



**Rodney A. Maile**  
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

**Brandon M. Kimura**  
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

November 7, 2023

**Via electronic submission**

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Scott Saiki  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear President Kouchi and Speaker Saiki:

Pursuant to Section 607.56, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the Judiciary is transmitting a copy of the *Report on the Parent Education Special Fund*, including an accounting of all deposits into and expenditures from the fund in Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, we are also transmitting a copy of this report to the Legislative Reference Bureau Library.

The public may view an electronic copy of this report on the Judiciary's website at the following link: [https://www.courts.state.hi.us/news\\_and\\_reports/reports/reports](https://www.courts.state.hi.us/news_and_reports/reports/reports).

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact Karen Takahashi of the Judiciary's Legislative Coordinating Office at 808-539-4896, or via e-mail at [Karen.T.Takahashi@courts.hawaii.gov](mailto:Karen.T.Takahashi@courts.hawaii.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rodney A. Maile".

Rodney A. Maile  
Administrative Director of the Courts

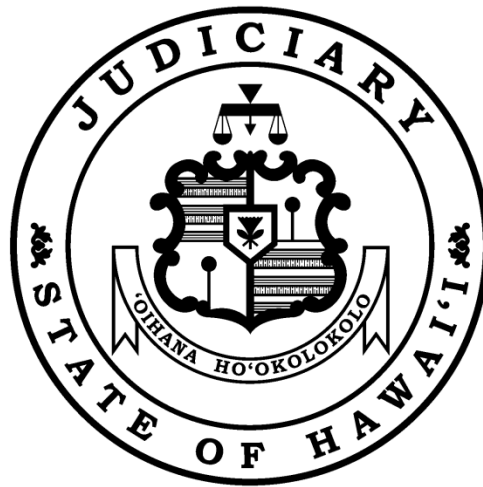
Attachment

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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE  
2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**A Report on the Parent Education Special Fund**

**Pursuant to HRS § 607-5.6**



**Prepared by:**

**The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i**

**November 2023**

## **A Report on the Parent Education Special Fund**

Act 274, Session Laws of Hawai'i, 1997, requires the Judiciary to submit a report on the Parent Education Fund.

The Parent Education Special Fund was established by the 1997 Legislature, State of Hawai'i, through Act 274. On May 2, 2003, HRS 607-5.6 was amended to increase the fund's surcharge from \$35 to \$50 for Family Court matrimonial cases and to add the surcharge to paternity actions.

### **The Purpose of the Fund**

The Parent Education Special Fund is used to administer education programs to families currently involved in divorce cases in the state of Hawai'i. Parties litigating custody matters as well as children of unmarried or never-married parents living in the same household are also required to attend. Parents attending the divorce-education programs are encouraged to refocus on their children's needs by learning how continued fighting negatively impacts their children. They are also encouraged to mediate rather than litigate their custody conflicts. The programs emphasize that:

- family violence is never appropriate and is extremely harmful to children;
- children will thrive if they live in safe homes and are loved by both parents;
- the court takes into account the safety of victims and children in making custody and visitation decisions.

Children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) also attend to learn how to cope with changes in their family. The programs emphasize that children are not the cause of parental separation, that parents do not divorce their children, and that there are many families going through similar experiences. Children and teens participate in age-appropriate discussions and activities focused on helping each child identify and understand their emotions.

After an opening statement is given by a Family Court judge, parents and children watch *The Purple Family* (1999), a timeless film which gently broaches themes of divorce and separation. The film is unique in that the words "divorce" or "separation" are never used explicitly to describe the family's situation. The programs distribute parenting guides with island-specific information on resources for counseling, domestic violence, parenting, and anger management classes. The website [www.kidsfirsthawaii.com](http://www.kidsfirsthawaii.com) is also available to provide island-specific program and contact information to families.

### **Parent Education Programs**

Each circuit administers its own parent education program. In the First (O'ahu), Second (Maui), and Fifth Circuit (Kaua'i), the program is called *Kids First*. Third Circuit (Hawai'i island) has two programs, the program in Kona is *Children First* and the program in Hilo is *Children in Transition*.

The O'ahu *Kids First* program is held most Wednesday evenings and alternates weekly between Ka'ahumanu Hale in Honolulu and the Ronald T.Y. Moon Court Complex in Kapolei. The Maui *Kids First* program is held on the second Wednesday of the month at Hoapili Hale in

Wailuku. On Hawai'i island, Kona's *Children First* program is held on the third Wednesday of the month at the West Hawai'i Civic Center, and Hilo's *Children in Transition* program is held at Hale Kaulike on the second Tuesday of even-numbered months as well as the second and fourth Tuesday of odd-numbered months. Kaua'i's *Kids First* program is held on the second Wednesday of the month at Pu'uhonua Kaulike Building in Lihu'e.

In March of 2020 to August 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented interruptions across the State of Hawai'i. The *Kids First* program and other court programs were suspended temporarily until alternate programming could be developed. During the month of April 2020, *Kids First* O'ahu created innovative online programming. The online program launched in May of 2020 and has since been utilized by families on O'ahu. The online program includes pre-recorded presentations by Family Court judges and *Kids First* licensed psychologists. The judges speak to parents about what to expect in Family Court and the presenters talk to parents about ways to minimize risks during the divorce or separation process. The programming also includes the *Purple Family* film, as well as a presentation by a licensed psychologist and interactive activities for children. Parents are asked to complete a feedback form and encouraged to ask questions, which are then forwarded to *Kids First* staff and licensed psychologists.

As COVID continued, all circuits developed an on-line platform and programming materials for the families in their circuits.

In April of 2022, the Firth Circuit, Kaua'i, resumed in-person programming once a month.

In May of 2022, *Kids First* O'ahu added an interactive Zoom class just for the children, twice a week on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. This Zoom class starts off with the children watching the *Purple Family* video. A facilitator then has an interactive discussion on how divorce is never the child's fault, how parents are parents forever, who the children can talk to when they have overwhelming feelings, and that they are not alone – teaching the children how to better understand the divorce/separation process and cope positively through their experience. Then, during November 2022, the O'ahu *Kids First* program added a third evening every week to provide the interactive Zoom class for the parents, which licensed psychologists conduct.

In April of 2023, the Second Circuit, Maui, resumed in-person programming once a month.

In-person classes continue to be suspended on O'ahu and Hawai'i island. However, the *Kids First* program in the First Circuit is planning to restart in-person classes and continue the Zoom classes to provide options for the clients.

<b>FY 2022-2023 Cases by Circuit</b>	<b>Divorce</b>	<b>Paternity</b>	<b>Civil Union</b>	<b>Total Cases</b>
First (O'ahu)	2,923	624	9	3,556
Second (Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i)	398	159	0	557
Third (Kona and Hilo)	577	234	2	813
Fifth (Kaua'i)	231	80	3	314
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,129</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5,240</b>

The percentage of filings for each circuit closely mirrors the population distribution for the state. The majority of the cases were filed on O'ahu with 2,923 new divorce cases (70% of state total) and 624 paternity filings (56% of state total). Additionally, nine (9) civil union divorces were filed on O'ahu (64% of state total).

Statewide, divorce-education classes were held serving a total of 4,214 individuals (2,539 parents and 1,675 children). In FY 2022-2023, *Kids First* O'ahu serviced a total of 3,321 individuals (2,029 adults and 1,292 children).

<b>FY 2022-2023 Attendance by Circuit</b>	<b>Adult Attendance</b>	<b>Children Attendance</b>	<b>Total Attendance</b>
First (O'ahu)	2,029	1,292	3,321
Second (Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i)	120	78	198
Third (Hilo and Kona)	146	164	310
Fifth (Kaua'i)	244	141	385
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,539</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>4,214</b>

Statewide revenue during FY 2022-2023 totaled \$103,220, which includes an interest amount of \$7,270. Total expenses were \$54,364.

The Parent Education Special Fund began collecting filing fee surcharges and donations beginning July 1, 1997. The attached financial report reflects the 26th year of collections. The Parent Education Special Fund continues to support all five of the State of Hawai'i Judiciary's parent-education programs.

THE JUDICIARY  
PARENT EDUCATION SPECIAL FUND  
FY 2023 (July 01, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

OBJECT CODE	DESCRIPTION	FIRST CIRCUIT	SECOND CIRCUIT	THIRD CIRCUIT	FIFTH CIRCUIT	TOTAL
<u>REVENUES</u>						
0288	INTEREST	7,270	-	-		7,270
0763	SURCHARGE	67,050	12,500	11,750	4,650	95,950
		74,320	12,500	11,750	4,650	103,220
	TOTAL REVENUES					
<u>OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES &amp; ENCUMBRANCES</u>						
2902	SECURITY SERVICES	0	2,087		3,093	5,180
3204	DUPLICATING SUPPLIES	-				-
3206	DATA POCESSING SUPPLIES	289				289
3209	OTHER STATIONERY AND OFFICE SUPPLIES	259			155	414
3301	FOOD SUPPLIES	-			599	599
3501	DUES	1,440				1,440
3502	SUBSCRIPTIONS	-				-
3901	PRINTING AND BINDING	37				37
4102	CAR MILEAGE - OTHERS	-				-
4401	TRANS OUT OF STATE - EMPLOYEES	1,782				1,782
4501	SUBSISTENCE OUT OF STATE - EMPLOYEES	4,714				4,714
4601	HIRE OF PASSENGER CARS - EMPLOYEES	50				50
4801	OTHER TRAVEL	-				-
5503	OTHER RENTALS (PARKING PASS)	-				-
6619	OTHER PUBLIC SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE	-				-
7131	INTERPRETER FEES	-				-
7198	OTHER SERVICES ON FEE BASIS	10,675	11,250		9,437	31,362
7204	SPECIAL FUND ASSESSMENT (ACT 34, SLH 1964)	5,012				5,012
7205	TRNG COST & REG FEES	3,485				3,485
7215	OTHER MISC CURRENT EXP	-				-
	TOTAL OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES	27,743	13,337	-	13,284	54,364