DEPT. COMM. NO. 388

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

MARK PATTERSON
CHAIR

CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS
HON. R. MARK BROWNING (ret.)

HON. RONALD IBARRA (ret.)

MARTHA TORNEY

HON. MICHAEL A. TOWN (ret.)

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 587-4160

May 8, 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 April. This report includes actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. Also included is the Commission's facility report of the Kauai Community Correctional Center. 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 808-587-4160.

Respectfully,

Mark Patterson
Chair

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

Enclosure



Hawai‘i Correctional System Oversight Commission

Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report – April 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 Wednesday, April 8th, 2026, at approximately 11:01p.m., facility staff at the state-contracted facility, Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona, received notification from a local hospital that a Japanese male, 63 years old, was pronounced deceased after an extended stay within their care. An autopsy was performed on April 9th, 2026. The medical examiner report concluded that the individual passed due to natural causes.

Events Attended

17th Annual Parole Completion Celebration

Commissioner Town and the Oversight Coordinator were honored to attend the 17th Annual Parole Completion Celebration hosted by Hawai‘i Friends of Restorative Justice at Ali‘iōlani Hale, joining community leaders, justice system partners, and families in recognizing individuals who have successfully completed parole. The event reflected the values of restorative justice through cultural practices, shared stories, and meaningful recognition of both returning community members and those who support them. Staff appreciated the opportunity to witness firsthand the impact of reentry success, celebrate award recipients, and engage with partners committed to advancing a more rehabilitative and community-centered justice system in Hawai‘i.

Tours

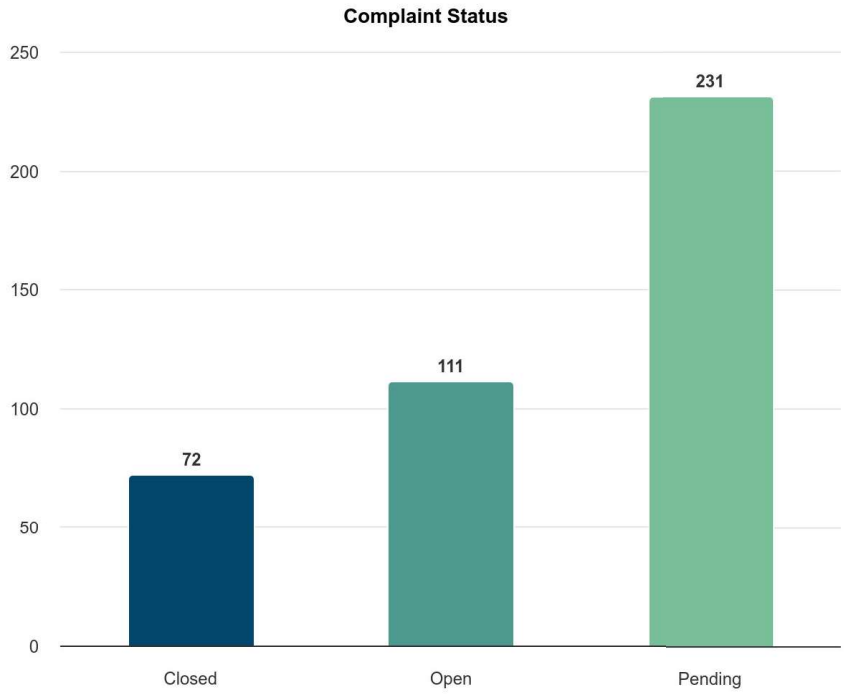
Tour of KCCC with Kaua‘i’s Office of the Prosecuting Attorney

The Commission extends its deepest gratitude to Becky Like and Michael Miranda from the Kaua‘i County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for joining the Commissioner’s annual tour of the Kauai Community Correctional Center on April 17, 2026, and engaging in a meaningful conversation about coordinating the continuity of care for reentry efforts.

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.

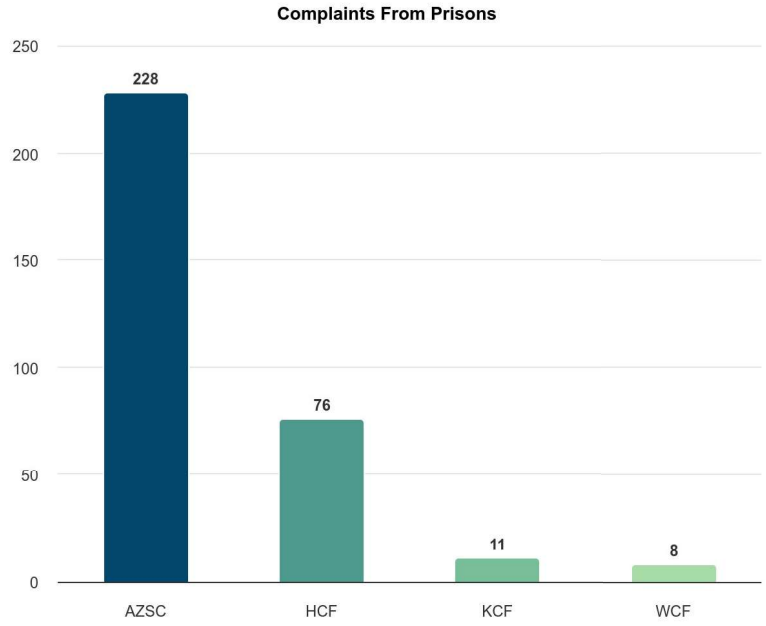
Complaint Status



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

As of April 28th, the Commission had 72 closed complaints and 231 complaints pending waiting (an additional 40 since April 2026) for review and potential investigation. The Jail and Prison Oversight Specialists currently have 115 complaints that are open and being actively investigated while Specialists also work on building the systems and processes that make responding to complaints possible.

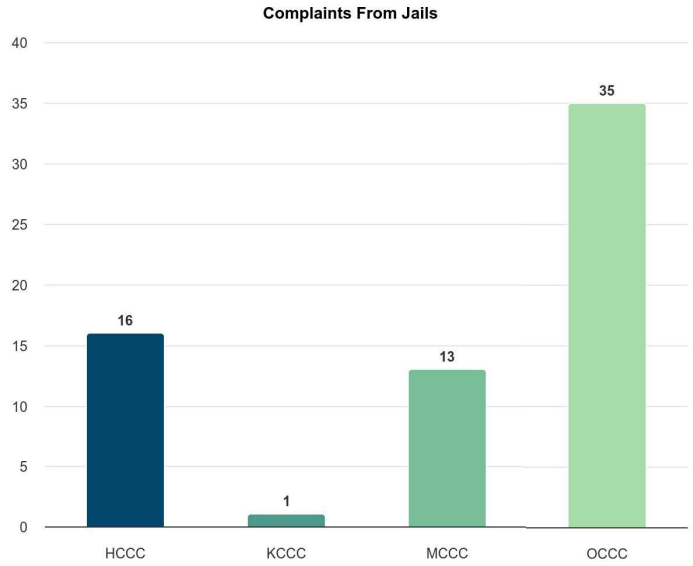
Complaints from Prison System



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

As of April 28, 2026, the Commission has received a total of 323 complaints from the prison system (not including the Women's facility which is detailed below). A total of 228 complaints came from Saguaro Correctional Center (AZSC), a privately run facility in Arizona, 76 complaints from Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF), 11 complaints from Kulani Correctional Facility (KCF), and 8 complaints from the Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF).

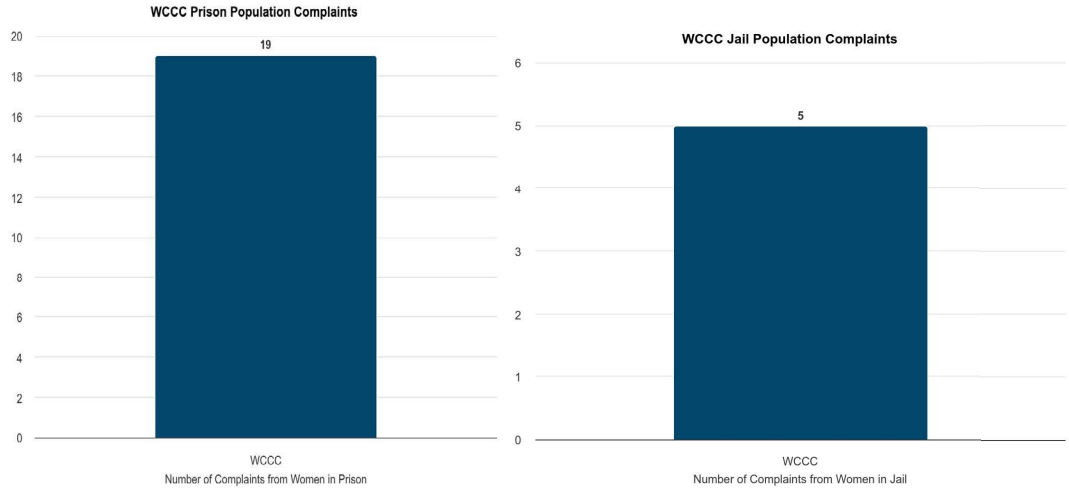
Complaints from Jail System



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

As of April 28, 2026, the Commission received a total of 65 complaints from the jails (not including the Women's facility which is detailed below). A total of 16 complaints came from the Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC), one complaint from the Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC), 13 complaints from the Maui Community Correctional Center (MCCC), and 35 complaints from the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC).

Complaints from Women's Hybrid System



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

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 five complaints from the jail side of WCCC.

The Commission will continue to report on complaints monthly 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's rated capacity is 334 individuals, and KCF's rated capacity is 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, it has been consistently **over 200 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
KCF	13	65	--	--	--	--	78

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
KCF	23	62	1	--	--	--	86

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	--	15	430	370	--	1	816
HCF	5	203	326	239	2	9	784
WCF	20	155	--	--	--	--	175
KCF	24	45	1	--	--	--	70

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

The above charts highlight that since 2023, between 220–260 people classified as *minimum or community custody* have remained in Halawa or Saguaro. Meanwhile, Waiawa's population has fluctuated from 181 (2023) to 136 (2024) to 165 (2025) and 175(2026). Kulani's population has fluctuated from 85 (2023) to 78 (2024) to 86 (2025) and 70 (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

Since 2023, the Commission has recommended DCR implement a system to ensure a timely transfer of eligible minimum and community 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.

The Commission understands that not all incarcerated persons will be eligible for immediate transfer upon gaining Minimum classification. Those who are actively participating in a program not available at the minimum facilities will be transferred upon completion of their program. Others have pending misconducts that needs to be resolved. Those with chronic medical conditions may be precluded from transfer if they require a higher level of care than offered in the minimum facilities. The Commission is concerned, though, about the number of minimum classified persons who are awaiting medical clearance prior to transfer. Those with chronic or serious medical conditions are known to the staff. Medical clearance must be expedited for those known not to experience health problems.

Leaving Waiawa Correctional Facility and Kulani Correctional Facility with 50% of the beds unfilled while eligible minimum individuals remain in higher custody settings undermines the

goals of rehabilitation and successful re-entry. The Commission will continue to monitor the flow of incarcerated persons through the correctional system and advocate for better use of the resources available.

Past Meetings

Monthly Commission Meeting

On April 17, 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 - April

Item	Cost	Qty	Total	Description
Operating Expenses			**$623.35**	
TELEPHONE	$265.09	1	$265.09	JANUARY
MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPT	$14.00	26	$358.26	AUTOPSY REPORT REQUEST
Inter-Island Travel			**$480.71**	
AIRFARE-ANJ	$147.31	1	$147.31	02/24 - ALASKA AIRLINES
AIRFARE-MKP	$147.31	1	$147.31	02/24 - ALASKA AIRLINES
AIRFARE-RI	$66.10	1	$66.10	03/12 - ALASKA AIRLINES
CAR RENTAL-ANJ	$77.00	1	$77.00	02/24 - ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR
P. DIEM MEAL-ALS	$20.00	1	$20.00	11/13/25 - PER DIEM
PARKING-ALS	$22.99	1	$22.99	11/13/25 - TRAVEL PARKING
Mainland Travel			**$1,216.32**	
AIRFARE-MKP	$323.50	1	$323.50	02/17 - ALASKA AIRLINES
CAR RENTAL-CMA	$819.44	1	$819.44	02/16-02/21 (PHX)
G. TRNPRT-CMA	$53.98	1	$53.98	02/16-02/21 (UBER)
TRVL PARKING-CMA	$19.40	1	$19.40	02/16-02/21 (PHX)
		TOTAL	**$2,320.38**	

** 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 May 14, 2026. The next monthly meeting is scheduled to occur on June 11, 2026, at the University of Hawai‘i Maui College, 310 W. Kaahumanu Ave, Kahului, Hawai‘i, 96732, Room Noii 206 or online via teleconference. More information can be found on the Commission’s webpage here: https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/information.

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Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC)
April 2026 Site Tour Observations
Date of Report: May 8, 2026

On Friday, April 17, 2026, the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (the Commission, HCSOC) toured the Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included two of the five Commissioners – Mark Patterson (Chair), Ron Ibarra in addition to staff. The Commission extends its deepest gratitude to Becky Like and Michael Miranda from the Kaua'i County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for joining the Commission and engaging in a meaningful conversation about coordinating the continuity of care for reentry efforts. This report encompasses notes from the Commissioners and will be discussed at the monthly public meeting held on May 14, 2026.

General Observations

The Commission is pleased to report that the overall population at KCCC remains low compared to 65% occupancy last year. The rated capacity for KCCC is 128. Based on the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) Weekly Population Report dated April 13, 2026, the facility's headcount stands at 85 individuals (72 males and 13 females) with a 66.4% capacity (https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2026-04-13.pdf).

KCCC staff provided the Commission with access to the facility without any hesitation or issues.

Last year, in May 2025, the Commission was pleased to report that people in custody were no longer being housed in shipping containers or dayroom spaces at KCCC. This was a much needed change and the Commission appreciated the KCCC team and all their efforts to ensure people are housed appropriately.

This year, during the tour on April 17, 2026, the Commission learned that 4 people were being housed in the container units due to mental health or behavioral issues. People with behavioral or mental health issues often need to be housed independently for their safety and the safety of others, which can cause some housing units to become crowded, even when the facility is under capacity.

The Commission learned that two dayrooms, which have a capacity for six people, were housing eight people and nine people respectively, while two other dayrooms, with the same capacity, housed four and two people respectively. See "Shipping Container Housing" and "Module A" below for more information.

Ongoing Construction Projects

The Commission is delighted to celebrate the successful installation and full operation of the new modular kitchen. This milestone marks a monumental achievement for KCCC, effectively mitigating serious safety concerns presented by large holes in the floor of the previous kitchen. This successful update reflects a commendable commitment to infrastructure excellence and the well-being of staff and people in custody.

The Commission has learned that the previous kitchen and dining area are being renovated. When renovations are complete, the new modular kitchen will be interconnected with the renovated space.

Shipping Container Housing

The shipping containers in front of the administration area were originally used for new intakes and active COVID-19 cases. When the Commission visited in 2024, they were being used as a secure housing unit for women.

The Commission was pleased to report in May 2025, that the shipping containers were no longer being used for housing. This was an important development as staff have reported when utilizing the shipping containers, there were not enough staff to post at the unit, leaving people in custody with no supervision.

On April 17, 2026, the Commission learned that the containers are being used again to house individuals with mental and behavioral health needs who require singe-cell housing.

Module A

Module A is the oldest part of the facility, opened in 1977, and is made up of four, three-cell units. Each three-cell unit has a very small dayroom that opens into a larger central dayroom. During the Commission's last visit, the new shower area in Module A had water pooling in the center of the room. The Commission did not observe any water pooling during this visit.

The Commission's findings noted an imbalance in capacity and overcrowding:

- **Unit 1:** Housed **4 people** (under capacity)
- **Unit 2:** Housed **8 people** (2 over capacity)
- **Unit 3:** Housed **2 people** (under capacity)
- **Unit 4:** Housed **9 people** (3 over capacity)

While two of the dayrooms were over capacity, the remaining two were under-utilized despite all four units having the same six-person capacity.

Last year the Commission noted an overall improvement in Module A's population but noted some overcrowding in the dayrooms due to the need for single-cell housing.

This year's headcount indicates that KCCC has maintained its prior improvement with lowering the overall population, but the capacity imbalance in Module A has not changed due to an ongoing need for single-cell placement and staffing shortages.

The law library is located in Module A, a male-only unit, potentially causing access restrictions for females. The Commission observed what appeared to be sign-up sheets for people in custody to make appointments to use the library. The Commission observed that the sign-up sheet, located behind a secured door, had limited entries. It should be noted that HCSOC has not received any complaints from people in custody at KCCC pertaining to access to the law library. A standardized portion of the Commission's review process of a facility's law library is apparent and readies access to the Commission's annual public reports. During this most recent visit, all Commission annual reports appeared to be absent from the law library.

Holding Cells

Three holding cells are located within the Administration area of Module A, with observation windows along the hallway. These are multipurpose cells for administrative segregation and suicide watch.

The Commission observed an exchange in the holding area between staff and a PIC that reflected an ongoing positive relational dynamic between KCCC staff and people in custody.

Module B

Module B was added in 1986 and is a unique space with six large cells, allowing a rated capacity of four people in custody assigned to each cell and a large dayroom in a central area.

On April 17, 2026, Module B's four 4-person cells were filled as follows: The dayroom is quite large, but all individuals were locked in their cells during the Commission's visit. Staff reported they receive two hours per day of out-of-cell time (22 hours locked down), but sometimes they may receive an additional hour out (21 hours locked down). Additionally, the facility placed steel shutters over the cell door windows, limiting any sight outside of the cell. During the Commission's prior visit in 2024, staff claimed this was for security reasons. Again, the Commission finds this level of in-cell time and isolation unacceptable.
On April 17, 2026, Module B's 4-person cells were filled as follows:

- **Unit 1:** Housed **7 people** (1 over capacity)
- **Unit 2:** Housed **6 people** (at capacity)
- **Unit 3:** Housed **7 people** (1 over capacity)
- **Unit 4:** Housed **6 people** (at capacity)
- **Unit 5:** Housed **8 people** (2 over capacity)
- **Unit 6:** Housed **6 people** (at capacity)

Additional information indicates that the population for each cell can vary throughout the day due to the transient nature of the jail population. For example, records indicate that, at approximately 7:00 am on April 17, 2026, **Unit 5** housed **4 people**. At approximately 10:30 am, and for the remainder of the day, **Unit 5** housed **8 people**. This data suggests that, in a jail setting, overcrowding or undercrowding can change on an hourly basis.

Module C

Module C, opened in 1997, is an L-shaped building with two large dormitories joined by a multipurpose room in the center and a bathroom for each wing. Each dorm is divided into cubicles

with half-walls. The building was under renovation during the Commission's March 2023 visit, and renovations were completed when the Commission visited again in 2024. During the 2024 visit, it was evident that all windows were replaced, and the bathrooms were renovated. The unit was clean, and individuals had considerable freedom of movement within the unit.

On May 8, 2025, Module C was closed due to staffing shortages and a low number of individuals who can be housed in a dorm setting. Exposure to natural light in Module C is significantly less limited than the exposure to natural light in Module A and B cells. With more staffing, Module C could be opened, potentially addressing some of the overcrowding in Module A, and providing a more rehabilitative environment for a larger number of the facility's population.

On April 17, 2026, Module C remains closed due to staffing shortages, a low number of individuals who can be housed in a dorm setting, and renovations to the previous kitchen, which is in close proximity to Module C.

Cabins A-C

Cabins A, B and C were originally built as temporary housing for Kauai residents after Hurricane Iniki. The cabins were moved to the facility between 1993 and 1995 as temporary housing but continue to be used today. These units were not included in the 2001 capacity report as they do not meet fire code—no fire suppression system and no second exit.

Kitchen

The Commission is pleased to report that the new modular kitchen has been installed and is now fully operational at KCCC. This significant development directly addresses the long-standing and critical safety concerns regarding the previous structure's flooring and overall degradation.

The Commission wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the KCCC leadership for their persistence in overcoming the complex shipping and logistical hurdles that previously delayed this project. The transition to this modern, functional unit represents a commendable commitment to the safety and well-being of both the staff and the people in custody.

Staffing Shortages

The Commission remains deeply concerned regarding the persistent staffing shortages at the Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC), which continue to impact facility operations and personnel well-being.

These prolonged conditions are unsustainable. The reliance on exhausting shifts not only impacts staff morale and retention but also limits the facility's ability to provide adequate out-of-cell time and supervision for the population in custody.

To address these critical issues, the Commission continues to recommend the implementation of 12-hour shifts

Previous Recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) **Ensure individuals in the facility are receiving the most out-of-cell time possible in alignment with a rehabilitative and therapeutic environment.**
   In 2024, individuals in Module B claimed to be locked in their cells for 22 hours per day. On May 8, 2025, individuals in Module A and B made the same claim. This, by definition, is considered restrictive housing, also sometimes referred to as solitary confinement.

   The Commission understands there are staffing issues that contribute to this issue and applauds the Department's efforts to fill vacancies. However, if the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is serious about the transition to a therapeutic and rehabilitative system, it is imperative to ensure individuals are not locked down within their cells for such extended periods of time.

   Therefore, daily schedules should be posted in all housing units for transparency and accountability regarding programming and out of cell time. This allows individuals in custody to anticipate what is to come, and to hold the staff accountable and ensure programming and out of cell time is completed in a consistent manner.

Additional recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) **Implement 12-Hour Shifts**
   The Commission highly recommends implementing 12-hour shifts. This has been requested by the facility after surveying staff and measuring interest. This was also highlighted as an evident solution for KCCC in the **Correctional Staff Survey, Findings, and Recommendations Report**. In order to eliminate the need for exhausting 24-hour shifts that cause burnout and an increase in leave requests, the Department must try something different than what it is doing now. Having additional staff at the facility can ensure that posts are not understaffed and increase out-of-cell time and safety for people in custody.

2) **Enable all Facilities to Initiate and Process Emergency Hires On-Site**
   The Commission highly recommends that DCR allow correctional facilities to conduct on-site emergency hiring to expedite filling vacancies and increase staffing levels that are desperately needed to:
   - Monitor the mental health population and ensure the mental health population are housed in the best possible setting for their condition;
   - Ensure people in custody have access to out-of-cell time;
   - Provide much needed and urgent relief to burnt-out staff; and
   - Improve staff morale and retention.

The Commission extends special thanks to the KCCC staff for their time, professionalism, and expertise during the tour.