

Alan Clinton
Chair

Richard Seder
Vice Chair



Hawai'i Commission for National and Community Service
1601 East-West Road, JAB 4082
Honolulu, HI 96848
Phone: (808) 956-8145
Fax: (808) 944-7677
Email: hicncs@hawaii.edu

Meeting Minutes

Date: **Hawai'i Commission for National and Community Service**
Time: Friday, May 30, 2025
1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

AGENDA

Serve Hawai'i With Aloha

I. Call to Order

Chair Alan Clinton called the meeting to order at 1:07pm.

II. Introductions and Welcome to New Commissioners

Commission Members present: Chair Alan Clinton, Vice Chair Richard Seder, Diane Peters-Nguyen, Anne Nakakura, Frank Haas, Anne Marie (Mahealani) Matsuzaki, Karen Mukai, Kymberly Sparlin, Elwyn Watkins, Kylie Alarcon (new), Ray Galas (new), Sandra Larsen (new), and Suzette Robinson

Commission Members excused: Raga Nadella

Others in Attendance: Commission staff Keala Monaco, Brian Higaki, and Maelynn Puchalski and Guest Kimi Gabbard

III. Public Comments on Agenda Items

No written comments were received and no individuals signed up for oral testimony.

IV. Approval of Minutes of the November 20, 2024 Meeting

Ray recommended draft minutes be distributed 10 business days post-meeting.

Frank suggested using AI tools to generate meeting minutes. Keala agreed to explore.

Richard moved to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2024 meeting, seconded by Karen and the motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative with the exception of Kymberly abstention.

V. Approval of Subapplications for Program Year 2025-2026 Funding

Keala summarized the process of AmeriCorps providing federal funds to states which in turn makes awards to subgrantees. All 2024 – 2025 awards were terminated on April 25, 2025 but AmeriCorps announced there is funding for 2025 – 2026 awards. Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i is applying for a competitive grant whereby the decision and funding is directly from AmeriCorps but the grant is administered by the state commission. In the case LASH is not funded, the state may award LASH from their Formula funds.

Applicant: Papahana Kuaola requests \$134,046 for 12 members to treat 4 acres of conservation lands in Waipao, Heeia, Oahu.

Maelynn clarified the 12 members consist of full, quarter and part – time members and reported while the program experiences some retention issues, they have been able to make adjustments.

Brian reported some delays in fiscal submissions as they are currently working on program years 2023 – 2024 and 2024 – 2025 will be submitted next week. This delay stems from the university issuing the sub agreements late which prevents reimbursement to be processed in a timely fashion.

Richard moved to approve Papahana Kuaola's request for \$134,046 for the 2025 – 2026 program year. Diane seconded the motion. The motion carried with one abstention (Mahealani) and all other members present voting in the affirmative.

Applicant: Teach for America Hawai'i, requests \$112,000 for 112 members to teach for two years in low income and under resourced schools on Oahu and Hawai'i Island.

Keala clarified Teach For America is a professional corps program. Members are salaried employees of the Hawai'i Department of Education and the funds requested could cover administration costs and there's no match requirements. Keala will verify if these funds go to the members. Main benefit for these members is the Segal Educational Award equivalent to the federal Pell grant.

Maelynn reported they have been an awardee for a while has had no program or member issues.

Brian reported due to staff turnover, there has been some errors but the program has been very responsive to making corrections but otherwise their submissions have been very timely.

Ray moved to approve Teach For America Hawai'i, requesting \$112,000 for the 2025 – 2026 program year. Richard seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Applicant: Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, requesting \$250,000 for 10 members who will help low income and disadvantaged residents of Hawai'i across the state navigate the justice system and connect with the legal information and resources they need to address the civil legal issues affecting their economic and social stability.

Maelynn reported the program experiences a bit of recruitment issues so the program decreased their request by a few members but otherwise are able to retain their members.

Brian reported as a veteran program, set up as a fixed award grant, there has been no problems with accuracy of timeliness with their reimbursements.

Diane moved to approve Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, requesting \$250,000 for the 2025 – 2026 program year. Ray seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members present voting in the affirmative.

Request made for information on more detailed report on how funds are spent, outcomes, and/or stories.

VI. Executive Director Updates

Keala informed the applicants just approved for 2025 – 2026 are also grantees for 2024 – 2025 that were terminated April 25, 2025. The university decided not to join the lawsuit against the termination. Teach for America Hawai'i transferred their members into their national direct program. Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i moved their members onto other funding. Papahana Kuaola members were invited to join Kupu, a national direct grantee but they declined and stopped service. In light of the current grantee status, these programs would like their applications to continue for 2025 – 2026.

Keala informed planning a summer cross stream activity is on hold until more definitive status of Raga Nadella, Regional Portfolio Manager on administrative leave and other Hawai'i state programs are known.

Keala clarified due to many AmeriCorps staff on administrative leave, grant making is their focus but delays are expected. Our competitive application was scheduled to have received notification in May but no notifications have been provided. National Civilian Conservation Corps, the first program to have been terminated, announced they are back in operation. AmeriCorps cancelled their 2025 annual symposium.

VII. Discussion on Commission Operations

Ray advocated for formalizing committees in alignment with Hawai'i Revised Statutes and best practices. Recommended participation of Deputy Attorney General or UH General Counsel to support legal review of agendas, minutes, and procedures.

Suzette stated the bylaws committee was awaiting feedback on the draft bylaws to which Keala stated UH General Counsel indicated additional work is needed. Alan suggested this to be picked up at a future meeting.

Diane emphasized caution on adopting five new committees as federal directives come down affecting staff workload and terminations.

General agreement to revisit bylaws, committee structure, and officer elections at the next in-person meeting.

VIII. Announcements

Next Meeting: tentatively planned as in-person session in summer 2025; date TBD.

Commissioners must complete financial disclosure forms by June 2, 2025.

New commissioners have until August to file.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Alan adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.