

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**DEPT. COMM. NO. 223**

**RYAN I. YAMANE**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**JOSEPH CAMPOS II**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

**TRISTA SPEER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

December 30, 2025

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:

Enclosed is the following report submitted by the Office of Youth Services in accordance with the following:

- Section 352D-6(11), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), Annual Report of the Office of Youth Services, and Act 151, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 1991, Annual Report of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility,
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, Section 223 (A)(3)(D)(II), as amended in 2002 and reauthorized in 2018,
- Section 367D-8, HRS, Annual Report of the Office of Youth Services on Gender-Responsive Programs for Female Adjudicated Youth,
- Act 297, SLH 2025, Safe Spaces for Youth Program, an
- House Resolution 180, HD 1, SLH 2024, Requesting the Department of Human Services to Report on the Cultural and Therapeutic Services provided by Community-Based Organizations at the Kawaihoa Youth and Family Wellness Center.

Per section 93-16, HRS, this report will be available for electronic review on the Department's website at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>. For questions regarding this report, contact Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director, Office of Youth Services, at [lgillespie@dhs.hawaii.gov](mailto:lgillespie@dhs.hawaii.gov).

December 30, 2025

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Sincerely,



Ryan I. Yamane

Director

Enclosure

c: Governor's Office

Lieutenant Governor's Office

Department of Budget and Finance

Legislative Auditor

Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)

Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (2 hard copies, one electronic copy)

Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (1 hard copy)

**REPORT TO THE THIRTY-THIRD HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE 2025 IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH THE:**

- **PROVISIONS OF SECTION 352D-6, ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES ACT 151, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 1991, ANNUAL REPORT OF HAWAII YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY,**
- **JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT OF 1974, SECTION 223 (A)(3)(D)(II), AS AMENDED 2002, AND REAUTHORIZED 2018,**
- **SECTION 367D-8, ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES, GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS FOR FEMALE ADJUDICATED YOUTH, 2006,**
- **Act 297, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2025, SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM, and**
- **HOUSE RESOLUTION 180 (2024), REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO REPORT ON THE CULTURAL AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AT THE KAWAILOA YOUTH AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTER.**

**OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
December 2025**

## **History of the Office of Youth Services**

Established in 1865 on Oahu, Hawaii's first youth institution, the Hawaii Industrial School, housed youth as young as six. The Industrial School operated under the doctrine of *Parens Patriae*, allowing the Kingdom of Hawaii to exert parental authority over the youth when the natural parents were deemed unworthy. In 1928, the Territory of Hawaii established two training schools, the Kawaihoa Training School for Girls in Kailua and the Waile'e Training School for Boys on the North Shore. Both schools operated as a farm and a ranch.

In 1962, the Waile'e Training School for Boys closed, and the boys were moved to Kailua. In 1987, the Department of Social Service and Housing (DSSH), Division of Corrections, officially became the Department of Public Safety. All the Adult Correctional Institutions left DSSH. The Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) remained within DSSH. In 1987, DSSH was reorganized to become the Department of Human Services (DHS).

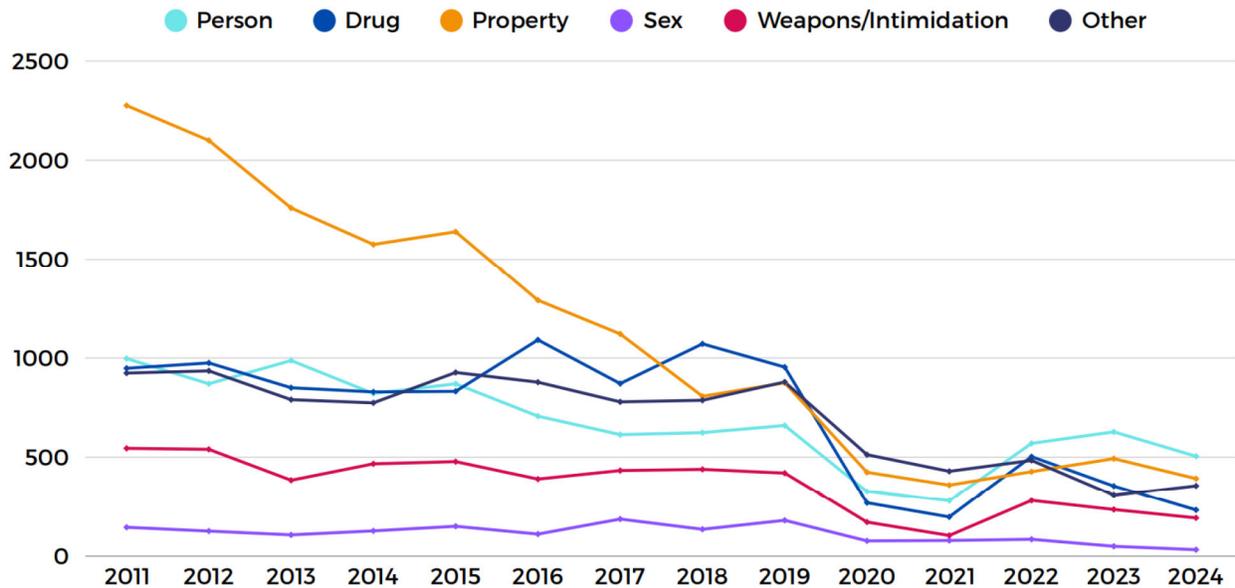
In 1989, the Legislature established the Office of Youth Services (OYS) to separate minor offenders from adult offenders, bringing a new era for juvenile corrections in Hawaii. In 1991, HYCF was placed in OYS.

Section 352D, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), tasks OYS to provide and coordinate a continuum of services and programs for at-risk youth to prevent delinquency and reduce the incidence of recidivism. While a core responsibility of OYS is to manage and operate HYCF, the State's only correctional facility for youth, the agency also provides and supports "front end" prevention, diversion, and intervention services and "back end" reentry and transition supportive services.

## **Trends, Programs and Services, Achievements, and Looking Ahead**

OYS continues to track juvenile crime trends to assess the needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and determine programmatic needs for contract services. With the exception of crimes utilizing weapons and intimidation, crime trends have decreased. An increase in crimes involving weapons and intimidation is of concern, but not yet a trend. With only anecdotal accounts, OYS requested funding for violence prevention programming. New data confirms that crimes involving weapons and intimidation have increased. OYS will continue to request funding for violence prevention services in order to provide education and outreach.

**Total Juvenile Law Violation Arrests Statewide, by Selected Offense, FY2011-2024**



**Programs and Service Areas**

OYS focuses on programs and service areas that address youth needs ranging from prevention to commitment, transition, and after-care. The foundation and working philosophy upholding the continuum of youth services supported by OYS is the "Aloha Spirit" statute, section 5-7.5, HRS, which recognizes and emphasizes the essence of relationships between people as a critical factor in our State. OYS strongly believes that community is where our youth belong and that deep connection, restoration, forgiveness, and healing emerge as OYS considers and embraces the Aloha Spirit statute.

Fiscal years (FY) 2024 and 2025 were busy procurement years with the need to reprocur services in the areas of project-based cultural programs, positive youth development, and truancy prevention. OYS spends significant time reviewing past performances of these programs, speaking with community partners, and developing new programs that meet the changing needs of our youth and their families. As a result, some of the program areas listed below have changed.

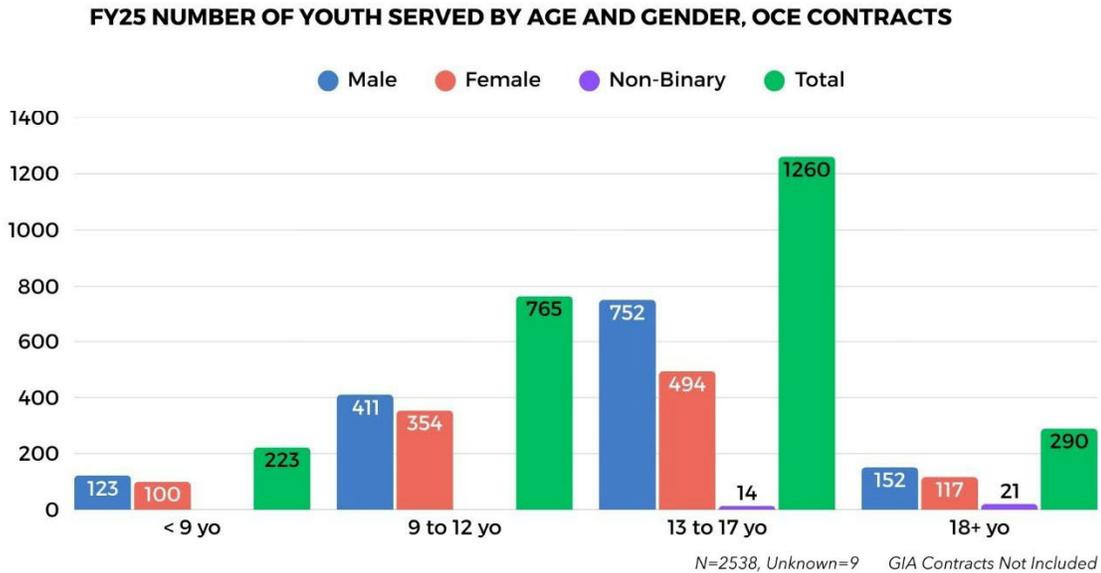
OYS served over 2,500 youths in community-based, general-funded, contracted programs, down from previous years. This is due to the rising costs of doing business in Hawaii post-pandemic. Notably, the youth have increasingly complex needs and need more intensive services.

In SFY24, OYS implemented new instruments for collecting gender demographics. As agencies pivot to collect and provide this information, OYS hopes to gain a better understanding of the

youth served and their needs. In light of the new federal executive orders on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, OYS is not currently collecting related data.

**Figure 1. Number of youths served in FY2025 by age and gender.**

## WHO WE SERVE



OYS served youth in the following program areas:

### 1) Project-Based Cultural Programs

Learning environments that immerse youth in cultural values, practices, traditions, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences are designed to help youth avoid unproductive behaviors and maintain safe, healthy lifestyles. Programming promotes the reduction of risk factors and increases protective factors specific to developing and supporting healthy youth within the communities where the program services are to be provided.

Youth participated in learning environments that immersed them in cultural values, traditional practices, ‘āina-based activities, leadership development, and experiential learning designed to support safe and healthy lifestyles. These project-based cultural programs helped reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors by grounding youth in identity, belonging, responsibility, and cultural continuity. Through hands-on work connected to land and community, value-centered group activities, and cultural leadership exercises, youth developed healthier decision-making patterns and a stronger connection to place.

Across these settings, youth demonstrated greater confidence, stronger communication skills, improved emotional regulation, and a deeper sense of cultural identity. Many showed healthier interactions with peers and caregivers, greater consistency in their behavior, and a

greater willingness to participate when guided through culturally grounded teachings and predictable, relationship-centered practices.

## **2) Culturally Specific Supportive Services**

Supportive services for underserved youth and families are culturally relevant and appropriate to the populations they serve. Culturally specific, in the context of these services, means a group united by shared experience of oppression and cultural resilience, based on such identities as race, ethnicity, immigration status, and language, or whose access to safety, resources, and services is limited. These services may include one or more of the following: family support, educational support, mentoring and intergenerational mentoring, resource and system navigation, youth in cultural transition, and other services.

Among all program models, there is a clear and united approach to providing culturally specific supportive services that are relevant and responsive to the youth and families involved. Culturally specific services focus on communities shaped by shared experiences of oppression and cultural resilience, including race, ethnicity, immigration status, language, and community identity. These supports address historical limitations to access and place culture at the center of healing and growth.

Services across programs included family engagement and caregiver support, social-emotional learning framed through cultural values and storytelling, culturally rooted mentoring and intergenerational mentorship, leadership development, educational support aligned with cultural strengths, and guidance for youth navigating changes in cultural or family environments. Many programs also integrated 'āina-based experiences that promoted healing, accountability, and responsibility through work with natural and cultural resources. Each of these service components contributed to a broader cultural environment in which youth developed positive coping skills, strengthened their identity, and deepened their sense of belonging.

## **3) Positive Youth Development/Positive Alternative Learning (PAL) Services**

Positive Alternative Learning (PAL) Services are community-based services for youth who are engaged in unproductive, at-risk behaviors, including status offenses such as truancy, in-school suspension, or absenteeism, substance use, and especially, in out-of-home school or social environments.

The PAL program has a two (2)-fold service objective for youth at-risk and their families:

- The first of the two-fold objective is to proliferate Positive Youth Development (PYD) by first assessing and addressing the youth's most basic physiological needs of having access to healthy food, clean water, decent/clean clothing, afforded with appropriate sheltering and long-term housing to be able to sleep and live in safe, clean, livable, and

acceptable conditions. The goals of PYD are to implement positive developmental programs and educational curricula that promote PYD activities designed to help youth maintain safe, healthy family and social lifestyles and to generally circumvent or avoid unproductive status-offending behaviors.

- The second objective is to prevent truancy and in-school suspensions by providing the basic needs and services designed to help youth stay in school and to avoid having unproductive anti-social behaviors that invariably may lead to problems, such as drinking, having excessive tardiness and absenteeism in school attendance, smoking, using illicit drugs, becoming violent or losing control with other classmates or teachers, bullying, and other behaviors which could lead to expulsion from school.

The target population for PAL includes youth of all gender and/or sexual orientations, ages eight (8)- up to eighteen (18)- years old, who have also been marginalized due to race, ethnicity, immigration, and/or language barriers and youth exhibiting status offending behaviors, such as truancy or excessively tardy in school; becoming hostile, violent, and unable to focus in the classroom setting; being troublesome; as well as having other problematic behaviors, such as not completing schoolwork, drinking or smoking on campus.

#### **4) Community-Based Outreach and Advocacy**

OYS provides community-based outreach and advocacy services to actively seek out and engage hard-to-reach vulnerable youth and families; increase access to services by addressing immediate and long-term needs through case management; facilitate the integration of social services; and refer youth and families to services to deter further involvement with the juvenile justice system. OYS contracts five (5) providers to identify and engage youth and families. Services include intake and assessment, development of a youth- and family-driven service plan, case management, trauma-informed practices, referrals, and follow-up to ensure service delivery. The target population is youth aged eight (8) to twenty-one (21) years who are at risk of justice involvement. These programs served approximately 90 youth statewide.

#### **5) Intensive Mentoring Program**

Intensive mentoring program services focus on youth adjudicated by the Family Court and placed on probation or another status. The goals of these four (4) programs are to provide intensive supervision for youth, hold them accountable for their behavior, and assist youth in following the terms and conditions of their probation. The service delivery approach includes involving the youth's family in supporting the youth's participation in activities that increase protective factors and decrease risk factors across various domains of the youth's life.

Intensive Mentoring Program services focus on youth who have been adjudicated by the Family Court and placed on probation. These services are designed to provide steady guidance and close supervision, helping youth stay accountable for their choices, understand the expectations of probation, and make progress in the different areas of their lives where support

is needed. Mentors stay in regular contact with youth and create a dependable rhythm of check-ins, coaching, and follow-through that helps them stay on track.

A key part of this work involves partnering with families. Mentors collaborate with caregivers to reinforce home routines, support school engagement, encourage positive peer interactions, and guide youth toward activities that build protective factors and reduce risks associated with disengagement, emotional stress, and unproductive behaviors. Much of the support focuses on helping youth organize their responsibilities, practice better decision-making, and stay connected to adults who can help them navigate challenges in a healthier, more grounded way.

The intent of Intensive Mentoring Program services is to surround each youth with consistent, meaningful support while reinforcing personal responsibility and accountability. Through steady guidance, clear expectations, and strong family involvement, youth are better equipped to meet probation requirements, reduce behaviors that place them at risk, and build the confidence and skills needed to move forward successfully.

## **6) Peer Parent Support**

Parent Partnership services offer a range of activities to support families in the Juvenile Justice system and improve outcomes for youth and families. Parent Partners' goals for Peer Parent Support services include reducing family conflict, improving school attendance and performance, reducing juvenile crime, and reducing recidivism. The Parent Partners assist parents and families in navigating the system of care to meet the identified needs of youth and families, emphasizing support for the family's "voice and choice" during the wraparound process. A critical factor in helping families access the care system's activities and services is the relationship that develops between families and Parent Partners, grounded in trust, safety, and commitment. The target population is parents, guardians, and families of youth, ages 8 to 19 years old, who are system-involved.

## **7) Juvenile Justice Wraparound Services**

Wraparound services target youth and their families involved in the juvenile justice system who experience very complicated situations that require intensive interventions and services with multiple state agencies. The wraparound planning process brings together people who are natural supports to youth and their families, as well as the multiple agencies that provide services to them. The wraparound facilitator, community navigator, and Parent Partners work together to develop a plan of care that meets the youth's and family's needs. The wraparound planning process uses the identified strengths and needs, guided by 10 principles, to create a plan of care that coordinates the various services and supports. The wraparound planning process supports youth currently on probation and during transition as they are discharged from HYCF and returned to the community. The target population is at-risk youth age twelve (12) through twenty-one (21) involved in the juvenile justice system.

## **8) Community-Based Residential Services**

Community-based residential programs serve youth who cannot or will not remain at home and prepare youth to return to community living. Programs focus on improving youths' decision-making, social, and independent living skills, as well as enhancing their commitment to learning and education.

- Emergency Shelters for youth ages 10 through 17: Emergency shelters provide shelter for recently arrested status offenders, non-violent law violators, and intoxicated, troubled, abused, or neglected youth requiring short-term shelter and related services that address a present crisis.
- Statewide Safe Houses are community-based residential alternatives and emergency shelters for troubled youth, ages 12 through 17, who are at risk of further involvement in the juvenile justice system. A diversion from the institutional setting of HYCF, safe houses provide guidance and support for troubled youth in a highly structured, closely supervised rehabilitative environment while preparing the youth to return to their respective communities.
- Intensive Residential Services for youth ages 12 through 17: Intensive Residential Services provide priority services for youth in the juvenile justice system. These youth are assessed as high risk in one or more areas of need and cannot currently function pro-socially without constant supervision and support. These youth may also benefit from highly structured residential services.
- Independent Living Programs for youth ages 12 through 22: Independent living programs provide services for youth and young adults who are troubled, abused, neglected, or adjudicated and lack the attitudes, skills, and resources for independent living.

## **9) Hawaii State Youth Commission**

The Legislature established the Hawaii State Youth Commission (HiYC) through Act 106, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, "to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State."

The Governor, the Senate President, and the House Speaker nominate 15 HiYC members (ages 14 – 24) to serve as commissioners. Current Commission membership includes representation from Kauai, Oahu, Lanai, Molokai, Maui, and Hawaii Island.

HiYC Commissioners are provided training and opportunities with the Aloha Spirit Statute as a foundation for developing communication and leadership skills with knowledge and competence as youth advocates through legislative processes. In addition, youth Commissioners have many opportunities to connect with and collaborate with other programs, boards, community organizations, and stakeholders on youth and related community issues. The Youth Commission submits a separate report at the end of each fiscal year.

## **10) Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF)**

HYCF is a 30-bed facility that provides custody, care, and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders who have committed serious or violent law violations. Youth who do not require secure confinement at HYCF may be placed in appropriate community-based programs that meet the needs of the youth without jeopardizing the public's safety. HYCF strives to provide programs and services that will aid and prepare the youth for reintegration back into the community. These include, but are not limited to, the programs and services listed below.

### Olomana School (DOE)

This school follows the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) calendar and provides summer school for youth. Olomana School serves students at HYCF in grades 5–12, based on their current grade. Teachers are accomplished and certified in their subjects and use the Hawaii Common Core curriculum. Students receive instruction in English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Art, Culinary, Health, Guidance, Physical Education, Credit Recovery, and Special Education. Special education services and Section 504 plans under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided for eligible students. Olomana School also offers career and technical education, including industry-standard wood and welding shops. Each student earns credits to advance grade levels and work toward a high school diploma. Additional activities include quarterly sports tournaments, district wood and culinary competitions, art and music exhibitions, and cultural days. Students may also participate in job training and internships, both on- and off-campus.

### DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) works with DOE high schools, including Olomana School, to help eligible students with disabilities prepare for and find employment. At Olomana School and HYCF, students with a diagnosed disability can access DVR services through the school's transition coordinator. Most HYCF and Olomana School students qualify for DVR's Pre-Employment Transition Services, called the mini-DVR program. Eligibility is based on an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), 504 Plan, or mental health evaluation. The mini-DVR program provides the following five services for students starting at age 14:

1. Job exploration counseling.
2. Work-based learning experiences include in-school or after-school activities, opportunities outside of traditional school, or internships. At Olomana School, students on the work line receive payment through DVR for their participation.
3. Counseling about options for enrollment in transition or post-secondary education programs.
4. Workplace readiness training focuses on developing social skills and independent living abilities, and
5. Instruction in self-advocacy.

Lanakila Pacific, a community non-profit organization, offers job coaching and employment classes, facilitates job placement for students upon release, and issues paychecks funded by DVR.

Before release from HYCF and Olomana School, students apply for full DVR services. This allows them to access benefits such as a cell phone with monthly phone cards, work or interview attire, job-related tools and technology, safety equipment, and funding for training or post-secondary education. HYCF social workers gather vital documents and a state identification card. FCLB completes the DVR psychological form, and the transition coordinator submits the application. The transition coordinator also arranges meetings with the students, social worker, probation officers, and representatives from Lanakila Pacific, DVR, and other relevant programs. These meetings finalize the students' transition plan. Lanakila Pacific assists students with job applications, resume development, and career-interest inventories, and provides counseling on post-release responsibilities. During the first week after release, Lanakila Pacific coaches students on job attendance, communication, and related employment skills.

#### Mental Health Support Services

The Family Court Liaison Branch (FCLB) is part of the Department of Health (DOH)'s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD). FCLB provides direct clinical mental health services to youth at HYCF. Clinicians hold weekly sessions, each 45 to 60 minutes, using client-centered, trauma-informed, emotion-focused, cognitive-behavioral, and dialectical-behavioral approaches, as well as motivational interviewing and anger management skills. Therapists help youth develop safety plans and strengthen social, coping, and emotional skills to improve judgment, self-awareness, and readiness for reintegration. FCLB manages psychiatric medications for youth needing intervention during confinement, coordinates treatment team meetings, and joins monthly multidisciplinary meetings to review each youth's progress and update individualized treatment goals based on outcomes.

#### Teens Outreach Program (TOP)

The HYCF staff implements a 12-month program, organized into two six-month cycles, to promote positive adolescent development. This program uses curriculum-guided, interactive group discussions, adult mentorship, and community service learning. These approaches help students build practical skills and self-confidence, foster a sense of purpose, and encourage positive relationships. The Teens Outreach Program is adaptable to many settings, including in-school and after-school programs, community organizations, and institutional environments such as residential facilities.

As an evidence-based initiative, the program has three core components. First, adults facilitate an interactive curriculum during weekly group meetings, focusing on problem-solving, emotional regulation, goal setting, and health and wellness. The curriculum is intentionally structured to be culturally responsive and trauma-informed. Second, the program provides adolescents with community service opportunities, allowing them to practice new skills and develop leadership qualities. Third, trained facilitators offer continuous support and coaching

to adolescents both during and outside of group meetings, enhancing their overall well-being and long-term development.

### Victim Impact Classes (VIC)

The Victim Impact Classes (VIC) program, led by HYCF staff, consists of 13 units. Each unit presents a victim's perspective on one of ten core crimes: Property Crime, Assault, Robbery, Hate and Bias, Gang Violence, Sexual Assault, Child Abuse and Neglect, Domestic Violence, Drunk and Impaired Driving, and Homicide. Youth participants engage directly with victims who describe their experiences and the results of crime. VIC stresses how victimization affects the entire community and helps youth identify who may be impacted. By meeting victims, youths reflect on their choices and change their behavior. They make amends, either directly or indirectly. VIC's goal is to lower juvenile recidivism, build empathy, and instill responsibility.

### Hökū Group Services

The Hökū Group Services program delivers weekly therapeutic group sessions for youth, providing essential skills, knowledge, and opportunities for connection within a safe environment. Participants often experience multiple risk factors or vulnerabilities, such as exploitation. The program facilitates continuity of care for youth transitioning between facilities, ensuring access to consistent therapeutic support.

Hökū groups promote the expression and processing of thoughts and emotions among youth through interactive sessions designed to foster empowerment and resilience. The program provides comprehensive support for young people in diverse circumstances, which is critical for trauma recovery. Sessions incorporate psychoeducational and therapeutic activities that enhance self-worth, social safety, autonomy, identity, communication, and self-empowerment. Activities utilize discussion, art, critical thinking, and movement to facilitate healthy expression. Additionally, Hökū integrates cultural values through activities and discussions focused on Hawaii's diverse cultures.

### Starfish Mentoring Program (SMP)

The Starfish Mentoring Program supports high-risk youth aged 11 to 24 who have experienced exploitation, irrespective of gender or disclosure status. Each participant is matched with a responsible adult mentor and engages in activities designed to enhance self-efficacy. Research demonstrates that consistent, trusted adult relationships are critical for fostering healthy interpersonal connections and achieving life goals.

Mentors meet with youth for two hours each week in community settings, foster care placements, or residential facilities. They provide continuous support throughout all placements and commit to a minimum of one year. Activities are tailored to each youth's goals and interests, promoting autonomy and self-advocacy. Examples of activities include hiking, sharing meals, playing games, visiting the beach, and exploring career opportunities. Mentors receive training in trauma-informed care to address the complex needs of youth with histories

of trauma. By fostering empathy, connection, and trust, mentors support youth throughout the healing process.

#### Forward Thinking Pre/Post Transition Services

Forward Thinking is a cognitive-behavioral journaling program. Its primary goal is to help justice-involved youth build skills for responsible living and successful reintegration. It uses Motivational Interviewing and the Transtheoretical Model to support positive changes in thinking, emotion, and behavior. Hale Kipa staff lead sessions where participants use Interactive Journals to set and pursue personal goals. Pre- and post-assessments track participants' understanding and retention. Journal topics include choices, influences, attitudes, responsible behavior, victim awareness, and reentry. After completing the program, Hale Kipa creates a transition plan, provides reintegration support, and delivers post-release services for long-term success.

#### Youth Outreach Program (YOP) Substance Abuse Program – (HYCF)

The Youth Outreach Program (YOP) by Child and Family Service, under contract to the DOH Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD), provides substance abuse counseling to youth at HYCF. YOP builds resilience through individual and group sessions that foster self-awareness, confidence, problem-solving, coping skills, peer connections, substance-use education, and healthy choices. The three-month program adapts to each youth and provides ongoing support for a smooth return to the community. Sessions promote healthy living and cut risky behavior. Treatment plans build self-control, lower substance use, support positive activities, encourage volunteering, and grow healthy relationships. Parents take part in recovery, and outreach helps keep families involved.

#### Employment Services / HYCF Work Program

Youths earn through good behavior to participate in the On-the-Job Training Program at a facility that supports operations such as maintenance, auto mechanics, farming, ranching, a call center, and food service. All earnings will be paid for restitution, and excess funds will be saved to assist the youth with re-entry into the community.

Building on this foundation, Lanakila Pacific Employment Services, operating under contract with the DVR, provides training and work experience for youths at HYCF. Lanakila Pacific supports youths with disabilities through an individualized approach by delivering workshops, offering skills training, and providing job coaching. As re-entry into the community approaches, each youth receives a step-by-step transition plan: this includes meetings with potential employers, assistance with job applications, and support throughout onboarding. Through these initiatives, youths acquire essential skills and guidance, preparing them for successful employment after leaving the facility.

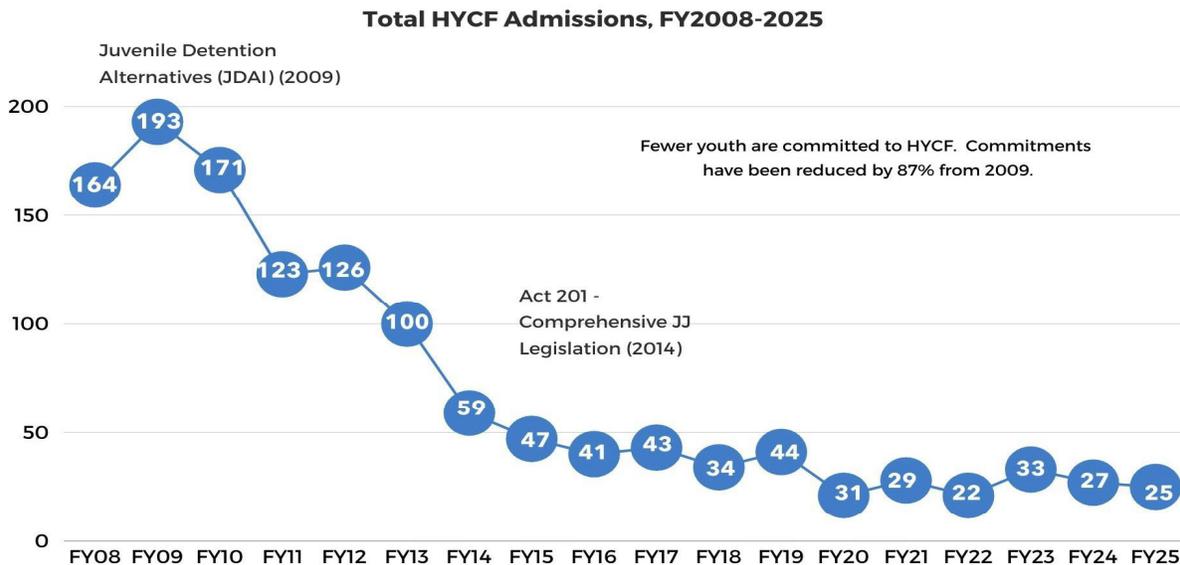
#### Financial Literacy

Young people embark on a journey of financial discovery, exploring topics such as budgeting, credit, emergency planning, and banking basics. Through engaging activities, the program equips youth with real-world skills in saving, investing, managing debt, negotiation, and

understanding their financial rights and responsibilities. The goal is to inspire lifelong healthy financial habits, helping participants grow their savings, manage debt wisely, and feel less stressed about money.

Figure 2 below shows youth admissions to HYCF between FY08 and FY25. As a result of juvenile justice reform and increased program services, inter-agency coordination, and system improvements, commitments to HYCF have been reduced by 86% from 2009 to 2022.

**Figure 2. Total HYCF Admissions, FY2008-2025.**



Source: Department of the Attorney General, Juvenile Justice Information System, 2008-2015, and Office of Youth Services, Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility Admissions data, 2008-2025.

### 11) Kawailoa Youth and Family Wellness Center (KYFWC)

Hawaii has consistently prioritized therapeutic and restorative approaches in its juvenile justice system, beginning with its first Juvenile Justice Plan in 1975<sup>1</sup>. The State established the Office of Youth Services in 1989 to support youth affected by neglect and abuse.<sup>2</sup> In 2009, Hawai'i joined a national campaign to reduce inappropriate juvenile detention, supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). By 2014, the years of effort and the work of the Hawaii Juvenile Justice Working Group resulted in measurable reductions in youth detention and incarceration rates. These successes led to further reform through Act 201, SLH 2014 (Act 201), which improved probation practices and

<sup>1</sup> See Act 303, Sessions Laws of Hawaii, 1980; the Hawaii Juvenile Justice Plan of 1974, supplements, and subsequent updates.

<sup>2</sup> The Legislative Auditor of the State of Hawaii, *Management Audit of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility*, Report No. 86-15 (Honolulu, December 1986), 3.

restricted placements at HYCF. Following Act 201, court filings, probation placements, and youth confinement continued to decline, demonstrating the lasting impact of these system-wide reforms.

The Kawaiiloa Youth and Family Wellness Center (KYFWC) at HYCF was established by Act 208, SLH 2018, as the next step in the State's effort to transform the juvenile justice system. Over the past six years, partners have been working together to develop a model for a system that centers healing and leads to improved community safety. The HYCF Administrator, who manages KYFWC, has brought together partners by providing space for both public agencies and private community-based youth-serving organizations to operate on the KYFWC campus. The eight primary objectives and the corresponding evidence of progress and impact at KYFWC are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. KYFWC Objectives and Evidence of Progress and Impact**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Timeline and Evidence of Progress/Impact</b>
1. Collaborating on effective community-based programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2018-2024</u>: Co-location of private services at KYFWC (described in Table 2 below), program refinement, adaptation, and expansion; preliminary cross-campus evaluation and data-tracking developed</li> </ul>
2. Engaging youth, families, and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2021-2024</u>: Families in Training (FIT) workouts hosted by Kinai ‘Eha have enhanced intergenerational wellbeing through prosocial, healthy activities that promote community-building</li> <li>▪ <u>2023-2024</u>: Kawaiiloa Pilina Builders formed a cross-campus team of program staff who planned and implemented engagement events for youth, staff, families, and community members (e.g., learning trips to local cultural sites; a Kawaiiloa staff appreciation event and La Ho‘iho‘i Ea celebration)</li> <li>▪ <u>2024</u>: Developed and refined the parent support component of the Ho‘okanaka diversion program at Kupa ‘Aina Farm</li> </ul>
3. Supporting Judiciary Diversionary Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2020-2024</u>: Partnership with Family Court 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit Youth Accountability Program – Kupa ‘Aina Farm as a community service and cultural learning site</li> <li>▪ <u>2023-2024</u>: Planning and implementation with Family Court 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit Juvenile Diversion Unit of the culturally relevant Ho‘okanaka diversion program at Kupa ‘Aina Farm</li> </ul>
4. Ending the disparate treatment of Native	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2021-2024</u>: Partnership with Kellogg Foundation to plan for and develop a Transformative Indigenous Model of</li> </ul>

Objectives	Timeline and Evidence of Progress/Impact
Hawaiians within the juvenile justice system	culturally-grounded, community-based therapeutic alternatives to youth incarceration
5. Ending institutionalization for Hawaii’s youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2018-2024</u>: Partnership with Vera Institute to End Girls’ Incarceration [Verify timeline with Mark]</li> </ul>
6. Keeping youth and young adults out of adult prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2021-2024</u>: Diversion of young adults from Oahu Community Corrections Center to restorative shelters at KYFWC with supportive services, including education and employment resources by Kinai ‘Eha and RYSE</li> </ul>
7. Empowering community efforts in aftercare and re-entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2018-2024</u>: Relationship building through community-based networks has expanded the referrals and connections available for youth re-entering the community after release from HYCF or OCCC. Kinai ‘Eha and RYSE have developed solid relationships with educational partners to help youth access higher education opportunities and to meet potential local employers willing to provide additional support to help youth learn, grow, and thrive. RYSE has expanded transitional housing options for young adults as they prepare to move out of the Kawaioloa shelters.</li> </ul>
8. Recognizing and responding to the specialized needs of youth and young adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>2022-2024</u>: Increased mental and behavioral health supports among partners at Kawaioloa, including but not limited to clinical services, substance use and anger management classes, music lessons, and cultural identity formation and affirmation through Hawaiian language and protocols.</li> </ul>

KYFWC has successfully convened key organizations that provide on-site services on its 500-acre campus. Over the past six years, KYFWC has made steady progress in implementing the paradigm shift by starting a cultural healing-focused program, building staff skills and capacity, and increasing staff and youth access to intervention resources and educational and vocational opportunities. Initiatives to assist with program evaluation include establishing and providing data-collection tools to demonstrate the impact, success, and learning of all KYFWC partners. Staff, volunteers, off-campus partners, and youth leaders engage in training in cultural approaches to become advocates for the State and private funders to invest in youth through resources for cultural healing, trauma-informed care, and mental health awareness. Below is a list of the programs on the KYFWC Campus (in addition to HYCF).

**Table 2. KYFWC Programs and Services**

Program	Services Provided at KYFWC
1. Hale Lanipōlua Assessment Center (HLAC)	This program is intended to provide services for commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) who need a place to stabilize, develop tools, and set goals before moving to supportive programs. Hale Kipa provided this service on the Kawaioloa campus until August 2023, then relocated its programming to Ewa Beach. In FY2024, OYS/CSEC services have not been based at KYFWC, although partnership development with off-campus providers, such as Ho'ola Na Pua, has been underway.
2. Hale Mololani	Vocational and educational training program for disconnected youth ages 16-24 with educational challenges and a history of substance abuse. The program assists youth seeking a safe place to learn, positive relationships with themselves and mentors, mental and behavioral health services, and career and life skill development. Kinai 'Eha has been providing workforce training at KYFWC since 2018 and expanded to offer transitional shelter in late 2021. The Hale Ka Hana shelter primarily houses young adults ages 18-24 who are diverted from the O'ahu Community Correctional Center and commit to the highly structured, culturally informed workforce development program.
3. Hale Apuakea	Temporary, transitional shelter for homeless street youth ages 18-24. Includes a daily drop-in center for homeless minors and provides mental health, healthcare, diversion support services, and vocational opportunities. RYSE also supports youth in planning for a transition to independent living off campus. RYSE has been providing these services at KYWFC since 2018.
4. Kupu `Āina	Kupu `Āina is an on-site five-acre natural farm that uses Aloha `Āina ("love of the land") as an intervention to heal youth, families, and communities. Kupu `Āina hosts community workdays and Farm-to-Table workshops, alternative education activities, and launched a court diversion program in partnership with Family Court Judges and Diversion Unit in 2024. Kupa 'Āina donates harvested produce to KYFWC partners and the community. Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF) has been providing this service at KYWFC since 2018.

Program	Services Provided at KYFWC
5. Olomana School	Olomana School provides alternative education within the Department of Education and serves the daily public education needs of youth committed to HYCF.

In FY24, these partners served 371 youth (unduplicated individuals) on our Kawaiiloa campus.

## 12) Federal Grant Programs

Federally funded programs have been strategically developed to strengthen the juvenile justice system while aligning with federal priorities. The primary aim of federally funded programs is to divert youth from pathways that lead to detention or incarceration, thereby fostering more supportive and rehabilitative settings. By integrating evidence-based practices and collaborating with local organizations, federal funds serve as an added resource to support interventions, including mental health services, educational support, and community engagement initiatives, all of which foster positive youth development.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, enacted by Congress in 1974, aims to protect and promote the well-being of youth within the juvenile justice system.

OYS, as outlined in sections 571-32(k) and 352F-5(b), HRS, is the designated state entity responsible for administering the JJDP. OYS serves as an administrative body and oversees and manages federal grant programs administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

This role also involves ensuring that the State complies with the JJDP requirements to secure OJJDP funding. Compliance with the JJDP provides financial support for juvenile justice programs and safeguards the State against potential civil litigation over conditions of confinement.

The funding, particularly through the Title II Formula Grants Program, enables the State to meet the core requirements established by the JJDP Act. The core mandates of the JJDP emphasize the deinstitutionalization of status offenders (DSO), the removal of youths from adult jails and lockups, the prevention of contact between juvenile and adult offenders, also known as “sight and sound separation,” and the reduction of the disproportionate representation of race and ethnic minority youth within the legal system. Furthermore, federal law also mandates adherence to the standards set by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

The table below highlights the four core requirements along with Hawaii's status.

**Table 2. Hawaii's Compliance Status with the Requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act**

Core Requirements of the JJDP Act	Compliance Status
<p><b>Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)</b>            Juvenile charges with status offenses, offenses that would not be criminal if committed by an adult, shall not be placed in secure detention or secure correctional facilities. Status offenses include, but are not limited to, truancy, running away, and minors in possession of alcohol.</p>	<p>The State is in full compliance with the DSO requirement.</p>
<p><b>Jail and Lockup Removal (JLR)</b>            No juvenile shall be securely held in adult jails or lockups. However, under the Reporting Exception, accused law violators may be held for up to six hours for identification, processing, interrogation, transfer to a juvenile facility, or while awaiting release to parents or guardians.</p>	<p>The State is in full compliance with the JLR requirement.</p>
<p><b>Sight and Sound Separation (SSS)</b>            During the temporary period when a juvenile may be securely held in an adult jail and lockup, sight and sound contact are prohibited between the juvenile and adult inmates or trustees.</p>	<p>The State is in full compliance with the SSS requirement.</p>
<p><b>Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED)</b>            The state must identify and analyze race and ethnicity at decision points in the juvenile justice system to determine which points create racial and ethnic disparities among youth who encounter the juvenile justice system. In addition, the state must ensure that youth in the juvenile justice system are treated equitably based on gender, race, ethnicity, family income, and disability.</p>	<p>The Office of Youth Services has completed the annual Racial and Ethnic Disparities Plan and submitted it to the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The State of Hawaii is in full compliance with the R/ED requirement.</p>

OYS has made significant progress in improving its operations to comply with federal regulations since the 1990s. The improvements, which include recruiting a dedicated statewide compliance monitor, primarily focus on meeting the federal mandates outlined above.

The dedicated Compliance Monitor plays a crucial role in overseeing and upholding federal standards. This individual is responsible for managing facility certification, conducting facility inspections across the state, facilitating compliance training, and providing vital technical assistance to various stakeholders.

During the 2025 Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), Hawaii upheld its commitment to the JJDP Act and met all core requirements throughout the year. The data presented in the following tables offers a comparison of the frequency and rates of DSO and JLR violations over the last five

years. It is noteworthy to highlight that there have been no reported SSS violations during this five-year timeframe.

**Table 3. Comparison of the Number of Violations from 2021 to 2025.**

Compliance Violations		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders		3	0	1	1	2
Jail and Lockup Removal		0	2	2	2	1

**Table 4. Comparison of the Rate of Violations from 2020 to 2024.**

Core Requirements		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders		1.0	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.34
Jail and Lockup Removal		0.00	0.67	0.59	0.30	0.68

**Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council**

Executive Order 91-4, which superseded Executive Order 91-2, established the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council (JJSAC) as an advisory body to the Office of Youth Services (OYS). The JJSAC is charged with implementing the provisions of the JJDP, as amended. In partnership with the JJSAC, the OYS addresses the prevention and treatment needs of youth involved in the justice system, ensuring compliance with the core mandates of the JJDP and educating the Governor and the Legislature on juvenile justice reform and best practices.

The JJSAC comprises vetted professionals from the government, private, and non-profit sectors, as well as youth. Guided by foundational values, strategic partnerships, and research-driven insights, the JJSAC has formed five subcommittees focused on specific areas: juvenile justice delinquency prevention, intervention strategies, addressing racial and ethnic disparities, and fostering an equitable system for youth.

In alignment with the 2024-2026 Three-Year State Plan, OYS and the JJSAC have identified the following priority areas and goals: Planning and Administration, Compliance, State Advisory Group (SAG), Alternatives to Detention, and Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED).

**Table 5. 2024-2026 Three-Year State Plan Goals and Progress**

OYS and JJSAC FY2024-2026 Goals	Progress
<p>Goal #1- Sustain and improve programs in specific geographic areas across the State, improve quality assurance measures, and support statewide coordinated efforts.</p> <p>a. Establish a data collection system that can monitor key performance indicators linked to the recidivism rates of young offenders. The goal is to use data to guide decision-making in</p>	Ongoing from the previous State Plan

OYS and JJSAC FY2024-2026 Goals	Progress
<p>policy development, program evaluation, and rehabilitation strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Gather precise gender-specific data to determine variations in treatment choices and care. Gender-disaggregated data will provide insight into the specific needs of young men, young women, and non-binary youth.</li> <li>c. Evaluate how factors such as sex/gender identity intersect with other social factors (e.g., race, class) will help to improve services for marginalized populations who may face discrimination or exclusion based on their identities.</li> <li>d. Sustain and offer support to existing community-based prevention and intervention programs through collaboration, policy adjustments, and advocating for resources within state legislation.</li> </ul>	
<p>Goal #2- Address gaps in policy and program areas that include a holistic framework in the planning and evaluating prevention and intervention programs that account for generational poverty and trauma, cultural/ethnic differences, and dual-diagnosis assessments and care for mental health and substance use.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Goal #3- Address inaccuracies/missing data at key decision points, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Revisiting how race/ethnicity is identified at each decision point.</li> <li>b. Hold discussions on whether departments/agencies across the system use the same protocol for identifying and documenting.</li> <li>c. Develop strategies and make recommendations on accurate identification and recording of race and ethnicity.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing from the previous State Plan. The Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJSAC) R/ED sub-committee and the prevention committee, in partnership with OYS, has taken on this task.</p>
<p>Goal #4- Join forces with the Hawaii Judiciary, Family Court, police departments, and partnering agencies to address gaps in policy and program practices statewide. A holistic approach in program planning, evaluation, and intervention will provide alignment in addressing the needs of youth and reducing disparities at each stage of the criminal justice system. Additionally, address the Act 201 requirements regarding mandatory reporting from the Family Court.</p>	<p>Ongoing from the previous State Plan</p>

OYS and JJSAC FY2024-2026 Goals	Progress
<p>Goal #5- Collaborate with non-profit/private community partnering agencies and government agencies to heighten diversion efforts statewide.</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Define/develop a statewide definition of diversion.</li> <li>b. Create evaluation methods and processes to monitor outcomes.</li> <li>c. Develop diversion programs in communities where disparities exist.</li> <li>d. Focus on policy implementation, practice, and system improvements.</li> <li>e. Revisit and update past MOUs/MOAs between juvenile justice leaders to produce a cohesive way of reporting data elements.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing from previous State Plan</p>
<p>Goal #6- Identify Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander communities that experience disproportionate social factors that are associated with poverty and homelessness. Research and review of literature reveal communities associated with poverty, housing, low employment, and mediocre healthcare, which generally result in higher rates of crime.</p>	<p>Ongoing from the previous plan. OYS will continue to collaborate with partnering agencies to address these social factors.</p>
<p>Goal #7- Collaborate with the Juvenile State Advisory Council (JJSAC) in conducting regular analysis of R/ED across the juvenile justice system and provide education and technical assistance to the community, legislatures, judiciary circuits, and police departments.</p>	<p>Ongoing from the previous plan.</p>
<p>Goal #8- Ensure and maintain compliance with the three core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended: Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO); Jail and Lockup Removal (JLR); Sight and Sound Separation (SSS) of youth offenders from adult criminal offenders.</p>	<p>Accomplished</p>

The Title II State Advisory Group (SAG) allocation supports the work of the JJSAC and its Sub-committees. More than seventy-five percent of Title II funds are provided to public and private/nonprofit organizations to reduce juvenile crime and increase positive youth development in Hawaii communities. The Alternatives to Detention Programs is critical in the continuum of prevention and intervention. The federally funded programs serve over 300 youth ages 10-17 involved in the justice system.

## **REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 367D-6-8, HRS, GENDER RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS FOR FEMALE YOUTH.**

The 2006 Hawaii State Legislature mandated through section 367D-6, HRS, that the OYS collaborate with the Departments of Human Services, Health, Labor, and Industrial Relations, and Education, as well as the representatives of the private sector, to develop a comprehensive continuum of care to address the gender-responsive needs of female adjudicated youth. Section 367D-7, HRS, also requires that the OYS shall foster a gender-responsive environment by providing model gender-responsive programs for female adjudicated youth, and section 367D-8, HRS, further requires that OYS report on the following areas: program descriptions, type, and costs of contracts made, name of the private agency awarded each contract, and the success of each contract in meeting program specifications.

Through our Ending Girls' Incarceration Initiative, OYS continues to increase gender responsiveness, programs and services, and opportunities for juvenile females to succeed and remain free of the juvenile justice system.

### **Ending Girls' Incarceration Initiative**

In 2017, Hawaii was one of five jurisdictions the Vera Institute chose to receive technical support in the nationwide initiative to End Girls' Incarceration. This project results from alarming numbers of girls being committed for low-level offenses to protect their safety or address their needs that have gone unmet within the community. Ending girls' incarceration will require a continuum of strong and effective gender and culturally responsive community-based services that meet girls' needs established within their community, allowing them to live healthy, safe, and accessible. The core values of this project are:

- Priority on strategies that promote healing and equality for girls and Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-Sexual (LGB) and Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) youth and youth of color.
- Gender-responsive means culturally responsive.
- Youth and family voices are integral to success.
- All girls have the right to self-determination, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be valued as experts in their own lives, and
- Necessary changes require local leaders to identify and address local solutions.

### **Girls' Incarceration in Hawaii: What We Know**

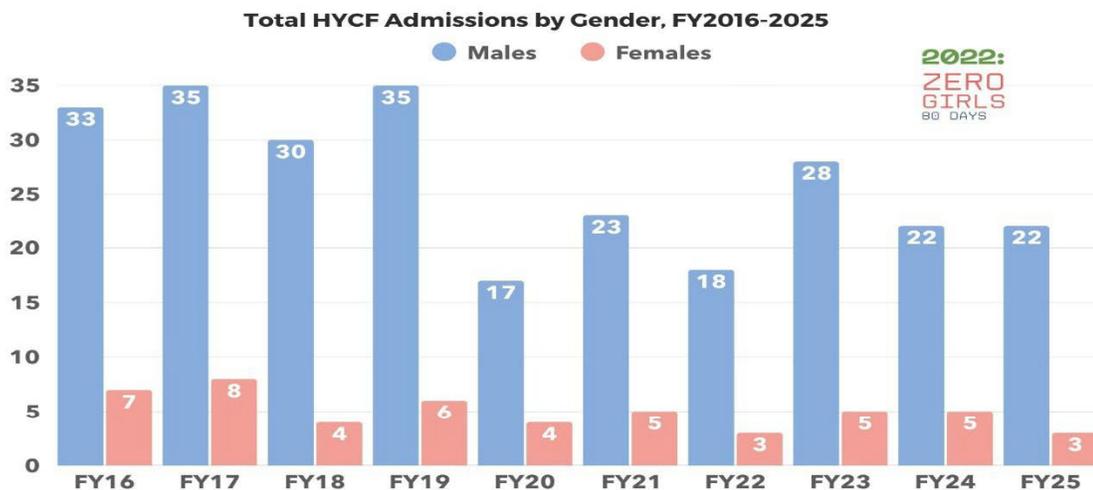
The partnership with the Vera Institute included several research studies evaluating data on girls' involvement with the juvenile justice system. This research found that most of the girls and gender-expansive youth entering Hawaii's youth justice system pose no threat to public safety. Instead, youth are confined or placed on probation as a vehicle to connect them to needed services, as services are limited, or in an attempt to keep them safe from harm. Perversely, existing funding streams often limit or restrict access to services, creating a pathway

for girls to enter the justice system to access the most intensive resources. At the same time, Hawaii's most vulnerable girls and gender-expansive youth end up in multiple systems and, as a result, are in contact with multiple adults who are responsible for various aspects of their well-being.

For example, a girl experiencing trafficking may have professionals assigned to her case from each agency: a case manager from a provider working with trafficked youth, a social worker from CWS, a probation officer from the Judiciary, a dedicated behavioral specialist from CAMHD, a social worker at a provider working with transitional housing, among others. As a result, coordination across systems and between providers is challenging, and caseworkers within one system are not always aware of the full slate of resources available within other systems. In addition, individual providers are often responsible for doing outreach and advocacy within systems to access the level of care girls need, while restrictive eligibility requirements - based on the funding source – limit what is accessible. Meanwhile, navigating multiple systems can be overwhelming, confusing, and challenging for young people and their families, who are often concurrently experiencing or healing from trauma.

In SFY22, Hawaii received national attention for being the first state-run facility in the country to achieve zero girls committed at a state juvenile correctional facility. HYCF saw eighty (80) days of zero girls committed. Beginning in 2004 with the establishment of the Girls Court under the innovative leadership of Circuit Court Judge the Honorable Karen Radius (ret.). This historical accomplishment can be traced back to over 20 years of collaborative efforts on the part of juvenile justice reform advocates, including the First Family Court leadership and judges, and the leadership of the OYS and HYCF, DOH CAMHD, and DHS Child Welfare Services (CWS) Branch administrators, in addition to many community-based organizations and other partners.

**Figure 3. Total HYCF Admissions by Gender, FY2016-2025**



In FY25, OYS will continue working with system partners to develop solutions to reduce risk factors and increase program services for girls involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the juvenile justice system.

## **REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACT 297, SLH 2025, THE SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PILOT PROGRAM**

Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program established by Act 130, SLH 2022 (Act 130), created the opportunity for the Office of Youth Services to establish:

1. An inter-agency safe spaces pilot program, and
2. Physical safe spaces for youth, ages 14 to 24 years old, in each county for youth experiencing homelessness.

Participating agencies include, but are not limited to, the DOE, DOH, DHS, Department of Public Safety (DPS), and county police departments, and are tasked with coordinating the identification of youth who are experiencing homelessness and placement of these youth at a shelter for homeless youth.

Act 130 authorizes OYS to contract with knowledgeable, experienced, qualified, and licensed nonprofit organizations to operate shelters for homeless youth. Notwithstanding any other law, a contracted shelter may admit a youth into the shelter's care for up to ninety (90) days without the consent of the youth's parent or guardian. The OYS will finalize the program framework and implement a plan to accomplish this project.

In FY23, the first year of the project, OYS met with community partners, assessed shelter bed availability and needs, increased funding and capacity for minor residential beds, researched local and national best practices, designed the project plan and partnered with the Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) to plan and facilitate the implementation of the National Safe Place (NSP) program in Hawaii. NSP provides a point of access for youth to get help wherever they see a yellow Safe Place sign.

In March 2023, NSP representatives conducted onsite training with HYSN. They participated in a collaborative conference for almost 200 government and community-based organization personnel interested in Hawaii's Safe Spaces program. In 2023, meetings and presentations were held with agencies across the state to develop an implementation plan.

In FY24 focused on recruiting and training Safe Place sites, establishing both Text4Help and phone numbers for youth to call for help, Safe Place site training, and project outreach. In July 2024, the Safe Spaces project officially launched on Oahu and Hawaii Island with a joint DHS and HYSN media release. On Oahu, Hale Kipa serves as the Safe Place provider. On Hawaii Island, The Salvation Army serves as the Safe Place provider. Both agencies will respond to youth calls and text messages through the Safe Place program 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Since the launch, this project has received favorable attention from several news agencies and community-based organizations, which have requested to be part of the project to help homeless youth.

OYS is grateful that the 2025 Legislature made this program permanent with Act 297, SLH 2025. FY25 was focused on outreach and recruitment of Safe Place sites across Oahu and Hawaii Island. The program currently has twelve active sites with more businesses being recruited and trained to provide services to youth. In FY26, recruitment will continue to be a focus, with outreach to ensure youth, families, and the community are aware of this program, as well as recruiting Safe Place sites.

As part of the project, OYS will issue procurement solicitations for minor emergency shelter on Oahu and young adult emergency shelter on Maui in the New Year.

**REPORT IN RESPONSE TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 180 (2024), REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO REPORT ON THE CULTURAL AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AT THE KAWAILOA YOUTH AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTER.**

In 2014, the Juvenile Justice System Reform in Hawaii (ACT 201, SLH 2014), proposed by the late Representative Diana "Mele" Carroll and based on the work of the Hawaii Juvenile Justice Working Group, continued the paradigm shift from punitive models toward rehabilitation through therapeutic programs and other alternative approaches to incarceration. The shift toward diversionary programs resulted in a large reduction in the juvenile incarcerated population. Fewer youth are committed to HYCF, and commitments have been reduced by 77% from 2009 (193 vs 43).

Juvenile Justice Reform in Hawaii is enhancing public safety, as indicated by the reduction in the number of felony petitions filed. There was 75% decrease as reported in the Juvenile Justice Reform Annual Results and Update, Hawaii JDAI Executive Committee, January 8, 2018.

The Kawaiiloa Youth and Family Wellness Center (KYFWC) at HYCF was established by Act 208 in 2018 as the next step in the State's effort to transform the juvenile justice system. Over the past six years, partners have been working together to develop a model for a system that centers healing and improves community safety. The HYCF Administrator, who manages KYFWC, has engaged partners to co-locate public and private (i.e., community-based) youth-serving organizations on the KYFWC campus.

KYFWC Mission

The idea of creating a campus where multiple state agencies and community non-profits collaborate to provide programs for the most vulnerable at-risk youth and young adult populations that are still falling through the JJS reform efforts has materialized. The specific youth communities targeted are victims (minors) of sex trafficking, homeless youth and young adults, vocational training for youth and young adults, and residential mental health programming for youth.

The purpose of the KYFWC is best described in the following principles:

- Supporting State Judiciary Diversionary Programs,

- Ending Institutionalization for Hawaii’s Youth,
- Ending the disparate treatment of Native Hawaiians within the JJS,
- Keep Youth and young adults out of adult prisons,
- Engagement of Youth families and communities,
- Empower Community efforts in aftercare and re-entry,
- Recognize and provide for youth and young adults with specialized needs, and
- Collaborate on effective community-based programs.

Since the implementation of our KYFWC Campus vision in 2018, there has been tremendous positive growth, along with obstacles, including COVID-19, which has negatively impacted youth and young adult mental health and homelessness. The combined programmatic work of Kawaiiloa partners has developed a profile of all the youth and young adults on campus that has shown an increase in mental health concerns. To understand the mental health crisis, we must begin to look at the factors that shape the social determinants of health for our most vulnerable youth and their families in Hawaii today. Factors include:

1. Society  
Social and economic inequalities, discrimination, racism, migration, media and technology, popular culture, and government policies.
2. Environment  
Neighborhood Safety, access to green spaces, healthy food, housing, health care, pollution, natural disasters, and climate change.
3. Community  
Relationships with peers, teachers, and mentors; faith community; school climate; academic pressure; and community support.
4. Family  
Relationships with parents, caregivers, and siblings, family mental health, financial stability, domestic violence, and trauma.
5. Individual  
Age, genetics, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and coping skills.

In addition to these factors is the understanding of this generation's COVID-19 experiences, where it has been documented that certain social groups' mental health was challenged:

1. Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islander youth who reported increased stress due to COVID 19 related hate and harassment.
2. Low-income youth, who faced economic, educational, and social disruption (for example, losing access to free school lunches).
3. LGBTQ+ youth who lost access to school-based services and were sometimes confined to homes where they were not supported or accepted.
4. Youth in rural areas faced additional challenges in participating in school or accessing mental health services (for example, due to limited connectivity).

5. Youth in immigrant and migrant (COFA) households, who face language and technology barriers to accessing mental health services and education.
6. Special youth populations, including youth involved with the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, as well as runaway youth and youth experiencing homelessness.

With the profile provided on the current mental health conditions of the most vulnerable youth and their families, Kawailoa is being developed to address the following issues.

1. Recognize that mental health is an essential part of overall health.
2. Empower youth and their families to recognize, manage, and learn from difficult emotions.
3. Ensure that every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care.
4. Support the mental health of children and youth in educational, community, and childcare settings.
5. Address the economic and social barriers that contribute to poor mental health for young people, families, and caregivers.
6. Increase timely data collection and research to identify and respond to youth mental health needs more rapidly.

As noted above, therapeutic services are provided on the KYFWC Campus by many agencies and community-based organizations. The Opportunity Youth Action Hui (OYAH) leads activities related to the Kellogg Racial Equity 2023 Challenge grant awarded to the Partners In Development Foundation (PIDF). Below is a summary of activities and achievements.

OYAH partners at Kawailoa are creating an Indigenous system of support for youth, shaped by Hawaiian knowledge and cultural practices. The work occurs in 3 “streams”: 1) Pu’uhonua: Healing sanctuary of programs and supports for youth; 2) Kapu Aloha: Healing policies and practices to shift from punitive to restorative approaches; 3) Pilina Ola: Healing partnerships to extend this network of cultural support. In the following section, we describe our work in Y2.

Pu’uhonua: On our Kawailoa campus, healing-centered, culturally-grounded programs are being adapted and expanded to support justice-involved youth and those who have experienced other significant life disruptions (e.g., loss of housing or family support, disconnection from school, unaddressed mental health needs). A nurturing environment of safety and consistency at Kawailoa is established through cultural protocols and grounded in relationships with people and places.

OYAH programs welcome youth to form trusting relationships with mentors and peers and to participate in regularly scheduled learning and community service activities. Youth who choose to learn Hawaiian language and values through cultural practices, chants, songs, genealogy, and mo’olelo (stories) develop skills and tools to strengthen their relationship to this place and reflect on their connection to the land that sustains our life. Youth who have been operating from a survival mindset can root down and grow by exploring their sense of self and purpose

through behavioral health services, educational and employment assessments, job training opportunities, and educational support. Cultural learning experiences serve as stepping stones for youth to gain understanding, practice skills, grow in confidence, and ultimately expand their access to future opportunities.

Kapu Aloha and Pilina Ola: Political and philosophical support for healing practices, policies, and pathways as alternatives to youth incarceration are mobilized through mutual learning and partnership development. At Kawaihoa, OYAH and HYCF host learning exchanges via campus visits, stakeholder convenings, and training with government agencies, policymakers, funders, schools, and other community-based organizations.

Emerging leaders who show potential to sustain system change are invited to experience culture-based approaches for themselves, often with time spent in ‘āina at the Farm. Judiciary partners are working with OYAH programs closely to establish diversion referrals from Family and District Courts. RYSE and Kinai ‘Eha actively develop relationships with local employers, assisting youth to better prepare for the expectations and requirements of different career pathways, and employers to have a fuller understanding of the resilience of youth who are working to overcome obstacles to employment in their lives.

To advance restorative and therapeutic policies at the State Legislature, OYAH continues to leverage funding to support a policy team of law students who identify legislative champions, track, and support priority bills each session. Beyond campus, OYS, HYCF, and OYAH leaders and youth share about Kawaihoa at conferences such as the Opportunity Youth Forum with the Aspen Institute (OYF-AI).

401 youth received support at Kawaihoa, benefiting from the 4 new racial equity programs launched by OYAH partners to nurture connections to ‘āina, self, and people.

- 1) RYSE piloted a cultural healing program featuring learning trips to introduce youth to ‘āina-based and healing-focused cultural practitioners in different communities. Early evidence suggests that the participating youth have increased motivation (e.g., improved GED class attendance, reduced drug use, and job applications). Community-based partnerships are a vital part of a broader network of care, providing social support, connection to ‘āina, and potential employment opportunities.
- 2) Kinai ‘Eha piloted workforce development for community response through an indigenous resource management lens, training youth in efforts to address the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) infestation decimating local crops. Youth assisted local farms, engaging over 180 community members in an intergenerational event to capture 500+ CRB specimens.
- 3) A pilot program of cross-program Pilina Builders is now part of a more robust infrastructure for communication and coordination, supporting training and cultural learning for staff and youth.

- 4) Ho'okanaka at Kupa 'Aina began this year as both a program promoting racial equity and a formal diversion pathway established in partnership with the Judiciary. Youth referred to Ho'okanaka from the Family Court diversion unit are immersed in culturally-relevant 'āina-based learning and are eligible to have their arrest record expunged upon completion.

Improved diversion systems served 99 youth engaged with OYAH programs. Beyond Ho'okanaka, older youth on supervised release from jail accessed support at Kinai 'Eha and RYSE to meet their court conditions, including culturally-relevant job training and/or education. Youth successfully fulfilled their obligations (e.g., paying restitution), and their efforts were recognized by judges (e.g., a shortened probation period).

Forty-eight emerging leaders were trained and mobilized as ambassadors for justice system transformation. As adults stepped back and opened space, youth leaders opened national conferences with cultural protocols, led tours for campus visitors, and shared their stories of challenges and healing.

At least 17 partnerships (e.g., PACT, Compassionate Ko'olaupoko, Lulukū Farms) expanded the system of services and resources for youth and staff at Kawaihoa. OYAH partners deepened collaborative relationships this year while continuing to build the 31 partnerships reported in Year 1, including national-level collaborations with organizations such as PRI, FHI 360, US DOE, OYF-AI, and CJJ.

Four policy wins were powered by nine legislative champions that our Policy Team has developed relationships with, promoting healing responses for youth: To establish a State Peer Support Specialist Work Group; expand funding for youth wellness and resilience; pilot a Crisis Intervention Diversion Program with DOH; and DHS report to the State Legislature on Kawaihoa culturally-grounded and healing-centered community programs.

24 organizations engaged in adapting approaches to cultural healing, e.g., the Prosecutor's Office, Family and District Court Judges, Probation.

Understanding the demographics of the current juvenile justice systems, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) are the highest ethnic group with system involvement.

### Future Planning

As Kawaihoa moves forward into 2026, the following initiatives and collaborations continue its progress:

1. With Legislative funding received in 2019 HYCF Capitol Improvement Project "Master Plan" will see the finalization of a final report on recommendations for the restoration and upgrade of the ninety-six-year-old campus. The plan will outline the demolition of aged facilities and the construction of new facilities to house mental health residential programs for minors, a new young adult homeless structure, a Kawaihoa administration and training building, and the renovation of the campus barn and farm area to include

office space, program space, and storage. Upgrades to antiquated water and sewer systems, parking, and lighting expansion.

2. Continued partnership with the Opportunity Youth Action Hui (OYAH) and finalizing lease agreements.
3. Continued discussion with the Governor's task force on Homelessness, to designate Kawaioloa as a potential site for a Kau Hale to house the homeless young adult population, aging out of the Judiciary, HYCF, DHS CWS, and DOH CAMDH programs.
4. Continued discussions with DOH CAMDH and DHS CWS for potential resources to initiate mental health residential programming for vulnerable male and female minors within the Kawaioloa campus vacant structures.
5. Continuation and expansion of Safe Places to provide sanctuaries statewide for homeless youth.
6. Continued support of Commercially Sexual Exploited Children shelters and programs throughout the state in support of the Judiciary, DOH CAMDH, and DHS CWS.
7. Continued support of statewide youth shelters in support of the Judiciary, DOH CAMDH, and DHS CWS.
8. Completion of the National Institute of Criminal Justice Reform report on an assessment and evaluation of OYS' system of care.

OYS will continue to work with government and community-based organizations and partners to address the needs of youth and families. OYS appreciates the continued support of the legislature for youth prevention and diversion programs and requests that bill and budget requests to maintain and increase supportive services to youth be supported.

### **OYS Achievements and Continued Projects:**

OYS continued its collaboration with the Judiciary to spearhead the State's effort in juvenile justice reform and improvement, based on the comprehensive recommendations of the Hawaii Juvenile Justice Working Group, which resulted in Act 201 (SLH 2014). The law intends to reduce secure confinement, strengthen community supervision, focus resources on practices proven to reduce recidivism, and provide an upfront investment of \$1.26 million for mental health and substance abuse treatment, delinquency interventions, and implementation of the reforms.

The policies contained in Act 201 advance priorities in three areas:

- *Reduce the use of secure confinement and protect public safety.*

Limiting space in expensive secure facilities to the most serious juvenile offenders will help Hawaii produce the most significant public safety benefit from the juvenile justice system. In addition, providing certain youth adjudicated for low-level crimes with opportunities for early interventions will ensure they are held accountable and that resources are used to their best advantage.

- *Strengthen community supervision and probation practices.*

Effective community supervision will allow Hawaii to maximize the public safety return on taxpayer investments in juvenile justice. In addition, by grounding probation practices in data and research, the state can better hold lower-risk youth accountable while reducing recidivism.

- *Sustain effective practices and cultivate stakeholder collaboration.*

Regular data collection and analysis continued to improve and maximize public safety returns. Act 201's increasing avenues for collaboration across agencies promoted efficient system management and case planning, enhancing decision-making and resource allocation. During SFY22, regular meetings with the Judiciary were continued to sustain practices and continue improvements intended by Act 201.

### **Community Collaboration:**

The work of OYS requires a collaborative approach. Collaboration permeates the agency's major programs, including partnerships with the Judiciary, DHS, DOE, DOH, the University of Hawaii, and county agencies, including the police, prosecutors, and Mayors' offices. Below are several ways OYS collaborates with other government agencies to serve Hawaii's youth and families, and requires OYS to rebuild successful activities following funding shortfalls.

- **Hawaii Island**

OYS continued collaboration with the Hawai'i County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney to implement a juvenile justice intake and assessment center in East Hawai'i. In SFY 18, OYS provided funding to expand services to West Hawai'i; this contract was cancelled following COVID-19 budget reductions. The assessment center offers various services for at-risk youth arrested for status and certain misdemeanor offenses, identifies needs, and links youth and their families with appropriate services. Reopening the West Hawaii diversion center will remain a goal.

- **Oahu**

OYS continued implementing the Ho'opono Mamo diversion program in Kalihi, designed to steer youth away from the juvenile justice system and toward supportive programs that help them address issues that may lead to risky or harmful behavior.

- **Maui**

OYS collaborates with the Maui Police Department's (MPD) Positive Outreach Intervention (POI) project, which addresses the lag time between arrests and initial court hearings by providing outreach services to youth. OYS also funds the Kalo program with MPD, a culturally based program for at-risk youth and their families. The Kalo curriculum includes building family communication skills and relationships, increasing the youth's connection to the community, and increasing cultural awareness

and appreciation. Kalo collaborates with DOE and serves youth of all ages, including those under 11 who are chronically absent from school or at risk of expulsion. OYS responded to requests for shelter beds for sexually exploited children by providing additional funding to a local shelter. OYS also supports emergency shelter for victims of sex trafficking and abuse on Maui.

- **Kauai**

OYS supports the Kauai County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney's Teen Court Program. The diversionary program is an alternative process to hold youth accountable through a peer-driven approach rather than the Family Court system. Due to staffing shortages on Maui, the contract provider for Intensive Mentoring services on Kauai has ended their contract. This is a significant loss to Kauai Island youth. OYS is working with community providers to seek an alternative to restart these services in the future.

- **Judiciary**

OYS continues to work with the Judiciary, the Family Court, and the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council to implement the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) with the guidance of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Implementing JDAI core strategies helped eliminate inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention, minimize failures to appear and incidences of delinquent behavior, redirect public finances to successful reform strategies, improve conditions in secure detention facilities, and reduce minority over-representation in the juvenile justice system.

OYS also works closely with the courts in the four judicial circuits to expand community-based treatment and monitoring as alternatives to confinement at the youth correctional facility, including a statewide assessment risk tool, YASI, that provides data to address critical risk and protective factors for youth entering the juvenile justice system.

- **Department of Health**

OYS continued its collaboration with DOH CAMHD to support youth exiting HYCF in their successful reintegration into the community. Many of these youth need intensive mental health services to address their substance abuse and mental health treatment needs. This collaboration also applies to youth referred by the Family Court for consideration before they are committed to the HYCF. Other stakeholders, such as DHS CWS and private community-based agencies, may refer juvenile justice-involved youth for intensive mental health services.

In FY25, this partnership resulted in an increase in fiscal support from DOH CAMHD for several OYS projects, including 1) purchasing electronic devices for committed youth to increase access to educational and vocational opportunities, behavioral health services, and family reunification opportunities, 2) an electronic health records system at HYCF, and 3) youth behavioral health wellness educational materials.

## **Continuing Philosophy and Projects:**

Investing in OYS community-based prevention programs at the front end yields considerable short- and long-term dividends. The resulting benefits to youth, families, and communities include maintaining positive relationships with family and support systems, receiving mental health and substance abuse treatment, reducing youth homelessness, and reducing delinquency behavior and criminal recidivism. Conversely, reducing resources for these programs can have a detrimental impact on positive outcomes, ultimately leading youth further into the juvenile justice system.

Programs across all areas of service, especially those providing residential shelter, report receiving youth who have increased behavioral health needs, resulting in the need for more intensive programming and trained staff. As a result, programs are serving fewer children with high-intensity services, and OYS has had to reduce the number of contracts to allocate more funding to priority or key programs.

Nonetheless, OYS continues to focus on enhancing services and programs and pivoting to meet needs as necessary. Programs must continue to meet the needs of adjudicated youth on probation, prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system, reduce recidivism, and maximize opportunities for youth to become productive and responsible citizens.

- Ensure adjudicated youth are placed in the least restrictive environment possible, consistent with nationwide best practices, without jeopardizing public safety.
- Ensure fair and equal treatment for all youth, regardless of race/ethnicity, and reduce disproportionate minority contact at decision-making points in the juvenile justice system.
- Continue the transformation envisioned by Act 201 - to increase public safety, hold juvenile offenders accountable for their actions, and reduce costs to Hawaii taxpayers by maximizing the public safety return on Hawaii's juvenile justice investment.
- Continue to implement Assessment Centers to provide an array of services for juveniles who have been arrested or are at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system by conducting in-depth assessments, facilitating access to services, and developing connections with community resources in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Continue the DHS 'Ohana Nui multigenerational approach to ensure services are holistic to promote positive outcomes and stabilization for youth and their families.
- Increase community-based, family-focused interventions, emphasizing culturally appropriate service delivery.
- Continue to lead the effort to improve services and systems in response to status offenders. Through the Status Offense Reform System workgroup, continue to collect data/information statewide, conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the current and proposed system, and develop statutory changes to implement a more effective system.
- Actively participate with DHS, DOE, DOH, and the Judiciary to implement wraparound services to address the complex needs effectively of at-risk youth and their families through integrated case planning between agencies.

- Participate in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) program that promotes detention reform efforts and alternatives to incarceration.
- Improve provider accountability to ensure that youth programs meet the needs of children and communities. Improve access to services and working relationships among stakeholders, including Family Court, CAMHD, CWS, and OYS, by hosting meetings in each Circuit.
- Collect outcome data to improve program performance and youth success.
- Continue to improve services and programs at the HYCF.
- Participate in the PbS quality control process and the VERA Institute's initiative to End Girls' Incarceration.
- Provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance, and training opportunities for providers and partners, including forgiveness, the Aloha Spirit, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.
- Continue to explore partnerships with public and private funding resources to maintain and enhance service capacity for the community. For example, participate in Lili'uokalani Trust's initiative to expand services and resources for Native Hawaiians and other at-risk youth and young adults.
- Efforts to allow OYS to create and expand career and vocational programs at KYFWC by establishing a revolving fund that would receive proceeds from sales for products and services continue by developing a comprehensive plan of the program, financial processes, oversight, and benefits. The program seeks to provide expansive opportunities to youth and young adults to earn a livable wage, increase financial literacy, and achieve success while decreasing dependence on state general funds for programs, services, and justice involvement.

### **Looking Ahead: OYS Focus in SFY26**

Improving system responses to youth behavioral health is a key priority for OYS. Nationally, children suffering from anxiety and depression increased by 25.5% from 2016 to 2020, with Hawaii children showing a 22.4% increase. In 2022, Hawaii ranked 22 out of 50 states for Overall Child Well-Being. In 2023, Hawaii dropped to 25<sup>th</sup> place. In Hawaii, a cohort of youth impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic is displaying increased behavioral and mental health issues. As a result of the Lahaina wildfires, youth experiencing trauma, helplessness, and mental health issues have also increased.

OYS works with the DOH CAMHD to provide mental health treatment to youth in the community who are eligible for CAMHD services but do not have an available source of funds. OYS has seen a steady increase in referrals. In the calendar year 2023, OYS received a record 81 referrals for youth treatment services. It should be noted that referrals are correlated with the funding that OYS receives from the legislature. Legislative support for increased funding for OYS, in partnership with CAMHD, can serve more youth.

## **Civil Citation/Diversion System Improvement**

In March 2015, OYS and the Honolulu Police Department implemented a Juvenile Civil Citation Program for juvenile offenders who commit status offenses and qualifying misdemeanor offenses. This program aims to divert juveniles with qualifying offenses away from the court system, provide an immediate response to address their behavior, and refer them to appropriate services. Upon the juvenile's arrest, a police officer issues a civil citation. The goals of this front-end diversion process include:

- Screening and assessment.
- Referral to services.
- Improving outcomes.
- Reducing recidivism.
- Reducing costs to the juvenile justice system by keeping low-risk juveniles out of the system.
- Freeing up limited resources; and
- Reducing disproportionate minority contact.

In June 2021, OYS formed a policy group to discuss policy changes to this program and processes to facilitate system improvement. This policy group includes representation from the Family Court, the Department of the Attorney General, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, the Department of the Public Defender, the Honolulu Police Department, and OYS. This policy group will continue to meet in SFY22 to address and address gaps in services, policies, and laws.

As a result of the policy group's work, in 2023, OYS submitted an administrative bill that would expand the criteria for expunging records for minors arrested for status offenses. This bill aimed to incentivize participation in diversion programs, facilitate access to needed services to avoid court involvement, and allow a minor sixteen years of age or older who completes a diversion program and remains arrest-free for one year to petition the court to expunge their arrest record. This bill intended to reduce the obstacles minors with arrest records face, including difficulty accessing educational and employment opportunities, obtaining scholarships, participating in the Job Corps, or entering the military. While SB1363 and HB1065 were not heard, OYS continues to seek opportunities to divert youth from the juvenile justice system and to help them create a brighter future.

In FY25, the Office of Youth Services participated in a National Governors Association Policy Academy to Drive Thriving Youth Mental Health and well-being in Hawaii. In FY26, OYS is participating in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children's Health Leadership Program, Cohort 4.