

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

Legislative Goals:

As we approach the upcoming legislative session, the OYAH Policy Interns gathered mana'o from our stakeholders in order to effectively prepare to advocate for our legislative priorities.

- **Education**
 - In education, we plan to focus on long-term (90-day) suspensions and find alternative sources of education for youth to continue their education without falling behind in credit. We have targeted legislators who we plan to speak with in hopes of sponsoring a bill.
- **Expungement**
 - The expungement process for minors remains arduous and confusing. We plan to advocate for legislation that directly affects the approach to expungement, and for more resources available for youth to take advantage of expunging their records.
- **Diversion/Rehabilitation Programs:**
 - Rehabilitation programs centered around Hawaiian values have been emphasized frequently in our conversations with OYAH stakeholders. We want to ensure that legislation we pursue related to diversion programs has a strong cultural element to them.

Community-based Cultural Diversion Program

On Friday, October 6th, members of the Family Court, Indigenous Court, attorneys, and OYAH stakeholders convened on Zoom to discuss the implementation of a community-based cultural diversion program. On the agenda were topics regarding the establishment of the program, its funding, and possible community outreach opportunities, including an expungement clinic led by local attorneys.

A follow up meeting is scheduled for December 5th.

UH Richardson Law Public Interest Fair

OYAH interns Haumea Velasco and Sydney Story met with RYSE director Carla Houser to run a table at UH Law School's Public Interest Fair. The Public Interest Fair is held annually with the goal of introducing law students to non-profit and government organizations looking to serve the public good.

Alongside Carla, the interns educated numerous law students about the important mission of Kawailoa YCF and advocated for some of OYAH's legislative priorities for the upcoming session. Conversations with students were highly productive, as many first-year law students are interested in youth incarceration and/or have a family law or social work background. Haumea and Sydney collected the contact information of law students who are interested in volunteering or working for OYAH in the future and are reaching out for the upcoming session.

