



Housing and Homelessness: An Update

15 July 2019

Please enjoy this update of recent happenings around housing and homelessness.

- For the first time in over 50 years, The United States Conference of Mayors held their annual meeting here in Honolulu (June 28 to July 1, 2019). Over 220 mayors attended. Highlights included:
 - Mayor Caldwell's proposed resolution, "[Address the Crisis of Homelessness and Housing Affordability](#)," was adopted by the conference.
 - Mayor Caldwell also moderated a best practice forum during the conference: [Homelessness and Housing: Government, Philanthropy, and the Private Sector](#). Two of Hawaii's own, Micah Kāne and Duane Kurisu presented, as well as, Mayors Garcetti (Los Angeles), Liccardo (San Jose), Vinis (Eugene), and Weiers (Glendale). Matthew Doherty of the USICH and Anthony Love of VA Homeless Programs also spoke.
 - Mayor Nan Whaley of Dayton and Mayor Marty Walsh of Boston were given a tour of Chinatown which included city-supported programs at the Joint Outreach Center, Safe Haven, and Punawai Rest Stop. [H3RC](#) Executive Director Heather Lusk, along with Tina Oh, and David Shaku, and [HPD](#) Captain Mike Lambert and team, and Mental Health Kokua, provided an on-the-street engagement with those struggling with mental health and substance use disorder.
 - Honolulu organized an off-site visit entitled, "Community, Permanent Housing, and Hygiene Services," which took nine mayors and other participants to both Kahauiki Village and the Punawai Rest Stop. The Mayor's Communications Team produced a special video, "[Kahauiki Village and Punawai Rest Stop: Community, Permanent Housing, and Hygiene Services](#)," featuring both facilities.
- The [Oahu Resilience Strategy](#) (led by the City [Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency](#)) was unveiled by Mayor Caldwell at the 2019 State of the City Address (5/30/19).
 - The organizing structure for the city's approach to affordable housing is found in Pillar 1, [Remaining Rooted: Ensuring an Affordable Future for Our Island](#), pp. 26-49.
 - [Bill 89 \(2018\), CD2 \(now ordinance 19-18\), Relating to Short-Term Rentals](#), was signed by Mayor Caldwell on June 25, 2018. It directly supports Oahu Resilience Strategy Action 2: Return Illegal Vacation Rental Units to Local Housing.
- Many have heard about the City's new [Lift Mobile Navigation Center/HONU](#) program which will better facilitate services to the unsheltered community. We hope to have the first one operational by early September.
- The contractors (providers) for two new programs under the [City Department of Community Services](#) will be announced shortly.
 - [Landlord Engagement Program](#): This program is intended to create a link between landlords with vacant units and households experiencing homelessness and at risk of become homeless. Landlord incentives and supports are funded, as well as support for direct assistance to clients in finding appropriate housing and preventing evictions.
 - [Outreach Navigation Program](#): This program is intended to serve the most service-resistant, chronically homeless clients, and those suffering from mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Funding supports include psychiatric services to develop and implement treatment plans and/or file for Assisted Community Treatment (ACT) orders, as well as, legal services for ACT orders.

- Medical Examiner Dr. Christopher Happy analyzed records from 2014-2018, a period of five years, and identified 373 homeless persons who died. The average age was 52.6 years, well below the current life expectancy in the U.S.A. of 78.6 years and more than 80 years old here in Hawaii. In 2018, 90 homeless persons died, compared to 70 in 2017. See [Homeless Deaths Demonstrate Need to House Vulnerable Population](#) (6/5/19).
- We recently shared progress on Housing First through a press release, [‘Housing First’ Program Making a Positive Difference in the Lives of Hundreds](#) (6/5/19). In the first three years of the Housing First Initiative, an average of 86 percent of all clients have remained housed. In 2018, 91 percent of Honolulu’s Housing First clients came into the program as chronically homeless, and over 60 percent came directly from living on the streets.
 - One of the great advocates for ending homelessness, Lloyd Pendleton, passed away earlier this year. Matthew Doherty, Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, republished a piece in his honor, [“What I Learned about Housing First from Lloyd Pendleton”](#) (5/13/19).
- The City’s [Honolulu 311](#) app has been updated extensively, including an option to report “homeless concerns.” We really encourage the use of this app which allows pictures to be taken, locations identified, and automated processing of requests. Concerns can even be reported anonymously. There are both iOS and Android versions available, as well as, the web version.
- The Mayor’s Office of Housing has expanded its social media presence with the addition of [Instagram](#) and a [YouTube Channel](#), in addition to our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) presence. Our website, www.honolulu.gov/housing, continues to be the main portal for up-to-date information on affordable housing and homelessness for Honolulu.
- Using Google Maps, we have published a beta [Oahu Homeless Services Locations](#) interactive map. The purpose is two-fold: To facilitate easier identification of helpful resources and educate the general public about the breadth of services available. Please let me know of any suggested edits and additions. It is a work in progress.
- In May we released an updated edition of the [Oahu Homeless Help Card](#), both in print (available at our office) and [pdf](#) editions.
- According to [The Oahu 2019 Point-in-Time Count: Comprehensive Report](#) (released 5/15/19) the total number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons for 2019 is 4,453, which is a decline of 42 persons or 1%, over 2018 (total = 4,495). The sheltered population declined by 13% (-298 persons) to 2,052 from 2,350 in 2018. The unsheltered population increased by 12% (+256 persons) to 2,401 from 2,145 in 2018. From 2012-2019 the unsheltered population increased by 82% (+1,083 persons). As the report noted, we should focus attention on trend analysis which is more instructive. See [2019 Homeless Point-in-Time Count Results – Observations](#) (released 5/22/19) for several trend graphs, which show:
 - Since 2015 the homeless veteran population decreased by 18% (-82 persons). The decline from 2017-2019 alone was 14% (-64 persons).
 - From 2015-2019 there has been a 42% decrease (-983 persons) in homeless family individuals.
 - From 2015-2019 there has been a 40% decrease (-526 children) in the number of homeless children.