

The New O'ahu Jail Project

Incorporation of Breaking Cycles Concepts

Informational Briefing

April 13, 2026

Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Agenda Item B: April 2026 Update on DCR Consultants Services

Summary of internal reviews, planning steps or policy discussions undertaken involving Breaking Cycles concepts. (2025-2026)

- Breaking Cycles Report reviewed by DCR, DAGS and consultants
- DCR directed which concepts to incorporate
- Design team is incorporating identified concepts into design
- Design effort is on-going in its development
- Community and other stakeholders' input to continue through project completion

Agenda Item C: Please identify areas where Breaking Cycles concepts ...

... have been incorporated?

- Increased education & health centered program spaces
- Spaces meet specific medical & mental health needs while also able to segregate those undergoing treatment
- Green space in and around facility to provide natural light and air
- Staff lounges provided on every floor with larger lounge, break/dining areas with outdoor seating
- Training rooms for educational, cultural, religious, law, and recreational activities

Agenda Item C: Please identify areas where Breaking Cycles concepts ...

... have been incorporated?

- Staff gym
- Medical treatment rooms in every module
- Incorporation of large glazing for natural sunlight
- Dynamic ACO stations and command centers using both passive and active security
- Personal storage in each cell for each individual

Agenda Item C: Please identify areas where Breaking Cycles concepts ...

... are under evaluation?

- Additional recreational spaces connected with nature
- Additional opportunities for natural light and air
- DCR policies are continually reviewed and evaluated

Agenda Item C: Please identify areas where Breaking Cycles concepts ...

... have not yet been adopted?

- Lack of legislation mandating corrections reform hinders implementation of noticeable changes in practices
- Furniture and artwork considerations continue for incorporation in later stages of the design

Agenda Item C:

Has DCR provided clear acknowledgement of the gaps identified by HCSOC, OPD, and other advocates on implementation and alignment?

- DCR acknowledges these important issues and continues to be open to sharing thoughts with all interested parties. In particular, that:
 - Change is needed and is in progress.
 - Both proper attitude and space are necessary to promote healing and better unify with the community.
 - DCR is seeking ACA accreditation.

Agenda Item D: How does Breaking Cycles inform ...

... custody vs. care continuum?

- Report explicitly reframes incarceration
 - Not as a destination, but as one point on a broader health, housing, and justice continuum.
 - Custody is treated as a last resort rather than the default response to social harm.
 - Guiding premise: most justice-involved people cycle through custody because care systems failed earlier - not because custody alone is effective
- Custody = containment and risk management (OCCC)
- Care continuum = prevention, diversion, treatment, stabilization, reentry, and long-term support (justice system, OCCC, community support)

Agenda Item D: How does Breaking Cycles inform ...

... custody vs. care continuum?

- Jail/custody is the 3rd intercept after community and court/justice system per the Sequential Intercept Model
 - Intercept **0** – **Community** Crisis care, prevention, non-police response
 - Intercept **1** – **Law enforcement** Pre-arrest diversion
 - Intercept **2** – **Court intake** Release + treatment instead of detention
 - Intercept **3** – **Jail/Court** In-custody care + diversion
 - Intercept **4** – **Reentry** Housing, treatment, “warm hands”
 - Intercept **5** – **Community supervision** Support to prevent returns to jail

Agenda Item D: How does Breaking Cycles inform ...

... diversion and decarceration strategies?

- Hawai'i's jail population is driven largely by system failures in health, housing, and behavioral care, making incarceration an inefficient and harmful default response
- Reduce jail reliance by intercepting people earlier with care
- Shrink custody demand through system redesign, not just facility redesign
- Decarceration is treated as a systems-level outcome produced by coordinated diversion, not merely reducing bed counts

Agenda Item D: How does Breaking Cycles inform ...

... programming for mental health, substance use, education, and reentry?

- Positions mental health care as foundational - not supplemental - to correctional system
- Observes jails are now default mental health institutions due to gaps in community care
- Promotes early screening & assessment at intake using validated tools (e.g., risk/needs and clinical assessments) to identify potential diversion or treatment pathways
- Recommends on-site behavioral health services in custody that prevent symptom escalation and reduce length of stay.
- Recommends secure behavioral health diversion centers and crisis stabilization units to reroute people out of jail entirely
- Recommends continuity of care through "warm handoffs" to community providers at release

Agenda Item E: Consideration of staff well-being and workplace culture as essential to success

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- Evolving design implements DCR policy initiatives to include multiple staff spaces supporting workplace culture and staff well-being.
 - Key features include:
 - Break rooms on every floor
 - A larger dedicated staff dining lounge to provide staff meals during their shifts
 - A gym to help staff maintain fitness
 - Multiple classrooms & multipurpose rooms for training and other professional development
 - Furniture, finishes, and artwork to enhance staff well-being
 - Facility layout designs to reduce staffing demands & redundancies through program adjacencies and effective floor plans

Mahalo
