State of Hawaii
Department of Human Services
Social Services Division
Child Welfare Services Branch



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Child and Family Services Review, Round 4
A Home for Every Child
Program Improvement Plan

October 2026

I. OVERVIEW

Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS) is excited to participate in *A Home for Every Child* and the opportunities it provides to strengthen the child welfare system while improving safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes for children and families. Hawaii officially opted into *A Home for Every Child* on May 28, 2026.

The goals of *A Home for Every Child*—including preventing unnecessary entry into foster care—align closely with Hawaii's value of *'ohana* (family) and the belief that children do best when they can safely live with and be cared for by their families. Hawai'i recognizes the strong alignment between *A Home for Every Child* and the principles of the *Family First Prevention Services Act.* Both emphasize child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, and ensuring children receive the support they need in the least restrictive, family-centered settings. Through the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide assessment, case reviews, and stakeholder engagement interviews, Hawaii identified four areas for growth: 1) safety, 2) resource caregiver support, 3) engagement, and 4) workforce. Based on CFSR data and stakeholder input, Hawaii identified the following goals:

A. Safety Assessments
   CWS staff continually engage and accurately assess families for risk and safety and collaborate with families to mitigate risk.

B. Resource Caregiver Support
   CWS staff recruit and support resource homes that meet the needs of children in foster care.

C. Engagement with children, families, and resource caregivers:
   CWS staff engage families to assess needs and identify barriers to accessing services to support timely permanency (reunification, adoption, or guardianship).

D. Workforce
   CWS staff have a manageable workload and a workforce culture that enhances their health, safety, and wellbeing.

CWS staff, contracted, community, and state agency partners came together in workgroups and engaged in the root cause analysis (RCA) process. Hawaii's RCA was supported by the National Child Welfare Center for Innovation and Advancement (NCWCIA). Through the RCA process, common themes emerged around the need to improve structures and systems to support CWS practice. Additionally, the complex and overwhelming workload of CWS caseworkers permeated conversations in all workgroups, resulting in Hawaii selecting workforce as a

priority area for its PIP. Hawaii proposes that with a more manageable workload and enhanced partnerships to help support children and families, CWS will be able to enhance its safety and engagement practices to achieve *A Home for Every Child*.

II. PARTICIPANTS

Numerous stakeholders, representing all islands, actively participated in Hawaii's root cause analysis process. Please see the list of contributors below.

Organization	Role	Names of the Participants
State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services, Social Services Division	CWS Line Staff	Damon Boren, Kaleimomi Cezar, Melanie Thompson, Samuel Del Toro, Tyra Caires, Jadelyn "Puna" Meyer, Brandi Yamamoto, Scotty Yoshida, Russell Spencer, Yvette "Hoku" Togikawa, Jamie Kai, Jessica Luna, Desiree Ancheta, Lisa Cook, Chelsie Bardoni, Anoi Gaogao, Baylene "Kala'i" Thompson, Dana Emerson
	CWS Line Supervisors	Rebecca Grotkin, Lena Kakehi, Maureen "Kanani" Lovell-Obatake, Annie Bell, Kristan Mattos, Debbie Soria, Julie Stielow, Korin Wakuta-Kenny, Ashley Yasuda, Bryant Janicki, Raquel Taguchi, Iwalani Lum, Marshall Clark-Tokunaga, Maili Taele, Elizabeth Petaia
	CWS Branch & Section Administrators	Julia Larson, Kepuanani Lee, Albert Pacheco, Kelli Maltezo, Puafisi Tupola, Ching Duncan, Winnie Nishimiya, Lisa Rapozo, Karlan Fields, Tonia Mahi
	CWS Program Development	Lynne Kazama, Stacie Pascual, Rachel Thorburn, Florence Calderon, Lavina Forvilly, Charlotte Kamauoha, Kisha C. Raby, Theresa Minami, Elliott Plourde, Sina Sison, Lesley Shibata
	Staff Development	Tammie Smith, Sharon Adric, Stacia Over

Organization	Role	Names of the Participants
EPIC 'Ohana (local non-profit)	Parent Partner – Lived Expert	Asha Autele
	Youth Specialists – Lived Experts	Tianna Celis-Webster, Melissa Mayo, Tiffany Ramos-Duh
	Staff	Emma Kurashige, Chassidy Shinno, Mitchell Odo, Kristina "Tina" Shibata
Hawaii Families as Allies (local non-profit)	Lived Experts	Malia Daraban, Jackie Jackson

Organization	Names of the Participants
Court Improvement Program	Emily Cureton, Kyle Suan
Family Court Judge	Darien Nagata
Attorneys General	Lila King, Ian Tsuda, James Walther, Peggy Leong, Lynne Youmans, Chloe Fasi, Russell Goo, Julio Herrera
Department of Education	April Lum
Department of Health	Jonah Kerr, Terra Kay Keli Acquaro
Catholic Charities Hawaii (local non-profit)	Amy Ulu, Mele Visser, Elizabeth Gilligan, Charyl Makanui, Nicole Trosy, Elizabeth Bain, Sarah Antone
Harvest Family Life Ministries	Ester McDaniel, Brad McDaniel
Parents & Children Together (local non-profit)	Janelle Chock, Cayla Kutaka, Tina Porras-Jones
Child and Family Services (local non-profit)	Emily-Joy Daoang, Novelyn Hinazumi, Chelsea Kapuni, Jenn Keau, James Lloyd, Shana Orta
PARENTS, Inc. (local non-profit)	Jennifer Endriss, Kim Krell, Michele' Padayao
Lili'uokalani Trust	Heide Lilo
Maui Family Support Services (local non-profit)	Shelly Brown, Kathi Jones
Hawaii Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement Project	Robyn DeMello, Valerie Cockett, Janice Low, Mia Quevedo, Jessica Garlock, Rona Martin
SAS Services	Sharon Simms
University of Hawaii, Law School	Tiffany Ige
CASAs & GALs	Emily Kauwe, Makia Minerbi
Maui Parent Counsel	Leslee Matthews

III. MEASUREMENT REPORTING

The State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services, Social Services Division, Child Welfare Services Branch (CWS) is committed to providing monthly core, chaser, and lead measures, as part of *A Home for Every Child*.

IV. HAWAII'S PRORAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A. PRIORITY AREA: WORKFORCE

1. Goal	2. Strategy	3. A Home for Every Child	4. Lead Measures
CWS staff have a manageable workload that allows for improved practices.	a. Draw on the capacity, expertise, and skills of community partners, contracted providers, and government agencies to streamline and support CWS work demands. b. Planned activities include: i. Develop efficient pathways for CWS workers to connect families to programs and services. ii. Use database capacities to increase efficiency in CWS work	a. This workforce goal indirectly supports the **reduction of the denominator and the rise of the numerator.** A workforce with a manageable workload will have the time to properly engage children, families, and resource caregivers, and will be able to complete more accurate assessments. b. This will ensure children and families are connected to services that target their identified needs, thereby promoting timely permanency and improving the core ratio.	a. Number of meetings between CWS staff and partner organizations and agencies, focused on reducing CWS workload b. Of the number of Home Visiting Services referrals submitted to providers through SHAKA, percentage change compared to the prior month

B. PRIORITY AREA: SAFETY

1. Goal	2. Strategy	3. A Home for Every Child	4. Lead Measures
All children, parents, and resource caregivers are assessed regularly to increase safety, permanency, and wellbeing.	a. Strengthen CWS and VCM coaching and supervision, targeting CWS and VCM caseworkers' completion of quality, ongoing safety assessments at all key junctures in the life of a case. b. Planned activities include: i. Identify coaching and training needs for ongoing assessments. ii. Set standards and expectations for ongoing assessments. iii. Supervisors shadow caseworkers and licensing workers in the field and provide strengths-based feedback for improvement. iv. Identify assessment champions among current staff to provide peer mentorship.	With supervisors coaching staff to complete accurate and timely assessments: a. children will achieve permanency (reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship) faster, thereby **reducing the number of children in foster care (Denominator)** b. more children will be safely kept out of foster care, thereby **reducing the number of children in foster care (Denominator)** c. Hawaii will effectively meet the unique and individualized needs of children, parents, and resource caregivers, thereby **increasing the number of resource caregivers (numerator).**	a. Of Child Safety Assessments that were completed in SHAKA, percentage change compared to the prior month (for CWS cases only) b. From case review data of both CWS and VCM cases, statewide rolling average performance (strength rating percentage) on CFSR Item 3A – initial assessments c. From case review data of both CWS and VCM cases, statewide rolling average performance (strength rating percentage) on CFSR Item 3B – ongoing assessments d. Out of all CWS caseworkers, CWS licensing staff, and VCM caseworkers, percentage who received coaching

C. PRIORITY AREA: ENGAGEMENT

1. Goal	2. Strategy	3. A Home for Every Child	4. Lead Measures
CWS and VCM staff continuously, authentically engage with a. children b. parents and caregivers, and c. resource caregivers.	a. Strengthen supervision and coaching of CWS and VCM staff to continually employ trauma-informed communication and authentic engagement with all families. b. Planned activities include: i. Identify coaching and training needs for authentic engagement. ii. Set standards and expectations for authentic engagement. iii. Supervisors shadow caseworkers and licensing workers in the field and provide strengths-based feedback for improvement. iv. Identify engagement champions among current staff to provide peer mentorship.	a. Coaching and supervising CWS and VCM staff in engagement will enhance communication with children, families, and resource caregivers, ensuring quality assessments that connect families to meaningful resources. b. With well-tailored services, children will achieve permanency faster, thereby **reducing the number of children in foster care (denominator).** c. When resource caregivers are authentically engaged, they will feel supported and equipped to meet the needs of children in care. Then, they are more likely to feel confident in their role, continue being caregivers, and recruit friends and family to become resource caregivers, thereby **increasing the number of resource homes (numerator).**	a. Out of all CWS caseworkers CWS licensing staff, and VCM caseworkers, percentage who received coaching (same as IV.B.4.d. above) b. Percentage of children in active (non-payment only) CWS cases who received at least one in-person visit from their caseworker, out of all children in active CWS cases (in home and foster care) c. Percentage of parents in active CWS cases who received at least one in person visit from their caseworker, out of all parents in active CWS cases (in home and foster care) d. From case review data, statewide rolling average (strength rating percentage) performance on CFSR Item 12C - assess the needs of and provide services to foster parents