

Future of the Oahu Community Correctional Center

Vol. 40 - 2022: The Year of OCCC

January 2022



Hawaii Department of Public Safety

The Hawaii Department of Public Safety (PSD) carries out orders from the state courts to confine individuals for a set period of time utilizing jails and prisons located within Hawaii, at the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu, and in private contractor facilities on the mainland. Jails, known in Hawaii as Community Correctional Centers (CCCs), are located on the islands of Kauai, Maui, Hawaii and Oahu and house pre-trial detainees, misdemeanor offenders, and others with a sentence of one year or less. CCCs also provide a pre-release transition function for prison inmates who reach less than a year until their scheduled release. While some offenders will remain confined for life, over 95 percent will serve their sentences and be released to the community.

PSD envisions a future when all its facilities provide safe, secure, healthy, and humane environments for offenders and staff. A future based on better understanding the differing needs of offender populations, using therapeutic rather than punitive management techniques, ensuring racial equity, and by promoting positive change so that fewer individuals are incarcerated in Hawaii. However, aged and obsolete CCCs have undermined PSD's ability to deliver such a vision and improving some and replacing others is a PSD priority. Chief among its priorities is developing a new Oahu CCC (OCCC) at the Animal Quarantine Station (AQS) in Aiea. Assisting with OCCC planning and development is the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and a team of consultants (the "OCCC Team").

Hawaii's 2022 Legislative Session Begins

On January 19, the Hawaii Legislature will convene at the State Capitol for the 2022 session. Among the many legislative actions lawmakers will be considering are those dealing with the state's criminal justice system including replacing the current OCCC with a new facility. Since 2016, the Legislature, with the backing of Governor David Ige, has been supporting efforts to develop a new OCCC by funding the work that led to selection of the Animal Quarantine Station in Halawa as the location for the new OCCC; preparation of Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements in accordance with state regulations; engaging and educating the public; and addressing utility services, environmental resources, transportation access, among other topics. With considerable progress achieved, the state's ability to significantly improve how offenders are housed and treated while held at OCCC is closer than ever.

When it was developed over 40 years ago, OCCC was considered a "new generation" facility based on best practices at the time. However, OCCC no longer aligns with the vision for the future of the criminal justice system that Hawaii's leaders are seeking to implement: reducing recidivism by improving living and working conditions and providing programs, counseling, and related services that emphasize behavioral and mental health treatment.

PSD is seeking to deliver on that vision for OCCC – a vision embraced by Governor Ige, members of the Judiciary and Legislature, justice and health system authorities, community advocates, and other stakeholders. A vision based on a better understanding of the needs of the differing offender populations, using methods that are therapeutic rather than punitive, ensuring racial equity, reducing the number of incarcerated individuals, and promoting positive change.

Replacing OCCC is Long Overdue

OCCC must safely and securely house those accused of serious offenses while preparing others to successfully return to the community. Yet some in Hawaii are still questioning the necessity of replacing OCCC and are advocating for all work to stop. Unfortunately,



**Hawaii's Legislative session begins on January 19, 2022
(Credit: StarAdvertiser)**

stopping work on the new OCCC will only perpetuate the poor conditions that exist at the existing facility which are worsening with each passing day. With the COVID-19 pandemic, offenders, staff and visitors are facing new, unprecedented risks, adding to the urgency to replace OCCC. To continue to support the new OCCC, Hawaii's legislature during its 2022 session will be requested to provide the funds needed to undertake the next steps in its development.

Public Safety Requires Modern Infrastructure

Over 40 years ago, OCCC was considered a "new generation" facility based on best practices at the time. OCCC no longer aligns with the vision for the future of the justice system that the citizens of Hawaii expect and deserve. The words "antiquated, dilapidated and obsolete" now are commonly used to describe this vital public safety facility. The current physical design and structure of OCCC present multiple challenges that make it difficult to provide sufficient housing, recreational activities, and quality education and services to offenders. Improving Hawaii's criminal justice system, and thereby enhancing public safety, begins by replacing OCCC.



OCCC - Kalihi, Hawaii

Most Persons Held at OCCC Will Return Home

Approximately 95% of the individuals currently incarcerated in Hawaii will eventually return to their families and communities. Therefore, their behavioral issues must be addressed, their physical and mental health needs must be treated, and they must gain the skills needed to avoid reoffending and reentering the justice system. Upon release, they should return home better prepared to be successful, productive members of society. A new OCCC will provide the physical, social, and therapeutic environments needed to provide offenders with the tools and resources to improve their lives.

Federal Intervention a Possibility

OCCC presents security, health and safety, and conditions of confinement issues for staff and inmates and increases the risk of U.S. Department of Justice intervention, court-imposed fines, along with lawsuits from inmates and advocacy groups. Failure to act could also subject the State of Hawaii to direct federal oversight, thereby relinquishing control of OCCC and other elements of its correctional system. This would not be the first time



that poor conditions at OCCC led to federal oversight. Between 1985 and 2000, a consent decree resulting from a federal class action lawsuit required the state to address chronic overcrowding and inhumane conditions at OCCC and other in-state correctional facilities. While Hawaii emerged from federal oversight in 2000, conditions at OCCC have deteriorated during the intervening years.

A federal judge could once again intervene and dictate priorities for how Hawaii can spend tax revenues on its correctional facilities, along with other forms of intervention that could last for years. For those jurisdictions where federal intervention has occurred, the result has been costly. For example, California's prison system was forced to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on federally-mandated outlays.

Funds Needed to Advance New OCCC

The antiquated, dilapidated and obsolete OCCC is not unique with other correctional infrastructure in Hawaii facing similar conditions. Replacing OCCC won't solve every problem, but it will go far in demonstrating the state's commitment to addressing its most immediate system infrastructure need. The long-term cost to operating the obsolete OCCC is unsustainable and outweighs the cost of building a new facility needed for the modern era.



To continue to advance development of the new OCCC, the Governor has requested \$15 million as part of the executive supplemental budget that he submitted to the Legislature in December 2021.



OCCC's maximum security unit (Credit: StarAdvertiser)

How Funds will be Used

Legislative approval to fund the next phase is critical to continuing to move the new OCCC forward and gaining approval is dependent on understanding why the funds are needed now, how the funds will be used, and the benefits of appropriating the requested amount. 2022 funding would be used to:

- Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) including preparing detailed plans, drawings, technical specifications, other documentation
- For legal and financial advisory services, contract development, etc.
- Issue the RFP, hold meeting with prospective Respondents
- Evaluate RFP responses
- Contract negotiation
- Continue community outreach and engagement
- Comply with Community Partnering law (HRS 353-16.37)
- Design the new Animal Quarantine Station (separate funding request)

The Legislature's Support is Essential

The Legislature's support for the next phase is essential to maintain the project's momentum and schedule and control future cost increases. Conversely, failure to fund the next phase will delay the necessary work by at least a year, increase the cost of construction, and jeopardize the new OCCC. A delay will also burden Hawaii taxpayers to continue funding an obsolete, ineffective and costly OCCC and subject offenders, staff, and visitors to the poor and worsening conditions.

Preparation of Request for Qualifications Continues

The State of Hawaii is preparing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to invite teams to submit a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) to design, construct, finance and maintain the new OCCC. Anticipated for release in early 2022, the RFQ will solicit teams to identify member firms, present their qualifications and experience with projects of a similar nature and scale, key personnel, experience adhering to budgets and schedules, references, and other information relevant to providing the services necessary to develop the new OCCC. It is expected that SOQs submitted in response to the RFQ will provide the information needed to evaluate and rank the submissions leading to a shortlist of qualified firms/teams for participation in the RFP stage.

The OCCC team is continuing the work necessary to prepare the RFQ for release including reviewing viable funding/financing options, defining the project approvals process, preparing a current project schedule, updating the OCCC architectural space program, and engaging architectural, engineering, legal, financial and other advisors to assist with RFQ preparation. Throughout this period the OCCC team will continue to meet with elected and appointed officials, community and neighborhood groups, stakeholders, and others to share information about progress, upcoming activities, and to answer questions that may arise.



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

NEW OAHU COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER



State of Hawaii
Department of Accounting and General Services
DAGS JOB # 12-27-5713

2022

Staff Shortages in Hawaii's Correctional Facilities

Among the many challenges confronting PSD is providing the necessary complement of adult correctional officers (ACOs) each day at Hawaii's eight correctional facilities and Community Correctional Centers (CCCs). Recently, attention has focused on the reasons behind the shortage of ACOs and the best means to address this complex issue. In response, the following has been prepared to shed light on this serious topic including PSD's efforts to address staffing shortages which has shown to have no easy solution.

How bad are staff shortages in Hawaii's correctional facilities?

Of PSD's 1,413 ACO positions, 382 are currently vacant or are on extended leave representing 27% of the total complement. The breakdown among the eight facilities is as follows:

- Halawa Correctional Facility: 332 positions with 25% vacant or on extended leave
- Waiawa Correctional Facility: 91 positions with 24% vacant or on extended leave
- Kulani Correctional Facility: 60 positions with 18% vacant or on extended leave
- Maui CCC: 170 positions with 38% vacant or on extended leave
- Oahu CCC: 413 positions with 31% vacant or on extended leave
- Women's CCC: 135 staff positions with 32% as new positions, vacant or on extended leave¹
- Hawaii CCC: 150 staff positions with 17% vacant or on extended leave
- Kauai CCC: 62 staff positions with 13% vacant or on extended leave.

¹Eighteen of the positions at WCCC are new positions to work at the Ho o'kipa Cottage, which is currently undergoing renovation. Recruitment for these positions will begin once construction nears completion.

Are staff shortages unique to Hawaii?

Staffing shortages are not unique to Hawaii with every state in the nation reporting shortages for many years; a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staffing shortages in all of Hawaii's correctional facilities have been a serious, long-standing issue and one that PSD has been raising with members of the Legislature, stakeholder groups, and the public for many years.

What are the chief reasons for staff shortages?

The job of an ACO is one of the toughest in State service and with an above average attrition rate, PSD is forced to continually recruit staff to fill vacancies and alleviate the strain on the workforce. Another is that recruiting an ACO takes longer than a regular civil service position, requiring applicants to complete a process that generally take three to six months and includes a written exam, physical ability test, oral interview, pre-psychological test, truth verification exam, background check, post-psychological evaluation, and clinical psychological oral interview.

Are there other reasons for staff shortages?

Absenteeism is a contributing factor with absences among ACOs high, in part, because of the generous leaves built into collective bargaining agreements and state and federal laws providing additional leaves. Correctional officers exhibit chronic absenteeism at higher levels than in other State departments due to workers' compensation claims and leaves based on the Family Medical Leave Act.

What is being done to recruit and retain more staff?

Staff recruitment and retention are two important components of PSD's strategic plan with efforts made to fill vacancies as quickly as possible through increased training cycles coupled with external recruitment campaigns. PSD has undertaken several statewide recruitment and advertising campaigns in recent years, including one currently in progress. PSD has also expanded recruitment by offering day and evening classes and is streamlining recruitment practices including adding temporary staff to expedite new hiring.

What else is being done to alleviate staff shortages?

PSD is also addressing staff shortages by re-assigning ACOs from other facilities, moving inmates to other facilities, and using emergency staff hires, among other measures. PSD has also closed non-essential posts when warranted to help maintain core corrections operations. For example, given the staff shortages at the Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF), PSD has requested volunteers from other facilities to

work at HCF before ordering temporary detachments. PSD has also requested assistance from the Sheriff Division to man perimeter gates and posts and has even contacted corrections retirees to see if they would be willing to work part-time (an approach that has not proven fruitful). Lastly, PSD is working with the Department of Human Resources Development to return staff to work who are receiving workers' compensation due to injury as quickly and safely as possible via limited and/or light duty assignments. These types of post assignments do not require normal levels of physical activity by the ACO, and some are sedentary, which ensure that staff temporary medical limitations are not exceeded. While not ideal, it shows that PSD is working hard to fill vacancies by employing creative solutions.

What can the Legislature do to help alleviate staff shortages?

Probably the most important action that the Legislature can take during its 2022 session is to approve a request to fund 160 ACO positions (11% of the total ACO count) that has gone unfunded. It is also well known that all of Hawaii's correctional facilities are antiquated and in various states of disrepair with the quality of the work environment another factor in the high absence and low retention rates among ACOs (in addition to being inefficient and unsafe for inmates and staff). The Legislature will also be asked to fund various correctional facility projects and critical maintenance. It is hoped that the Legislature will recognize the challenges being faced by PSD and support the efforts to provide for the safety and security of inmates, staff, and the public.

Construction Continues at WCCC

Each month PSD shares progress in constructing improvements at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua. The improvements include a new 176-bed Housing Unit, Administration Building, and Visitation/Intake Building totaling 56,121 square feet (see renderings below), along with parking lot and access drive upgrades. These improvements, costing approximately \$35 million, are the first substantial investments in WCCC which was originally developed as the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility in 1952 and adapted in 1992 to house female offenders. The improvements are part of PSD's plan to relocate female pre-trial detainees currently housed at OCCC to WCCC to improve living conditions; provide gender-specific programming, treatment, and rehabilitation services; and increase opportunities for family visitation. Another focus is to provide space for WCCC personnel in a supportive environment in order to help attract additional staff, retain current staff, and reduce staff turnover.



Renderings of new construction at WCCC (credit: CGL Companies)

PSD made sure that WCCC's large canopy monkeypod trees were considered during the planning phase, were integrated in the overall design scheme, and would be protected throughout the construction phase. Exterior building materials were thoughtfully chosen to reflect the aesthetic of Hawaii with use of lava rock material and cast stone accents. Building interiors were designed to offer clear and easy wayfinding with ample natural light for public and in-custody areas and for all staff workspaces. Construction during December and January continued to focus on site preparation and installation of underground utilities with the improvements on schedule for completion in 2023.

Renovation of the Ho o'kipa Cottage is also progressing to convert a formerly vacant structure into a useful addition to the WCCC campus. From this vacant structure will emerge a new living environment for female offenders that focuses on rehabilitation, normalization, and providing life skills for a successful transition out of custody, leading to lower rates of recidivism. Progress photos are provided below along with the eventual interior and exterior spaces.

Construction Continues at WCCC (Continued)



WCCC construction progress photos (December 2021/January 2022)



Ho o'kipa Cottage Renderings (credit: DLR Group)



Renderings of finished dormitory, dayroom, and lanai (credit: DLR Group)



Progress photos - December 2021 (credit: DLR Group)



The 2022 legislative session will be held at the State Capitol.

Upcoming Activities

The following activities are anticipated in the months ahead.

<p>February 2022</p>	<p>New construction and renovations continue at WCCC.</p> <p>Public outreach, information, and engagement continues with attendance at meetings of Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission, publication of Newsletter Vol. 41, etc.</p> <p>2022 legislative session continues.</p>
<p>March 2022</p>	<p>OCCC Request for Qualifications anticipated to be published.</p> <p>New construction and renovations continue at WCCC.</p> <p>Public outreach, information, and engagement continues with attendance at meetings of Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission, publication of Newsletter Vol. 42, etc.</p> <p>2022 legislative session continues.</p>
<p>April 2022</p>	<p>New construction and renovations continue at WCCC.</p> <p>Public outreach, information, and engagement continues with attendance at meetings of Aiea Neighborhood Board #20, Aiea Community Association, and Hawaii Correctional Systems Oversight Commission, publication of Newsletter Vol. 43, etc.</p> <p>2022 legislative session continues.</p>

Join OCCC Email List

Add your name to the OCCC email list to directly receive announcements, newsletters, and other project-related materials by sending your name, affiliation (if any), and email address to: robert.nardi@wsp.com.

Interested in Learning More?

For additional information visit <http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans> or contact:

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