

Minutes of the Hawai'i County Workforce Development Board (HCWDB) Meeting

Date: May 14, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Interactive Conference Technology / Board Meeting Room

Chair: Rossella Guardascione

1. Call to Order and Introductions

- **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by the board chair.
- **New Board Members/Guests Welcomed:**
 - New Corporation Council members Sinclair, welcomed to the board.
 - Doug Adams was welcomed under old news items.

2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

- **Roll Call & Quorum:** Roll call was conducted, establishing a quorum with 11 members present.
- **Attendees Present (11 members):** Austin Drake, Chad Okinaka, Dawn Hao-De Motta, Denise Pacheco, Jeracah Lawless, Jodie Sumera, Juanita Reyher-Colon, Les Estrella, Rossella Guardascione, Trisha Buskirk, Doug Adams (On behalf of Susan Kazama)
- **Attendees Excused:** Andrew Chun, David De Luz, Derek Inaba, Dylan Gasper, Evan Chun, Kehaulani Costa, Kevin Waltjen, Mary Beth Laychak

3. Call for Public Comments on Agenda Items

- No public comments or testimony were presented during the public comment period.

4. Approval of Minutes

- **Review of Previous Minutes:** The Board reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025.
- **Motion to Approve:** Made by Denise Pacheco.
- **Second:** Made by Juanita Reyher-Colon
- **Discussion:** None noted.
- **Vote Result:** Approved unanimously via verbal vote (All in favor, none opposed).

5. Formal Motions & Votes

- **Motion 1: Approval of Extension Recommendations for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs (PY24/PY25)**
 - **Motion Made By:** Denise Pacheco
 - **Seconded By:** Jeracah Lawless
 - **Final Vote Outcome:** Approved unanimously by verbal vote (All in favor; 0 opposed).

6. Committee Reports & Updates

- **Executive Director's Update (Clinton Mercado):**
 - **WIOA Programs:** Discussed the winding down of PY24 funds expiring on June 30, 2026, and the execution of contracts for PY25 beginning July 1, 2026, to ensure uninterrupted services. Internal staff reallocations provided an extra \$54,000 to support adult and youth training programs.

- **Goodwill Hawai'i Partnership:** Goodwill spent 85% of allocated funds with \$13,000 remaining, anticipating full expenditure by June 30, 2026. Collaborative youth and adult employment programs continue to thrive.
- **County Initiatives:** Highlighted collaboration with Mayor and HR to adjust minimum qualification requirements on entry-level county roles to expand local employment opportunities.
- **Partner Updates:**
 - **American Job Center Hawai'i (AJCH):** Reported 1,948 sign-ins since July 1, 2025, and ongoing efforts to improve building signage.
 - **DLIR Workforce Development Division:** Highlighted the Hele Imua program providing livable-wage summer internships for young adults and recent graduates.
 - **Project Pilina & Community Outreach:** Emphasized cross-island networking events, career expos, and expanding employer pipelines across the county.

7. Action Items

- **Denise Pacheco**
 - **Action Item:** Ensure 100% expenditure of remaining adult and youth training funds and finalize partner allocations.
 - **Deadline:** June 30, 2026.
- **Operations & Staff Team**
 - **Action Item:** Goodwill to fill open Career Navigator and internal administrative vacancies resulting from staff transitions.
 - **Deadline:** Prior to start of PY25 (July 1, 2026).
- **Training Providers & Partners**
 - **Action Item:** Update eligible training provider lists and incorporate high-demand sector adjustments for healthcare, trades, and IT.
 - **Deadline:** Ongoing through end of fiscal quarter.

8. Adjournment

- **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned following closing remarks and expressions of appreciation for board member participation.