

NA KUPA ALO ANA O HAWAI'I

State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services Social Services Division-Child Welfare Services Branch

1010 Richards Street, Room 216

Honolulu, HI 96813

Attn: Elladine Olevao

August 2024

Aloha Ms.Olevao,

Na Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i Citizen Review Panel has worked in collaboration with Hawai'i Child Welfare Services since 2011. Mahalo for your continued collaboration with us through this year! Please find the following report of the Panel's activities for the State Fiscal Year 2024, which covers July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Our team would like to express gratitude for Florence Calderon, Assistant Program Administrator, who has been our liaison with the Department for half a decade. Florence is a strong advocate and support for the Panel and its members. She meets with us monthly via in-person and online meetings; shares updates of the Department and Hawai'i's child welfare system, responds to issues/requests from the Panel, and discusses recommendations. We would also like to thank Maria Ganot, Program Development, Child Welfare Services, who coordinates our travel so that the Panel can be effective in addressing issues and achieving goals. Maria also makes purchases for our projects and keeps our budget up to date.

Who We Are

Hawai'i's Citizen's Review Panel (HCRP) is comprised of citizen volunteers, as mandated by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Our mission is to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of Hawai'i's child welfare services system to evaluate agency practice and to enhance the agency's capacity to help Hawai'i's children and families engaged in child welfare services achieve positive outcomes.

Nā Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i is comprised of citizens who represent their organizations and have knowledge about children from their respective islands. Representatives are committed to meeting the needs of children. Together, we make recommendations to the child welfare system on making improvements to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children and families in our community.

Participation in Monthly Meetings

Nā Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai'i members, representative from across the pāe 'āina including representation from Kaua'i County, Honolulu County, and Maui County. We continue to actively pursue recruitment of new members to ensure we have representation from across the islands. Our group met monthly either through face-to-face visits or through video conference to establish goals and discuss projects and issues related to Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS).

Face-to-face meetings give us opportunities to connect with community members and potential recruits for the Panel.



Current Membership

Chair: Chris Molina, Lili‘uokalani Trust, Kaua‘i
Panelist: Monica Ka‘auwai, Catholic Charities Hawai‘i, Kaua‘i
Panelist: Stephen Haynes, CASA, Honolulu
Panelist: Noe Realin, Lili‘uokalani Trust, Honolulu
Panelist: Leah Ho, Kaua‘i Planning and Action Alliance, Kaua‘i
Panelist: Michelle Jenkins, Hale Kipa, Honolulu
*Panelist: Heidi Allencastre, Maui Family Support Services, Maui
*Indicates new members

Summary of Panel Activities

Hawaii Citizen Review Panel Annual Retreat: No retreat scheduled this year

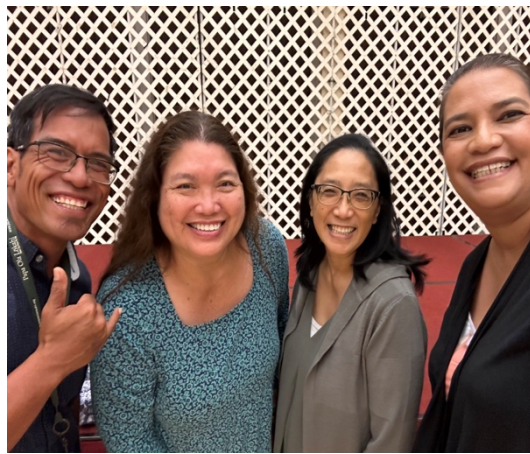
Monthly Meetings: Na Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai‘i members met:

- January 18th held via MS Teams
- February 15th held on Maui
- March 21st via MS Teams
- April 18th via MS Teams
- May 16th held on Oahu at Hale Kipa in Ewa
- June 20th via MS Teams
- July 18th via MS Teams
- August 15th held on Hawaii Island Kīpuka Kona, Lili‘uokalani Trust

Projects

1. **Recruitment Efforts:** We are happy to announce that we welcomed a new member in 2023, Heidi Allencastre who joins us from Maui and brings her wealth of experience from her work with Maui Family Support Services. We will continue working on recruitment and are actively seeking members from across the islands with prospects in Hawaii County and within important sectors to child welfare service.
2. **Collaboration with Family First Hawai'i Program:** Our membership stays engaged with the FFH initiative which is focused on improving the child welfare system and reducing disparities and disproportionalities within our system by providing early intervention and support with programs like evidence-based home visiting programs. We support the focus on culturally appropriate, upstream, preventative services that help families stabilize and reunify, and we will continue to engage with these positive efforts.
3. **Staff Wellness Baskets:** Our CRP membership has worked with Florence to provide our Child Welfare Workers with water bottles and wellness items and have discussed the use of applications like CALM and Headspace for use by staff for the purposes of self-care, self-regulation, and stress management. We have also continued to explore what wellness spaces would look like within work areas for child welfare workers
4. **CRP National Conference:** This year we sent two of our members along with the CWS liaison to the CRP National Conference in San Diego where our members were able to learn about the work happening on the national level and bring back some innovative ideas. We welcome the opportunity for our members to connect with those doing the work across the country and to learn how we can apply what we learn here at home in Hawai'i.
5. **Focus on Staff Retention and Recruitment:** This year our Panel has begun to look at how to support the retention and recruitment of CWS workers. CWS workers are important to supporting our families and children. To ensure quality service, we must make every attempt to keep competent, motivated, and committed workers and attract new people especially those with lived experience with our system into child welfare work by offering competitive pay, good benefits, and flexible schedules for work-life balance. CRP is currently working on a process to generate a set of recommendations on how to retain and recruit workers for CWS.

6. **CFSR/CQI Reviews:** Our members continue to join these case reviews on their respective islands. These case reviews give our members a better understanding of the process and expectations of child welfare cases. We continue to strongly encourage all our members to join these reviews not only to build our own professional experience but also to gain a better understanding of the complex moving parts that are the child welfare system. The Panel will continue to attend these case reviews as much as they can and commit to raising awareness among the community about the value of participating in these processes.



7. **Mālama ‘Ohana Meetings:** Our members attended these important community meetings to hear from community members about how we can continue to improve the child welfare system. We feel this was a valuable opportunity to engage with the community and look forward to seeing how this crucial time of sharing will help pave the path to improved outcomes for our keiki and our communities.

Final Thoughts

Nā Kupa Alo Ana O Hawai’i, Hawai’i’s Citizen Review Panel, had a productive year as we welcomed a new member and look forward to recruiting more members with the goal of ensuring representation from across the islands and from each county. We will also continue to support the efforts to reduce disproportionality and disparities among Native Hawaiians in the child welfare system utilizing efforts like FFH and with other efforts in the community such as the Na Kama a Hāloa Network, the efforts of Mālama ‘Ōhana, and many others. If there are any lessons this year it is that the thriving of our keiki, mākua, kūpuna, and ‘ohana is a collective effort that will take all of us. Strong communities with a network of organizations that can

provide concrete support for family needs and safe places for families to gather and have fun is a goal worth pursuing and a potential boon and protective factor for keeping our families safe, stable, and connected to one another. We believe that for CWS to provide quality service, we need to ensure that efforts are made to retain valuable staff who have years of institutional knowledge and can provide the needed support and guidance for staff. The work of child welfare is demanding and ensuring that our system has adequate resources, most importantly the people to do the work should be a top priority. Our continued commitment to worker wellness will also remain a top priority. The Panel will continue its committee work to determine more specific and concrete ways to support recruitment and retention of CWS workers and continue the work.

As we continue our work into 2025 we will begin looking at exciting new ways to realize our goals by exploring initiatives like setting up a wellness space at the Media Action Center, continuing to work on retention and recruitment and formulating recommendations after talking with identified stakeholders involved with CWS, we also hope to use our annual retreat to prepare for the upcoming CFSR case reviews and continue to strongly encourage every member of the CRP to participate in these case reviews within their own communities when possible and finally to increase the amount of community engagement we do to cultivate relationships within community that help strengthen CWS and the community together.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Mahalo,

Christopher Molina

Christopher Molina

Chair

Citizen Review Panel