



Office of the Administrative Director of the Courts – THE JUDICIARY • STATE OF HAWAII
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October 2, 2024

Via electronic submission

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Scott Saiki
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear President Kouchi and Speaker Saiki:

Pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 160, S.D.1, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, the Judiciary is transmitting a copy of the *Initial Report of the Women's Corrections Implementation Commission to Reduce the Number of Women Incarcerated at the Women's Community Correctional Center by Twenty-Five Percent by 2029*.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, we are also transmitting a copy of this report to the Legislative Reference Bureau Library.

The public may view an electronic copy of this report on the Judiciary's website at the following link: https://www.courts.state.hi.us/news_and_reports/reports/reports.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact Karen Takahashi of the Judiciary's Legislative Affairs and Special Projects Division at 808-539-4896, or via e-mail at Karen.T.Takahashi@courts.hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney A. Maile".

Rodney A. Maile
Administrative Director of the Courts

Attachment

c: Legislative Reference Bureau Library

Initial Report of the

**Women's Corrections Implementation Commission
to Reduce the Number of Women Incarcerated
at the Women's Community Correctional Center
by Twenty-Five Percent by 2029**

**Submitted to the
Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2025**

Pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 160, S.D. 1 (2024)

**Prepared by:
The Women's Corrections Implementation Commission**

October 2024

The Women's Corrections Implementation Commission ("WCIC" or "Commission") was established by the Hawai'i State Legislature in May of 2022 and signed into law by Governor David Ige as Act 244 on July 6, 2022. The WCIC was enacted to:

- collaborate with the Judiciary and county prosecutors to develop and implement an evidence-based, gender-responsive plan to divert non-violent women offenders, especially those with minor children, from the criminal justice system;
- ensure that the recommendations made in the Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Legislature during the Regular Session of 2019 are implemented;
- review existing local resources and programs focused on women in the justice system for their effectiveness and capacity for expansion; and
- consider model programs that include residential, in-person and community-based rehabilitation programs, supportive and subsidized housing, restorative justice, and educational programs.

Act 244 directed that the Commission be made up of the following women members:

- the Chief Justice, or the Chief Justice's designee;
- the Director of Public Safety, or the director's designee;
- a social worker who assists in the rehabilitation and attainment of housing for female inmates, who shall be appointed by the Director of Public Safety;
- the Public Defender or the Public Defender's designee;
- the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Hawai'i, Honolulu, Maui, or Kaua'i, or the Prosecuting Attorney's designee;
- the leader of a private foundation that assists women in rehabilitation after release from prison, or the leader's designee;
- a former prison inmate appointed by the Director of Public Safety; and
- a community-based advocate appointed by the Director of Public Safety.

The Commission began its work in the summer of 2022. The members of the Commission met monthly, primarily via video conferencing. The inaugural members of each category were designated as follows:

- Designee of Chief Justice – Trish K. Morikawa;
- Designee of the Director of Public Safety – Shari Kimoto;
- Social Work – Candace P. Beale;
- Designee of the Public Defender – Hayley Cheng;

- Designees of the Prosecuting Attorney Offices -
Honolulu – Cheryl Inouye;
Hawai‘i – Ha‘aheo Kaho‘ohalahala;
Maui – Shelly Miyashiro;
Kaua‘i – Rebecca Vogt Like;
- Private Foundation Leader – Toni Bissen;
- Former Prison Inmate – Daphne Ho‘okano;
- Community-Based Advocate – Linda Rich.

From 2022 to the end of 2023, the Commission focused primarily on fact finding and information gathering regarding incarcerated women at the Women’s Community Correctional Center (“WCCC”). This work involved participating in a Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Workshop focused on women in the criminal justice system, convened by the Pū ‘ā Foundation; touring the WCCC facility in April 2023; and conducting four kūkā (talk story) sessions with focus groups of women inmates at WCCC. The Commission’s preliminary findings identified a number of areas in need of improvement, including programming and services at WCCC and policies and procedures of the Hawai‘i Paroling Authority.

In 2024, the WCIC continued meeting monthly and shifted its focus to continue fact finding and information gathering regarding women on probation. Since women who are unable to complete probation face five, 10 or 20 year prison sentences if their probation is revoked, the Commission is currently reviewing whether there are meaningful changes that could be made to increase their successful completion of probation, thereby allowing them to avoid incarceration.

On May 1, 2024, House Concurrent Resolution No. 160, S.D. 1 was adopted which added requirements to the Commission. Those requirements include:

1. developing a strategy and making recommendations to reduce the number of women incarcerated at the WCCC by 25 percent by 2029;
2. working with additional departments and organizations, beyond the current members of the WCIC, including the Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Education, Hawai‘i Paroling Authority, and each county police department in developing the strategy and recommendations.

Once the WCIC has completed gathering relevant information, it will share its findings with these additional stakeholders and solicit their input as the WCIC begins to

develop a strategy and recommendations. A copy of this report has been shared with all the members of the Commission and transmitted to the Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Education, Hawai'i Paroling Authority, and each county police department.