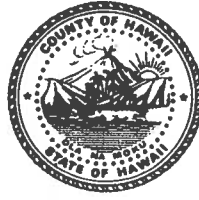


C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



COUNTY OF HAWAII
Police Commission

Aupuni Center
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 9, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Phone: (808) 932-2950 Fax: (808) 932-2949

Rick Robinson, Chair
John Bertsch, Vice Chair
Wendy Botelho, Member
Arthur Buckman, Member
Lloyd Enriquez, Member
Eileen Lacerte, Member
Jacob Tavares, Member
Bernadette Urban-Smith, Member
Greg Yamada, Member

HUMAN RESOURCES

SEP 24 2025
10:39 a.m. JK
RECEIVED

September 24, 2025

To: Steven Pavao, Chair, Salary Commission

From:  Rick Robinson, Chair, Police Commission

Subject: Response to Salary Commission's Inquiry Regarding Proposed Salary Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

1. What are the primary duties and responsibilities of the department/agency?

The Police Department is responsible for the preservation of public peace, prevention of crime, detection and arrest of offenders against the law, protection of the rights of persons and property, and enforcement and prevention of violations of all laws of the state and ordinances of the county and all regulations made in accordance therewith.

2. How many employees does the department/agency employ?

The Police Department is authorized for 654 employees, of which 543 (426 sworn and 117 civilian) positions are currently filled.

3. What is the department/agency organizational structure?

The Police Department consists of a Police Commission, a Police Chief, and the necessary staff.

Police Commission: The Police Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the County Council in the manner provided by the county charter. The Police Commission shall adopt such rules as it may consider necessary for the conduct of its business and regulation of the matters committed to its charge by law.

Police Chief and Deputy: The Police Chief is appointed by the Police Commission and may be removed by the Police Commission. The Deputy Chief shall be appointed by the Police Chief with the confirmation of the Police Commission and may be removed by the Chief with the approval of the Police Commission.

Staff: The department shall be organized into three main bureaus: Administrative, Area I Operations, and Area II Operations.

SALARY COMMISSION
COUNTY OF HAWAII

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Comm. No. 25-04.05
Date November 17, 2025

Each bureau shall be under the command of an Assistant Chief designated by the Police Chief and shall be composed of such number of sworn and civilian personnel as may be assigned.

4. What does the department/agency operating budget and funding encompass?

The department's operating budget represents the resources necessary to carry out our mission and provide essential services to the community. For Fiscal Year 2025-2026, the total operating budget is approximately \$90,531,388. Much of this funding is provided through the County's General Fund, supplemented by state/federal grants, special funds, or other revenue sources as applicable.

A significant portion of the budget is dedicated to personnel costs, including salaries, benefits, and overtime, which are critical to maintaining staffing levels and ensuring continuity of operations. Beyond personnel, the operating budget supports a wide range of daily expenses, such as training, equipment, vehicles, fuel, technology systems, utilities, and facility maintenance. These resources allow the department to function effectively and sustain readiness.

The budget also encompasses the programs and services unique to our department, including emergency response, community engagement, and/or specialized public safety operations. Overall, the department's operating budget reflects both the scope of our responsibilities and the scale of services we provide to the community. It covers the staffing, infrastructure, and operational needs required to meet public expectations and fulfill our mission.

5. What major challenges does the department/agency face?

The Hawai'i County Police Department's major challenges include ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties that result in lingering vacancies, competition for workforce with other entities, and the cost of living on Hawai'i Island; the unique demands of policing the state's largest and most geographically diverse county; and budget limitations that constrain investments in equipment, training, and technology. These challenges, combined with increasing service demands and community expectations, underscore the importance of competitive compensation and sustainable staffing to maintain effective public safety services.

6. Are there any overtime requirements of the department/agency?

Overtime is a necessary component of the Hawai'i County Police Department's operations to maintain 24/7 staffing across all districts. It is driven by staffing shortages, response to emergencies, court appearances, and necessary training, among other special events.

7. What are your recommended salary adjustments and the rationale for these adjustments?

I recommend a 4% raise for our Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief. Instead of focusing solely on the percentage increase, these positions should be evaluated based on their performance and in comparison to similar roles across the United States.