



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMALU KALAIMA A HO'OPONOPONO OLA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2024

New recruitment campaign for corrections officers kicks off in June 2024

HONOLULU —The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) is kicking off a new multi-pronged recruitment campaign for adult corrections officers (ACO) beginning Monday, June 10, 2024.

The department officially transitioned from the Department of Public Safety (PSD) to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on January 1, 2024, and began to ramp up its recruitment efforts with radio spots and paid social media campaigns, in addition to continued participation in job fairs.

DCR Director Tommy Johnson said, "We compressed our recruit training from 11 weeks to eight weeks while still covering all of the basics, to ensure our new ACOs are well-prepared for their jobs. We're also doubling the number of graduating classes this year, from two to three classes a year, to six classes."

The first adult corrections officer class of the year had 30 graduates, who celebrated the completion of their 300-hour basic corrections recruit course in March 2024.

"Despite these positive changes, we know there is more we can do," Johnson said, noting that there is currently an estimated 1,125 filled adult corrections officer positions statewide and nearly 400 vacant positions. "The more positions we can fill, the more we can reduce our overtime costs, and this also helps create a more optimal work environment for our hard-working team of ACOs."

"Additionally, having more staff available provides additional opportunities for inmates, such as attending additional programming, while preparing them for release," he added.

The department is seeking certain qualities in new recruits. “We’ve transitioned from what some have seen as a punitive model, to a rehabilitative and restorative model of justice. We’re looking for employees with a genuine desire to help others succeed in life. We want adult corrections officers who see the potential in the inmates and are willing to serve as mentors, to help them successfully reintegrate back into the community,” Johnson said.

The new campaign is called, “Unlocking Potential,” which centers on the department’s goal and vision of rehabilitation. It includes a 30-second [spot](#) showing the mentoring relationship between an ACO and an inmate, and the progression of the inmate’s readiness for the outside world, as he moves from initial tentativeness to being confident about his abilities. The spot also shows the various services offered to inmates sentenced to our custody and care including education and job training.

The spot will be shown at Consolidated and Regal theaters statewide, beginning Monday, June 10, 2024 and continue through September 1, 2024.

A 15-second version of the spot will be geotargeted to those who go to the movies, which means they will see the same message when they use various apps. Those who live in the areas near the theaters will also see the same message when streaming on their mobile devices.

Featured in the spot is Carl Dunaway, a veteran corrections officer at the Hālawā Correctional Facility (HCF). The role of the inmate is played by an actor.

In addition to the spots, the DCR also produced three videos featuring three ACOs — Dunaway, Chief of Security Maj. Joanna-Jacklyn “Jojo” White and Sgt. Nani Cossey, also of HCF — who tell their story of how they became corrections officers and why they continue to serve in their respective roles. The videos will be posted on the DCR website and shown at job fairs.

Dunaway, who has been a corrections officer at the Hālawā Correctional Facility for the past 34 years, started after graduating from high school.

In the video, he describes how he overcame adversity that he faced in his youth. “I grew up in the foster care system and had to face all types of challenges, but I had a good role model in my early years, Father Phil Harmon. I was lucky that I was able to stay on the right path, and now I have a chance to be a role model and a mentor for these inmates, so that they can become productive members of society,” Dunaway said.

The DCR awarded the recruitment campaign contract to Strategic Communication Solutions.

###

Media Contact:

Rosemarie Bernardo
Public Information Officer
Hawai‘i Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Office: 808-587-1358
Cell: 808-683-5507
Email: Rosemarie.Bernardo@hawaii.gov
Website: <https://dcr.hawaii.gov>

