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DEPT. COMM. NO. 200

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DIR 21.028

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

December 21, 2021

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
President and Members of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker
and Members of the House of
Representatives
Thirty-First State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

Enclosed is the following report submitted in accordance with provisions of Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, Related to the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Pilot Project.

In accordance with section 93-16, HRS, the report is available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Betts".

Cathy Betts
Director

Enclosure
C:
Governor's Office
Lieutenant Governor's Office
Department of Budget & Finance
Legislative Auditor
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)

President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki

December 21, 2021

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**REPORT TO THE THIRTY-FIRST HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE
2022**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACT 177, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2018, RELATED
TO THE
EAST HAWAII CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PILOT PROJECT**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Social Services Division
Child Welfare Services Branch
December 2021**

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Child Welfare Services Branch (CWS) submits this report per provisions of Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018 (Act 177), related to the East Hawaii Child Welfare Pilot Project.

I. Purpose

The purpose of Act 177 was to establish a five-year pilot project within DHS to ensure the safety and well-being of at-risk children and families in East Hawaii on Hawaii island. Act 177 included funds for four full-time equivalents (4.0 FTE) child/adult protective service specialists, administrative costs for the East Hawaii child welfare services section on Hawaii island, and travel costs for the child welfare services division to train new hires.

Act 177 Positions

Three units comprise the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services office: East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 1/36 (EHCWSU1), East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 2/37 (EHCWSU2), and East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Unit 3/72 (EHCWSU3). Two of the pilot positions are assigned to EHCWSU1 and EHCWSU2. The third and fourth positions are assigned to EHCWSU2 and EHCWSU3, respectively.

East Hawaii Unit 1	East Hawaii Unit 2	East Hawaii Unit 3
Assigned 2 Positions	Assigned 1 Position	Assigned 1 Position
Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122786 Hire Date: Jan 1, 2020	Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122788 Hire Date: Nov 12, 2019	Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122789 Hire Date: Oct 1, 2021
Pseudo/Position Number 91919K/122787 Hire Date: Oct 1, 2019		

II. Current Position Status

As of Dec 13, 2021, East Hawaii has filled all pilot positions.

With the inclusion of the four pilot positions, now permanent positions, East Hawaii's December 2021 position inventory indicates a total of forty-five (45) positions in the section with nine (9) vacancies (a decrease of two (2) vacancies compared to the December 2020 position inventory).

III. Caseload Evaluation

As of Dec 13, 2021, the number of cases managed per permanency social worker range from 10 to 18; the number of children per caseload ranges from 21 to 40 (a decrease of 6 children per social worker). In addition, the new Section Administrator implemented a process to look at how new cases are assigned to permanency social workers, making sure the total number of cases does not

exceed 18 or 40 children on the social worker's entire caseload.

IV. Performance Evaluation

Unfortunately, due to the impacts of managing COVID-19, DHS could not implement the performance evaluation as reported last year. As a result, DHS cannot presently meet the data reporting requirement and instead plans to utilize and analyze case review data to measure the change in performance. The data will include children's re-entry into foster care, fatalities due to maltreatment, relative placement, timely response to new reports of harm, employee performance and satisfaction, caseload size, family court sanctions, and legal claims. DHS intends to have this data available before the start of next year's legislative session or shortly after.

V. Employee Satisfaction Evaluation

DHS was not able to develop and conduct a survey of East Hawaii CWS employees to measure the change in satisfaction due to managing service delivery changes and mitigating COVID-19. Once satisfaction surveys are developed and approved, DHS will conduct 6-month surveys of East Hawaii CWS employees to see if the reduction in caseload affects employee performance, satisfaction, and attrition. This data will be provided to the Legislature beginning in 2023.

VI. Court Sanctions

In 2021, the Family Court in Hilo imposed five financial court sanctions totaling \$2,000. In addition, the Family Court ordered the Section Administrator in Hilo to attend periodic review hearings. At these hearings, the Section Administrator explained why the assigned social worker did not include updated reports on intakes received less than a day before a hearing for a concurrent temporary restraining order case in open child welfare services cases.

Year	Number of Court Sanctions
2013	2
2014	0
2015	0
2016	1
September to December 2017*	5
2018	21
2019	6
2020	0
2021	5

*Supervisors provided the information.

VII. Legal Claims

Currently, there is one active civil lawsuit involving an East Hawaii case.

VIII. Provider Experience

DHS will develop and conduct two surveys in 2022 to collect data on the conduct and efficacy of the pilot project from service providers that work directly with children assigned to social workers in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services section.

IX. Findings

The addition of the four pilot (now permanent) positions continues to positively impact employee morale and social work practice in the East Hawaii CWS offices. The number of cases in a caseload continues to decrease per caseworker in comparison to 2020. The maximum number of children on a social worker's caseload has been reduced by 6. Also, there is an increase in monthly visits to children by social workers, and adoptions are more timely than before the pilot. Complaints about staff have significantly decreased. CWS will collect data in the coming year to include caseload, performance, and employee satisfaction evaluations.