



Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report – September 2025

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Deaths in Custody	3
Tours	3
Events Attended	4
Reports	4
Projects.....	8
Past Meetings	8
Expenses for the Preceding Month – September	9
General Office Information.....	9
Monthly Meetings	9

Introduction

In accordance with Chapter §353L-6, the Oversight Coordinator shall submit a monthly report to the Commission, the Governor, and the Legislature. The monthly report shall include actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. In addition to the mandated parties this report must be shared with, the Oversight Coordinator publicly posts the monthly report to increase transparency and accountability. This report will also be shared with each individual who has the responsibility of appointing members of the Commission. This includes:

- 1) Governor of Hawaii
- 2) President of the Hawaii Senate
- 3) Speaker of the Hawaii House of Representatives
- 4) Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice
- 5) Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The Oversight Coordinator monthly reports are released on the first Thursday of each month, covering the previous month, and will be discussed on the second Thursday of each month at the monthly Commission meetings.

Deaths in Custody

1. On September 2, 2025, at approximately 8:24pm mountain standard time (MST), a 49-year-old male in custody was found injured on a cell floor at the Northeast New Mexico Correctional Facility in Clayton, NM (interstate compact facility). At approximately 8:29 pm MST, medical staff entered the pod with a gurney and removed the individual. Medical staff performed chest compressions until emergency medical services (EMS) arrived and assumed life saving measures. The male was transported by ambulance to Union County General Hospital where he was pronounced deceased at 9:13 pm MST. The medical examiner will determine the official cause of death following an autopsy.
2. On September 25, 2025, at approximately 5:00pm, security staff were alerted that a 62-year-old male in custody needed assistance at Halawa Correctional Facility. Security staff called for medical backup, who arrived at approximately 5:10pm before EMS arrived and assumed life saving measures. The decedent was transported to Pali Momi Medical Center's emergency room where he was pronounced deceased at approximately 6:18pm. The medical examiner will determine the official cause of death following an autopsy.

Tours

Waikiki Health Center

On September 4, 2025, Commission staff visited the Waikiki Health Center where Director of Native Hawaiian Healing/Pu'uhoonua Prison program, Francine Dudoit-Tagupa, shared the history and mission of the center. As the first health clinic in Waikiki and a federally Qualified Health Center, Waikiki Health provides medical, dental, behavioral health, and shelter services across eight sites on O'ahu. Unique among health centers, it is the only one

focused on reentry, offering prison classes, pre-release support for SNAP and Med-Quest, and traditional Hawaiian healing practices like Ho‘oponopono and Lomi to foster whole person and family care. Waikiki Health plays a critical role in Hawai‘i’s reentry system, with its work aligning closely to the upcoming 1115 waiver set to begin January 2026.

Hale Kipa

On September 30, 2025, Commission staff visited Hale Kipa in ‘Ewa Beach and met with Executive Director Venus Rosete-Medeiros, who shared the facility’s innovative and community-focused programs. Highlights included an aeroponics project where one container equals 3–5 acres of food production, with the first harvest donated to kūpuna, as well as shelters and services for youth up to age 25. Hale Kū Ola provides housing for mothers with children, and the Executive Director hopes to extend this resource to women leaving prison, especially those under 26 who may also access program funding and Housing First vouchers. Hale Kipa also offers the 10-week Kamalama parenting program, currently taught inside WCCC. Despite funding challenges and staff shortages, Hale Kipa remains a vital resource for transition-age youth and holds strong potential to support reentry for justice-involved women.

Events Attended

WCCC Ohana Family Day

On September 13, 2025, Commission staff attended the first-ever ‘Ohana Family Day at WCCC, held at Olomana Field. The event brought together 16 women in custody, and their loved ones who came to enjoy the moment, creating a rare and meaningful opportunity for families to reunite in a supportive environment. Families enjoyed booths, food, a bounce house, and a petting zoo, supported by 14 work line participants and community partners including Chaplain Tammy, Education, Chaminade University, and the Women’s Prison Project. Leadership support was visible with Warden Guillonta welcoming families and Director Tommy Johnson attending. The day created joy, belonging, and meaningful family connections while strengthening case manager relationships and underscoring the vital role of ‘ohana in reentry success. The Commission would like to thank the Women’s Prison Project for their generous donations to ensure the events success and thank Department leadership and Warden Guillonta for prioritizing family connections.

Reports

Women’s Community Correctional Center Site Observations

On Thursday, September 11, 2025, the Commission toured the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included one of the five Commissioners – Commissioner Torney in addition to the Oversight Coordinator and staff. There were no additional recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation that stemmed from the WCCC tour. The full report can be read at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/facility-specific-reports/>.

Oahu Community Correctional Center Site Observations

On Wednesday, September 17, 2025, the Commission toured the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included three of the five

Commissioners – Chair Patterson, Commissioner Torney, and Commissioner Browning– in addition to the Oversight Coordinator, staff, and State House Representatives Della Au Belatti and Kim Coco Iwamoto. Commissioner Town was present for a meeting with Warden John Schell prior to the tour.

Below are recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation which stemmed from the OCCC tour. The full report can be read at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/facility-specific-reports/>

Follow-up on Previous Commission Recommendations

The Commission made the following recommendations following the HCSOC February 2023 tour, which have not yet been implemented. The Commission continues to recommend the following:

1) Allow for Natural Light by Removing Wood Covering from all Cell Windows

Replace wood-covered windows in housing units with to allow natural light, in line with American Correctional Association (ACA) standards. Although some wood coverings have been removed over the past year, wood coverings still remain on some cell windows. According to ACA Standard 4-ALDF-1A-16, all inmate rooms/cells must provide occupants with access to natural light through at least three square feet of transparent glazing, plus two additional square feet per inmate in rooms/cells housing three or more individuals. Therefore, the Commission recommends OCCC continue replacing wood coverings to ensure all cell windows in all modules allow natural light. Compliance with the ACA standards is of particular importance with OCCC moving toward ACA accreditation.

2) Restoration of Contact Visits

OCCC has not offered in-person contact visits for five years, initially due to COVID-19. Extensive research underscores the importance and rehabilitative benefits of contact visits for those in custody, as these visits allow individuals to maintain closer connections with their loved ones and communities. The Commission therefore continues to recommend OCCC reinstate contact visits.

3) Expand Programming Opportunities

People in custody at OCCC have too much idle time and limited access to programming, including cultural, education, and reentry preparation. The Commission recommends expanding programming opportunities and community partnerships to reduce idle time and increase programming opportunities. While the facility has made some progress in this area, it is essential to continue and be innovative (even within limited space) to support people in custody and gain community support and trust.

4) Prioritize Kitchen Upgrades, Including Dishwasher Repair and Mold-Free Trays

The kitchen at OCCC is in dire need of updates to ensure sanitary conditions for staff and the kitchen workline, and to provide safe food for the entire facility. Urgent repairs are needed for the dishwasher, along with replacement of ceiling and floor tiles, rusted appliances, and food service trays. Although there are plans for a new facility, these conditions cannot wait until then and must be addressed immediately.

5) Expand Furlough Utilization at OCCC

Although OCCC has the highest furlough participation and occupancy rate in comparison to the other three jails, there is still opportunity to increase furlough participation at OCCC. Identifying and addressing the roadblocks to furlough is crucial to allow more individuals to benefit from these programs and move through the correctional system. The Commission recommends that DCR assess, identify, and resolve systemic issues around furlough participation. The Commission would like to see furlough occupancy rates near 100% as it significantly increases the chances of success post-release.

6) Install Shade for Recreation Cages in the Holding Unit

The recreation area outside the Holding Unit consists of individual cages, which currently lack shaded areas to protect people in custody from the sun. The Commission recommends installing shade structures, even tarps, to provide protection from sun exposure.

7) Investigate and Address Concerns from People in Custody at OCCC

The Commission has received multiple complaints regarding the following issues at OCCC:

- **Roaches in Cells:** Roaches are present in the cells. This poses a health and sanitation concern. The Commission recommends implementing a pest control plan that effectively and safely eliminates the roach population.
- **Difficulties in Accessing Bail Calls:** The Commission learned that some individuals have experienced delays of several weeks in accessing bail calls, which has prevented those who could make bail from being released. This delay not only impacts individual rights but also contributes to overcrowding. The Commission urges the facility to establish and confirm a reliable system that allows timely access to bail calls for all eligible individuals and ensures all people in custody have prompt access to bail calls.

8) Ensure Regular Access to Books and Reading Material, Legal Calls, Mail, and Recreation for Those in Holding Unit, including those in Disciplinary Segregation

People in custody in the holding unit at OCCC reported irregular access to legal calls, daily recreation, and inconsistent mail service, along with no books or reading material. ACA standards require the following access for people in disciplinary segregation:

Mail: Inmates in Restrictive Housing can write and receive letters on the same basis as inmates in the general population.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-20, p. 128.

Access to Legal and Reading Materials: Inmates in Restrictive Housing have access to reading materials.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-23, p. 129.

Exercise Out of Cell: Inmates in Restrictive Housing receive a minimum of one hour of exercise outside their cells, five days per week, unless security or safety considerations dictate otherwise."

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-24, p. 129.

Telephone Privileges: Inmates in Restrictive Housing are allowed at minimum telephone privileges to access the judicial process and family emergencies as determined by the facility administrator or designee unless security or safety considerations dictate otherwise.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-25, p. 129.

Access to Programs: Inmates in Extended Restrictive Housing have access to programs and services that include but are not limited to the following: educational services, commissary services, library services, social services, behavioral health and treatment services, religious guidance, and recreational programs.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-26, p. 130.

Additional Recommendations to be Considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) Evaluate the Impacts of Requiring Post Closures to Limit Overtime Costs

The Department needs to seriously consider how requiring post closures to limit overtime impacts daily access to showers, out-of-cell time, outdoor recreation, programming and general conditions of confinement. The Department should allow Wardens to make these decisions as they should know the needs of their facilities the best. Additionally, the Department should consider holding regular inter-

divisional meetings between Division Administrators to evaluate the fiscal and humanitarian impacts of requiring post closures before authorizing overtime.

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

Projects

Complaint Management

After recently receiving dedicated funding for a case management system from the legislature, the Commission secured a vendor to ensure a smooth and efficient system for the office. Commission staff are preparing for a 15-week systems integration process, which will involve integrating the case tracking system developed by Commission staff with the newly developed case management system. Once this process is complete, the Commission will be better equipped for tracking, monitoring, investigating, and responding to incoming complaints.

Past Meetings

Monthly Commission Meeting

On September 11, 2025, the Commission hosted its monthly public meeting. All past meeting agendas, video recordings, meeting minutes, and testimonies can be found on our website here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/2025-meetings>. All meetings are live streamed on our [Facebook](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Expenses for the Preceding Month – September

Item	Cost	Qty	Total	Description
Operating Expenses			\$23,202.54	
Telephone	\$217.24	1	\$217.24	
Advertising	\$350.00	1	\$350.00	Job Positing-Prison Oversight Specialist
Other Current Expenditures	\$1,094.24	1	\$1,094.24	In ArtSmart LLC
Other Current Expenditures	\$21,056.60	1	\$21,056.60	Compaint Management System
Other Current Expenditures	\$161.49	3	\$484.46	2TB DUO LINK Gen 2 Flash Drive
Inter-Island Travel			\$429.84	
AIRFARE-KRT	\$174.29	1	\$174.29	8/22
AIREFARE-ANJ	\$179.05	1	\$179.05	8/22
CAR RENTAL-CMJ	\$76.50	1	\$76.50	7/14
Mainland Travel			\$0.00	
Conferences			\$0.00	
TOTAL			\$23,632.38	

** All expenses reflect posted transactions procured*

General Office Information

Mailing Address: Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission
235 S Beretania Street, 16th floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Website: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov>

Submit Testimony: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony>

Email: hcsoc@hawaii.gov

Social Media: [YouTube](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Instagram](#)

Monthly Meetings

This report will be discussed at the monthly Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission meeting on October 9, 2025. The next monthly meeting is scheduled to occur on November 13, 2025, at Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building, 235 S. Beretania Street, Rom 204, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 or online via teleconference. More information can be found on the Commission's webpage here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/information>.