

FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**SENATOR STANLEY CHANG**  
East Honolulu Community Newsletter

December 2022



## Waikiki Aquarium Receives \$11.5 Million CIP Funding

Photo Credit: Star-Advertiser

In October, Waikīkī Aquarium was allocated \$11.5 million in Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funding from Governor Ige. These funds are the product of Senator Chang's efforts to secure funds for public infrastructure on behalf of his District 9 constituents and Hawai'i.

These funds will be used for the building and installation of a much-needed upgraded water discharge system. For the past several years, the Waikīkī Aquarium has occasionally been unable to meet the new standards of the Waste Water Branch in the Department of Health for water discharge into the ocean and has been dealing with issues from the City and County of Honolulu for discharging salt water into the sewer system for over six decades.

The new discharge system will collect existing ocean discharge water and salt water that would be previously sent to the sewer and direct these waters into injection walls at the Waikīkī Aquarium. The work for this project will be significant, involving the laying of new underground pipelines to transport the discharge water and the temporary closure of certain doorways and the Edge of the Reef exhibit. Eventually, in a construction project separate from the water discharge upgrades, the Edge of the Reef exhibit will be renovated and expanded.

The Waikīkī Aquarium serves as an integral part of Hawai'i as the State Aquarium of Hawai'i, a part of the University of Hawai'i, and the second oldest public aquarium in

the United States. The Aquarium faces high budgetary and operational costs, which is why this funding comes at a much-needed time. Andrew Rossiter, Director of Waikīkī Aquarium, says "A major renovation is needed to bring the Aquarium up to modern display standards and to refocus exhibits on conservation, education, and research pertaining to Hawai'i's marine life."

In the upcoming months, Waikīkī Aquarium expects an influx of new animals at the aquarium including new fishes, several species of clams, and a diverse array of corals. Additionally, there is a new baby leafy dragon recently born there. The Waikīkī Aquarium is one of a few aquariums around the world with a successful seadragon breeding program.

Mr. Rossiter explains that the Waikīkī Aquarium is so important because "Over 24% of the fishes found in the inshore waters occur here and nowhere else worldwide. The amazing and unique marine and freshwater biology of the islands needs to be emphasized to residents and visitors alike. The Aquarium plays an important role in introducing visitors and locals to the wonders of Hawai'i marine life and allowing them to make informed decisions about its care and conservation."

For more information on the Waikīkī Aquarium and to learn about their upcoming events, visit the Aquarium in person or at [waikikiaquarium.org](http://waikikiaquarium.org).



### ▶ CALL US

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### ▶ HANDY CONTACTS

**State Pothole Hotline**  
808-586-7852

**City Pothole Hotline**  
808-768-7777

**State Homelessness**  
[gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov](http://gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov)  
808-586-0193

**City Homelessness**  
[complaints@honolulu.gov](mailto:complaints@honolulu.gov)  
808-768-4381

**Abandoned Vehicles**  
808-733-2530

**Building Permits**  
808-768-8000

**Trash Collection**  
808-768-3200

**Street Light Repair**  
808-768-5300

## IN THE COMMUNITY

### NEW BISHOP MUSEUM PROGRAMS



Photo Credit: Go Hawaii

The Bishop Museum has joined Museums for All, which provides food assistance (SNAP) program participants with free regular admission. Museum guests who present a SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card will receive free admission, for up to four people, and free parking for one vehicle. Guests can bypass parking payment and check in at the ticket counter in Shop Pacifica.

Brandon Bunag, the museum's vice president of public programs, said "Through the Museums for All program, we hope to provide greater access to Bishop Museum to those who may not have been able to visit us previously. To those neighbors, friends, and 'ohana we say, 'Welina! A e komo mai,' welcome, and we hope to see you soon."

Residents can also take advantage of the Bishop Museum After Hours program. After Hours takes place every second Friday of the Month, from 5:30 PM – 9 PM, and offers visitors the chance to view the historic Hawaiian Hall, the expansive Science Adventure Center, and the new exhibits in the Castle Memorial Building and J.M. Long Gallery. The Great Lawn is also open, where you can spend your evening under Honolulu's star-lit sky and try new food and drinks from local vendors. \$5 presale admission tickets are available for residents with a valid state ID/driver's license or military ID. The museum's next After Hours takes place on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Visit [bishopmuseum.org](http://bishopmuseum.org) for more information about the programs and buying tickets.

### DR. SUN YAT-SEN MEMORIAL PARK REOPENING

The Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Park is open to the public after a two-year closure for renovation. On November 22, the City and County of Honolulu held a blessing ceremony for the park; the public was invited to a free concert on Friday, December 2 with a lion dance, music from Stacie Ku'ulei, and a performance by Hawai'i boy band Crossing Rain.

The memorial houses the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen statue, which was gifted by the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Hawai'i Foundation in 2007. According to Nate Serota, spokesperson for the City and County of Honolulu, the statue was relocated to the center of the park and is now the "focal point of the historic figure's

namesake location." Sculpted by Chu Tat Shing, the sculpture depicts a young Dr. Sun carrying two books in his right hand and dressed in traditional Chinese garments.

Raised in Hawai'i after moving from Zhongshan, China, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen was a Chinese statesman, physician, and philosopher. China's first revolutionary society, the Xing Zhong Hui (Revive China Society), was organized in Hawai'i in 1894. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen would overthrow the Qing Dynasty, establish the Republic of China (Taiwan), and serve as the first provisional president of the Republic of China.

The statue and memorial park recognize the influence of Hawai'i in nurturing the roots of 'Modern China' and its Founding Father. The park is free to visit and located at 1041 Bethel Street in Downtown Honolulu.



Photo Credit: Sun Yat-sen Hawai'i Foundation

## MOVING FORWARD



Image Credit: UH News

### Paul Balazs and Kaiser High School's Peace and Sustainability Garden

In 2016, a plot of land was cleared with the help of students and volunteers at Kaiser High School (KHS). They transformed that land into Kaiser High School's Peace and Sustainability Garden, led by Paul Balazs.

Paul Balazs has been an English teacher and leadership advisor at KHS since 2016 and is currently pursuing his master's degree in Sustainability and Resilience Education at the University of Hawai'i's College of Education. However, his work to further his own education never distracted him from being an integral part of the KHS community. Balazs helped establish the Wipeout Crew, a club that focuses on helping the environment through service projects and activism, and he continues to serve as the sole advisor for the group of 135 students. In 2016, he was recognized for his impactful work with the Milken Educator's Teacher of Promise award.

The Peace and Sustainability Garden that Balazs helped to create at Kaiser houses 78 different species of plants a majority of native Hawaiian flora, fruits, and vegetables. The garden is an important part of the KHS campus as it has been integrated into the school's curriculum, offering a hands-on and innovative approach to learning. Being outdoors is beneficial for students' mental health, allows them to learn about themselves and their place in the world, and do meaningful service for their community.

### 2023–2024 FAFSA Application Open Now

Are you going or planning to enter a post-secondary institution? Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) now! Find it online at [studentaid.gov/fafsa-app/roles](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa-app/roles).

FAFSA is the primary form to determine student eligibility for financial aid from any U.S. college or university. If you are only looking for federal aid, FAFSA is the only form you need to fill out. Frank Green, a financial outreach counselor at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu, explains the importance as "state organizations will use the results of the FAFSA to determine eligibility for state [financial aid] programs."

The application window for the 2023–2024 year opened in October with billions of dollars in financial aid available. This past year, only

around half of the families in Hawai'i completed the form. According to Green, there are "literally millions of dollars that get left on the table... people didn't apply. They didn't even ask. They didn't even try. And therefore, none of it passed out."

While the form may seem daunting at first, it only takes between 45 minutes to 1 hour. Using the IRS Data Retrieval tool on the FAFSA website makes it even faster. Here are some tips to make the process this year (and every year after that) a little bit easier:

1. Fill out the FAFSA as early as you can. The form for the following school year opens in October and closes in June.
2. Instead of leaving a blank, use a 0 when applicable.
3. Utilize the FAFSA checklist to ensure you have all necessary documents: [nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/FAFSA\\_Checklist.pdf](https://nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/FAFSA_Checklist.pdf).

The FAFSA is a great way to save money, especially if you plan to stay in state. According to Green, "college can be affordable. You do have to put in some work, but at the end of the day—especially if you're considering staying home here in Hawai'i—college is very affordable."

If you have not filled it out already, the deadline is June 30, 2023.



Photo Credit: Gilbert Public Schools

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Photo Credit: Island Slipper

The Honolulu City Lights have returned this Christmas season! Open daily from 8 AM to 10 PM on the Frank F. Fasi Civic Center Grounds, they will run through December 31. Several family-friendly events will be held throughout December, presented by the Friends of Honolulu City Lights. For more information, please visit the Friends of Honolulu City Lights website at: [honolulucitylights.org/events-1](https://honolulucitylights.org/events-1). Free public parking is available at the Frank F. Fasi Municipal lot, with entry from the left lane of Beretania Street just past Alapa'i Street.



## APPLICATIONS OPEN: HAWAII STATE YOUTH COMMISSION

Climate change, a recession, a pandemic, and the rise of the largest social movements in decades. This is the reality of today's young people. As we move forward together to advance our island community, we have a duty to ensure the next generation of young people don't deal with the issues of today. This is your chance to make a difference. The Hawai'i State Youth Commission (HSYC) was established to "Advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State." The 15 Youth Commission members (ages

14–24) are appointed by the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House, and the current membership includes representation from Kaua'i, O'ahu, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Maui, and the Island of Hawai'i.

For more information, visit [humanservices.hawaii.gov/blog/hawaii-state-youth-commission](https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/blog/hawaii-state-youth-commission). Applications for three spots are **now being accepted**. To apply, visit [forms.ehawaii.gov/pages/board-survey](https://forms.ehawaii.gov/pages/board-survey), click on the Department of Human Services Tab, and select "Youth Commission."

The commissioners will be selected by the Governor, Senate President, and House Speaker. The new commissioners selected will serve terms of two years, and will be filling positions for members whose terms come to an end on June 30, 2024.

# AT THE CAPITOL

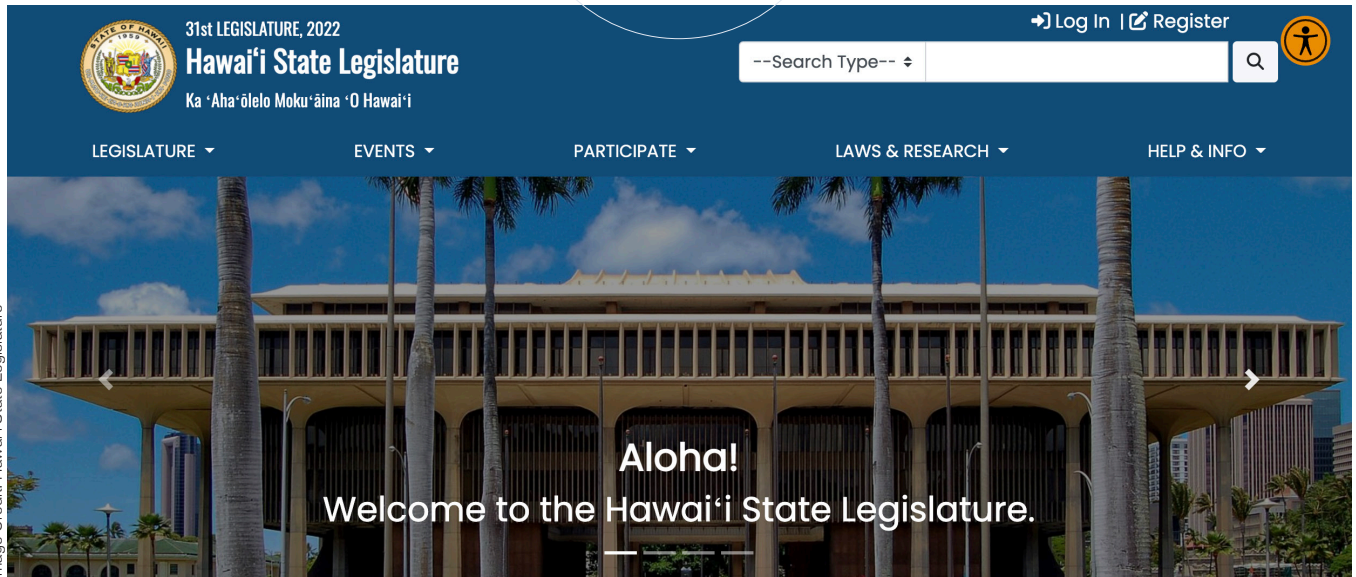


Image Credit: Hawai'i State Legislature

The Hawai'i State Legislature's website looks a little different! The website was redesigned to be more streamlined and accessible to users. Please visit [capitol.hawaii.gov](https://capitol.hawaii.gov) to access government information, track bills, deliver testimony, and much more. The Public Access Room has created a comprehensive guide to navigate the new website. Find the guide here: [capitol.hawaii.gov/docs/HiLegSiteGuide2022.pdf](https://capitol.hawaii.gov/docs/HiLegSiteGuide2022.pdf).

## HAWAII CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUMMIT OUTCOMES

For the first time since 2019, youth and young adults gathered at the Hawai'i State Capitol for the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawai'i Children and Youth Summit. Almost 100 participants discussed issues facing their communities, producing ten recommendations for legislative action. From the

ten recommendations, youth and young adults voted for their top three priorities. Emerging recommendations include:

1. Creating anti-vaping programs in middle and high schools that include peer-to-peer education and support therapy.
2. Mandating sexual abuse training for school staff and faculty.

3. Funding a statewide sustainability program in public schools to promote a more sustainable lifestyle.

The recommendations will influence the legislative package introduced by the Keiki Caucus.

To view the entire list of recommendations and youth-made videos about successful efforts to promote menstrual equity, ways to get involved in government affairs, support for youth who stutter, and more, please visit the Hawai'i Children and Youth Summit website at [hawaiiicys.org](https://hawaiiicys.org). If you would like more information about the Hawai'i Children and Youth Summit or would like to be involved in planning for the 2023 Summit, contact Judith Clark at the Hawai'i Youth Services Network at [jclark@hysn.org](mailto:jclark@hysn.org).



Image Credit: Hawai'i Children and Youth Summit

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

# WE ARE HIRING

JOIN OUR TEAM NOW

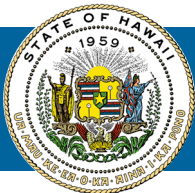
Full-time staff  
position

2023 Legislative  
Aide positions

If interested, please send a cover letter and  
resume to Lynn Robinson-Onderko -  
[l.robinson-onderko@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:l.robinson-onderko@capitol.hawaii.gov)



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