

Future of the O'ahu Community Correctional Center

Vol. 61 - New O'ahu Jail Team Attends ACA

October 2025



Hawai'i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Mission: The mission of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) is to provide a secure correctional environment for comprehensive rehabilitative, holistic and wraparound re-entry services, including culturally based approaches, to persons sentenced to our custody and care with professionalism, integrity, respect and fairness. Our goal is to reduce recidivism and enhance the safety and security of our communities.

What We Do: DCR carries out orders from the state courts to confine individuals in custody for a set period of time utilizing jails and prisons located within Hawai'i, at the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu and in private contracted facilities on the continent. Jails, known in Hawai'i as Community Correctional Centers (CCCs), are located on the islands of Kaua'i, Maui, Hawai'i and O'ahu and house pretrial detainees, misdemeanor offenders and others with a sentence of one year or less. CCCs also provide a pre-release transition function for prison inmates who are less than a year from their scheduled release. While some individuals in custody will remain confined for life, over 95% will serve their sentences and be released to the community.

Vision: DCR envisions a future when all its facilities provide safe, secure, healthy and humane environments for those in custody and staff. We are looking for a future based on a better understanding of the differing needs of offender populations, using therapeutic rather than punitive management techniques, ensuring racial equity and by promoting positive change so that fewer individuals are incarcerated in Hawai'i. However, aged and obsolete jails undermine DCR's ability to deliver such a vision and improving some facilities and replacing others are high priorities. Chief among those priorities is development of a new O'ahu jail on state-owned lands currently housing the Animal Quarantine Station in 'Aiea. Assisting DCR with O'ahu jail planning and development is the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and a team of experts and advisors (the "New O'ahu Jail Project" team).

The New O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) project: Also known as the "New O'ahu Jail" or "New O'ahu Jail Project" to make clear that DCR is planning for a new jail and not a prison as we move forward with our development efforts.

New O'ahu Jail Team Attends ACA Conference

The State of Hawai'i is dedicated to transforming its unified correctional system into one that reduces recidivism and promotes safer communities. The centerpiece to that transformation is replacement of the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC). To generate interest in the New O'ahu Jail, officials representing the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) and members of its project team, led by DCR Director Tommy Johnson, have been seeking opportunities to present and discuss plans for the New O'ahu Jail. This includes attending the American Correctional Association's (ACA) 155th Congress of Corrections recently held in Denver, CO. Attending ACA conferences offered a unique occasion to share information about DCR and the transformation taking place to Hawai'i's correctional system. It was also an opportunity to present plans for the new jail and DCR's efforts to create a healing facility that is grounded in the values of our island culture.

Team members spent time attending workshops and panel discussions relevant to developing and managing the New O'ahu Jail. Among the workshops held during the conference was the "Quadruple Bottom Line." Moderated by Hal Alejandro (Planner and Head of DCR's Capital Improvements Program), speakers included Aaron Ackerman, Architecture & Planning Consultant with Bowers+Kubota, DCR Director Johnson, and Chris Kinimaka, Special Projects Manager Consultant with DAGS. The "Quadruple Bottom Line" is a dynamic project prioritization tool developed to help Hawai'i balance sustainable priorities with an overarching emphasis on safety and security. DCR is shifting to a data-driven project tracking tool as the basis for establishing a user-informed



New O'ahu Jail team attends ACA Conference

From the Director's Desk



DCR Director Tommy Johnson

Aloha,

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) continues to make great strides, thanks to the support of the honorable Governor Josh Green, the Hawai'i State Legislature, our stellar staff and dedicated community partners.

Building a new O'ahu jail remains a top priority. The current conditions at the O'ahu Community Correctional Center are beyond repair and the facility has been operating over its design capacity for more than two decades. A new, modern design would provide a safe, efficient and rehabilitative facility for inmates and better working conditions for our staff.

In this year's legislative session, the Governor's request for \$15 million in FY2026 and \$15 million in FY2027 was approved by the state Legislature, advancing planning, design, preparing bridging documents and other related work for the new O'ahu jail.

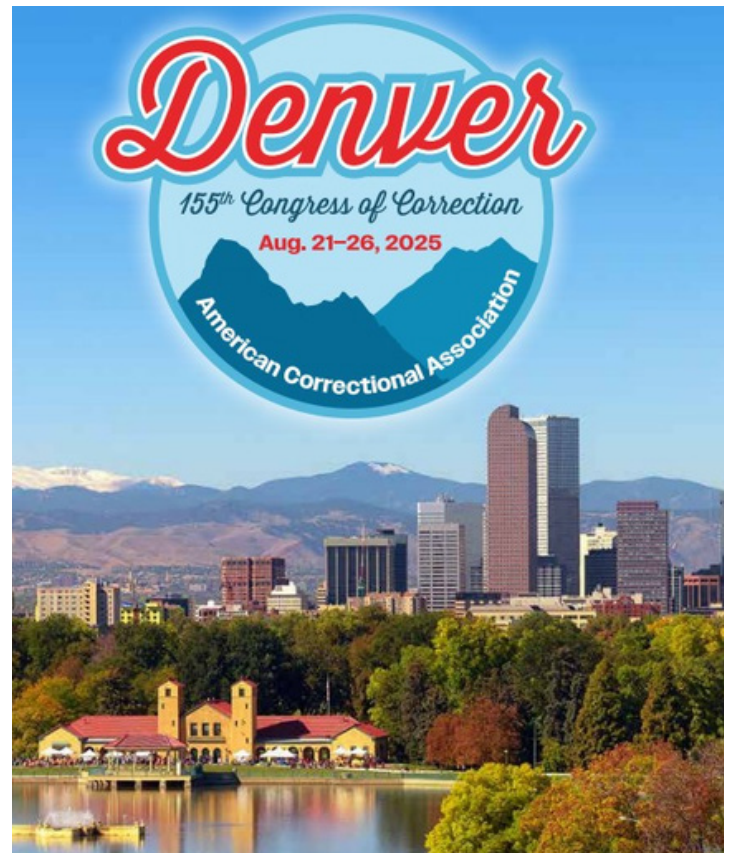
This summer, the department welcomed 20 new adult corrections officers (ACO) who are working at various facilities across the state.

We also hosted our annual Service Awards Ceremony at the State Capitol auditorium in June, honoring over a dozen employees who exemplify public service. Their dedication and commitment are unmatched.

The department also continues to support those in our custody and care with events such as Keiki Day held at Waiawa Correctional Facility and Hālawā Correctional Facility in June to celebrate Father's Day. Good family connections help maintain bonds that assist in reducing recidivism and producing safer communities. Programs are also a critical part in department's rehabilitative and restorative approach for inmates. In July, eight women at the Women's Community Correctional Center completed the Windward Community College (WCC) Landscaping Technician Program. The program is an example of the multitude of programs available to inmates to help equip those in our custody with practical skills to have a smoother transition back into the community upon release.

master plan to implement improved workplace well-being for staff and better outcomes for adults in custody.

The state of Hawai'i was also represented in the exhibition hall where designers, constructors, product vendors and service providers were able to meet with DCR officials and team members and learn of the status of the New O'ahu jail and how DCR's corrections and rehabilitation strategies are being incorporated into the vision for both future and current correctional facilities operating across the state. Many conference attendees stopped by DCR's booth to inquire about the new jail project and to share their own experiences and lessons learned in developing new facilities. Much was learned from the experiences of others who have developed or are engaged in developing modern correctional facilities. Attending the conference was an opportunity to reiterate the efforts to transform Hawai'i's correctional system and share the progress that has been made since DCR was established in January 2024. It was also an occasion to demonstrate the support of key Hawai'i officials for replacing OCCC with a new jail that reduces recidivism and promotes safer communities.



New Housing Unit Construction Underway at Maui CCC

With aged and crowded in-state jail facilities, DCR is working to improve and/or replace its corrections infrastructure. In addition to plans to replace OCCC and the Kauai CCC, DCR is developing a new housing unit at the Maui Community Correctional Center (MCCC) that is similar to the unit recently completed at the Hawai'i CCC in Hilo. MCCC, opened as a 22-bed facility in 1975, has a design capacity of 209 beds and currently houses 217 occupants or 4% above its design capacity (DCR, October 20, 2025). The new housing unit is the first substantial improvement to MCCC since 1997 when a 110-bed community release facility was constructed.

Construction of the housing unit started with relocation of the facility's air conditioning chiller system followed by development of the building foundation. The new unit will be a substantial improvement to living and working conditions by providing occupants and staff with access to natural daylight and views to the outdoors, improved acoustics, thermal comfort, and additional space which have been shown to reduce levels of stress, depression, and fear of being victimized among occupants. Enhancing the feeling of safety and lowering stress levels for occupants and staff is expected to have a positive effect on overall institution safety and security.

The 32-bed unit will occupy two levels and will include support spaces such as an assessment/treatment room, interview room, offices for mental health counseling and program rooms with spaces for the dayroom and outdoor recreational areas based on American Correctional Association standards. The photos below depict progress in constructing the new housing unit which is being developed by F&H Construction with completion scheduled for September 2027.



Location of new housing unit at MCCC.



Construction progress (March/April 2025). Credit: SSFM



Construction progress (September 2025). Credit: SSFM



Interior renderings from officer's station (left) and mezzanine (right). Credit: DLR Group

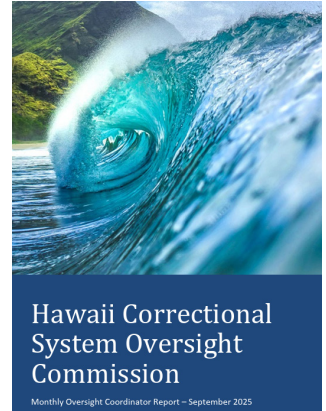
Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission Members Visit OCCC

On September 17, 2025, members of the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) visited OCCC to observe current conditions affecting the facility. Among the observations were the lack of out-of-cell time for those in custody. As a result of its antiquated design, operation of OCCC requires a large number of Adult Correctional Officers (ACOs) to safely supervise and manage the occupants; a number greater than in modern facilities. The visit showed the high number of staff needed to maintain security and control and the impacts that shortages of ACOs have on operations. For example, when there are insufficient numbers of ACOs to supervise the housing units, some units require the occupants to remain in their cells, thereby limiting their movements. Outdoor recreation is often one of the first activities reduced or eliminated when there are insufficient ACOs to meet the daily needs for transportation and supervision.

The visit found the Medical Unit/Infirmary orderly and well-staffed; however, many staff vacancies exist and services are augmented by contract nurses. In addition, the physical space lacks privacy for medical practitioners who need space for confidential medical communications and examinations of those in custody. The

infirmary is also inadequate for a facility the size of OCCC. While functional, the Holding Unit, built in 1936, was clearly archaic. Annex II is a concrete building divided into open bays on each of three floors, with dormitory-style housing that utilizes bunk beds. On the day of the visit, 134 men were housed in this area, which was designed for 114. The kitchen area is also in dire need of updates to ensure sanitary conditions for workers and to provide safe food for the facility. Urgent repairs are needed to the equipment and appliances, along with the replacement of ceiling and floor tiles among other improvements.

The HCSOC also found several significant improvements at OCCC along with key issues addressed over the past year in its report which is available at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/facility-specific-reports/>.



NEWS & UPDATES: OPERATIONS

DCR Employee Receives State Employee of the Year Award

Congratulations to Hālawā Correctional Facility Education Supervisor Marly Jane “MJ” Nakamura who received the distinguished award of State Employee of the Year. Governor Josh Green presented the award to Nakamura of the Corrections Program Services Division – Education Services Branch at the Governor’s Award Ceremony held at the State Capitol Auditorium on September 22, 2025. She was selected as State Employee of the Year from among 19 other nominees.

Nakamura epitomizes public service with her extraordinary work educating incarcerated individuals at the Hālawā Correctional Facility (HCF) and preparing them to reintegrate into the community. An inspirational educator, Nakamura has helped many in DCR’s custody and care realize their full potential to transform their lives. She has contributed greatly to HCF’s

educational programs through her creation of the Tutorial Program, or BrainGYM, that addresses students’ competencies in reading, writing and math. Her standardized cross-curricular lesson plans assist with challenging concepts. Nakamura organized HCF’s 1st Commencement Ceremony for those receiving their high school diplomas and enrolling students for an associate degree in business administration from Chaminade University of Honolulu, University of Hawai‘i and in Hawaiian Studies programs at Windward Community College.

During the ceremony, other DCR staff members were also recognized for their excellence in public service in their respective categories: State Manager of the Year nominee: Correctional Industries Specialist Kelli Miyasaki and State Team of the Year nominee: Healthcare Division-Health Information Unit.



DCR Director Tommy Johnson and Governor Josh Green congratulate HCF Education Supervisor Marly Jane “MJ” Nakamura (center photo) as the winner of the State of the Employee of the Year Award. DCR State Manager of the Year nominee Kelli Miyasaki (left photo) and the DCR State Team of the Year nominee (right photo) was also recognized. Credit: DCR.

12 Men at WCF Graduate From Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Program

The Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF) hosted a graduation ceremony September 4, 2025, for 12 men who earned a certificate after completing the Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Program. The six-week program is available to inmates at the facility and at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), made possible through a partnership between the DCR, Honolulu Community College (HCC) and the Hawai'i Carpenters Apprenticeship & Training Fund (HCATF). Completion of the program creates a direct pathway to become apprentice carpenters with the HCATF upon their release.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson, Deputy Director Sanna Muñoz of the Rehabilitation Services and Programs Division, Corrections Program Services Administrator Frank Young, Corrections Education Program Manager Roseanne Propato, WCF Warden Sean Ornellas, HCATF Executive Director Edmund Aczon, HCATF Instructor Robert Locquiao and the graduates' family members and loved ones were among the honored guests who attended the ceremony. During the program, graduate Cody Mikami thanked Director Johnson, facility staff, HCATF and HCC for *"believing in us, investing in us, (and) bringing this program here to help rehabilitate us to prepare us to succeed out there...and thank you for helping us find our self-confidence again,"* Mikami added.

In the program, participants acquire essential carpentry skills such as mathematics, blueprint reading, framing and drywall installation. Students are also trained in Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards as well as first aid and CPR. One of the 12 graduates recently benefitted from a reduction in custody and is no longer at WCF. During the ceremony, DCR Director Johnson congratulated the men for their achievements. *"I applaud the graduates for your hard work, your dedication and completing this program and for taking the initiative to change*

the trajectory of your own lives through education and real-world skill-building, which is what this program does," Johnson said.

He also thanked facility staff, HCC and HCATF for their dedication and invaluable partnership. *"This program is a prime example of DCR's focus on rehabilitation, equipping those in our custody and care with viable skills as they prepare to reintegrate into the community,"* Johnson added.

During the ceremony, HCATF Executive Director Edmund Aczon also congratulated the graduates. *"It's an honor to recognize your achievement today. Over the past six weeks, you've shown dedication, resilience and a strong work ethic,"* Aczon said. *"You've gained valuable skills and laid the foundation for a promising future."*

"The tools you've gained here are not just for building structures; they're for building your life. Move forward with confidence and pride," he added. DCR Corrections Education Program Manager Roseanne Propato said, *"This achievement is not only a reflection of their hard work and dedication, but also a testament to what is possible when education, opportunity and community come together. We are incredibly proud of them and wish them nothing but continued success on this next chapter of their journey,"* Propato added.

WCF Education Supervisor Kerry Iwashita commended the graduates for their commitment and teamwork. *"All of the students worked tremendously hard to get here today,"* Iwashita said. *"This program provides individuals a way to transform their lives."* A total of 43 graduates — 30 men from WCF and 13 women from WCCC — have completed the pre-apprenticeship program since the program's inception in 2023.



WCF Education Supervisor Kerry Iwashita, HCATF Executive Director Edmund Aczon, HCATF Instructor Robert Locquiao and program graduates. Credit: DCR.

Waiawa Correctional Facility Hosts Resource Fair

On August 28, 2025, the Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF) held a resource fair for more than 150 inmates, supporting their preparation for reentering the community. This event is one of two resource fairs the facility organizes each year and is part of a tradition WCF has maintained for over 25 years.

WCF collaborated with DCR's Reentry Coordination Office, the Hawai'i Paroling Authority (HPA) and the nonprofit "Transforming Lives" for the event. DCR Director Tommy Johnson, DCR Deputy Director Sanna Muñoz of the Rehabilitation Services and Programs Division and WCF Warden Sean Ornellas were among the honored guests.

Each fair provides inmates useful information from multiple agencies and organizations in one location. More than 35 vendors were available with actionable information on housing, job readiness programs, healthcare and other support services. Director Johnson thanked facility staff, the Reentry Coordination

Office, HPA and Transforming Lives for organizing the event and their tireless efforts assisting inmates prepare for reintegration into the community.

He also thanked the vendors for their unwavering support. *"We value our partnerships with community organizations that play a critical role in our goal to reduce recidivism,"* Johnson said.

Participants in the fair are eligible for parole or slated to complete their sentences within a year. Agencies and organizations that participated in the resource fair included Waikiki Health, TEAM (Teach, Educate, Advocate and Motivation) WorkHawai'i, Ke Ola Mamo, American Job Center, Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers, New Start Discipleship and more. In recent months, the Hālowa Correctional Facility and the Hawai'i Community Correctional Center – Hale Nani Facility also hosted resource fairs while the Women's Community Correctional Center plans to host a fair in the fall.



DCR Director Johnson speaks with event staff and vendors. Credit: DCR.



Foster Pet Pilot Program Kicks off at WCCC

A new foster pet pilot program kicked off on October 2, 2025, with the arrival of five kittens at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) from the Hawaiian Humane Society (HHS). WCCC participants of the 12-month program, "Transforming Animal and Incarcerated Individuals' Lives (TAIIL)," will become foster mothers to the young animals to encourage socialization and prepare the kittens for adoption. In turn, the women will develop useful skills as they prepare for reintegration into the community upon their release.

The pilot program is a partnership between DCR and the HHS made possible by funds appropriated by the state Legislature in 2024. Under the TAIIL program, two minimum custody inmates underwent foster pet care training by HHS staff. Throughout the duration of the program, the participants will nurture two to three kittens at a time for approximately two weeks. Thereafter, HHS staff will conduct a wellness exam to determine if they are ready for adoption. Staff will then bring a new group of kittens to the correctional facility for the foster mothers' care. Approximately 165 kittens are expected to be part of the TAIIL program.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson, Deputy Director Melanie Martin of the Administration Division, Deputy Director Sanna Muñoz of the Rehabilitation Services and Programs Division, Corrections Program Services Administrator Frank Young, WCCC Warden Ione "Noni" Guillonta, Sen. Glenn Wakai (D, Kalihi, Mapunapuna, Salt Lake, Pearl Harbor) and State Rep. Lisa Marten (D, Waimānalo, Keolu Hills, Lanikai, Kailua) were among the honored guests who attended the event at Ho'okipa Cottage to kick off the pilot program. HHS President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Anna Neubauer; Stephanie Kendrick, Vice President of Community Engagement; Natalie Spencer, Vice President of Operations; Alexia Boyd, Director of Operations-Mō'ili'ili Campus; Foster Care Manager Adrienne Daniels; and Brandy Shimabukuro, Director of Communications and Marketing, were also among the

special guests that attended the event.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson said, "We are thrilled to partner with the Hawaiian Humane Society on the pilot program at WCCC. This will not only help rehabilitate incarcerated individuals and provide a sense of purpose, the compassion and care the women provide to the kittens will help prepare the young animals for adoption." DCR Deputy Director Sanna Muñoz echoed Johnson's sentiment. "The pilot program mutually benefits the women and the kittens. Additionally, it benefits the community whose homes these kittens will be adopted into. This program is a prime example of our department's mission to rehabilitate those in our custody and care," Muñoz said.

HHS President and CEO Anna Neubauer said they are honored to partner with DCR on the groundbreaking foster pet pilot program at WCCC. "Research consistently demonstrates that animal-assisted programs in correctional settings can significantly reduce recidivism rates while teaching invaluable life skills such as responsibility, empathy and compassion," Neubauer said. "We look forward to seeing the transformative impact TAIIL will have on both our animals and the women who care for them," Neubauer said. WCCC Warden Ione "Noni" Guillonta said, "This program is aimed to boost confidence and self-worth for participating inmates as they serve as foster mothers to the kittens. The program will also help foster rehabilitation and reduce recidivism."

Sen. Glenn Wakai, vice chair of the Senate Public Safety and Military Affairs Committee, and strong supporter of the foster pet pilot program, said, "Caring for cats is a 'purr-posedul' approach to rehabilitating our incarcerated women." "The inmates will exit [the facility upon release] with more compassion and a sense of responsibility, while the felines will be more adoptable. This double win comes at a minimal cost to taxpayers," Wakai added.



DCR and Hawaiian Humane Society attendees at kick-off event. Credit: DCR and Hawaiian Humane Society

Hālawā Correctional Facility Hosts Wellness Fair for Staff

The Hālawā Correctional Facility hosted a wellness fair on September 25, 2025, where more than a dozen organizations provided information on health and wellness to adult corrections officers and non-uniformed staff. During the event, representatives of Hawaii Medical Service Association administered blood pressure checks and trained professionals from Stretch Lab provided complimentary stretch demonstrations for facility staff. Practitioners from Project Koa Yoga also gave demonstrations on breathing and grounding techniques that foster a sense of calm and connection. Various vendors also provided information on resources relating to health, financial wellness and retirement planning.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson said, *"Our staff is our most valuable asset. It is critical for our uniformed and non-uniformed staff to practice self-care. The health and well-being of our workforce is vital to facility operations."* Approximately 235 adult corrections officers and 55 non-uniformed personnel are currently employed at HCF.

Since its redesignation to the DCR in 2024, the department is making strides to prioritize health and wellness for uniformed and non-uniformed staff. In recent months, the department's Training Academy in Iwilei and Women's Community Correctional Center also hosted wellness fairs. Corrections officers and non-uniformed staff are susceptible to burnout, anxiety, depression and other adverse health effects due to work demands.

DCR provides resources and programs that encourage physical fitness, mental well-being and work-life balance, according to Deputy Director Melanie Martin of the Administration Division, who leads the department's wellness efforts. *"The department's focus on overall health helps boost morale and productivity,"* Martin said.



DCR leadership and HCF staff attend the wellness event at the facility. Credit DCR



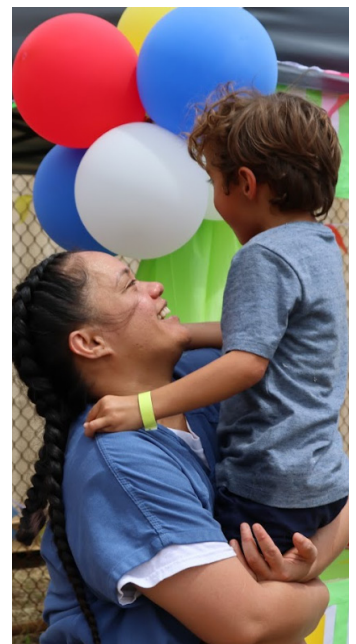
Women's Community Correctional Center Host First 'Ohana Day

The Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) hosted its first 'Ohana Day on September 13, 2025, for incarcerated women, their family members and loved ones. Sponsored by the Women's Prison Project (WPP), the carnival-themed event included a petting zoo, an inflatable bounce house, games and face painting. More than 25 inmates and over 70 family members and loved ones attended 'Ohana Day. Dedicated facility staff, volunteers and the WPP made the festive occasion possible. The WPP is a volunteer coalition led by former Gov. Linda Lingle that is dedicated to restorative justice for justice-involved women in Hawai'i. WPP sponsored and funded the event where families enjoyed quality time together with carnival games facilitated by volunteers as well as a group of female inmates who dressed up in clown outfits. WCCC Chaplain Tammy Turcios also donated and helped set up colorful decorations for 'Ohana Day.

WPP member Diane Chen said they were thrilled to help support the event which was "a huge success" thanks to WCCC lone "Noni" Guillonta, her staff and volunteers. WPP member Edgy Lee played an instrumental role with the petting zoo's presence at the carnival-themed event by connecting Nalo Keiki Paniolo of DLT Ranch, LLC with the correctional facility. Nalo Keiki Paniolo volunteered their staff and animals that included bunnies, turtles, miniature goats and a miniature donkey for 'Ohana Day, bringing smiles to the women and their families. "It was really wonderful," Lee said. Keiki flocked to a tent where they selected game prizes of toys, candy, stuffed animals and other goodies to bring home. Families also enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, popcorn, shave ice and cupcakes.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson attended 'Ohana Day and thanked Guillonta, her staff and volunteers for their hard work organizing the event. "I think this first ever 'Ohana Day represents our paradigm shift from what some see as a punitive incarceration model to one that's about restoration and reintegration," Johnson said. He also thanked the WPP for their steadfast support for the incarcerated women as well as the inmates' families for showing their support. "That goes a long way to boost their morale and refocus them on what's important which is reunification," Johnson added. Family support is crucial in reducing recidivism for justice-involved individuals during and after incarceration.

Events like 'Ohana Day are immeasurable for the women to reunite and strengthen ties with their families, Guillonta said, noting that 'Ohana Day will be an annual event at WCCC. The women need their family's support to be successful when they reenter the community upon their release, she added.



WPP sponsors 'Ohana Day at WCCC. Credit: DCR.

GED Graduation Ceremony Held at Kulani Correctional Facility

The Kulani Correctional Facility (KCF) hosted a graduation ceremony on September 12, 2025, for 11 inmates who earned their General Education Development (GED) or High School Equivalency diploma while in custody.

Although KCF has had GED graduates in the past, the event was the first time KCF hosted a graduation ceremony. DCR partners with the Hawai'i Department of Education McKinley Community School for Adults – Moanalua campus, for the program. Students must have a passing score of 145 in four exams, reading/language arts, math, science and social studies, to earn their high school equivalency diploma. Studies show that individuals who earn their GED while incarcerated are less likely to recidivate.

Principal Helen Sanpei and Lance Jyo participated in the ceremony to honor the graduates. During the event, DCR Corrections Education Program Manager Roseanne Propato presented diplomas to six graduates. Five of the 11 graduates were not present because four benefitted from a reduction in custody and a fifth transferred to a correctional facility on O'ahu. DCR Director Tommy Johnson congratulated all the graduates for their achievements. He also thanked KCF Acting Warden Kenneth Rowe, education staff and community partners for their unwavering support. *"We are truly grateful for the partnerships we have to support those in our custody and care and help transform their lives,"* Johnson said.

Deputy Director Sanna Muñoz of the DCR Rehabilitation Services and Programs Division, who attended the graduation ceremony, also praised the graduates for their hard work and determination. *"Today is more than just about receiving your diploma, it is about recognizing your potential, knowing that whatever you decide to set your mind to, whatever goals you lay out for yourself, are achievable,"* Muñoz said. Propato echoed Muñoz's sentiment. *"This accomplishment is the beginning of many more steps you can take toward your future, whether it's continuing your education, developing new skills, or pursuing the goals that matter most to you,"* Propato said during the ceremony.

"We are proud of what you have achieved and look forward to seeing the success you will continue to build from this foundation," she added.



DCR Deputy Director Sanna Muñoz of the Rehabilitation Services and Programs Division, officials of the Hawai'i Department of Education McKinley Community School for Adults – Moanalua campus and KCF Acting Warden Kenneth Rowe with graduates.
Credit: DCR.

Difference Between Jails and Prisons

While the terms “jail” and “prison” are often used interchangeably, they actually refer to two very different types of facilities that serve different purposes and function in different ways. When someone is accused of a crime and arrested, jail is usually the first stop in the criminal justice system, serving as the booking and holding location. Jails provide the secure environment needed for the temporary detention of individuals accused of a crime but who have not completed the trial process. Persons may also remain in jail if they could not meet conditions for bail or may not have qualified for bail. While some individuals remain in jail for a short while, minutes or hours, before being released, others may be held longer before they are released or transferred to another facility.

Jails are also used to house individuals who have been convicted of a low-level crime and received a short sentence (typically less than one year). Individuals convicted of a serious crime and who received an extended sentence (more than one year) are incarcerated in a prison. Think “short-term” and “long-term” with jail applying to short-term misdemeanor convictions and prison applying to long-term felony convictions.

In Hawai‘i, the jail population is under the jurisdiction of the courts and individuals in jail can only be released, placed in outside programs or assigned to other alternatives to incarceration by the courts. In contrast, a prison facility houses inmates that have been convicted and classified. Jails may oversee work release programs and some offer services designed to help the individuals change their behavior so they stand a better chance of avoiding a return stay. The difference between a jail and a prison may seem relatively minor on the surface, but there is a significant impact on the types of services that must be provided and how they are operated.



Length of Stay: Jails are used primarily for short-term detention.



Jurisdiction: Jails are typically operated by local law enforcement agencies.



Type of Offense: Jails are commonly used to hold individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or have been sentenced for minor crimes.



Programs and Services: Jails offer some programs and services aimed at helping individuals successfully re-enter society upon release.

We Want to Hear From You

DCR continually seeks input from community leaders and members about plans for the new O‘ahu jail and in response Project Team representatives attend meetings of the ‘Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, the ‘Aiea Community Association, and the Hawai‘i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission, as well as engaging with state and local officials, the media and others. In addition to reporting progress and accomplishments in advancing plans for the new O‘ahu jail, these forums are opportunities for DCR to seek input, advice and guidance from officials, stakeholders and the public. Contact the City and County of Honolulu, Neighborhood Commission Office for information about how to participate at an upcoming ‘Aiea Neighborhood Board meeting (Tel: 808-768-3710/email: nco@honolulu.gov). For information about upcoming meetings of the ‘Aiea Community Association and how to participate, visit <http://www.aieacommunity.org>.

In addition to distributing newsletters to over 1,800 elected and appointed officials, government agencies, media outlets, volunteer groups and members of the public, DCR maintains the new O‘ahu jail website, **NewOahuJail.hawaii.gov**, which provides access to project-related materials, documents outreach efforts, and facilitates the public’s ability to offer ideas and suggestions or ask questions. Interested parties can also request to receive future announcements and notifications by submitting your contact information (name, affiliation if any, and email address) to: robert.nardi@wsp.com.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY



Honoring the
Original Inhabitants
of the 'Āina and their Culture

October 13, 2025 was Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

October 2025	Construction of a new housing unit continues at Maui CCC. Public outreach and engagement continue with attendance at 'Aiea Neighborhood Board, 'Aiea Community Association, and Hawai'i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meetings.
November 2025	Construction of a new housing unit continues at Maui CCC. Public outreach and engagement continue with attendance at 'Aiea Neighborhood Board, 'Aiea Community Association and Hawai'i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meetings.
December 2025	Construction of a new housing unit continues at Maui CCC. Public outreach and engagement continue with attendance at 'Aiea Neighborhood Board, 'Aiea Community Association and Hawai'i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission meetings.

Interested in Learning More?

DCR distributes newsletters to more than 1,800 elected and appointed officials, government agencies, media outlets, volunteer groups and members of the public. For the latest information about the new O'ahu jail project, including project-related materials and FAQs, go to: dcr.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans/. To receive (via email) future announcements, newsletters, and other notifications, please submit your contact information (name, affiliation if any, and email address) to: robert.nardi@wsp.com.

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