DEPT. COMM. NO. 379

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STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ
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April 3, 2026

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

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

In accordance with Chapter 353L-6, I am submitting the monthly Oversight Coordinator Report for the month of March. This report includes actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. These reports may be reviewed electronically at http://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/reports.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 808-849-3580.

Respectfully,

Christin Johnson
Oversight Coordinator

c: Governor's Office
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)

Enclosure



Hawai‘i Correctional System Oversight Commission

Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report – March 2026

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Introduction

In accordance with Chapter §353L-6, the Oversight Coordinator shall submit a monthly report to the Commission, the Governor, and the Legislature. The monthly report shall include actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. In addition to the mandated parties this report must be shared with, the Oversight Coordinator publicly posts the monthly report to increase transparency and accountability. This report will also be shared with each individual who has the responsibility of appointing members of the Commission. This includes:

1) Governor of Hawaii
2) President of the Hawaii Senate
3) Speaker of the Hawaii House of Representatives
4) Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice
5) Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The Oversight Coordinator monthly reports are released on the first Friday of each month, covering the previous month, and will be discussed on the second Thursday of each month at the monthly Commission meetings.

Death in Custody

On Sunday, March 29th, 2026, at approximately 7:35p.m., a Japanese male in custody, 65 years old, at Halawa Correctional Facility was found unresponsive his cell. Medical personnel immediately responded, conducted CPR, and alerted 911 emergency services. Federal Fire and Emergency arrived on scene at approximately 7:45p.m. At approximately 8:40p.m. the individual was pronounced deceased. An autopsy will determine the official cause of death.

Tours

Tour of OCCC with University of Ryūkyūs

On March 10, 2026, the Oversight Coordinator toured the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) with Emi Yano, Dean of Ryūkyūs University Law School (Okinawa Japan), her staff, and multiple law students. The group deeply appreciated the opportunity to learn more about Hawaii's correctional system as they are currently working with the Okinawa Prison to develop new programs in their local community.

Events Attended

Ka'ahumanu Hale, First Circuit Court

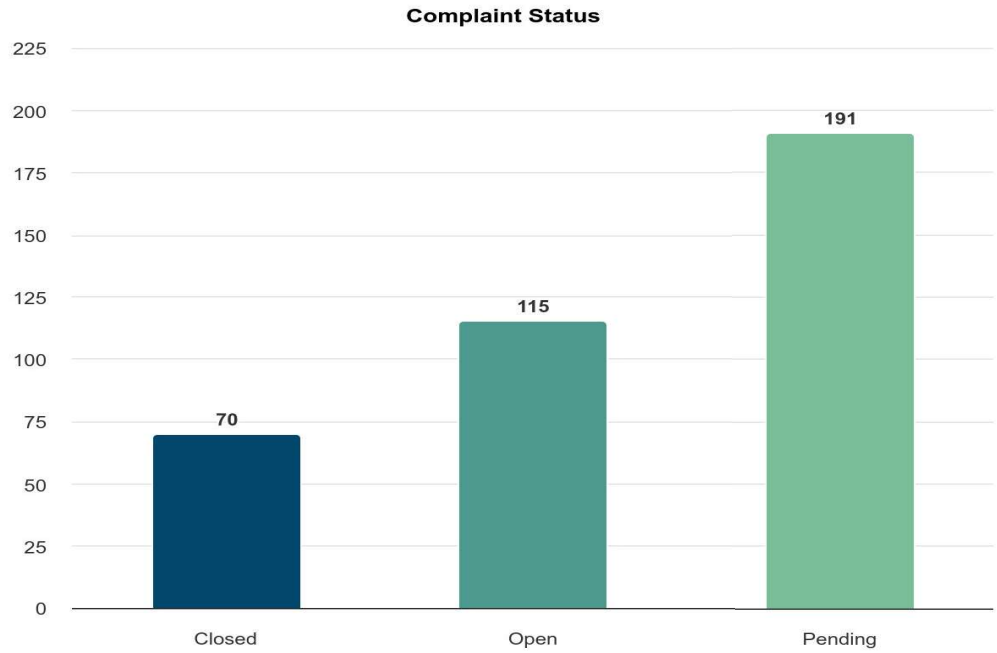
On March 18, 2026, HCSOC staff attended the First Circuit Court's ceremony celebrating its first inaugural graduating class of the O'ahu Post-Booking Jail Diversion Program (JDP). Seven participants successfully completed the program and were recognized by Circuit Court Judge Ronald Johnson, who presented certificates of completion and court orders dismissing their charges. The ceremony underscored the program's collaborative, treatment-focused approach, which diverts eligible individuals directly from jail into crisis stabilization and community-based services. Graduates shared personal reflections on their recovery journeys, emphasizing the impact of consistent judicial support, coordinated case management, and access to behavioral health treatment.

To read more about this event, please visit:
https://www.courts.state.hi.us/news_and_reports/2026/03/first-circuit-court-celebrates-first-jail-diversion-program-graduates

Complaints Received by the Commission

After receiving dedicated funding for a case management system from the legislature, the Commission has been better equipped for tracking, monitoring, investigating, and responding to incoming complaints. Below is a breakdown of the office's current status of complaints including open complaints, pending complaints, closed complaints. Additionally, there is a breakdown of how many complaints the Commission has received from each correctional facility.

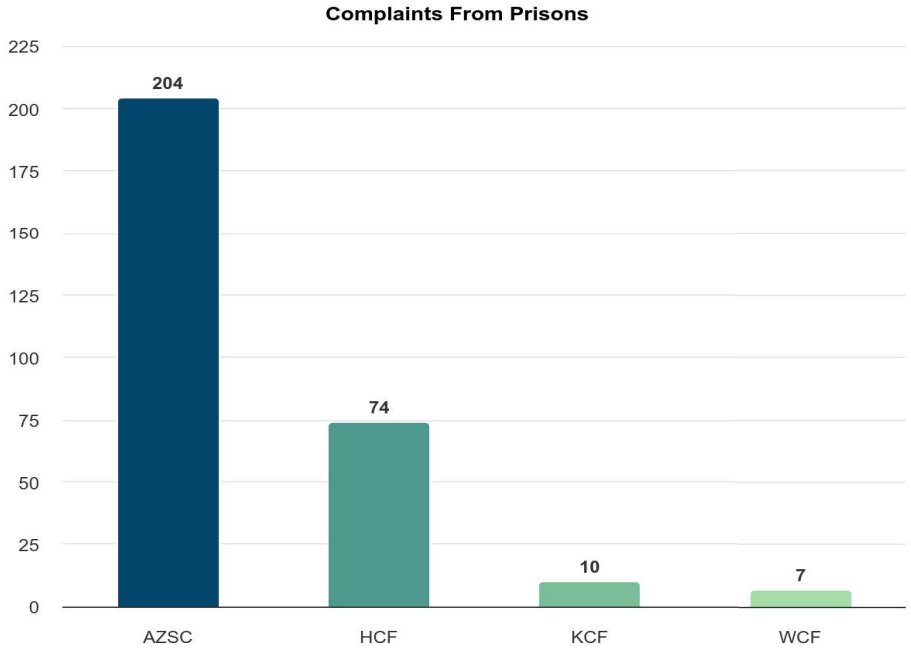
Complaint Status



***Note**: number of incoming complaints is subject to change as some letters may contain multiple complaints.*

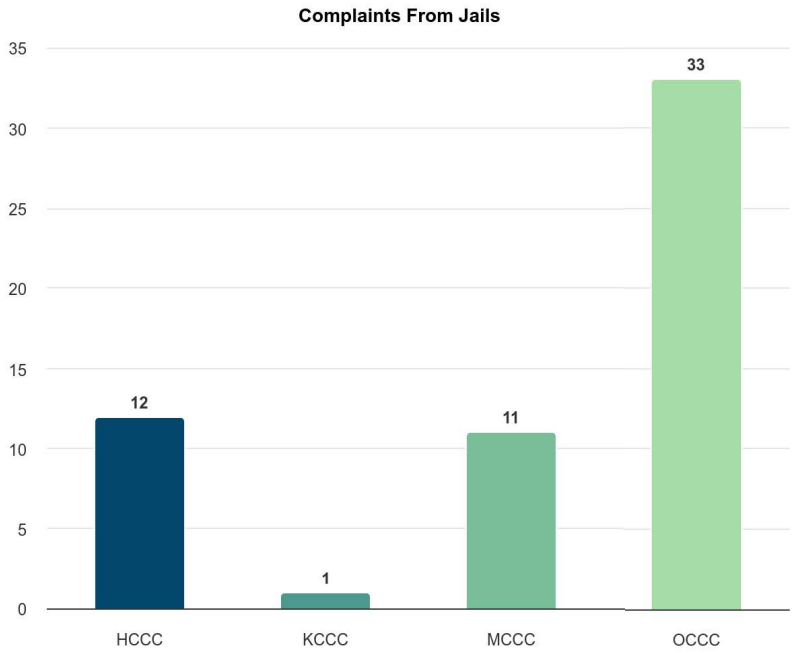
As of March 31st, the Commission had 70 closed complaints and 191 complaints pending waiting for review and potential investigation. The Jail and Prison Oversight Specialists currently have 115 complaints that are open and being actively investigated.

Complaints from Prison System



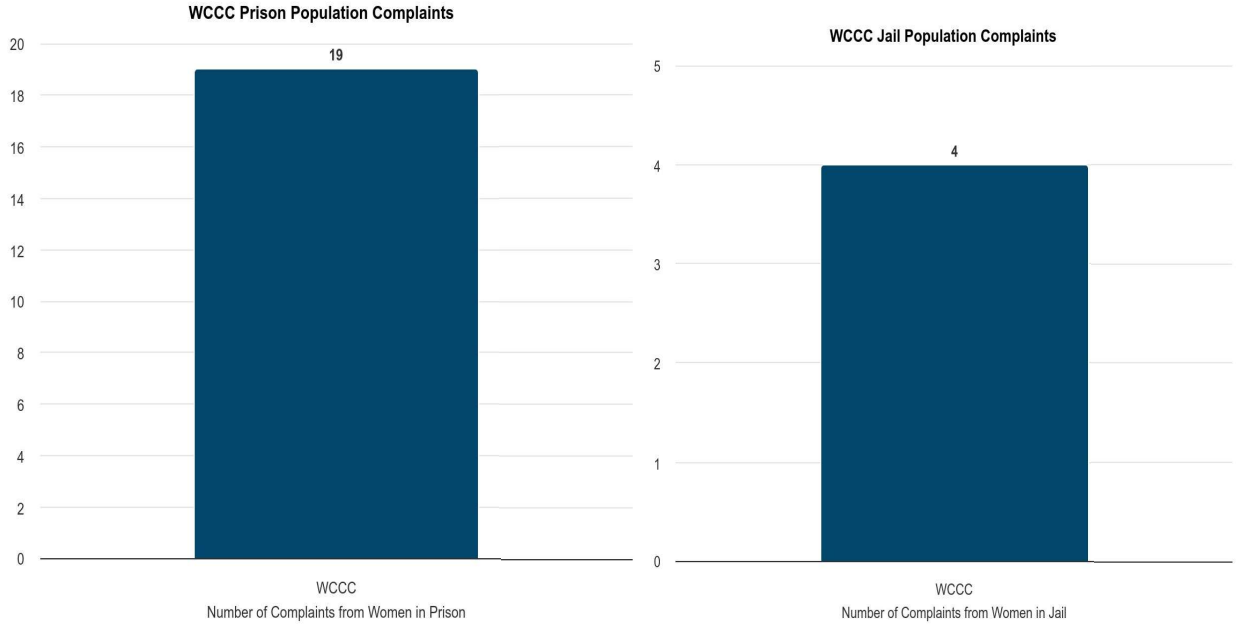
The Commission received a total of 295 complaints from the prison system (not including the Women's facility which is detailed below). A total of 204 complaints came from Saguaro Correctional Center (AZSC), a privately run facility in Arizona, 74 complaints from Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF), 10 complaints from Kulani Correctional Facility (KCF), and 7 complaints from the Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF).

Complaints from Jail System



The Commission received a total of 57 complaints from the jails (not including the Women's facility which is detailed below). A total of 12 complaints came from the Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC), one complaint from the Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC), 11 complaints from the Maui Community Correctional Center (MCCC), and 33 complaints from the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC).

Complaints from Women's Hybrid System



The Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) functions as the State's only hybrid facility housing the jail and prison population of women. The Commission received 19 complaints from the prison side of WCCC, and four complaints from the jail side of WCCC.

The Commission will continue to report on complaints on a monthly basis based on feedback from the Commissioners and public on what statistics are best to make available. If you have feedback you would like to share regarding complaint information you would like to see, please email us at hcsoc@hawaii.gov.

Findings on Lack of Movement Throughout the Prison System

Concerns Regarding Lack of Bed Utilization at Minimum Custody Facilities

The Commission has consistently reported on concerns regarding a lack of bed utilization at minimum custody facilities. Hawaii has two minimum custody prisons for men - Kulani Correctional Facility (KCF) and Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF). These facilities are designed for people who pose low public safety risk and are eligible for rehabilitation-focused programming. WCF can hold 334 individuals, and KCF can hold 160 individuals. Despite this:

- Both facilities are less full now than they were in 2023 (WCF is at 50% capacity, KCF is at 48% capacity).

- At the same time, **hundreds of people who qualify for minimum custody** remain housed in Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF) (a higher-security prison), or Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona (AZSC) (higher security, out-of-state prison).

The Commission has found that minimum custody beds are sitting empty while eligible individuals are housed in more expensive, more restrictive, and less rehabilitative settings.

	2023 Hawaii Male Prison Security Classifications						
Male Prison	*Community*	*Minimum*	*Medium*	*Close*	*Maximum*	*Unclassified*	**Total Population**
AZSC	--	53	455	369	--	--	877
HCF	4	183	435	187	2	11	822
WCF	27	154	--	--	--	--	181
KCF	24	61	--	--	--	--	85

Source: Hawaii Department of Public Safety Roster, Dated Nov. 13, 2023

	2024 Hawaii Male Prison Security Classifications						
Male Prison	*Community*	*Minimum*	*Medium*	*Close*	*Maximum*	*Unclassified*	**Total Population**
AZSC	--	77	506	411	--	--	994
HCF	6	179	306	204	6	5	706
WCF	23	113	--	--	--	--	136 - **DECREASE FROM 2023**
KCF	13	65	--	--	--	--	78 - **DECREASE FROM 2023**

Source: Hawaii Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Roster, Dated Oct. 14, 2024

	2025 Hawaii Male Prison Security Classifications						
Male Prison	*Community*	*Minimum*	*Medium*	*Close*	*Maximum*	*Unclassified*	**Total Population**
AZSC	--	67	409	340	--	--	816
HCF	4	173	351	271	5	8	812
WCF	17	148	--	--	--	--	165 - **DECREASE FROM 2023**
KCF	23	62	1	--	--	--	86 - **DECREASE FROM 2023**

Source: Hawaii Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Roster, Dated Nov. 17, 2025

	2026 Hawaii Male Prison Security Classifications						
Male Prison	*Community*	*Minimum*	*Medium*	*Close*	*Maximum*	*Unclassified*	**Total Population**
AZSC	--	58	397	338	--	1	794
HCF	7	176	372	266	4	14	836
WCF	30	123	--	--	--	--	153 - **DECREASE FROM 2023**
KCF	29	48	--	--	--	--	77 - **DECREASE FROM 2023**

Source: Hawaii Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Roster, Dated March 30, 2026

The above charts highlight that since 2023, between 230–260 people classified as *minimum custody or below* have remained in Halawa or Saguaro. Meanwhile, Waiawa's population dropped from 181 (2023) to 136 (2024) to 165 (2025) and 153 (2026). Kulani's population dropped from 85 (2023) to 78 (2024) to 86 (2025) and 77 (2026). The Commission believes that this is not a year-by-year fluctuation, but a sustained pattern.

Differences Between Minimum and Medium+ Facilities:

Minimum Custody Facilities:

- Are **far less restrictive** than medium or higher custody prisons
- Focus on:
  - Education
  - Vocational training
  - Substance use treatment
  - Reentry preparation
- Allow more movement, work opportunities, and pro-social behavior
- Are designed to prepare people for successful release

Medium and Higher Custody Facilities:

- Emphasize **security and control**, not rehabilitation
- Offer fewer programs
- Often have long waitlists for classes or treatment
- Increase the likelihood that individuals:
  - Serve their entire sentence
  - Are released without skills, treatment, or planning

Impact:

Underusing minimum custody facilities increases the risk of people returning to the community unprepared.

When people are housed in higher custody settings than necessary:

- They are less likely to receive:
  - Treatment
  - Job skills
  - Education
- They are more likely to "max out" their sentence and be released with **no supervision and no preparation.**

By contrast, people in minimum custody are:

- More engaged in programming
- More likely to earn credits
- More likely to transition gradually back into the community

Cost to State:

Cost differences:

- Higher custody incarceration is **inherently more expensive** as they require**:**
  - More staffing
  - More security resources

Leaving minimum custody beds empty while paying for higher custody placements is:

- Operationally inefficient
- Financially wasteful
- Contrary to best practice

What the Commission Has Recommended (and Why)

Since 2023, the Commission has recommended transferring eligible minimum custody individuals from Halawa and Saguaro and fully utilizing Kulani and Waiawa. This recommendation aligns custody level with actual risk, maximizes rehabilitative impact, improves reentry outcomes, and uses state facilities as intended. However, the recommendation has **not been implemented**. The same underutilization continues into 2026.

Although the Commission understands that not all Minimums will be eligible to be in a Minimum facility (based on factors such as finishing programming, waiting for and passing medical clearance, pending misconduct adjudication, etc.), the Commission is still concerned regarding the high number of lower-level classifications in higher level facilities. Leaving minimum custody facilities 50% underused while eligible individuals sit in higher custody settings undermines rehabilitation, public safety, and responsible stewardship of state resources. The Commission will continue to report on this issue until it has been appropriately addressed.

Past Meetings

Monthly Commission Meeting

On February 12, 2026, the Commission hosted its monthly public meeting. All past meeting agendas, video recordings, meeting minutes, and testimonies can be found on our website here: https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/2026-meetings. All meetings are live streamed on our Facebook and YouTube channel.

Expenses for the Preceding Month – March

Item	Cost	Qty	Total	Description
Operating Expenses			**$348.42**	
TELEPHONE	$265.09	1	$265.09	DECEMBER
OFFICE SUPPLIES	$83.33	1	$83.33	B&H PHOTO
Inter-Island Travel			**$244.66**	
AIRFARE-RI	$157.66	1	$157.66	02/12 - ALASKA
P. DIEM MEAL-ANJ	$20.00	1	$20.00	12/13 - PER DIEM
P. DIEM MEAL-ANJ	$20.00	1	$20.00	02/24 - PER DIEM
P. DIEM MEAL-MKP	$20.00	1	$20.00	02/24 - PER DIEM
PARKING-MKP	$27.00	1	$27.00	02/24 - TRAVEL PARKING
Mainland Travel			**$2,582.60**	
AIRFARE-MKP	$752.20	1	$752.20	02/16 - ALASKA (TKT# 0272131671472)
AIRFARE-CMA	$852.20	1	$852.20	02/16 - ALASKA (TKT# 0272131955084)
AIRFARE-KRT	$978.20	1	$978.20	02/16 - ALASKA (TKT# 0272131961224)
		TOTAL	**$3,175.68**	

** All expenses reflect posted transactions procured*

General Office Information

Mailing Address: Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Website: https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov

Submit Testimony: https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony

Email: hcsoc@hawaii.gov

Social Media: YouTube
LinkedIn
Facebook
Instagram

Monthly Meetings

This report will be discussed at the monthly Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission meeting on April 9, 2026. The next monthly meeting is scheduled to occur on May 14, 2026, at the Hawai‘i Community College, 1175 Manono Street, Hilo, Hawaii, 96720, Room 388-101 or online via teleconference. More information can be found on the Commission’s webpage here: https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/information.