

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, March 10, 2026
10:00 am to 11:00 am

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
Andrew Rosen
Janna Hoshide
Frederick Pascua
Sarah Guay
Christopher Lum Lee

Guests:

Randall Higa, Workforce Transition Center, Owner and Founder
Alison Higa, Workforce Transition Center, Administrator
Shanyn Kanemori, Hawaii Pacific Health, Manager, Workforce Development and Compliance
Brittane Bernal, Array Corporation, General Manager; Vice President Array Corp
Lee Williams-Naeole, WorkHawaii Division, WIOA Title I Programs Manager

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 10:02 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 January 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Chair Wesley Akamine requested a motion to approve the minutes for the January 13, 2026, meeting. Andre Rosen moved to approve the minutes. Janna Hoshide seconded the motion. There were no objections or abstentions. The minutes were unanimously approved.

V. Review of Small Projects Proposals submitted by March 4, 2026

a. Youth Workforce Training, LLC dba Pathway to Success Program

Randall Higa, Owner and Founder of the Workforce Transition Center, introduced himself and his wife Alison Higa, Administrator of the Workforce Transition Center, and gave a background of the program/company.

Randall noted that himself and Alison both retired from the Department of Education. The Workforce Transition Center is the parent company to Youth Workforce Training, LLC, which works directly with students with barriers to employment and students with exceptionalities and students with barriers to employment.

- In the past nine years, they have worked in ten schools across the state working with students on work readiness skills and placing in paid internships.

Janna Hoshide inquired what the metrics of success are for the participants that go through the program.

- Randy informed Janna that there has been an 85 – 90% employment rate, with the remaining individuals going back for more training or referred to another program.

Andrew Rosen inquired the wage that the participants that go through the program are obtaining when gaining employment.

- Randy informed Andrew that the individuals are paid minimum wage, e.g. \$14 an hour last year, and it will be \$16 this year.

Wesley Akamine asked if the participants that go through the program will be receiving anything that would constitute a Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) performance metric, which has been a topic of concern.

- Randy noted that the MSG the student/participant would obtain would vary depending on where they are at, the jobs that they are being placed in are generally entry-level jobs. However the main goal of these jobs are to get them into the working environment and get work experience and get their foot in the door.

Sarah Guay asked if there are certain schools that are currently being targeted for the program.

- Randy noted that currently it is schools based in Oahu such as Castle, Roosevelt, and Leilehua.

Andrew Rosen asked what some of the skills that are being taught to the students/participants other than interviewing, resume writing, etc.

- Alison Higa informed Andrew that the skills that are being taught are for general employability skills, such as conflict resolution, attendance, financial literacy, etc.
 - For the financial literacy piece, outreach to the family is also done, for transparency with the family for SSI benefits and such.

Andrew generalized the potential population base into thirds, one third being self-motivated ready to work individuals, one third being self-motivated but not ready to work individuals, and lastly a group of people who are neither. He inquired what steps are taken to take the individuals who are not work ready but self-motivated to that top tier of individuals.

- Randy noted the program curriculum was developed in-house and tested locally specifically crafted for local students. The first steps that the program does is meet with the individuals' teachers, principals, and vice-principals to establish the target population and criteria prior to program enrollment.
 - Randy noted that a main focus of the program is to protect the business, being able to work independently is a large component prior to placement.
- Randy noted that the school system has a good grasp on "on-campus work-based learning" and the programs intention is to not supplant but rather support the coursework that the schools have/offer.

b. Boys and Girls Club Nānākuli Workforce Readiness Program

Unfortunately there was no staff present to go over the program for Boys and Girls Club Nānākuli's program. Daven Kawamura, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Specialist for OWDB, shared the proposal on screen. The proposal can be found at the following link:

<https://oahuwdb.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/3.10.26-Small-Project-Proposals.pdf>

Janna Hoshide noted that from her individual reading prior to the committee meeting that it was a well written proposal.

Sarah Guay noted that since she is on the board for Boys and Girls Club that she will be recusing herself from the conversation.

There were no questions from the members present at the committee meeting, however Daven Kawamura noted that if any questions arise after the meeting if members read through the proposal to send them over so that he could relay them over to administrative staff over at Boys and Girls Club Nānākuli.

c. Hawai'i Pacific Health Youth Workforce Development Program

Shanyn Kanemori, Workforce Development and Compliance Manager at Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH), gave a brief overview of the HPH annual summer internship and HPH as a whole. The program focuses on careers in Healthcare and workforce readiness training to prepare youth for the workforce. HPH consists of

four medical centers; three on Oahu and one on Kauai, there are also 70 clinics throughout the state.

Shanyn noted that the program was created back in 2004 and since then the program has grown in size and is constantly adjusted to keep up with the changing needs of students. In the past couple of years the cohort size consisted of 65 – 75 interns which are spread across the HPH network.

- Shanyn noted that the program is twofold, the first being to educate the students on various careers in Healthcare as there are the careers that many individuals think of when hearing Healthcare, such as Nursing, Pediatricians, Cardiologist, etc. However HPH alone has over 2,000 other jobs in the Healthcare realm that span from clinical to non-clinical.
- The second goal is to provide first-hand exposure to the Healthcare field to help the students confirm whether or not it's the industry for them. During the program they are able to shadow various professionals and departments.

The internship program is six weeks long, and the interns work 40 hours a week, which in and of itself is a learning experience for many participants. Interns are placed in one department at one of the HPH facilities, however they do engage in experiences outside of the department they are placed.

- During the program, workforce etiquette is gone over, things such as how to talk on the phone, how to send professional emails, what they should be doing during meetings, etc.
- There is also a career development seminar, where time is spent on refining their resumes, job interviewing skills are taught, and workshops on finding the individuals mission helping them find their purpose to align with a job.

Janna Hoshide inquired how many applications are received for the program. Shanyn informed her that currently HPH gets approximately 600 completed applications across high school and college students. She noted that they do like to balance them out so it ends up around 50/50 high school and college students.

Wesley Akamine inquired if the same process will be followed for this set of projects, e.g. going to the next Full Board meeting for final approval. Daven Kawamura confirmed that these projects will follow that similar path.

VI. Announcements

Daven Kawamura announced that the next Special Projects committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 9th 2026 from 10:00 am – 11:00 am.

VII. Adjournment

Chair Wesley Akamine adjourned the meeting at 10:40 am.