State, and non-governmental organizations. These partnerships, including those formed with the Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center, Institute for Human Services, and other established outreach agencies, allow service providers controlled and safe opportunities to connect with clients and offer services to those willing to accept them. Outreach service providers and HPD-CPT regularly coordinate for outreach events and to work together on strategies to address challenging situations related to homeless encampments. By being involved in this process, HPD-CPT officers can gain the trust and build relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness in desperate need of these services, showing them a compassionate side of law enforcement that has their best interests at heart.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, various outreach-based projects were spearheaded by patrol districts to assist those experiencing homelessness. This includes increasing access to shelter space, distributing face masks and personal hygiene kits to prevent the spread of the virus, and providing access to medical services.

In addition, an increased emphasis has been placed on providing specialized training to officers department-wide when approaching those experiencing homelessness, including those undergoing a mental health crisis.

Housing, Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons (HONU)

Housing, Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons (HONU) is a temporary mobile shelter program that relocates approximately every 90 days. The program was initiated in 2019 by the Department of Community Services (DCS) in partnership with the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) and is primarily funded through the State of Hawai'i 'Ohana Zones program. The intent of the HONU program is to ensure that individuals and families experiencing

homelessness have a safe place to stay while seeking shelter or housing. The main goal of HONU is to provide housing navigation services to individuals by helping them secure necessary clearances to enter a shelter, assisting them with placement, and transporting them to shelters. Beyond shelters, many program participants are also reunited with family who are able and willing to take care of them. HONU can be compared to a 'bus stop' en route to getting individuals experiencing homelessness to the next rung of the housing ladder.

From January to mid-October 2022, HONU served a total of 714 individuals, with 437 individuals being placed in a longer-term setting. This includes 344 who were transitioned into shelter, 11 who went into a treatment facility, and 31 who were placed into permanent housing.

Navigating the housing safety net services is not simple, regardless of whether an individual is recently homeless or has been on the street for a long time. Often, housing is not the only challenge these individuals are facing. So while housing isn't the only solution these individuals need, it contributes significantly to their social and emotional stability, enabling them to make better decisions. Having a temporary mobile shelter operation that takes services to the population and makes it a safe and stable space available for 90 days has been effective in reaching individuals who need to learn how to engage the system or are otherwise hesitant to engage.

Beyond housing navigation services and temporary shelter, HONU provides its participants with at least one meal per day and access to shower and laundry facilities. For individuals experiencing homelessness, these elements are essential in further providing social and emotional stability. HONU also partners with service providers to deliver basic medical attention on-site and case management.

HONU also allows the City to engage with each community it visits on the issue of homelessness. HONU has faced initial community opposition on the use of each site, which the City has countered, indicating that it is only a temporary 90-day program. Yet after only a few weeks of operation, the program often garners positive feedback from the community and a desire for the program to return. It's very common for HONU sites to receive donations of food, hygiene products, clothing, and other household items from community members. Overall, HONU has been very helpful in improving the dialogue with the community about siting homeless services and programs all around the island.

Another benefit of the HONU program is that it is a scalable operation. During the pandemic, the program expanded with the infusion of federal funding to increase program capacity while providing adequate means for isolation and quarantine. Instead of running one HONU site, the program operated two locations – one inside and one outside the urban core. With the sunset of emergency shelter monies, HONU has been reduced to a single site but will expand back to two sites as soon as possible.

Effective November 1, 2022, HONU operations were transferred from HPD to DCS, as it currently administers several other housing programs.

Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG) provides shelter and service programs for people experiencing homelessness each year. The City matches the approximately \$700,000 received from HUD each year for a total of \$1.4 million annual budget.

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) amended the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, revising the Emergency Shelter Grants Program in significant ways and renaming it the Emergency Solutions Grants program. The change in the program's name, from Emergency Shelter Grants to Emergency Solutions Grants, reflects the shift in the program's focus from addressing the needs of homeless people in emergency or transitional shelters to assisting people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness. The ESG Interim Rule took effect on January 4, 2012.

The ESG program helps individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness. HUD makes these funds available to jurisdictions throughout the country and awards them to eligible private nonprofit organizations through a competitive solicitation and procurement process.

ESG funds are allocated to the following categories:

- **Street Outreach** funds may cover costs related to essential services for unsheltered people, including emergency health or mental health care, engagement, case management, and services for special populations.
- **Emergency Shelter** funds may be used for the renovation of emergency shelter facilities and the operation of those facilities, as well as services for the residents (including case management, child care, education, employment assistance and job training, legal, mental health, substance abuse treatment, transportation, and services for special populations).
- **Homelessness Prevention** and **Rapid Re-Housing** programs fund housing relocation and stabilization services, including rental application fees, security deposits, utility deposits or payments, last month's rent, and housing search and placement activities. Funds may also be used for short- or medium-term rental assistance for those at risk of becoming homeless or transitioning to stable housing after homelessness occurs.
- **Data Collection – Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** funds may be used to pay for the costs of participating in and contributing data to the HMIS designated by the Continuum of Care for the area. Eligible activities include computer hardware, software, equipment, technical support, office space, operators' salaries, staff training costs, and participation fees.

The Department of Community Services (DCS) coordinates closely with Partners In Care, Honolulu's Continuum of Care coordinating organization, to determine the appropriate percentage of funding per category for each funding period before it issues a Notice of Funding Availability, provided approximately 18 months in advance of every funding period.

The City received \$25,649,399.21 in additional ESG funds in three separate allocations from HUD to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. The City awarded these funds to support the following:

- Operating costs or renovations for emergency shelter services:
 - Catholic Charities Family Assessment Center
 - Family Promise of Hawai‘i – Waikīkī Vista
 - Hale Mauliola
 - Institute for Human Services (IHS) Ka‘a‘ahi Street Emergency Shelter for Women and Children
 - IHS Sumner Street Emergency Shelter for Men
 - Honolulu Community Action Program Kumuhonua Emergency Shelter
 - Residential Youth Services and Empowerment Emergency Shelter
 - Hale Kipa Hale Lanipōlua Emergency Shelter for Youth
 - Kinai ‘Eha Emergency Shelter for Youth
- Partnership with the Department of Health Adult Mental Health Division for isolation and quarantine/stabilization services on Lemon Road
- Street outreach services in Honolulu and Waikīkī
- Medical and psychiatric evaluations and housing readiness assessments at HONU
- Homelessness prevention programs through IHS, the Salvation Army, and Family Promise of Hawai‘i
- O‘ahu Housing Now (OHN) Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Program

OHN is one of the more successful projects implemented during the pandemic. It provided hundreds of households with short-term rental assistance and supportive services to assist in obtaining housing quickly, increasing self-sufficiency, and helping them maintain housing.

The purpose of OHN was to address the public health crisis of COVID-19 in the community by achieving social distancing through permanent housing, improving the rental history of those housed, and increasing housing opportunities after households exit the program. The program set an ambitious benchmark of rehousing at least 300 households that were experiencing homelessness through a RRH approach.

OHN is a collaborative partnership:

- The [*City & County of Honolulu*](#) provided the funding for the OHN program.
- [*Partners in Care \(PIC\)*](#) was the lead agency providing capacity-building support and technical assistance to the service providers as well as unit acquisition through the Landlord Engagement Program (LEP).
- [*Housing Solutions Inc. \(HSI\)*](#) led the rental payment side of the operation.
- [*Family Promise Hawai‘i \(FPH\)*](#) and [*Alternative Structures International \(ASI\)*](#) provided supportive services, including case management, to prevent returns to homelessness for those most at-risk.

The program operated through the following steps:

1. Households are assessed and referred through the [Coordinated Entry System \(CES\)](#).
2. Prioritization for this project will align with the CES' RRH medium-term matching criteria of individuals with a VI-SPDAT score of 4-10 and families with a VI-SPDAT score of 4-8. The households being served must be experiencing [literal homelessness](#).
3. Households will work alongside a case manager to achieve stable and safe housing.

On February 23, 2022, the OHN program met its goal of housing 300 households, representing 787 individuals. The program ultimately surpassed its goal by housing an additional 12 households, bringing the total number of individuals housed through OHN to 829 people. In addition to helping hundreds of households obtain housing, OHN has successfully kept its participants housed. As of December 2022, 97% of individuals participating in the program have not returned to homelessness (see Figure 4).

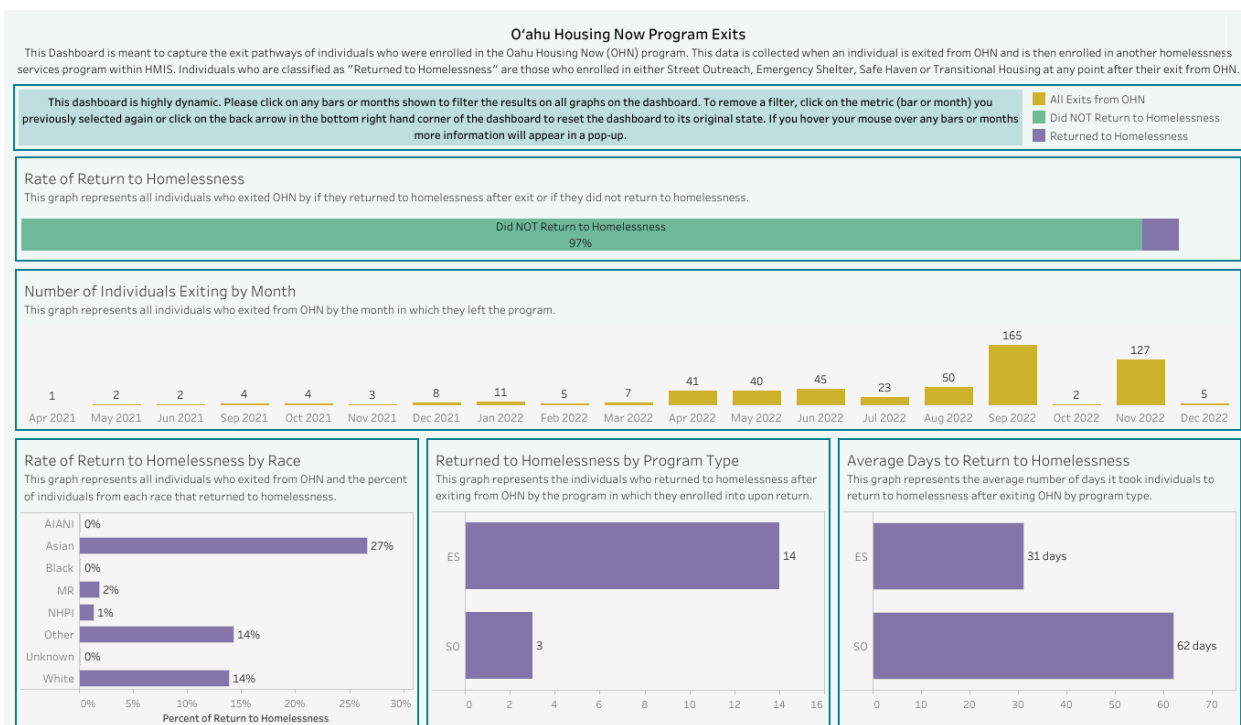


Figure 4: O'ahu Housing Now Dashboard, accessed December 19, 2022. Source: Partners in Care.

As more rental subsidies for households participating in OHN are coming to an end and case managers are supporting participants to transition to ensure housing stability, the City is able to evaluate the model that OHN set for what could be done to more rapidly house our community members experiencing homelessness.

Department of Community Services – Grants in Aid (GIA) Program

The City and County of Honolulu's Grants in Aid (GIA) Program is administered by the Office of Grants Management within the Department of Community Services. It is a charter and ordinance-mandated program that requires 0.5% of City revenues to be deposited into a fund for grants to nonprofits annually. The charter states explicitly that, with only a few exceptions, it is

the sole source of City grants. The number of grants and amount of funding varies each year, as the GIA solicitation is competitive. The GIA Advisory Commission makes recommendations to the Honolulu City Council on grants to be funded through the City's budgeting process.

GIA funds shall be used to award grants to charitable nonprofit organizations that:

1. Provide services to economically or socially disadvantaged populations, including but not limited to seniors, people with disabilities, children, victims of domestic violence, people experiencing homelessness, and those suffering from the effects of substance abuse or poor mental health.
2. Provide services for public benefit in the areas of the arts, culture, economic development, or the environment to support the sustainable improvement in the wellbeing and quality of life of local communities, especially in low-to-moderate income areas.

For Fiscal Year 2023, nearly \$9.3 million was awarded to 61 O'ahu nonprofits. Of the grants awarded, [four organizations that assist individuals experiencing homelessness](#) were funded for \$511,994, or 5.51% of funds available for grants this year.

Supporting Homeless Outreach Efforts

The [Homeless Initiatives Unit \(HIU\)](#), part of the Planning, Eligibility, and Coordination Branch within the Community Based Development Division of the Department of Community Services, supports homeless outreach efforts through the City's general fund, including:

- **Hale Mauliola**, a low-barrier emergency transitional shelter facility that allows couples to stay together, providing lockable secure units for privacy and welcoming people with pets.
- **Pauahi Hale**, a 77-unit apartment complex for Housing First residents and Safe Haven operations for people with severe mental illness with drop-in services for case management and counseling and a hygiene center with showers and restroom facilities for people experiencing homelessness.
- **Pūnāwai Rest Stop**, a hygiene Center that includes showers, restrooms, laundry equipment, storage area for carts and pets, and program office to allow social service providers to offer outreach services with the goal of providing shelter to people experiencing homelessness.
- **Revive and Refresh**, a mobile hygiene trailer offering showers and restroom facilities with supportive case management services available.
- **Outreach Navigation**, to provide psychiatric and legal services for people experiencing homelessness.
- **Transportation** to help individuals experiencing homelessness move themselves and their belongings to shelter or permanent housing.

All of the programs and services in this section are working together to provide people with choices along their path out of homelessness. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to homelessness, therefore, developing a homeless crisis response system that acknowledges this and has the flexibility to change as needed and meet people where they are at is key. The

services that the City operates and supports for the homeless crisis response system are programs that are constantly evolving and expanding to better meet people's needs.

STRATEGY: INTEGRATING HEALTHCARE

Housing is integral to good health. For people experiencing homelessness, poor living conditions can result in inadequate nutrition, poor hygiene, high levels of stress, and physical and sexual violence.

Those experiencing unsheltered homelessness are especially vulnerable, facing more significant health challenges and experiencing trauma and violence at higher rates than their sheltered counterparts. The average life expectancy for those experiencing homelessness is 53 years, approximately 30 years less than the general population.

According to the 2022 Point-in-Time Count, 36% of adults and unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness on O'ahu reported one or more disabling conditions, and 22% reported a physical, developmental, or other disability.

Healthcare costs are particularly high for people without shelter and social support because care is often rendered in hospitals and emergency rooms. Programs that address the complex medical needs of individuals experiencing homelessness are necessary to improve health and reduce the considerable burden on the emergency medical system and healthcare costs. These programs provide serious and preventative healthcare services and additionally can assist in navigating clients to other services that they may need, such as connecting them with housing resources or getting help applying for financial assistance through the State Department of Human Services.

Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE)

As discussed in the *Strengthening the Homeless Crisis Response System* strategy, the Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) program was created through a collaboration between City departments and community partners to provide health services to O'ahu's unsheltered population. CORE uses refurbished ambulances to respond to crisis calls from or within the community that are non-violent and do not require emergent medical assistance.

The response team includes emergency medical technicians and community health workers trained in relationship building, extending compassion, problem-solving, and crisis prevention intervention. CORE can address non-emergency medical needs, such as treating wounds and changing bandages, and acts as a liaison, connecting the individual with many resources, including hygiene centers, health clinics, psychiatric services, shelters, and permanent housing.

CORE is committed to supporting a diversified response system adaptable to the needs of the participant, the community, and the responders' resources. Once the identified crisis is addressed, CORE deploys a participant-centered follow-up routine that includes continual assessment of their needs and linkage to community resources when necessary.

Medical Respite Partnership

To meet a growing need for medical care for individuals experiencing homelessness, the CORE program has partnered with the John A. Burns School of Medicine's Homeless Outreach and Medical Education (HOME) Project to open a clinic in Chinatown. The Pauahi Street location, relocated from Hotel Street, is accessible five (5) days a week and was intentionally collocated near the CORE headquarters on Pauahi Street to facilitate increased medical collaboration between the clinic and the CORE program.

In addition to medical care, the clinic may include limited medical respite short-term acute or post-acute care for individuals experiencing homelessness who are not sick enough to be in a hospital but are too ill to recover on the street. Often these individuals are unable to enter shelters, which require individuals to perform activities of daily living, such as bathing, using the restroom, or walking without assistance. Service providers have identified the lack of sufficient medical respite beds as a gap in the continuum of care system, which is why the City is working with partners like the HOME Project to fill this crucial service gap. Offering a safe place for these individuals to recover can help them stabilize and create a pathway to housing, thus improving care, preventing re-admission to emergency rooms, and reducing healthcare costs.

CORE and clinic personnel will insure that this medical clinic will not become an aggregator of homeless individuals to the Chinatown community. They will also work diligently to ensure the clinic does not promote homeless individuals aggregating on public spaces outside the clinic. The clinic is designed to help reduce the presence of ill homeless individuals on the streets of Chinatown, not increase the presence of ill homeless individuals on Chinatown streets.

Pūnāwai Rest Stop

Pūnāwai Rest Stop is a four-story facility located at 431 Kuwili Street. The ground floor consists of a hygiene center providing free restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities to men, women, and children experiencing homelessness within a clean, safe and dignified environment. The rest stop also offers a storage area for carts and pets and a program office enables social service providers to deliver outreach services with the goal of providing shelter and other necessities to people experiencing homelessness.

The mezzanine and second floor support the operations of a health services clinic that provides non-emergency services to people experiencing homelessness who are ambulatory and do not require hospitalization. The clinic complies with the State of Hawai'i Department of Health regulations of an outpatient clinic. The rest stop also offers permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, which can also be used to support the patients of the health services clinic located on the mezzanine level.

As noted earlier, housing and health go hand in hand. In addition to CORE, the HOME Project, and Pūnāwai Rest Stop, access to and facilitation of health services are embedded into many other City programs, including the City's Housing First voucher program. Many key partnerships have been formed, including through collaboration between homeless service provider agencies and Medicaid health plans. The City will continue to identify where gaps lie and how healthcare

and other services can be integrated together to better serve our unhoused population on their path to housing.

STRATEGY: BUILDING CAREER PATHWAYS TO EXIT HOMELESSNESS

Connecting people who are able to work with meaningful employment is a crucial strategy for helping individuals and families exit homelessness, achieve self-sufficiency, and maintain long-term housing stability. Beyond economic benefits, employment can provide fulfillment, boost confidence, and promote membership within the community.

Despite the importance of stable employment in helping people secure and remain in housing, many people experiencing homelessness face individual and structural barriers to gaining and maintaining employment. Employment programs are critical to provide support and reduce barriers to help individuals and families break the cycle of homelessness through financial stability.

TEAM WorkHawai‘i

As discussed within the *Strengthening the Homeless Crisis Response System* strategy, TEAM WorkHawai‘i encounters unsheltered individuals and families, those preparing to transition from correctional facilities to the community, and others in community-based treatment and helps them create a pathway to financial and housing stability.

Annually, the TEAM aims to provide 100 individuals and families with housing assistance or enroll them in employment and training programs. As of October 1, 2022, 80 individuals or heads of households entered one of the following WorkHawai‘i programs:

- **Rent-To-Work** works with individuals and families experiencing homelessness to create a plan to end their homelessness and establish a pathway to financial and housing stability. Services include case management, rental subsidies for 12-24 months, occupational skills training, job placement, and resources to enhance their fundamental skills (i.e., financial literacy).
- **American Job Center Hawai‘i (AJCH)** is a unique collaboration of State and local organizations to address the workforce development needs of Hawai‘i – for both our residents who are seeking jobs and businesses that want to employ them. Through its hiring events, the AJCH connects job seekers to employers who need to fill the talent gaps in their workforce.
- **Kumuwai Permanent Supportive Housing** is a 30-unit building owned by the City and County of Honolulu, which includes 20 State of Hawai‘i ‘Ohana Zones-funded units targeted for elderly individuals transitioning from chronic homelessness. The facility is property-managed by the nonprofit, Housing Solutions, Inc., and the 20 ‘Ohana Zones-funded units include case management from TEAM WorkHawai‘i. Kumuwai is a prime example of collaborative efforts between the City and County of Honolulu providing the facility and the State of Hawai‘i supporting the service component.

O‘ahu Back to Work

O‘ahu Back to Work, a program of the Office of Economic Revitalization, is a partnership with the University of Hawai‘i and WorkHawai‘i, as well as other community-based training organizations to upskill O‘ahu’s workforce and provide paid internships and apprenticeships at the City and other targeted economic growth sectors.

O‘ahu Back to Work provided free job training for O‘ahu residents who suffered a job loss or an employment setback because of COVID-19. In Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, the University of Hawai‘i Community Colleges trained nearly 3,000 residents through this partnership with the City and County of Honolulu.

The O‘ahu Back to Work program is currently closed, but a third iteration of the program is anticipated. The proposal requests an allocation of \$5 million for one year and is now moving to the Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, then contracting.

With the structure of the WorkHawai‘i programs and the O‘ahu Back to Work initiative formed over the past few years, the City will continue to build upon these opportunities and determine how else they can be fine-tuned and expanded upon.

STRATEGY: HOUSING

At its core, homelessness is a housing problem. A [2019 study commissioned by the State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism](#) estimates that the City and County of Honolulu will need an additional 22,168 units by 2025 to meet the demand for housing.

The annual [Out of Reach report](#) from the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) consistently ranks Hawai‘i among the most expensive places to afford housing in the country. In 2022, Hawai‘i was ranked by the report to have the most expensive housing compared to our wages. The report showed that a person in Honolulu would need to either make \$43.08 per hour for a 40-hour work week to afford a 2-bedroom rental at fair market rent or would need to work 161 hours per week if they were paid minimum wage to rent that same unit. [According to NLIHC](#), the majority of Hawai‘i’s extremely low- and very low-income households are severely cost burdened by their housing, meaning that they spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs and utilities. Our severe housing shortage contributes to high housing costs, and with the additional burden of the high cost of living, people cannot afford a safe place to stay.

The City has several departments and offices that work to increase the supply of affordable housing within its jurisdiction, with the Department of Community Services (DCS) as the primary agency that administers programs to meet the human services, workforce, and housing needs of economically-challenged individuals and families with special needs. Two of its divisions – the Community Assistance Division and the Community Based Development Division – have a key role in programs and projects designed to preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing and keep low- and moderate-income households housed (see Figure 5 for the department’s organizational chart).

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

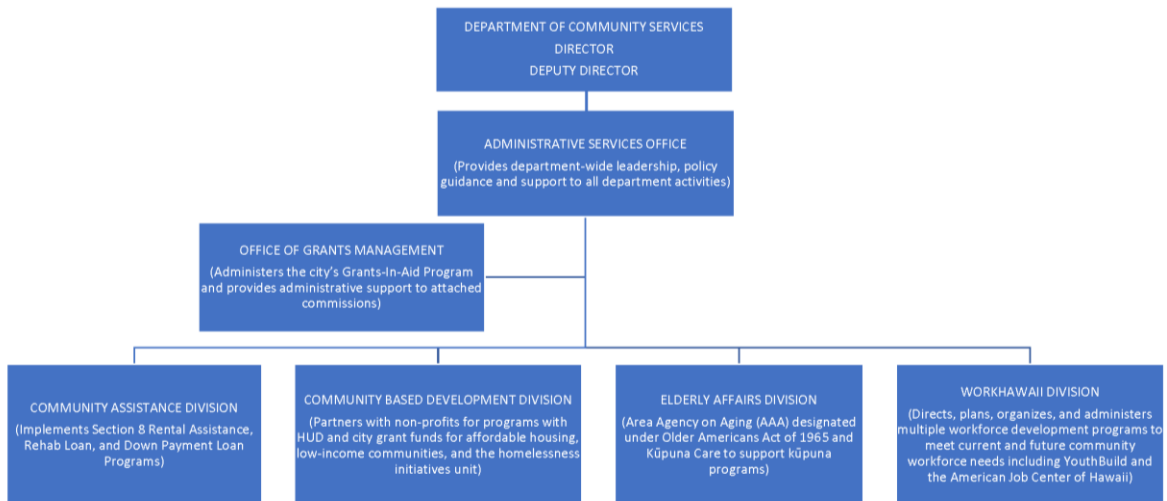


Figure 5: Organizational Chart for the Department of Community Services. Source: Department of Community Services.

Department of Community Services – Community Assistance Division

The Community Assistance Division manages programs that provide rental assistance to lower-income families; preserves decent, safe, and sanitary housing for low- and moderate-income households; and assists lower-income families to achieve economic self-sufficiency and homeownership. The Division administers the following federal voucher programs, which help to house those experiencing or at-risk of becoming homeless:

- **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program**, also known as the Section 8 voucher program, provides rent subsidies to eligible low-income families to live in rental units of their choice. As of October 2022, the City’s program currently assists 3,900 families, with approximately 586 on the waiting list. Three hundred and two households have been pulled off the waiting list and are at different stages of the process. Once determined eligible, the family must find a unit from a willing landlord and the unit must pass an inspection. The family’s eligibility must be recertified annually. The City’s HCV program rules include a limited preference for families certified as receiving housing assistance through a homeless program administered by the City.
- **Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)** vouchers are available for veterans referred to the City by the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA). As of October 2022, there are 196 households active in the program and five are in pending status, looking for a unit. Fifty-four unused vouchers are available for new applicants referred by the VA.
- **Family Unification Program (FUP)** vouchers assist former foster youth certified as eligible by the nonprofit Hale Kipa. As of October 2022, there are 48 individuals in the program. FUP vouchers provide 36 months of rental assistance and supportive services.
- **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)** are provided through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). This program provides the City with 312 vouchers for qualifying families referred to the program by Partners in Care. EHV’s operate in a similar

manner to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, but EHV's are specifically for households experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and those fleeing volatile situations, such as domestic violence. As of January 2023, there have been 347 families referred and 116 have been leased up.

Department of Community Services - Community Based Development Division (CBDD)

The Community Based Development Division (CBDD) within the Department of Community Services works in partnership with the for-profit and nonprofit sector and other government agencies to address affordable housing, special needs housing, shelter, and supportive services for people in need. Funding for these activities is provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as State and City funds. CBDD is made up of two functional divisions:

- The **Planning, Eligibility and Coordination Branch** manages federal, state, and City-funded projects and programs.
- The **Development, Acquisition, Construction and Fair Housing Branch** works with developers and nonprofit agencies to construct projects serving low- to moderate-income people or special needs populations. This Branch also promotes fair housing awareness on O'ahu.

The Planning, Eligibility and Coordination (PEC) Branch is primarily responsible for securing, soliciting proposals for, administering, and providing oversight and monitoring of competitive grant funds distributed through HUD, the State of Hawai'i, the City and County of Honolulu, and other sources of funding for people experiencing homelessness and/or for people with HIV and AIDs.

On the federal programs side, program planners in the PEC Branch coordinate various provider-based services to O'ahu residents that are funded through formula-based federal programs such as:

- **Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program** helps individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness. Housing-related programs funded by ESG consist of homeless prevention and rapid re-housing efforts for housing relocation and stabilization services (including rental application fees, security deposits, utility deposits or payments, last month's rent, and housing search and placement activities). Funds may also be used for short- or medium-term rental assistance for those at-risk of homelessness or transitioning to stable housing after homelessness occurs. The timing of the assistance determines which source of funds is used, based on whether the assistance occurs before a person becomes homeless or after.
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) Program** is dedicated to the housing needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Low-income individuals (at or below 80 percent of the area median income) that are medically diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and their families are eligible to receive HOPWA-funded assistance. HOPWA funds may be used for a wide range of housing, social services,

program planning, and development costs. These include, but are not limited to, the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of housing units; facility operations; rental assistance; and short-term payments to prevent homelessness. HOPWA funds also may be used for health care and mental health services, chemical dependency treatment, nutritional services, case management, assistance with daily living, and other supportive services. As there are only two providers on O‘ahu delivering services to HOPWA clients for the past ten years, the City’s Consolidated Plan for the period of 2021 to 2025 was amended to reflect the actual percentages of monies disbursed to these two organizations: 80% of future formulaic program grants will be awarded to [Gregory House Programs](#) and 20% will be awarded to [Hawai‘i Health and Harm Reduction Center](#).

- **[Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Program](#)** provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income people. Funds can be used to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development, and providing improved community facilities and services. Each activity must meet one of the following national objectives for the program: benefit low- and moderate-income people, prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or address urgent community development needs where existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and other funding is not available. Under the CDBG program, qualified agencies may also be designated as Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) and provided funds to carry out neighborhood revitalization, community economic development, or energy conservation projects.

The [Homeless Initiatives Unit \(HIU\)](#), part of the PEC Branch, coordinates City and State-funded programs such as Housing First Tenant Based Rental Assistance and Case Management programs that provide permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness or victims of domestic violence; the Hale Mauiola emergency transitional shelter at Sand Island; and hygiene, landlord engagement, outreach navigation, and transportation programs that support the City’s homeless outreach efforts.

Housing efforts funded by the City’s General Fund (GF) include:

- **[Housing First](#)** offers permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals. Housing First is an approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the understanding that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation. Exercising that choice will likely make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life. There are four increments of the City’s Housing First program, some with different funding sources:
 - [Increment 1](#) – 115 persons (City GF case management/rental vouchers).

- Increment 2 – 100 persons (City GF case management/rental vouchers).
- Increment 3 – 100 persons (City GF case management/HUD HOME rental vouchers).
- Increment 4 – 60 (State ‘Ohana Zones case management/City GF rental vouchers) + 38 (rent only Permanent Supportive Housing)
- **Hale Mauliola** is a low-barrier emergency shelter facility that allows couples to stay together, providing lockable secure units for privacy and welcoming people with pets.
- **Pauahi Hale** is a 77-unit apartment complex for Housing First residents and Safe Haven operations for people with severe mental illness. Drop-in services for case management and counseling are also available at Pauahi Hale, including a hygiene center with showers and restroom facilities for people experiencing homelessness.
- **Pūnāwai Rest Stop** is a hygiene Center that includes showers, restrooms, laundry equipment, a storage area for carts and pets, and a program office to allow social service providers to deliver outreach services with the goal of providing shelter and other crucial needs to people experiencing homelessness. The second and third floors offer permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness or in support of the programmatic needs of the patients of the health services clinic located on the mezzanine level (20 residential units + one live-in residential manager).
- **Landlord Engagement Program** identifies landlords willing to partner with the City for voucher holders, including Housing First, Rapid Re-Housing, Rent-to-Work, Section 8, and HUD-VASH (VA Supportive Housing).
- **Transportation** is contracted to help individuals experiencing homelessness move themselves and their belongings to shelter or permanent housing.

The City also receives funds from the State to support housing and homelessness efforts. In 2018, the Hawai‘i State Legislature passed Act 209, which appropriated \$30 million to create the ‘Ohana Zones pilot program to address homelessness statewide. In 2019 and 2022, an additional \$2 million and \$15 million were appropriated to support the program, respectively. Projects receiving ‘Ohana Zones funds must have a connection to state and county land and provide services to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness in accessing permanent housing. The City uses its portion of the funds to support housing efforts, which include:

- **Housing First** Increment 4 provides funding for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals. Sixty households are supported by State ‘Ohana Zones-funded case management with City GF rental vouchers and an additional 38 households are supported with rent only for permanent supportive housing.
- **Kumuwai Permanent Supportive Housing** is a 30-unit building owned by the City and County of Honolulu, which includes 20 ‘Ohana Zones-funded units specifically targeted at elderly individuals transitioning from chronic homelessness. The facility is property-managed by the nonprofit Housing Solutions, Inc., with the 20 ‘Ohana Zones-funded units case managed by WorkHawai‘i.
- **Hale Maluhia** provides 20 one-bedroom apartments for survivors of domestic violence in a City-owned facility that is property-managed by Housing Solutions, Inc., with services provided by the Domestic Violence Action Center. Hale Maluhia includes a range of on-site services for survivors and their families, including attorneys to assist with temporary restraining orders, custody matters, and other civil legal issues. The program provides stable long-term housing so participants can address issues related to

documentation and other legal concerns without the pressure of having to leave the facility within a designated time frame, such as 60 or 90 days.

The Development, Acquisition, Construction and Fair Housing (DACFH) Branch is primarily responsible for securing, soliciting proposals for, administering, oversight and monitoring of construction and acquisition of affordable low- and moderate-income housing projects for families, seniors, and special needs populations such as people experiencing homelessness, victims of domestic violence, people with disabilities such as physical impairments and severe mental illness, and youth. Program planners in the DACFH Branch attract, secure, and solicit funding and financing opportunities for community development and housing from federal, State, and City sources to maximize resources for the acquisition, construction, or renovation and rehabilitation of affordable housing units on O‘ahu. Funding sources include:

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program** provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income people. Funds can be used to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development, and providing improved community facilities and services. Activities overseen by the DACFH Branch primarily use these funds to develop, acquire and rehabilitate properties suitable for low- to moderate-income housing.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program** provides formula grants to states and localities that communities use, often in partnership with local nonprofits, to fund a wide range of activities including building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership, providing direct rental assistance to low-income people, or "other reasonable and necessary expenses related to the development of non-luxury housing," such as site acquisition or improvement, demolition of dilapidated housing to make way for HOME-assisted development, and payment of relocation expenses. It is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. For rental housing and rental assistance, at least 90% of benefiting families must have incomes that are no more than 60% of the area median income (AMI). In rental projects with five or more assisted units, at least 20% of the units must be occupied by families with incomes that do not exceed 50% of the AMI. The incomes of households receiving HUD assistance must not exceed 80% of the AMI. At least 15% of HOME funds must be set aside for specific activities to be undertaken by a special type of nonprofit called a **Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)**. The City’s two approved CHDOs are Habitat for Humanity and Hawaiian Community Development Board. More participation by smaller developers is encouraged.
- The HUD **Housing Trust Fund (HTF) program** is administered through the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation and may be used for the production or preservation of affordable housing through the acquisition, new construction, reconstruction, and/or rehabilitation of non-luxury housing with suitable amenities. All HTF-assisted units must have a minimum affordability period of 30 years and serve individuals and families at 30% AMI or below. HTF-assisted rental housing must comply

with certain rent limitations. Developers have not been able to financially comply with the strict requirements in a very competitive market such as Honolulu. As a result of low interest from developers in the program, the City has not requested an allocation since Fiscal Year 2021. Should developers express interest in applying for and using the funds, the City will re-assess the market.

- The City's [Affordable Housing Fund \(AHF\)](#) is used for project development and construction leveraging. The AHF is funded by 0.5% of City Real Property Tax revenues and generates approximately \$7.5-8 million annually. A Charter Amendment in the 2022 General Election asked voters to consider raising the percentage to 1%, but the measure failed. The AHF can be used for the provision and expansion of affordable rental housing and suitable living environments in projects, which may include mixed-use, mixed-income projects. Activities can include land acquisition for, development of, construction of, and/or capital improvements or rehabilitation of residential units that are principally for people of low- and moderate-income. Units supported by the AHF must remain affordable for at least 60 years. Projects that have received AHF include:
 - **Family Justice Center** - \$2,000,000 to acquire and renovate a 20-bedroom apartment building.
 - **Ola Ka 'Ilima/Artspace** - \$4,400,000 to assist in developing low- to moderate-income housing, including 12 Housing First units.
 - **Hale Makana o Mā'ili** - \$2,000,000 performance mortgage to assist in developing 56 low- to moderate-income housing units.
 - **Nā Lei Hulu Kūpuna Renovation project, Phase I** - \$3,850,000 for the acquisition and renovation of 75 low-income apartments for seniors.
 - **Pauahi Hale** - \$300,000 to install a new fire alarm system in a City facility that provides permanent rentals for Housing First clients and individuals experiencing severe mental illness.
 - **Pūnāwai Building** - \$5,901,446 for the construction of a hygiene center and two floors of permanent rental housing.
 - **Kahauiki Village Phase II** - \$7,027,000 for infrastructure and construction of temporary housing units for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.
 - **Maunakea Marketplace** - \$7,428,730 for the renovation and repurposing of 38 second floor units to create housing for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.
 - **1531 Kewalo Street, Units D & E** - \$100,000 for due diligence costs to complete a HOME-funded Special Needs Housing purchase of a 10-bedroom duplex to be leased to The Youth Collaborative, consisting of Alternative Solutions Inc., RYSE, and Achieve Zero, formerly known as ALEA Bridge.
 - **Nā Lei Hulu Kūpuna Renovation project, Phase II** - \$1,853,000 for additional health, fire, and safety improvements.
 - **54-83 and 54-83A, 54-85 and 54-85A, 54-87 and 54-87A Hau'ula Homestead Road** – \$2,650,000 for due diligence and partial funding of three duplexes to add 15 dwelling units to the City's Special Needs Housing Inventory.
 - **87-288A-H Farrington Highway** – \$5,575,000 for due diligence and acquisition of eight five-bedroom homes to add up to 40 low- to moderate-income dwelling units to the City's Special Needs Housing inventory.

for special needs groups. The 63 properties are located throughout the island, disbursed amongst 19 zip codes for easy access and proximity to the residents and families served (see Figure 6).

The 63 special needs properties include:

- 23 that serve people with developmental disabilities or people with mental illness
- 11 that serve the elderly
- 11 that provide emergency shelter or transitional housing (families and youth)
- 3 that provide permanent rental housing for households experiencing homelessness
- 2 that provide housing or shelter for victims of domestic violence
- 7 that provide support for youth and young adults

Transitional Housing and Kauhale Villages

Transitional housing and kauhale villages offer another option beyond emergency shelter. These communities would foster a sense of belonging through secure, private areas for sleeping, common spaces for cooking and other activities, and offer services such as substance abuse counseling, job training, and housing placement to help residents obtain long-term housing.

As noted earlier, the City is looking to create systems that provide people with options that fit their needs to create their path from homelessness to housing, and each person's path may look different. For some individuals, especially for those who have been unhoused for a long time, living completely independently directly from homelessness can be a huge shock. This may be caused by a variety of different factors, including being pulled away from the communities that are formed living unhoused or getting used to living in an enclosed space again, which may be intimidating for some individuals. Housing that provides a stepping stone between homelessness and more permanent placements can be the key to success for many households, ultimately setting people up for longer-term stability.

Through research and discussions with the community, the City has identified existing groups that would be good candidates for a potential kauhale village. There are currently three projects in the planning stages. We envision a community consisting of several "clusters" of tiny homes, with 20 to 30 homes in each cluster. Although we anticipate there may be some zoning and permitting hurdles to build these communities, we plan to partner with the State to aggressively add options to our housing portfolio. A [State report from 2022](#) on non-traditional housing models for people transitioning from homelessness can help to proactively plan for and counteract some issues that may arise, with insights provided by local agencies that run non-traditional types of permanent or transitional housing.

As the City seeks to add more kauhale villages to our island, we will work with the community to determine their placement. We plan to partner with the State in acquiring land and with businesses and foundations to help develop the communities. The City has secured over \$13 million in Congressionally Directed Funding to help finance construction and operations.

STRATEGY: HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND DIVERSION

In 2022, 27% of O‘ahu households were considered [Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed \(ALICE\)](#), meaning they are above the federal poverty line but struggle to pay for necessities such as food, rent, childcare, and transportation and are only one financial crisis away from slipping into poverty. An additional 14% of O‘ahu households fall below the federal poverty line. As noted in the *Housing* strategy, our residents with the lowest incomes are [significantly cost burdened by their housing and utilities](#), with the majority of our lowest-income residents paying over 30% or even over 50% of their household income toward housing.

With so many residents barely able to make ends meet, we need to break the cycle and prevent people from losing their housing to truly end homelessness. Homelessness is a traumatic experience that not only results in losing a home, but also possessions, community connections, and sense of security. Programs that prevent people from falling into homelessness or divert people that lost their housing before they enter an emergency shelter are critical to "closing the front door" to homelessness.

Due to the health and economic impacts caused by the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the City and County of Honolulu received additional funding to pursue more innovative projects for homelessness prevention and diversion programs.

Rental and Utility Relief Program and Mediation Services for Eviction Prevention

The [City’s Rent and Utility Relief Program \(RURP\)](#) was launched in April 2021 to help families stay housed during the pandemic and prevent evictions through payments of rent and utility bills. Administered by Catholic Charities Hawai‘i and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, the program has distributed over \$200 million in aid and has helped over 15,000 local families as of January 2023. O‘ahu’s RURP was recognized as one of the best-performing rent and utility relief programs in the country by the Treasury.

Households qualified for the program if they could demonstrate financial hardship since March 2020 and met income eligibility limits of up to 80% of the area median income. 86% of families served earned less than \$64,000 a year. Eligible households could receive up to 18 months of payment for rent, electricity, and other utilities through the program. The average amount of support was around \$8,000 per household. Women are head of households for 60% of the families served.

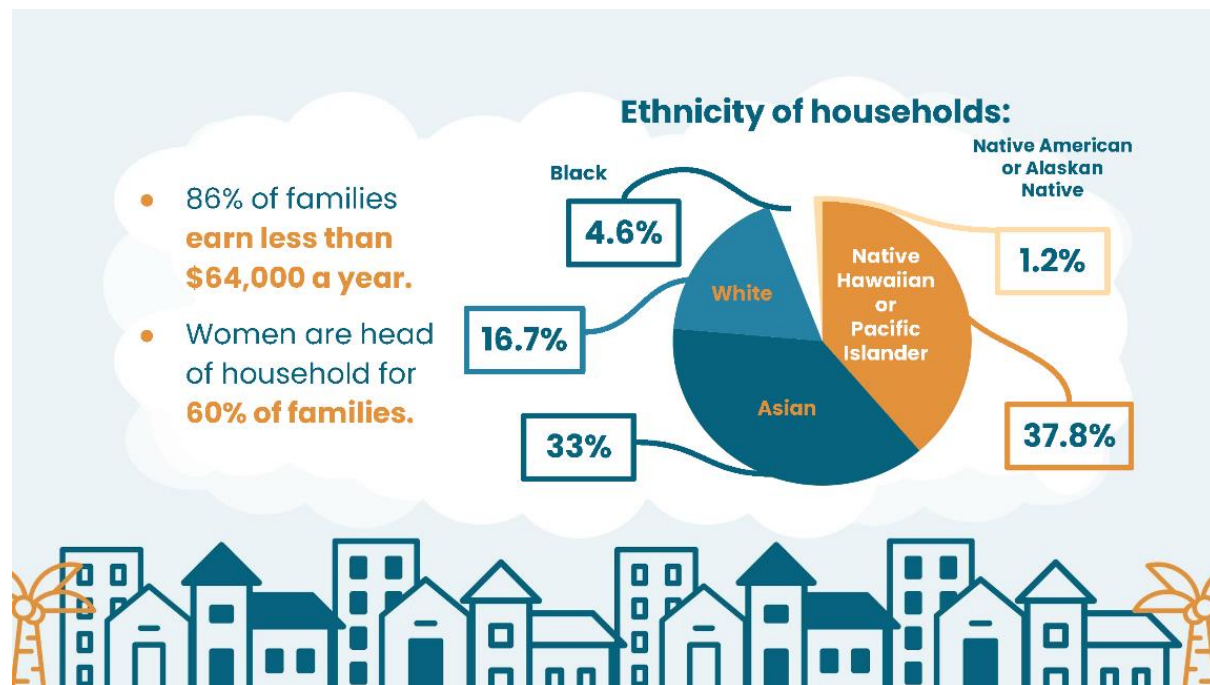


Figure 7: Rent and Utility Relief Program demographics as of October 2022. Source: Office of Economic Revitalization.

Recently, the City allocated an additional \$31 million in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to extend the program through December 2022 to give families more time to plan to cover household expenses and landlords an opportunity to keep families housed while preventing evictions. The portal reopened on October 3, 2022, and closed on November 14, 2022, after receiving 8,000 new applications.

To assist households in transitioning after the end of the RURP, the City is contracting with Catholic Charities Hawai‘i and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement to provide housing stability services, including case management, eviction diversion, housing counseling, financial literacy training, and connection to other social services and workforce development including job placement through WorkHawai‘i.

During the first few years of the pandemic, eviction moratoriums prevented tenants who had fallen behind on rent from being evicted. To ease back into normalcy after the last statewide moratorium ended, the State Legislature passed [Act 57 \(2021\)](#), which temporarily increased the required timeframe for a landlord to provide notice of their intention to evict in cases of non-payment of rent from 5-days to 15-days. Additionally, the Act encouraged landlord-tenant mediation through free mediation services. Act 57 took effect on August 7, 2021.

Mediation services can help renters and landlords find common ground and agree on payment plans. Through the City and County of Honolulu, The Mediation Center of the Pacific provided free mediation services and helped more than 1,100 landlords during the Act 57 time period. [87% of mediation cases reached an agreement](#) and avoided evictions over the past year. Overall, it has been a successful strategy.

Although Act 57 expired on August 7, 2022, The Mediation Center of the Pacific continues to offer no-cost mediation to renters and landlords. They provide translation support and internet/computer access to tenants who need it. In addition, the District Court is encouraging judges with eviction cases to refer renters and landlords to mediation as this strategy has been beneficial for both parties involved.

Federal Aid to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the health and economic impacts caused by the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the City and County of Honolulu, through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) passed by the United States Congress on March 27, 2020, received additional Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funds and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to address the impacts of the coronavirus from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City used some of this additional funding on homelessness prevention and diversion programs, including:

- Eviction Prevention Payments (CDBG - CARES Act)
- O‘ahu Housing Now Rapid Rehousing Program (ESG – CARES Act)
- Homelessness Prevention programs through the Institute for Human Services, the Salvation Army, and Family Promise of Hawai‘i (ESG – CARES Act)

Department of Community Services - Elderly Affairs Division (EAD)

Although the Elderly Affairs Division (EAD) of the Department of Community Services does not directly support individuals experiencing homelessness, it does provide services and supports to allow older adults to live independently in their own homes. In those efforts, EAD supports kūpuna (60 years or older) by providing “housing assistance” services through a contract with Catholic Charities of Hawai‘i and WorkHawai‘i via a Memorandum of Understanding. Housing assistance can include help with identifying housing needs, understanding options, and support finding adequate housing to improve an individual’s present housing arrangement. Additionally, EAD administers a contract with the Legal Aid Society of Hawai‘i to provide legal advice and representation for older adults for landlord and tenant issues, including eviction.

CONCLUSION

The City’s current and ongoing efforts mentioned throughout this plan are designed to approach individuals and the many challenges they may face with an understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to ending homelessness. Providing the variety of programs and services for assistance that the City and our partners deliver creates more opportunities for people to choose their path forward toward becoming stably housed.

Homelessness can seem like an intractable problem, but progress is possible. The strategies outlined in this plan will bring us closer to our goal of making homelessness a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience. However, we also acknowledge the issue’s complexity and envision this plan as a living document that will evolve as needs change.

With so many residents barely able to make ends meet and only one financial crisis away from slipping into poverty, homelessness could happen to anyone. The 2022 State of ALICE report estimates that 27% of O‘ahu households were above the federal poverty line but struggled to pay for necessities such as food, rent, childcare, and transportation. An additional 14% of households were below the federal poverty line. As long as these conditions exist, we must approach the issue from both sides of the spectrum. We must prevent people at risk from falling into homelessness *and* help people experiencing homelessness find housing and connect them with supportive services so they can stay housed.

The City cannot solve this problem alone. Fortunately, there are many dedicated organizations, businesses, public servants, and concerned citizens that work tirelessly to help our most vulnerable residents. As we align our resources and efforts toward a common goal, together we can build a future without homelessness.