



COUNTY OF HAWAII OFFICE OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER



Renovations and upgrades are underway at Kula'imano Elderly Housing in Pepe'ekeo. *County of Hawaii photo*

Renovations Underway at Kula'imano Elderly Housing

Renovations and upgrades are underway at the County of Hawaii's Kula'imano Elderly Housing in Pepe'ekeo.

Kula'imano Elderly Housing (KEH) features 50 one-bedroom units across 17 buildings. Constructed between 1977 and '79, KEH was the Office of Housing and Community Development's first development project after its establishment in 1975.

This \$11.1 million initiative includes exterior and interior building renovations, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, and various site improvements, including construction of a concrete walkway and ramp.

Nan Inc. was the lowest bidder for the project that is supported by federal State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Work is anticipated to take about a year to complete. During the work, residents will be relocated to vacant units on the site ensuring no tenants are displaced.

For project updates, please visit www.housing.hawaiicounty.gov.

Coming Up: Hawaii Energy Assistance Program Applications Open June 2

Need help paying your home energy bill? H-HEAP may be able to assist.

Learn more on Page 3



Apply Now: Emergency Rental Assistance Still Available to Residents

Applications are still being accepted for the County of Hawaii's Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

Learn more on Page 3



In Focus: Affordable Housing Production Program RFP

Proposals sought for County of Hawaii's Affordable Housing Production Program Fiscal Year 2025-26 funding.

Learn more on Page 4



FROM RENTER TO OWNER



Homeownership Option Program Offers HCV Participants Chance to Own Their Own Home

A single mother of three is finally seeing hope for a stable future for her family.

With a disabled son and limited Social Security income, “Faith,” who has requested anonymity, once felt homeownership was out of reach.

However, through the County of Hawai‘i Office of Housing and Community Development’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Homeownership Option Program (HOP) and supportive community services she has secured a safe and accessible home.

HOP is a federal initiative managed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that enables eligible low-income families to utilize their existing rental assistance vouchers to purchase a home. This program is designed to assist first-time homebuyers in achieving homeownership by providing monthly assistance to help cover mortgage payments.

To learn more, contact the HOP Coordinator at (808) 959-4642 or fsshopinfo@hawaiicounty.gov.

Build a Brighter Future

REACH FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE WITH THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Participants in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), or “Section 8,” Program are eligible to join the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program, offered by the County of Hawai‘i Office of Housing and Community Development.

This voluntary program helps families work toward financial independence — while still receiving housing assistance.

Launched by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1990, FSS combines case management with a financial incentive. Participants work with an OHCD FSS Coordinator to set employment and financial goals, access support services, and track their progress. The program typically runs for five years, with options to complete it sooner or extend it under certain conditions.

Here’s how the financial incentive works: As a family’s income increases, their rent typically goes up. However, for FSS participants, the increase in rent is matched by deposits into a special escrow savings account — funds they can access after successfully completing the program.

Past participants have used their escrow savings



to reduce debt, repair credit, invest in a business, pay for education, or even buy a home.

In 2024, 65 households participated in FSS with 10 completing the program and graduating. The total combined escrow payout was over \$150,000.

Two of the graduates have since moved on to the HCV Homeownership Option Program (HOP).

“The FSS Program is a powerful tool to help families build a stronger financial future while still receiving needed housing support. I encourage every HCV participant to consider joining — it’s an opportunity to turn today’s stability into tomorrow’s independence,” Housing Administrator Kehaulani Costa said.

To learn more, contact the FSS Coordinator at (808) 959-4642 or visit fsshopinfo@hawaiicounty.gov.

Emergency Rental Assistance Available

Applications are still being accepted for the County of Hawai'i's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

ERAP helps Hawai'i Island households that experienced economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to pay their rent. ERAP is limited to households at or below 80% of Area Median Income.

ERAP gives priority to households that

demonstrate the most need and are at imminent risk of homelessness, including households that have received eviction notices for nonpayment of rent; households with rental arrears; and households that are homeless and have a lease agreement.

For more information or to apply, please contact Neighborhood Place of Puna at (808) 298-5566 or visit <https://neighborhoodplaceofpuna.org/erap>.

Energy Assistance Program Application Period Opens June 2

Applications for the Hawai'i Home Energy Assistance Program (H-HEAP) Energy Credit (EC) Program will be accepted June 2 to 30, 2025.

H-HEAP, previously known as LIHEAP, is a federally funded program designed to help low-income families keep their utilities on.

EC assists households that are not in crisis but need assistance with bill payment for the heating/cooling of

their residence.

Applicant households must have an income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Households with a TANF, SSI or SNAP recipient may be eligible for an exemption.

H-HEAP also supports the Energy Crisis Intervention (ECI) Program that assists households in crisis whose electric or gas service has been or will be disconnected. Applications for ECI are

accepted year-round, but the number of approvals each month is limited and fill quickly.

Applicants may apply, once per program year, for one of two types of credit.

For more information on these programs or to apply, please contact the Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC) at (808) 731-7009 or visit <https://hceoc.net/>.

Get Ahead With Free Confidential Financial Counseling

The County of Hawai'i in partnership with Hawaiian Community Assets is committed to enhancing the lives of Hawai'i Island residents by offering a range of services geared toward promoting housing stability and strengthening low- and moderate-income communities.

Financial Empowerment Services are available at no cost and can help residents reduce debt, improve credit, create a budget, grow savings, plan for homeownership, and connect to safe and affordable financial products.

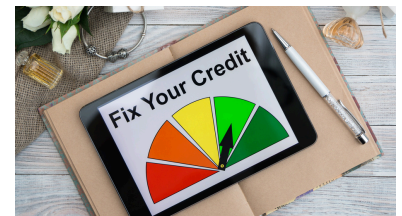
For more information, please email hilofoc@hawaiiancommunity.net, call (808) 934-0801, or visit <https://hawaiiancommunity.net>.

SUCCESS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: FES Helps Resident Reduce Debt, Improve Credit Score

As the old saying goes, "When one door closes, another opens."

For "Keahi," a client who was unable to qualify for a local self-help housing program due to high debt, that second door opened thanks to FES.

Since enrolling in FES, "Keahi," who has requested anonymity, has paid off two credit cards and is reducing her debt-to-income (DTI) ratio. Meanwhile, her credit



score has improved significantly, rising from 673 to 745.

"Keahi" is now in a strong position for the next opportunity to participate in a self-help housing project on Hawai'i Island.

Affordable Housing Production Program RFP Issued

The County of Hawai'i Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) has issued its Request for Proposals (RFP) for Affordable Housing Production (AHP) Program funding to eligible non-profit and for-profit organizations, public agencies, and community land trusts.

The funding is made possible through Ordinance 22-77, which appropriates a minimum of \$5 million per year to the OHCD to facilitate programs that will support, increase, and sustain the availability and accessibility of affordable housing on Hawai'i Island.

The County has set its funding priorities for the Fiscal Year 2025-26 funding round as follows: (1) Targeting the "Gap Group" (81%-140% AMI); (2) Homeownership Initiatives with Extended Affordability; and (3) Preservation of Existing Units.

"We know that finding affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges families face," said Mayor Kimo Alameda. "Through this program, we are supporting real solutions to make our island more affordable for local residents and creating a stronger, more resilient future for everyone."

Proposals must be submitted electronically through an online application platform available at www.hawaiicounty.gov/ahp. Proposals are due no later

Previously Funded Projects Taking Shape



TOP: Nā Hale Makoa, a 139-unit affordable housing project being constructed on County of Hawai'i-owned land in Waikoloa, received \$2,000,000 from the AHP Program in Fiscal Year 2023-24.

ABOVE: HALE o Hawai'i Community Land Trust recently completed this 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom single-family home in Hilo thanks to \$300,000 from the AHP Program in Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Pacific Housing Assistance Corporation and County of Hawai'i photos

than 4:30 p.m. on July 7, 2025.

For more information on AHP and to obtain a copy of the proposal guide, email

ohcd.ahp@hawaiicounty.gov.

Additional information is also available online at www.hawaiicounty.gov/ahp.

UPCOMING OFFICE CLOSURES

Monday, May 26 — Memorial Day
 Wednesday, June 11 — King Kamehameha I Day
 Friday, July 4 — Independence Day
 Friday, August 15 — Statehood Day



  STAY CONNECTED

Facebook: [@hicounty.officeofhousing](https://www.facebook.com/hicounty.officeofhousing)

Instagram: [@hicounty.officeofhousing](https://www.instagram.com/hicounty.officeofhousing)

Email: ohcd@hawaiicounty.gov

Online: www.housing.hawaiicounty.gov