

2022 Annual Conference Hawai'i State Association of Counties
September 28 — 30, 2022
Kōhala Coast, HI
Report By: Aaron-Michael Ho, District 9

BACKGROUND

The Hawaii State Association of Counties ("HSAC") is a non-profit organization that consists of elected officials representing the County of Kaua'i, County of Maui, County of Hawaii, and the City and County of Honolulu. Members of HSAC work collaboratively to ensure the best interest of the people in the State of Hawaii. As stated in HSAC's Bylaws, the purpose of the organization shall be coordination of county programs in the best interest of the people of the State of Hawai'i through cooperation of the legislative bodies of the several counties of the State; the creation of more practical and efficient county legislation, administration and procedures; the provision of a single source of information in regard to all counties which shall be available to the Governor, the Legislature and to all proper persons and officials and a general improvement in the conduct of county government.

This year's conference was held in Hawai'i County at the Westin Hapuna Beach Resort on the Kōhala Coast. Majority of the conference sessions were held at this location from September 28 to 30, 2022.

The theme of this year's conference "Ho'ōla Hawai'i: Reconnect & Reimagine".

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Arrival Day on Hawai'i Island

3PM to 7PM

Registration

5PM to 7PM

Welcome Reception

This reception was an opportunity to network with other attendees. Notable representatives were present from the various County Administrations and Councils; HSAC Sponsors (i.e. Ulupono Initiative, and Kamehameha Schools); the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; and NACo (the National Association of Counties) among others.

Thursday, September 29, 2022

7AM to 8AM

Networking Breakfast

This morning, I was fortunate enough to share a meal and a conversation with Maui County Councilmember Tasha Kama. We spoke about the similarities and differences between our islands with regard to how our communities experience homelessness; food and financial security; and Hawaiian Homes.

8:00AM to 8:30AM

Welcoming Ceremony

Kumu Hula Ka'ea Lyons and Hālau Ka'eaikahelelani offered a strong and passionate series of mele and hula to open the conference. Thoughts were shared about the importance of being anchored to where one is from; respectful to where one is; and careful to ensure that what is here now, is still here for our grandchildren's grandchildren's grandchildren.

Hawai'i County's District 8 Councilmember, Holeka Inaba, gave opening remarks and introduced himself as the emcee for the morning sessions.

8:30AM to 8:45AM

HSAC President and Mayor Mitch Roth

HSAC President Mason Chock and Hawai'i County Mayor Mitch Roth offered welcoming remarks on behalf of the Hawaii Association of Counties and Hawai'i County respectively.

8:45AM to 9:45AM

NACo Federal Policy Update and County Landscape Review

Representatives of the National Association of Counties (NACo) gave updates on the advancement of federal priorities in Washington D.C. and discussed challenges, opportunities and trends across the member counties.

A major point of this panel was to illustrate that *800+ counties across the nation are dealing with a national-level disaster*. While this point was used to create shock...it was also employed to encourage empathy and unity in that we are all going through something. We all deserve to be treated with mutual understanding and care because while we are not all going thru the 'same' thing...we are all still going through something.

Current NACo President Denise Winfrey updated the conference on a her new program called R.I.S.E.!: Resiliency (getting back up); Inclusion (being part of the conversation); Solvency (finance); Empowerment (helping you thrive); and ! (telling the story to others).

Past NACo President Larry Johnson spoke on an initiative called "untold stories"; described how his county has proclaimed 'walking' as the office County exercise; conveyed his vision of bringing rural farmers to urban areas to address 'food deserts'; and advised that 'you have to coach and motivate the citizens EVERYDAY!'

Past NACo President Mary Ann Borgesson detailed the assembly on an initiative called 'Mental Health First Aid' which is a class offered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Her perspective is that County governments should be going much farther to ensure their people have mental health resources and know how to use their options. "If County Government was an industry, we'd be one of the largest...with around 36 Million employees. So, we also have the biggest responsibility to provide mental health resources and options."

President Emeritus Borgesson also mentioned that NACo is trying to foster strong ties with the armed forces. They believe that we would benefit greatly if there was strong communication between 1) the Pentagon; 2) the Local military establishments and bases and 3) the local County governments.

10:00AM to 11:15AM

Breakout One: Improving Service Delivery – Government/Non-Profits

COVID-19 pandemic unleashed unprecedented impacts on every part of our island population and every sector of our economy, testing the nexus of the government and nonprofit sectors. This session allowed participants to discuss generative solutions that capture the best of what each partner can provide in ways that did not previously exist, asking the question, “How are we stronger together?”

Focus was on the flow of federal funds to nonprofits through state and local governments or directly from federal agencies. Session leaders also explored opportunities to build cross-sector collaborations relating to processes, policy, and public outreach toward meeting the most urgent needs in the community.

We can look at service to the community in terms of a spectrum with Government on one side, and Community-based community-building organizations on the other. While Government arguably has resources to leverage, it is also very rigid with ‘red tape.’ And while the community-based organizations are much less rigid and have can do things without much ‘red tape’, they also don’t often have the resources to make a difference.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hawaii County process for awarding Grants In-Aid came to a screeching halt and had to be rethought. As a result, in order to process the \$2.65 MIL in GIA’s, the County developed the Waiwai Grant Program. The GIA process was streamlined with the use of a Google Sheet by which non-profits could enter their info and their market research.

If we used Waiwai as a case study, we find that capacity needs to be built on all sides and that should be funded, in part, as a line item in the County budget. Capacity needs to be built into the governmental arm that processes the applications...AND also into the non-profits themselves. The non-profits need to have the capacity to identify whether or not they have a ‘good’ idea, and then how to ‘flesh it out’ once they have one. Capacity needs to be built so that both the government granting arm and the non-profits can be more flexible and better partners.

Because Government ‘takes so long’, during the grand-in-aid process, Waiwai help build capacity within the non-profit applicants and then ‘shops’ them out for ‘external’ support opportunities and philanthropy. The ability of the granting arm does not have to be limited to the grants they have to offer. And the survival of a non-profit does not have to be limited to their present ability to write a grant. HANO (Hawaii Alliance of Non Profits) and Grants.gov were also valuable participants in the discussion.

11:30AM to 1:00PM

Lunch

11:30PM to 12:30PM

Regenerative Tourism Panel (During Lunch)

The pandemic saw an opportunity to re-examine Hawai'i's economic pillars and their impact on Hawai'i's communities, cultures, and natural resources. As resident sentiment measurements towards tourism reached all-time lows, implementation of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority's 2019 strategic plan to shift the industry towards regenerative tourism emerged, seeking to Huliau tourism towards a model that leaves more than it takes.

This panel was moderated by Maui County Councilmember Keani Rawlins and included panelists Kuhao Zane (Creator and Designer with SigZane Designs; Kanaka'ole Foundation; Destination Management Steering Committee for Hawaii Island); Rebecca Soon (President of Ward Research and Solutions Pacific); Adrian Kamalii (President and Chief Consultant of Paeaina Communications); and Amy Kalili (Partner of Pilina First, LLC).

While the panelist were all well-spoken and spoke at length about how they were passionate and vehemently qualified...in my opinion, the only speaker of substance was Kuhao Zane who spoke about 'equity' in the industry...and about how both the local business owners and the native Hawaiian business owners have a real stake and can affect change.

12:30PM to 1:00PM

Lt. Governor Josh Green (During Lunch)

Lt. Governor John Green gave a 'White House Correspondence Dinner'-esque Keynote address in which he made attempts at humor while speaking about his efforts to provide affordable housing with the Kauhale Projects. He detailed the recent point-in-time counts, the projected housing demand, and the close relationship between homelessness, drug use, and crime. He also took time to break down the incidental costs of individuals experiencing homelessness on both the Health System and the Tourism industry. And he outlined how providing initiatives like KauHale...providing homes for the houseless...directly helps the individual, their families, the community, and all of Hawaii.

1:15PM to 2:30PM

Breakout Two: Climate Change Simulation

In this session, we participated in a place-based simulation of the causes and effects of climate change specific to Hawai'i and how they affected individual interests. We were challenged to implement (not just develop!) solutions to climate change in cooperation with 7 other people per group. The team worked together and debated the virtues of various solutions to make Hawai'i carbon neutral in a way that was deemed 'pono' and place-conscious by 2045.

We were encouraged to choose character role cards that were either dissimilar or directly contrary to our own lives, and participate in discussions and votes given the character information provided. I participated as a 'farmer' while other character interests represented were 'cultural practitioner'; 'real estate developer'; solar energy developer; environmentalist; and more. The discussions that resulted were very lifelike and very telling...but the participants were also gifted with the simulated opportunity to experience the feeling of 'not having any choice' and then thru discussion finding the epiphany 'oh, i didn't see that' or 'oh, my thinking was the problem' or 'there must be a way, I just can't see it.'

2:45PM to 5:00PM

Breakout Three: Smallify Lab

You may feel overwhelmed with uncertainty or challenges in your work that seem too big to solve. You may also see big opportunities in your communities, but don't know where to start. This highly interactive, inspirational, and practical session will give you space and tools to work on an important goal for your work and life in a supportive and generative environment. You'll learn how to take any goal (personal, leadership, organizational, or societal), break it down into smaller, more actionable pieces and reach your goal faster through "small bets" and "small wins." You'll practice skills and mindsets from the fields of community-driven innovation and collaborative problem solving, including indigenous and global practices, and make great connections with peers. Best of all, you'll leave with a clear action plan to make progress on your goal right away.

6:30PM to 8:30PM

Locally Sourced Dinner

Friday, September 30, 2022

Departure Day Back to O'ahu

7:00AM to 8:00AM

Networking Breakfast

This morning, I had the distinct privilege to share a meal and a conversation with Capsun Poe, Community Engagement Director and Interim Chief Advocate from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. We continued a discussion that began at the Breakout One the previous day.

11:00AM to 3:00PM

Huaka'i

As an attendee to HSAC 2022, we had the opportunity to select one (1) of six (6) *huaka'i*. I chose to register for the excursion to Kohanaiki Shoreline Park & Cultural Learning Center. Kohanaiki is the heart of the PASH (Public Access Shoreline Hawaii) Supreme Court Legal Victory determining standing for Native Hawaiians and the mandate to protect Cultural Practices and Public Trust Resources in Land Use Decisions. The Kohanaiki Shoreline Park is the result of years of grassroots organizing and public participation in the land use process and represents a true partnership between the County of Hawaii, the Community and the Landowners.

6:00PM to 6:45PM

Southwest Airlines Flt #2272 from KOA to HNL

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

2022 OCT 31 A 7 32

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 10/5/22

Traveler: Aaron HO

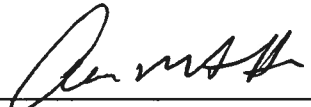
Event: 2022 HDAC Annual Conference

Location: 62-100 KAHUNA'OA Dr. Hawaii Island, HI

Dates: From 9/20/22 To 9/30/22

Description	Amount	Notes
1. Registration Fee		
2. Airfare		
3. Hotel	\$ 749.00	
4. Meals		
5. Ground Transportation		
6. Tips		
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	0 \$749.00	

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:



Signature of Traveler

10/5/22

Date