

OAHU WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

715 SOUTH KING STREET, SUITE 211 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-7790 • www.OahuWDB.com

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR



CHRISTOPHER K. LUM LEE
CHAIR

HARRISON KURANISHI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SPECIAL PROJECTS
COMMITTEE MEETING**
Tuesday, January 13, 2026
11:30 am to 1:30 pm

Note: Per the State Office of Information Practices (OIP), members of the public may contact OahuWDB@honolulu.gov to be added to a mailing list for future meeting announcements

Members Present:

Wesley Akamine
Christopher Lum Lee
Carla Kobashigawa
Suzie Schulberg

Guests:

Shawntay Yasuda, Hawaii Correctional Industries, Administrator
Mae Dorado, Hawaii Pacific Health, Medical Assistant Program Manager
Erin Yagi, Leeward Community College, Field Placement Coordinator
Terri Funakoshi, Young Women's Christian Association, Chief Business Development Officer
Stephanie Hamano, Young Women's Christian Association, Chief Program Officer
Chan Phouthavong, SolluCIO Partners, Chief Executive Officer
Paul Anderson, SolluCIO Partners, Vice President of Advisory Services
Mali Philliber, SolluCIO Partners, Director of Client Relations and Public Relations

Staff:

Harrison Kuranishi, Oahu Workforce Development Board, Executive Director
Lisa Pereira, Oahu Workforce Development Board, WIOA Specialist
Sherrie Garedo, Oahu Workforce Development Board, WIOA Specialist
Erin Nicole Fernandez, Oahu Workforce Development Board, WIOA Specialist
Daven Kawamura, Oahu Workforce Development Board, WIOA Specialist

I. Call to Order

The Special Projects Committee meeting was called to order at 11:33 am by Committee Chair Wesley Akamine.

II. Welcome and Introductions

(Note: Per the State OIP, a quorum of members must be visible throughout the public portion of the meeting, but so long as that requirement is met, Oahu Workforce Development Board (OWDB) members are allowed to attend board meetings on

audio only. Their votes will still count, and their attendance will also count toward quorum. However, board members must state their names clearly during introductions and before all of their comments during the meeting.)

III. Public Testimony relating to agenda items

There was no public testimony relating to agenda items.

IV. Approval of September 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Chair Wesley Akamine requested a motion to approve the minutes for the September 22, 2025, meeting. Carla Kobashigawa moved to approve the minutes. Suzie Schulberg seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The minutes were unanimously approved.

V. Review of Small Project Proposals submitted by January 6, 2026

Chair Wesley Akamine practiced chairs prerogative to move the Small Project Proposals to the following order; Hawaii Correctional Industries (HCI) Digital Career Pathway, Hawaii Pacific Health Medical Assistant Program, Leeward Community College Alternative Certification for Career and Technical Education Licensure, SolluCIO Partners 90-day Pilot Program, and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Social Enterprise Program. The Small Project Proposals can be found at the following link:

<https://oahuwdb.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Small-Project-Proposals.pdf>

a. Hawaii Correctional Industries Digital Career Pathway

Shawntay Yasuda, Administrator for HCI, gave a short overview of HCI's Digital Career Pathway small project that they had submitted.

Wesley Akamine inquired if the proposed ten participants in the project would be one cohort or if the participants will be spread across multiple cohorts.

- Shawntay informed Wesley and the committee that since the cohort will be six weeks long, the goal is to keep the ten participants in one cohort. However if for some reason a participant is unable to continue participation, a program is being developed to have the ability for participants to "catch up" to the cohorts.

b. Hawaii Pacific Health Medical Assistant Program

Mae Dorado, Medical Assistant Program Manager at Hawaii Pacific Health, gave a short overview of the Medical Assistant Training Program.

Wesley Akamine noted that per the proposal the cohort had already started in August of 2025. Wesley inquired if the requested budget will be utilized in the June to July 2026 timeframe. Mae confirmed.

Carla Kobashigawa inquired if there is a specific portion of the budget that the funds would be dedicated to.

- Mae Dorado informed Carla that the funds would be used for the listed costs, such as the uniforms for the planned clinical externships.

Carla Kobashigawa asked if this is intended to be a long-term project even after the Special Projects small purchase funding and if the participants will be required

to have some sort of agreement/commitment to work at Hawaii Pacific Health or other State of Hawaii entities.

- Mae Dorado let Carla know that the program is intended to be a long-term program after the funding, and that there is no commitment for students required as the program ends in a nationally recognized certification.
 - Carla followed up her question asking about the historical retention rate of students in Hawaii after obtaining the credential.
 - Mae informed her that the current cohort is the eighth cohort and the current retention rate is 87% of students completing and working within Hawaii.

Wesley Akamine inquired what the exact reportable performance metrics would be. Such as the completion/retention rate, etc.

- Mae informed him that they currently track performance metrics for their accrediting body, such as how many students complete the training, stay in Hawaii, and are working.

Carla Kobashigawa and Wesley Akamine noted that the budget should have a breakout to specifically identify the direct benefit to the participants.

c. Leeward Community College Alternative Certification for Career and Technical Education Licensure

Erin Yagi, Field Placement Coordinator at Leeward Community College, gave a summary on the Alternative Certification program for their Career and Technical Education Licensure.

Wesley Akamine asked about the reportable metrics, Erin noted that she can provide the metrics that are asked, such as completion rate.

Carla Kobashigawa inquired what the current enrollment numbers into the program are now.

- Erin noted that typically per semester there are 12 – 15 students, currently there are 48 students in the program. 27 of which are going through their final field practicum and 21 in their final steps before recommendation for licensure.

Carla Kobashigawa asked about the total funding request and the direct benefit for participants.

- Erin Yagi noted that for most students/participants the final semester is the most difficult (the field practicum), if the student is not already a full-time teacher they will need to give up their current employment in order to do a full-time course load. Erin noted that any tuition assistance along the pathway helps.
 - Carla noted that the addition of the additional context around the program would be helpful in the proposal.

d. SolluCIO Partners 90-day Pilot Program

Chan Phouthavong, Chief Executive Officer of SolluCIO, shared SolluCIO Partner's AI engine Cortex.

Wes Akamine inquired if OWDB would have the data after the initial 90-day pilot.

- Chan informed Wes and the board that the data would stay with OWDB after the 90-day period.

Carla Kobashigawa noted that the presentation shared was mentioning the State Department of Labor and stressed that the scope of work must be identified for OWDB. Chan noted that he will tailor the presentation to indicate the board rather than the State.

Carla Kobashigawa also asked what the long-term commitment would look like after the 90-day pilot program. Asking if the subscription is annual, by group, by person, etc.

- Chan informed her that the annual subscription cost would be \$2,500 a month, however there is a full implantation of Cortex for a more long-term strategy.
 - Carla asked what full implantation exactly is, Chan informed her that full implementation would be a private Artificial Intelligence system that would be Government specific for OWDB. Where OWDB would be able to build/customize different things.

Carla Kobashigawa noted that in the example language such as, “aligned with blank” and “consistent with blank”. She wanted to know if SolluCIO has federal certifications for Cyber compliance or security.

- Chan informed her that SolluCIO is SOC 2 Type 2 compliant, and their Chief Information Security Officer is a certified information system security professional (CISSP).

e. Young Women’s Christian Association Social Enterprise Program

Terri Funakoshi gave an overview of the 6-month pilot YWCA Social Enterprise program.

Wesley Akamine inquired if YWCA is working directly with Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC).

- Terri informed Wes that they work with WCCC for the transitional housing programs and also the State for permanent housing programs, ultimately working with their referral partners and HCI for the population.

Wesley Akamine then asked if the program cost would be based off of a single cohort of 4-6 individuals.

- Terri confirmed the cohort size and noted that the lower numbers help with, the retention of the participants, one-on-one time, and getting the participants ready for longer job-training workforce programs.

Carla Kobashigawa noted the \$25,000 for curriculum development and instruction, and asked about the long-term sustainability plan as the special projects funding is short-term and limited.

- Terri informed Carla and the committee that YWCA has been doing programs for multiple years. The Social Enterprise program follows the curriculum model of their Hawaii Guest Services program, which has seen success in the last five years.

Carla inquired that since the Small Projects are being used to enhance the Workforce Development ecosystem, how Terri sees YWCA feeding into/broadening the scope for participants to have opportunities for WIOA programs.

- Terri noted that after individuals graduate, YWCA works closely through the American Job Center and WorkHawaii readying the participants to take further programs.
 - Carla noted that the verbiage defining the impact on the workforce ecosystem should be noted in the small project proposal to give the Full Board a better view of the whole proposal.

Wesley Akamine noted to the programs that are submitting updated small project proposals to:

- Performance metrics be related to the usage of funds. So the board can see the impact of the project.
- Statement that reflects the affect the program can have on the entire workforce ecosystem.
- Sustainability plan of the program after the small project funding subsides.

Carla Kobashigawa added that the main reason these Special Projects are being utilized is because the Service Provider is not spending down funds accordingly. She noted that although the special projects will be adding value the sustainability is important as the Service Provider should be the primary source of service for WIOA participants. The use of Special Projects should be used to augment the existing framework that is being utilized by the Service Provider.

VI. Announcements

There were no announcements at the meeting.

VII. Schedule Next Meeting

The next Special Projects committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 10, 2026 at 10:00 am – 11:00 am.

VIII. Adjournment

Chair Wesley Akamine adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm.