



NEWS RELEASE

HAWAII RECOGNIZES INAUGURAL COHORT OF STATE'S CERTIFIED TRAUMA-INFORMED PROFESSIONALS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU – Governor Josh Green and Office of Wellness and Resilience Director Tia L. Roberts Hartsock joined state leaders, community partners and graduates today at the State Capitol Rotunda to recognize the first cohort of state employees to earn the State of Hawai'i's Certification in Trauma-Informed Care.

The graduates completed the Certification in Trauma-Informed Care course, an eight-module hybrid program developed by the Office of Wellness and Resilience that pairs in-person workshops with asynchronous video trainings hosted online by the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD). It is the first trauma-informed care certification in the state and a cornerstone of Green's 2024 executive order committing Hawai'i to becoming a trauma-informed state

The online training modules are available now via the Department of Human Resources Development's training website. To access the site, visit: <https://dhrd.hawaii.gov/state-employees/eetraindev>. Once logged in, search for "Certification in Trauma-Informed Care" to enroll.

After employees complete the online modules, they will take a one-day, in-person training to complete their certification. To maintain certification, certified employees will be enrolled in the Office's Learning and Leadership Collaborative to continue their trauma-informed care journey with access to ongoing training, technical assistance and leadership development, as well as various wellness activities.

Coursework covers the science of trauma and resilience, the principles of trauma-informed care, and the application of those principles in the workplace, and was shaped by Hawai'i's culture, strong sense of place, and the realities of historical and intergenerational trauma experienced by Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.

“This first cohort represents what’s possible when we put hope and healing at the heart of public service,” said Governor Green. “These graduates are bringing a deeper understanding of trauma and resilience into every interaction they have with the people of Hawai‘i. That is how we build a healthier state.”

The cohort includes employees from across state departments and partner agencies, with about 200 workers enrolled in the program’s first phase. The certification is now open to nearly all executive state department employees, with plans to eventually extend it to our other branches of government, county workers and community-based organizations.

“Becoming trauma-informed is not a checklist—it is a commitment to how we show up for one another, grounded in the values and ways of knowing that are special to Hawai‘i,” Hartsock said. “Our inaugural cohort took that kuleana seriously, and I am so grateful for their willingness to be open and learn, to reflect and to lead. They are the foundation of our vision of a more resilient workforce and state.”

The certification training becomes a signature initiative of the Office and marks an important implementation milestone of the State of Well-Being Report, the state’s first comprehensive look at the mental health and well-being of Hawai‘i’s essential workforce, including educators, healthcare providers and first responders, as well as the systems that serve them. Drawing on statewide data and community perspectives, the report documents where Hawai‘i stands, identifies areas of need related to wellness supports and outlines a path forward grounded in trauma-informed, hope-centered principles. One of the key recommendations of the report is targeted training programs, as a universal support and intervention for all state employees. To read the full report, visit <https://owr.hawaii.gov/state-of-well-being-project>.

“Our clients work with some of the most vulnerable populations in the state. They are exposed daily to secondary trauma, and so are we as the attorneys who advise them,” said Deputy Attorney General James Walther, who works in the Department of the Attorney General and is part of the inaugural cohort. “This training gave us good insight and practical tools to use with each other and with our clients, helping us listen and respond in ways that don’t add to someone’s trauma. Having this locally produced training resource will support the well-being of the people in our office and, in turn, the larger community.”

To learn more about the Office of Wellness and Resilience Learning and Leadership Collaborative, visit <https://www.owr.hawaii.gov/llc>.

About the Office of Wellness and Resilience

The Office of Wellness and Resilience was established in 2022 under Act 291, making Hawai‘i the first state in the nation to legislate a statewide office focused on improving the resilience of our workforce and communities through trauma-informed strategies. Our kuleana is to strengthen state service systems through hope-centered principles that support the well-being of Hawai‘i’s people—from keiki to kūpuna. For more information, visit owr.hawaii.gov.

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