

OCTOBER 22, 2021

# OPPORTUNITY YOUTH ACTION HUI POLICY PRIORITIES

*An initial cohort of University of Hawai'i college student advocates has been engaged by members of the Opportunity Youth Action Hui to advance initiatives in support of the hui member organizations, including Native Hawaiian equity in the criminal justice system, workforce training and development, trauma-informed care, and the education, health and well-being of youth.*

## **What is the Opportunity Youth Action Network?**

The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is a coalition of representatives from non-profit social services organizations and other organizations supporting youth including Partners in Development Foundation, Kawaihoa Youth and Family Wellness Center, Hale Kipa's Hale Lanipōlua Assessment Center, the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, Olomana School, Kinai 'Eha, Residential Youth Services and Empowerment (RYSE) and many other individuals and organizations. Their work together represents a commitment to collaboration and mutual advocacy support.

## **What are the Goals of the OYAH Policy Externship Program?**

OYAH members identified policy advocacy opportunities, sought to raise the awareness of policy leaders including state legislators about their programs, and desired to increase the salience of youth policy issues for legislators. Volunteer advocates from Hawaii Public Policy Advocates, LLC, lead by Melissa Pavlicek, were recruited to supervise a University of Hawai'i undergraduate student, Leah Delos Santos, and a Wm. S. Richardson School of Law student Harley Broyles to initiate a policy externship program on behalf of OYAH. From October - December 2021, the OYAH policy externs will work to increase awareness of policymakers of OYAH and its policy priorities; translate legal concepts into writing for non-lawyers, such as drafting written materials related to policy priorities; research, draft, and make recommendations for state level policy reforms; meet with OYAH stakeholders and non-profit policy leaders; review, summarize, and make recommendations for future bills and testimony; and schedule and participate in meetings with government officials, including legislators and their staff members.



*Harley Broyles is a student at the Wm. S. Richardson School of Law where she has been recognized as an Ulu Lehua Scholar and serves as Co-President for Law for Youth Empowerment. She earned a Bachelor of Political Science, Bachelor of Administration of Justice, and Bachelor of Sociology, and certificates in Pre-Law, Hawaiian Culture, and Multidisciplinary Hawaiian Studies.*



*Leah Delos Santos is an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i majoring in political science. She is a 2021 graduate of Kamehameha Schools and has worked in state policy and advocacy for three years.*



*"If you're passionate about something, you'll become an advocate."*

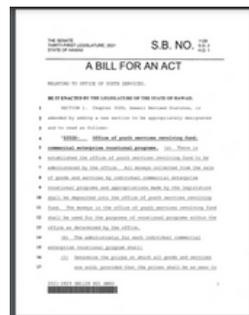
## OYAH 2021 - 2022 Policy Priorities

### Opportunity Youth Action Hui Members Collaborate

OYAH members met to share progress and opportunities among their organizations at the Kupa Aina farm, *pictured above*. The Kupa Aina farm is one piece of a large vocational training system that assists homeless and incarcerated youth and victims of sex trafficking. Members were invited to participate in a training by Uncle Wayne Hoapili Lee, a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner. The "staff-oriented" training introduces participants to Uncle Wayde's youth training centering around ho'oponopono, healing and strengthening relationships to restore balance.

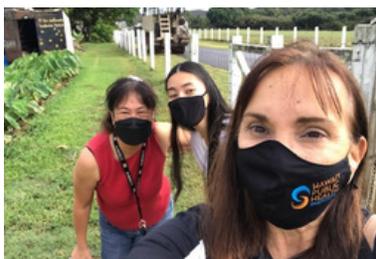
### Case Study: Senate Bill 1128 (2021)

The state legislature considered a bill to establish self-funded commercial enterprises vocational programs within the Office of Youth Services for disenfranchised young adults; and The Office of Youth Services Revolving Fund within the Office of Youth Services, for the receipt of income and payment of expenses generated from the commercial enterprise vocational programs.



The bill was supported by Department of Human Services, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawaiian Homes Commission, Community Alliance on Prisons, Kinai 'Eha, Papa Ola Lōkahi, Kamehameha Schools, Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture, 'Iolani Palace, Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, Partners in Development Foundation, The Queen's Health Systems, Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii, Kanaeokana, Bishop Museum, 'Aha Ho'ona'auau 'Ōiwi Hawai'i. OYAH members plan to support this measure for 2022.

- Improve and increase resources available for child and adolescent mental health programs.
- Improve the transition for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult programs and services.
- Eliminate housing discrimination.
- Secure a cost-of-living increase for the Imua Kākou stipend for young people aging out of foster care.
- Create a reporting system for the abuse of minors whose social security benefits are used by adults who no longer care for them.
- Promote a more holistic approach by agencies.
- Increase and improve the continuum of care for trafficked youth.
- Raise awareness about rights of minors to housing.
- Improve youth access to medical care.
- Gain approval for commercial opportunities for incarcerated youth concerning agricultural program.



Pictured: Tracy Parker, Kawaiiloa; OYAH extern Leah Delos Santos; and Melissa Pavlicek, volunteer OYAH extern coordinator.

