

Meeting of the
HAWAI'I COUNTY HOUSING AGENCY

Hilo, Hawai'i
April 7, 2025

Agency Members Present

James Hustace (attended via Zoom)
Jennifer Kagiwada
Matt Kanealii-Kleinfelder
Ashley L. Kierkiewicz (Chair)
Heather Kimball
Dennis Onishi (attended via Zoom at
10:19am)
Rebecca Villegas

Housing Staff Members Present

Linda Bui (attended via Zoom)
Kehaulani Costa
Jade Iokepa
Chelsea Jensen
Tammy Lyn Kaniho-Miyasato
Kyla Lee
Keiko Mercado
Royce Shiroma (attended via Zoom)
Jenny Suefuji

Corporation Counsel

Diana Mellon-Lacey
Sylvia Wan

Absent and Excused

Michelle Galimba
Holeka Goro Inaba

County Members Present

Kuuhiapo Jeong

Members of the Public

None

Kierkiewicz: Good morning, everyone, welcome to our annual convening as the Housing Agency. Today is Monday, April 7th. I am calling this meeting to order at 10:05am. We are meeting at the OHCD Conference Room in Hilo, with other members joining us via Zoom. Present here in Hilo are agency members Jennifer Kagiwada, Matt Kanealii-Kleinfelder, Heather Kimball and on Zoom, agency members, can you please introduce yourselves on Zoom. I see Mr. Hustace.

Hustace: James Hustace.

Villegas: Aloha Rebecca Villegas, Hawai'i County Council Representative for District 7.

Kierkiewicz: Thank you, Rebecca, just to kind of remember, reminder, we are meeting not with our legislative hats on today. We are just members of the public as agency members. So not Council members. Thank you.

Villegas: Thank you. Sorry about that.

Kierkiewicz: No worries.

Wan: I'm sorry. One technical thing - Can I remove the speaker from under the papers? That would be good. Thank you. Or microphone, I think that's the one recording.

Kierkiewicz: Any other agency members joining us on Zoom. Okay, and I am Ashley Kierkiewicz, Chair and presiding officer of the agency. At this time, we will take testimony from the public.

Kaniho: There was none.

Kierkiewicz: No testimony. Moving on to business of the day. I need a motion for the approval of minutes dated March 28, 2024.

Kimball: So moved.

Kanealii-Kleinfelder: Second.

Kierkiewicz: There is a motion by agency member Kimball, and a second by agency member Kanealii-Kleinfelder. Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor, please say aye. Any opposed (none)? Motion carries. Moving on to new business, the approval of the Annual PHA Plan and 5 year Plan. May I have the motion to approve, please. Thank you. There is a motion by member Kagiwada, seconded by member Kimball to approve the Annual PHA Plan and 5 Year Plan. Housing Agency, would you like to make a presentation?

Costa: Okay, so is there a way to maybe minimize? I don't know if it's going to be big enough. So, Hi, Aloha, Kehau Costa, Office of Housing and Community Development Housing Administrator. Today we're here to present our Annual PHA Plan and our 5 Year Plan. So, we'll just kind of give a little background for you all as a reminder and also for new members of the agency. So, at OHCD we have 5 divisions. One of those divisions is our Existing Housing Division. The Existing Housing Division is our Housing Choice Voucher Program Division also known as Section 8. It's a voucher only program, meaning that we don't have public housing assets that we manage. Part of the requirement is that we provide to HUD every year a one-year Annual PHA Plan submitted by April 15th, and then every 5 years, a 5 Year Plan. So, we're here today to do that. We are federally funded. Our budget which, our budget for this division is

about...What did we just say this morning, 28 million in vouchers, 30 million vouchers, yeah. We support rental assistance for about 2300 family households. We have about 2300 vouchers under our program and when I was Manager, we were cutting about 2.6 million a month in rental assistance and it's probably about...okay, okay...

Kimball: So should we interrupt if we have questions or wait until the end?

Costa: How about we wait 'til the end? Yeah, just make note of them. I might cover them in short. And so, we are the agency, we are the agency. Hawai'i County Housing Agency, OHCD, administers the programs of the Housing Agency for the County of Hawai'i. Okay, so the purpose of our PHA Plan is primarily, it's the agency's policies regarding its programs, operations and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals, and it informs HUD and the families, or its participants served by the agency, members of the public of the agency's mission, goals, and objectives. There are 2 parts to the PHA Plan, 5 Year and Annual, which we'll talk a little bit about, talk through a little bit. Okay, so the PHA Plan, this is required under the code of Federal regulation CFR 24 903. It's very prescriptive. There's a template we follow. It's a HUD template. That, that this information that's listed on this presentation are all the components of the Public Housing Agency Plans or information elements of the plan. A Progress Report, most recent Fiscal Year Audit, Resident Advisory Board comments (if there are any), and then Certifications that you will sign by our local officials, Civil Rights Certification, any challenged elements that would have come out of public comment or Resident Advisory Board comments, and how we would address those challenged elements, and then always our Fair Housing, affirming Fair Housing statements are always included as part of the plan. So that's the thing that, those are the HUD requirements of the plan. As part of the plan, we have a Resident Advisory Board that we convene annually prior to this meeting. So, the plan goes out to participants. We presently hold a kind of a public, public hearing or public meeting, for Resident Advisory, a Resident Advisory Board meeting for our participants to respond to any elements of the plan that they feel they'd like to participate in or give feedback to. When the plan doesn't change significantly or the changes to the plan are federally mandated, often not a lot of comment, because it's just federal policy. When we start to change things, that we can change like preference. A few years ago, we changed our waitlist preference policy, a lot more public feedback and comment from organizations and the public as to the way that we were managing our waitlist and the preferences of our wait list, which was public notice through the plan. So, this year and we'll, we'll get into changes of the plan, but I don't believe we have a lot of local locally

driven changes. The changes to the plan are federally mandated. They are a little bit significant because they're coming out of Federal Law HOTMA, Housing Opportunity through Modern Modernization Act, which was enacted in 2016, and we're only starting to slowly implement. There will be changes to the way we, we qualify households through assets, assets and income. And, and they're they're pretty significant, I would say. But we're slowly implementing them, as HUD requires and it's a very delayed implementation. So, it's, it's pretty technical. I wouldn't imagine a lot of public comment on it until we start to implement it and we start to see, see the, the impacts. Right? So, and and we can't do a lot of talking about it because we don't have the, all of the implementation pieces in place from HUD yet. So, it's very slow starting with software which is taking forever. So, Resident Advisory Board meeting was held on the 21st February 21st, 2025, and there were no comments, which is why I just preface, preface that. And yeah, there we go. So, our mission for our program is to provide for the development of viable communities through decent housing, suitable living environments and expanded economic opportunities. Okay, so 5 Year Plan, Major 5 Year Plan highlights is, are to expand the supply of existing housing. Are you guys online, okay? Hearing this, okay?

Hustace: We can hear you clearly. The slides have frozen, though.

Costa: What slide are we on?

Hustace: The 1st slide.

Costa: You're not seeing any of the slides.

Kierkiewicz: Do they have a copy of the presentation shared via Chat.

Costa: Can you drop it into the chat.

Kierkiewicz: Drop the file into the chat.

Hustace: Thank you.

Costa: Okay? Wait, let's just take a little, little pause so we can get the slides over to you folks and then let me know when you're, when you've got it, and if you're able to open it, are you able? Are you in places where you're able to open the, the presentation on a desktop.

Hustace: Yes.

Costa: Okay

Hustace: Yes. Rebecca says, No.

Villegas: I'll just open it on my lap, on my laptop. I'm on my laptop

Costa: Yeah, you're okay.

Villegas: I'm good.

Costa: Okay. Sorry about that. I should have asked earlier, but I saw a little Internet unstable message pop up and, and then, that skewed me into like, maybe you guys are lost somewhere.

Kierkiewicz: Administrator, as you transition between slides, can you just note the title of the slide that you're on so folks can follow along. Thank you.

Costa: Will do. Would you like me to go back at all when you get your slides open?

Hustace: You can keep progressing. That's totally fine. Thank you.

Costa: Okay, okay. So, the slide that we're currently on is Major 5-Year PHA Plan Highlights. Just let me know if it....

Hustace: Mahalo. All good. Thank you.

Costa: Rebecca, we can't see you.

Villegas: Gotcha so I'm sorry. Can you say the.

Costa: The slide.

Villegas: Yeah.

Costa: Yep, Major 5-Year Plan PHA Plan Highlights and it might be like 4, slide 4 or 5

Villegas: I got it. Thank you.

Costa: Great, thank you.

Villegas: Of course.

Costa: Okay, sorry. Thank you very much.

Villegas: No worries.

Costa: Yeah. So, Major PHA Plan Highlights are to expand the supply of existing housing, improve the quality of, improve the quality of existing housing, increase local choices for program participants, promote self-sufficiency and homeownership, seeking partnerships that will further the goal of affordable housing opportunities, ensure equal opportunity and affirmatively further Fair Housing, enhancing governance and service and improving housing delivery systems, ensure safe and sanitary housing, and comply with updated Violence

Against Women, Women Act or VAWA. So key achievements of the past year are, we applied for and were awarded 46 new HUD VASH vouchers. So, these are vouchers through the Veteran Administration. These are vouchers that come directly with supportive services from VASH from the Veteran, Veteran Affairs and with case management. So, there's a whole process that a veteran would go through to be preferred for this type of voucher. And this is pretty significant for us to add these 46 vouchers to our program, and primarily...what, where, we, why we applied for the vouchers, and where we went with this, City and County of Honolulu, we were actually administering vouchers for the City, City and County of Honolulu, HPHA. Yeah, I think administers for them, too, anyway. So, we were administering for them and what was happening is because their home voucher was based in Honolulu, the case management was attached to the city, was attached to Honolulu, so veterans would have to come through intake in Honolulu, and their case management would be managed out of Honolulu. But then we would be administering these vouchers here for veterans living here on island. So, then they would have to go through case management, they would have to contact to case management here, or work with the case manager in Honolulu and the veteran affairs was off. It wasn't synced. Their case management staffing wasn't synced with the number of veterans that we were serving here for homelessness. So, the award of this voucher allows us to absorb all of those veterans into our program and not just administer, and it allows the VA to bring case management staff to the island to directly serve those veterans. So, that was pretty significant to be able to do that and that was one of the achievements. We've expanded our in-person services at our West Waimea Civic Center to increase accessibility to participants. So, we have specialists that go to Waimea and meet with families, households there in Waimea. We've maintained relationship with Community Alliance Partner participation. We've improved landlord engagement through orientation and education. During, and then we've increased Family Self-Sufficiency program participants with 10 graduates. Total escrow payout for those graduates from the Family Self-Sufficiency program, \$154,000 in, in escrow earnings to those families that have worked through the FSS program and then 2 of those graduates moved from Family Self-Sufficiency program to the Homeownership Option Program. That's pretty significant for us. That's it, that's it. Thank you.

Kierkiewicz: Thank you. Agency members, any questions? I'll go ahead and start with folks that are on zoom.

Hustace: No, thank you.

Costa: Next slide. Sorry, thank you, and stop, share and see.

Kierkiewicz: Rebecca, do you have any questions for Administrator Costa?

Villegas: Not at this time.

Kierkiewicz: Okay, thank you. Members here, questions?

Kagiwada: Sure.

Kierkiewicz: Member Kagiwada.

Kagiwada: Thank you. So, going back to the Existing Housing Division and the Federal funding for these vouchers, does the Federal funding also cover the staff salaries for that division.

Costa: Yes.

Kagiwada: Okay, so do you have an estimate of how much that is or how many, how many people and in...?

Costa: So, Existing Housing has about 26 staff right now, 26 to 30. We have 2 vacancies currently and I would say salaries are under 3 million. So, at last, when I was managing, was, it was about 2 ½ million annually in salaries out of the 28 - 30,000,000 that we received.

Kagiwada: Okay, thanks. And of the 2,300 households that you serve with the vouchers every month, or is that per year? Oh, that's per year, month every month, 2,300 a month, do we have an estimate on number of individuals that is?

Costa: So, voucher sizes run from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, right? We have households of one up to households of 11. So, we estimate, maybe, but without, I don't have that number for you right now, but without having to run like a very significant report out of our system, we estimate about 7,500 individuals between all the household sizes that we have. Okay? So yeah, you're good with that number.

Kagiwada: Okay, yeah. Monthly. Okay. And of the changes you said, there's some changes coming, and that changes for qualifications for the vouchers.

Costa: Yes.

Kagiwada: Are you able to share at all what some of those might be?

Costa: You wanna...

lokepa: Yes, yeah. So right now, there are no significant changes. But there will be changes coming up. So, HOTMA, Housing Opportunity through Modernization Act from 2,016 went into law. Now we're only seeing the effects through HUD. So they're starting to implement in a rolling phase. So right now,

there'd be about 3 topics per quarter that will be implemented. One that I can share that will be coming up is the eligibility requirement. We'll now be looking at, and this is a HUD requirement, so nothing we can make a decision on. It'll be a \$100,000 for assets. So, if there's a \$100,000 for assets, they would not be eligible for housing assistance. There will for our participants that are currently on the program, they'll be able to stay on the program. So any new applicants, they wouldn't be eligible. So that is one that I can share that's gonna happen coming up in the next few months.

Costa: If I could just briefly, this is Jade Iokepa. She's the division manager for Existing Housing. Prior to that, she was the, the planner that worked on the plans. She's followed me along when I was hired here, I was the planner, and then when I moved to division manager, Jade moved into my, my planner position, and as I moved into Housing Administrator, she's moved into Division Manager. Jenny Suefuji is with our program, and she was our family self-sufficiency coordinator. And now she's moved into our planner position. So, we kind of have a nice consistency between the 3 of us, understanding the plan, the administrative rules that we're following, our programs all the way up through you know, Housing Administration, which is, I think, really a plus for this division, since it's half of the OHCD Division and it's the division that really impacts our community in a very visible way.

Kagiwada: Okay. And as new requirements, so you said, this is one you can share with us, but it sounds like there's other ones you think, or maybe coming, that you're not quite able to share.

Iokepa: So there are others that will be coming in the next month. As soon as HUD releases that information, then we're able to take a look at it. Is this something that we have a decision on? Is it a HUD mandatory requirement? So that one in particular is a HUD mandatory requirement?

Kagiwada: Sure.

Iokepa: As new information is provided we will be sharing out with everyone so that they're aware of the rolling implementation. Initially, they had planned on doing implementation all at one time, and I think they realized that, that was not possible for PHA, so it'll be slowly implemented.

Kagiwada: Okay and you said that HOTMA was 2016. I guess I have a question of our is this administration and HUD able to quickly change things? Or process and kind of a rigorous process. But, given what we've seen with this new administration, is it possible that they may make quick changes that you do not see coming.

Iokepa: Don't think so. HUD has made it very clear that it's a very slow implementation process for HOTMA in particular. So, I don't anticipate seeing any quick changes.

Kagiwada: I have been hearing that this Administration is trying to get away from housing 1st and getting more into, you know, work requirements. And you know, mandatory enrollment in programs things like that. So in order to get any sort of support.

Iokepa: We are closely monitoring all of the information that is shared publicly from HUD and if anything does come to light, we will be sharing that out with community as soon as we're aware.

Kagiwada: Okay, and Administrator Costa, will that be brought to council? Or how will we know about this?

Costa: know. Yeah, I would know the telling council.

Kagiwada: But how will County Council be informed of the information changes?

Costa: You know, as, and we've talked about this, you know, as we haven't seen this type of significant legislation within this industry, the public housing authority industry since, like 1998 or something with the last significant change to public housing administration. As we roll out, I think it would probably be good that we're engaged with HCHA, through the chair, and if we need to conduct a little bit more regular or quarterly meetings, we can, so that the agency is informed about changes, and it can just easily also just be a memo to you folks that when there are significant, implementable directives given from HUD that you're aware of what those are. You know the the asset one is, it's significant for us. So it's important that you're informed, because you'll hear that from the public right? Definitely.

Kagiwada: Okay, thank you. And then just one thing on the achievements. First of all, congratulations on the VASH Vouchers. Awesome. The improved landlord engagement like, what kind of things have you been doing that have improved them.

Costa: You wanna talk about it?

Iokepa: Yeah, I can share. So, we have implemented the landlord orientation. Prior to that, it was just kind of phone calls, emails engagement. We have that, added landlord orientation. So it's meeting in person or through zoom to share all the nuts and bolts about the program. How it works? What are the benefits

for landlords? So yeah, it's been a lot of it's more information sharing and educating landlords and community on the positives of the program. So

Kagiwada: Thanks, that's all for now, Chair. Thank you.

Kierkiewicz: Just being on the topic of hot messages. Similar to the office sending a letter to the Council regarding there was a resolution we adopted, and on a regular basis you let us know where we are with 201H projects. So, as rules are shared by HUD and implemented by the office, please transmit a memo to either my office or all agency members for our awareness, and I'm also assuming that information will be posted to the OHCD website. So members of the public are aware of changes and how it impacts existing voucher, voucher holders and you know future absence.

Costa: Absolutely.

lokepa: We do have a link on our current website www.hawaiicounty.gov/hotma

Jensen: Yes, it should be active.

Kierkiewicz: Is there a timeline in which HUD is hoping to implement all of the new changes and policies?

lokepa: Not yet. So, so far they're releasing it seems like quarterly so far, and it keeps changing, but right now it's been quarterly about 2 to 4 topics, 3 to 4 topics per quarter. Some are very minor, more staff streamlining processes, and then some are a little well, the only one, so far is that significant is the asset requirement. So yeah, you can absolutely share.

Kierkiewicz: Thank you and I just want the record to reflect that Member Onishi, Fresh Onishi, joined us at 10:19 am. Thank you. Member Kimball, do you have any questions?

Kimball: Yeah. Sure. Thank you. So, just following up on Member Kagiwada, any issues with funding coming to you guys or any anticipated reduction.

Costa: So we're not. We're not seeing or hearing about any significant reduction of award to the rental assistance program, the voucher program. There's 1 program that we know is being affected. It's a small program. So, within our housing choice voucher program, there's a few special purpose voucher types. So, there's VASH. There's a foster youth initiative. There's a stability voucher. So, there's these different specialized vouchers to address particular housing need, particular housing population. So, during Covid, HUD created or released emergency housing voucher vouchers, and it was

anticipated to be a 10-year program, so it would have sunsetted in maybe 2030, and we did receive new notice that it will sunset in 2026. So that's 95 households currently. It's about, I don't know how many... 2.6 million and so that that is sunsetting early, but not of immediate impact, and there will be a implementation in the way that we roll back that program and absorb. I'm anticipating that we would absorb those households into our regular voucher type. So just that special the specialty specialty voucher will probably go away. But, there will be a plan to absorb those households into housing choice vouchers.

Kimball: What were the qualifications for that without different standards?

Costa: Homeless. Yeah. At risk of homelessness referred through the COC Continuum of Care. So they have to be referred in through our HUD COC, locally COC released would do referrals to us for those vouchers.

Kimball: Is the constraint with utilizing all of the vouchers still finding landlords that are willing to participate in the program?

Costa: So the current state of our vouchers, if you don't mind me saying, we have excellent utilization of our vouchers, so much so that we over utilize our vouchers. Part of our landlord, program a couple of years ago was to really do some significant landlord incentives for becoming a Section 8 Landlord. So not only education, but we have incentives for landlords. So, we had really excellent adoption, and then we had, we have a landlord liaison position. So we have somebody that works directly with landlords, new and existing landlords. Kind of gives, you know, gives priority work to, to addressing landlord, new landlords and existing landlords. So, we have a position. We have education, and then we had some funding available for landlord incentives. So, we have excellent adoption of Section 8 Program in our community. We went over utilized. We use too many vouchers. So, then we had to pull back a little bit to get down to 100% utilization. We went over a hundred percent, and then the other significant aspect of our program is that our cost, our cost per unit has gone up. So, we do a calculation of cost, just very average cost per, per unit, PUC and that has gone up. So right now, we're having to manage our utilization with our actual budget amount. So last year we went over budget. We went into shortfall. HUD does have HUD health reserves, and they have a way to manage shortfalls for, for public housing agencies that go over budget. And, and then we just request that additional money, typically in the following year, that additional money requested from shortfall becomes part of your next annual award. So, it, it works out. We don't go into our own shortfall. But right now what we're having to do is manage utilization with our budget amount

and our cost per unit is going up such that we're not able to utilize all of our vouchers because the cost per unit is exceeding what we're budgeted from now. So that's the, that's the landscape we're in right now.

Kimball: Can you, can you explain to me how that relates to the fair market rent?

Costa: So, HUD publishes the fair market rent based on a rent study. They, HUD does their own rent study, and we can also participate in. We can also do our own, generate our own rent study, hire a consultant, do a rent study as long as they use the same formulation as HUD, in the way that they determine fair market rent. We can use a local study to say, "Hey, our rents are higher than what you're telling us they are" so we can get closer to fair market rent. True, fair market rent. Our last fair market rent study was done about 5 years ago. Then we take that fair market rent which includes rent. It includes utilities, electric and water.

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Costa: Yes, it includes utilities. We take that fair market rent and per CFR, we're able, we set a payment standard from 90% to 110% of that fair market rent amount. We can do exception rent of a little bit higher to 120% for areas that have higher rents. About 2 years ago, 3 years ago, we, we got this big boost of inflationary spending. We got an additional 4 or 5 million dollars from HUD, and the directive from HUD was spend that money down, spend that inflationary amount. So we pull every lever you can to spend that money. So we went to the highest payment standard we could 110%, and then 120% in exception areas to spend that money down. The challenge with that is that you don't change that for, for participating households until 2 years out. So, when we do annual re-certifications, so we went to the highest to have good absorption, to have landlords participate to do the highest we could in fair market as close to fair market as possible, that just inflated our per unit cost, right? So then, if we were truly in a budget year where we weren't receiving as high of an award, we may have to pull back on our, our payment standard. But it really, you really wouldn't see the effects of that until maybe 2 years out, because it wouldn't affect existing households. It would only affect new incoming households until and then the existing households 2 years, past the 2 years.

Kimball: It's very confusing.

Costa: Yeah, it is.

Kimball: So does, does HUD identify the exception areas, or is that something you guys identify?

Costa: Hey? You want to go there. It's very interesting because HUD actually has small area fair market rent. You can go to the HUD website, and you can see our fair market rent by Zip code on this island, and you can see the disparity. Waimea is the highest, maybe like 4,300 a month, right? So, it is, it is a real, a blend of art and science, because we could break up our payment standard into actual small areas. We could do it by zip code. We could blend zip codes together. So, we currently do kind of West zip codes and East zip codes as 2 separate payment standard areas. West is the exception side. We could go; we could go more granular, granular than that. It would be very confusing and complicated for our staff to, to do that, and it would really blow up our budget because we would have very high exception rents in certain areas. So, it's, it's probably a strategy that you would want to employ for a long period of time slowly, so that you're not just doing this crazy change of things every year, every other year. You, you'd want to have a housing strategy that if you really wanted to address payment standards by general groupings, geographic districts based on what the actual fair market in an effort to really meet the needs of North Hawai'i community. We could do that, but it would take strategy and it would take commitment over a long period of time, and we could get there. We can't get there in one year. So, there's things that we can do definitely to address housing and rents. But, it's some work, and it would, and it would be additional work on our staff.

Kimball: Certainly something to have further conversation.

Costa: Yeah.

Kimball: The vouchers themselves doesn't really have geographical requirements

Costa: No, except for project based vouchers.

Kimball: And then do you have any sense of the distribution there?

Costa: Primarily, you would say, like 70% East Hawai'i, 30% West Hawai'i and it's just because the, the rents are so much higher in West Hawai'i that there's not an incentive for a landlord to rent at our payment standard, even with the exception rent when they can get more on the market.

Kimball: Thank you.

Costa: Sure, thank you.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: What is the, what is the data being used to create the 5 Year Plan? I'm leaning on what I heard at Council.

Costa: What aspect of the 5 Year Plan?

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: I guess, populations being served.

Costa: So we use the Consolidated Plan. So the consolidated, the PHA plan, it goes with the Consolidated Plan. So we use that same housing study that Grants Management uses to put together the OHCD, you know the same plans, the same data. We're using the same data.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Where does the data come from?

Costa: So, the, the housing planning study, we hire a consultant, SMS, and they collect the data from HUD, from DBEDT. They do surveys, local surveys themselves. They conduct surveys here locally. They do the housing, planning, study data for the State, for primarily all, all the PHA's in the state and I'm happy to share that with you and it's on our website, also. If you want to see the actual housing plan. The study that we use, it's under plans and studies on the OHCD website.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: What I caught last time maybe correct me is that we're using census data.

Costa: Census data is incorporated in there, too.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Contractors that we had contracted to do this study failed to act in time, and then we had another company step in. Something between Ward and someone else.

Costa: Yeah, so we contract SMS. Typically, and since this data is used in, in there, in all of the studies. It's a, it's a compilation of several data sources. Currently, SMS, yes, did not finish the updated plan in time. So, we have the existing plan and then additional census data and we have the new consultants who, who have taken over from SMS Ward. They're finishing out the 5 Year Plan. That is not finished. That SMS did not finish.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay, so that was my, that was my question is, SMS didn't Ward is finishing. Yeah. But here's our 5 year plan. And then what I heard was, we're using census data, which is very selective cause a lot of people just won't fill it out. They don't like being recorded anyway by the government, which is funny. But if that is our basis for creating the plan, then I have concerns about what our plan becomes based on the data that we use to get that.

Costa: So, when the new housing, when the new house housing study is published, we can amend our plan.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay.

Costa: So, we're using the best data we have available to us, which may not be the best data, but we can amend the plan based on new data.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Yeah, that's good. That's good to hear. Thank you. That was a, that was a big question mark for me last time.

Costa: and if I can go off script a little bit. I would really like to have a better housing study and something that's much more local. Instead of using statewide data, statewide collection. I just really think that we in our community have resources available to us that could really get a lot closer to what the actual housing need is and I, I'd like to see us, our office do that because how we direct our development is directly impacted by the community lead.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: I absolutely agree. What was driving decision making being federally based with a little scattering of state questionnaires, that may have been a phone surveys that may have happened. I always do wonder where that, that is being pulled from. I've, I've seen some horrible statistical analysis where they call people on Oahu and ask them how the impact would be on Hawai'i Island.

Costa: So, if I could go off the script, and so you can see where my brain goes and how I think, Kohala Affordable Housing Task Force, they're an amazing little group out in Kohala and a few years ago, and I, I love getting their minutes, I love getting their agendas. A few years ago, they wanted to know what the housing need for Kohala, North Kohala, you know, was. And so they created their own survey on SurveyMonkey, and they went to the Kohala Reunion, and they really got out into their community. They sat at the Kohala Reunion. They helped Kupuna fill out paper surveys. They had a SurveyMonkey online, and they really collected very localized housing need data for their community and that is who I would go to if I were asking what are the needs for housing in Kohala. I would go to the group that is locally doing their own surveys and really able to advise on what the need is. So, I just wanted to share that with you, because that's where, that's where we are as administrators. We don't want somebody to say we need 10,000 units, and we're going to put them all in Waikoloa. We want to put units where they belong. State side of the town

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: I completely agree, and, and gauging from some of the community response for the meetings, I saw 2 sign-up names on one of your exhibit sheets in here. And so, 2 people showed up to a housing meeting where you can ask for input from the community that's showing me that we're

not getting that feedback. Beautiful. Okay. Last one. This, this is an interesting well, and I need your help with this. So there's the continuum of care. There's cap. There's OHCD referrals, and I'm seeing, I'm seeing a circular kind of mentality there, where and where I'm going is, the members of CAP are receiving OHCD grants to do work.

Costa: But I'll explain. I'll explain a little bit about CAP. And do you know the relationship between CAP COC OHCD.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: And there's another one, starts with a "B".

Costa: Bridging the Gap. So, I had to learn this, too, right? Because I'm like, who are all these players? Right? So, oh, and then there's HCHA, right?

Kierkiewicz: So, which is us.

Costa: Which is you folks, you know who you are. OHCD administers all these programs, right? So we're the county department. Anybody who received a HUD grant outside, you know, they get direct funding through NOFOs. All of the organizations that receive HUD grants are required to be part of the CoC, the Continuum of Care. Across the State, there's 2 Continuum of, 2 groups that meet HUD's Continuum of Care requirements. So, HUD requires that there is a Continuum of Care. Honolulu Oahu has partners in care, that is, their, their local Continuum of Care group administer convener and the rest of the state, the balance of state is Bridging The Gap. So, we are required to have a Continuum of Care by HUD. Anybody who participates in programming and receives funding through HUD participates in the Continuum of Care. On our island, that's Bridging The Gap. There are many other organizations that work in homelessness housing, and homelessness, nonprofit organizations that are not directly receiving HUD awards, so they are not able to participate, or they don't participate necessarily, not, maybe not, not able to participate, but they don't necessarily participate in the Continuum of, because that's really, primarily around funding. So, community alliance partners is the greater member, member organization of all of the service providers and all of the organizations that are working in this. Not all of them are HUD awards, or you know, are are, have a HUD contact, and are required to participate in the CoC, so it does seem like a little bit like, why are there so many groups? Or but that's the relationship. That's the org chart between all of them. So CAP is larger. The Bridging The Gap is small. It's just our little, little CoC for HUD. And then OHCD, of course, is outside of that. So hope that explains it to you a little bit.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay, so under the for HUD, for PHA, BTG, is our local

Costa: CoC

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: CoC

Costa: Yeah, sure.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: And then CAP participates in BTG.

Costa: Some members of CAP participate in BTG. HUD, if they have a HUD award that they're managing.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Does CAP provide referrals to OHCD?

Costa: CAP does not. CAP does not provide referrals to OHCD. It's BTG, it's the Continuum of Care.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay.

Costa: And actually, BTG has an, to make things more confusing, BTG has Administration Office called Ka Mana O Na Helu. So they, BTG, will direct referrals to Ka Mana O Na Helu and we get the referrals directly from Ka Mana O Na Helu. So, it, it gets vetted and put into the system through the, the office that administers the COC.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay, that's helpful. It is more clear than it was. Not as clear as we want, but it's actually helpful, and I'll follow up outside of this because I think my questions a little bit differently.

Costa: Okay, yeah.

Kierkiewicz: Administrator who runs Ka Mana O Na Helu?

Costa: Allison.

Kierkiewicz: Allison, we love Allison.

Costa: What's her last name?

Kierkiewicz: Our Allison at OHCD?

Costa: No, no, she's on Oahu. Allison and Carlos

Kierkiewicz: LLC.

Costa: No, they're the 2 staff that are there, the executive director and staff there, so I'm sorry none of their names with me, but they, they're, they're

Kierkiewicz: So they're the channel for all the COC's to send referrals to. As for BTG?

Costa: For BTG, just BTG, Oahu has Partners in Care. So, Partners in Care is the member, the CoC member organization with an administration team in-house, and we have BTG, as the members and Ka Mana O Na Helu administers the grants.

Kierkiewicz: And they are selected by HUD?

Costa: I'm not sure.

Kierkiewicz: Okay.

Costa: But they're, they're definitely approved by HUD and, and part of HUD oversight, oh, undersight.

Kierkiewicz: So, OHCD administers policy and program. HCHA, the agency, which is what we are, kind of sets the policies that you administer. The Continuum of Care HUD requirement, if you're gonna use any HUD monies, you have to have a Continuum of Care. These folks talk stories, share best practices. Then it sounds like there's a Community Alliance Partners which is a mix of folks that are in the CoC, our Bridging The Gap. They could also be organizations that receive State or County funding.

Costa: No.

Kierkiewicz: No funding at all from government, but folks come together and just talk about industry issues and how they might be able to collaborate.

Costa: Even friends.

Kierkiewicz: Friends. Friends of the mission.

Costa: Individuals can participate.

Kierkiewicz: Just wanna make sure I got all the different entities. That's great. Thank you. You know you did a high-level overview of what you hope to achieve over the next 5 years with the plan, and I'm grateful to know that there's a potential to amend the plan. You know, I agree with Member Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder, that the census data is not a true representation of our island. Keep in mind that the census was last taken during Covid. So, a lot of folks just weren't answering the doors. There were a lot of folks that were moving off island, on island, and so where we were then is very different from where we are now, and I honestly thought that when we, as a council, directed the office of housing to create a housing strategy, I was not expecting a review of Chapter 11, so that was a surprise to me because the directive through our resolution was create a housing strategy specific to Big Island. So, I'm grateful to know that you guys are looking at that and would encourage

you to explore that more with the County Council during their budget hearings, which can be later this week about what that could look like. If there's a need, or if you can take care of it, with existing funding. But I'm curious, supply of housing, quality of housing, choice of housing, getting people to be in a position to go from renters to homeowner, and then the necessary partnerships that are needed to make all of that happen? Do you have specific goals, because these are all very systematic, but are we saying we want to help 100 matches? You know what I mean like, are there specific goals that you have in mind where you know that you've made progress, that you can say, "Hey, this was one success."

lokepa: Yeah. The annual plan was specified.

Costa: Yeah, okay, yeah, I'm cautioning myself to not answer big picture, OHCD big picture, because today's meeting is specific to the vouchers and Section 8. So, it would really be appropriate for our division manager to talk about goals, that the division that manages the, the agency goals and objectives is able to share what the goals are for, for the, for the, for the agency, for, for our programs.

Kierkiewicz: I'm just talking about the 5 Year Plan. These were things that were on the slide. But it sounds like you need to do more research to be done. You need to get more Hawaii Island center data first before you can articulate, you know, really clear numbers for goals for these objectives you have.

Costa: Yeah, with, with taking in mind the limitations that we have with the number of vouchers and the budget that we're given and the position that we're in, because we, of course, would love to expand the program. But we're kind of at our max, right? So it's yeah. Different, different strategies to employ actually in finding ways to maximize vouchers within our budget, which is, yeah, reducing the POC.

Kierkiewicz: Alright, Member Onishi, do you have any questions for housing before we move to the vote?

Costa: No, they don't.

Villegas: One quick question.

Kierkiewicz: Go ahead.

Villegas: Sure, I just want to make sure I understood this clearly. So, the changes that are anticipated to come under the laws that were passed, I believe you said in 2016 related to HUD programs, those were passed under, you know, much different administration priorities. And it sounds like it's to the

benefit of these programs that it takes so long for them to move forward and it's been chosen for it to happen in increments, which from understanding this correctly, provides some comfort that the current administration can't gut HUD the way that other, you know, departments in the government and budgets have been gutted, but that we would be looking. We're still looking pretty good, and we, we should be safe(ish) in this cycle.

lokepa: We're still monitoring. So, if anything does come to light, we will share, as soon as we are aware. If HUD shares any information.

Villegas: Okay. Well. May the force be with us?

lokepa: Yes, very true.

Villegas: Thank you for your continued vigilance and keeping an eye on that, keeping those lines of communication. We aren't the only, you know, county or municipality, having to navigate these trepidatious times. But thank you for your, your work in all of this and I just, I appreciate it. I also wanted to say that I appreciated Member Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder's line of questioning, and I think I know where he was headed with some of those questions, and would be happy to talk offline of some of those things that are at least in my community are perceived and they have a lot of questions about the organizations that get to receive the HUD funding and then allocate them. So. thank you. That's, that's all I got.

Costa: And you know I'm more than available to meet and talk.

Villegas: You're wonderful. Thank you so much, Administrator Costa. Your leadership is deeply appreciated. Your authentic service and I, I also appreciate hearing how your succession planning within your team, how you've all worked together in so many different capacities, and that brings a wealth of knowledge, and understanding of acronyms that are almost giving me a headache.

Costa: Yeah. Thanks.

Villegas: Yeah. Appreciate it, that's all. Thank you.

Kierkiewicz: I just, I wanted to clarify because it was mentioned that folks that receive HUD money, direct HUD money, and my understanding is the no buzz are issued a financial award. And so organizations are applying directly to HUD. No local organizations are directing HUD money to themselves or other agencies. I just, I, I really want that clarification for the records.

Costa: Correct. Yes, correct. Cause HUD funding through the Continuum of Care, are separate awards from Office of Housing. Those are direct awards through notice of funding opportunities and organizations that you know are ma'a to HUD will apply directly to HUD for those awards, and, and we don't touch them, and we don't direct them, and we don't guide that at all. So, it and I'm happy. I'm happy to do the breakdown anytime with you, because I had to really dig in and learn this myself when I started here, and I just didn't know who all these organizations were, and how they all interconnected or didn't connect and, and we're a small community. So, different, you all do. We all wear different hats. We all wear different hats at the same time.

Villegas: Yep.

Kagiwada: I have a couple small follow-up's, if I will.

Costa: Yeah, go ahead.

Kagiwada: Thank you. So, with this new requirement about asset limitations, do you have any sense of how many people may be losing their vouchers?

Iokepa: Not yet. So, I think once we start to see then we'll have a better idea of how, what the impact will be. There also is an opportunity for them to dissolve assets. So that's something that they could choose to do if they wanted to. So, they it's really up to them at that point.

Kagiwada: Okay, okay. Cause I could see somebody having, you know, some land that's willed to them, and they can't do anything with it, because they have no money. Kind of thing, or partial ownership of something where they don't get to choose, even if they can sell it or not, because there are other members involved.

Costa: That's addressed. HUD addresses those situations.

Kagiwada: Okay, good.

Costa: Even geographic. So, you could, you know, you could work in Hilo, own a home that's geographically not where, where you work. That would not be considered, considered ineligible or ineligible asset. But the income derived if you're renting, that would be considered. So there, there's all these nuances that HUD has provided for really minimizing, minimizing.

Kagiwada: And then going back to the different kinds of vouchers, you noted VASH, foster youth, stability vouchers, emergency housing vouchers. Are those all under this 28 - 38,000,000 because I believe there are other vouchers housing vouchers referred to. I don't know if it's getting out there, but in our

budget that total up to, I think, 42 million altogether, when you add those other small pots, but those are not any of these. Those are separate.

Costa: Oh, yeah. So.

Kagiwada: I'm just trying to understand which ones fall in this, and which ones may be separate and not included in the 30 million.

Costa: Yeah, 30. You're, you're right. HCV is 30 million, and then we have a couple of small. The only 2 voucher types that are separate in their own funding buckets are Mainstream, and so Mainstream, Mainstream and EHV.

Kagiwada: Mainstream

Costa: Mainstream and EHV. Mainstream is non-elderly disabled voucher, and we have a hundred and ten vouchers.

lokepa: 87, and EHV is a hundred ten.

Costa: Oh 87, that's right. EHV has a hundred ten. 87 and EHV was max of a hundred, but we're down to 98.

lokepa: 98.

Kagiwada: Okay.

Costa: Yeah, so those are the 2.

Kagiwada: And there not under that 30 million.

Costa: They're not that large.

lokepa: Similar programs.

Kagiwada: Okay, okay, I'm just trying to understand what that 30 million is. Alright. Thank you.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: I have one more. Congratulations on getting the Cmap score up. You want to continue on that track as well.

Costa: Yeah, we're overachievers here.

OHCD Admin: and then. My, my final question right now. The homeowners home ownership option program current 27% utilization. How are you gonna? how or is it? Is it us not being able to get there? Or is it the community not participating in the program that is the hurdle.

lokepa: It's, it's housing available at the right price.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: It's housing availability.

lokepa: It's truly affordable is what the main barrier.

Costa: It's a, it's an amazing program, right. You can use your voucher to to pay your mortgage. But most of our portion, right? Not your mortgage. But you know our program is for 60, 60% and below AMI. So you have to find a home that's selling at that 60% or below AMI price points, which is non-existent. So this goes through like the bigger picture of really finding ways to address affordable homeownership or putting homes into affordability periods much longer through a whole bunch of different creative programs that I really hope that we're going to see that we're doing in the next 4 years, so that there are homes that are deeply affordable for families that are in this particular, in this, in these 80% and below that, can actually enter into homeownership.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: I think I mean, if I look back in the minutes. I know I bring this up every time is, how do we begin to build equity? And that's this program is that but if we're not able to utilize it because we don't have affordable housing available to purchase, then we can't get there. So even requiring affordable housing projects to have homes for sale that match this category become something we can push towards in the future, if you're not already.

Costa: Absolutely. We have models, and we have programs that we've done in the past that we can do again. We have programs that are really innovative, that we can use to address homeownership. So we'll be talking about that a lot.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay, have you reviewed the affordable, as we look at affordable housing as a county? Or are you reviewing it to see where it could interlock our guidelines. Chapter 11. How it would interlock with the home ownership options program.

Costa: Yes.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: So we can create the housing and have it for sale and have, and it's ready to take over.

Costa: Yep.

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Okay.

Kierkiewicz: all right. There is a motion on the board to approve the Annual PHA Plan and 5-Year PHA Plan. All those in favor, please say, aye,

Wan: I'm sorry, just because we're split and remote, and this is the fun. If the voting members who are on zoom, can you please turn on your cameras for the vote.

Kierkiewicz: and audio

Wan: and audio, please? Oh, did we lose? And I mean with, with Rebecca we have quorum, and we can have a vote of 5.

Kierkiewicz: Fresh, are you able to turn on your camera and unmute yourself?

Kierkiewicz: Okay, I'm gonna do a roll call vote. Approval of the Annual and 5 year PHA Plans. Member Kimball?

Kimball: Aye.

Kierkiewicz: Member Kagiwada?

Kagiwada: Aye.

Kierkiewicz: Member Onishi? Member Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder?

Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder: Aye.

Kierkiewicz: Member Inaba? Member Villegas?

Villegas: Aye.

Kierkiewicz: Member Galimba? Member Hustace? I am an "aye". That is 5 affirmative votes to approve plans as presented. Members Hustace, Galimba, Inaba, Onishi excused. We are adjourned at 11:14am. Thank you.