



VOLUNTEER LEGAL  
SERVICES HAWAII

## 2020 STATS

**2,047** NEW INTAKES

19% of those helped are homeless or at risk of being homeless;  
11% suffer from domestic violence  
6% of those helped are veterans;  
26% of those helped are disabled;  
16% of those helped are seniors.



### LEGAL CLINICS

**270**

270 Neighborhood Legal Clinics (virtual/over the phone starting in March 2020);  
1 Oahu In-Person Pop Up Clinic in Wahiawa in February 2020.



**416** LEGAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED ONLINE

Legal questions answered online by a Volunteer Attorney on Hawai'i Online Pro Bono (HOP)/Hawai'i Free Legal Answers



**SERVICES VALUED AT OVER \$771,000**

(at an average hourly rate of \$250)

200+ volunteer attorneys donated over 3,084 hours in person, over the phone and online in 2020



## On the calendar

### August 4 at 11 a.m.

A Decision-Making Pulic hearing will be held virtually. VA ALOHA, LLC is requesting a Development Permit and application waiver, to construct a new Department of Veterans Affairs Multi-Specialty Outpatient Clinic located at the Southeast corner of the Kamokila Boulevard Extension and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Avenue. The public notice is posted on the HCDA website.

### August 4

The next HCDA Board meetings will be held. For more information on the public hearing, board meetings or about HCDA visit [dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda).

### Know someone?

If you want to include an event, know an individual or a business in Kakaako, Kalaeloa or Heeia that we could feature, or just want more Community Connection, let us know by emailing us at: [dbedt.hcda.contact@hawaii.gov](mailto:dbedt.hcda.contact@hawaii.gov).

## Volunteer Legal Services

A call to VLSH is literally a call for help

By Francine Murray

By the time people call Volunteer Legal Service Hawaii (VLSH) it's usually their last resort.

During the Covid19 pandemic, it was often difficult to abide by a custody schedule due to the shutdown and quarantining.

Many calls VLSH receives are about child custody, especially when the parents are not married. "The court would love to see parents negotiate and work it out themselves, but a lot of times they can't," explained Angela Min the executive director of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii. "Because of the way child support is, it could change too. If one child spends a lot more time with one parent, how much the other parent has to pay could change."

"We've had so many more people qualify for our program," said Min. "And so many more people that are in need." VLSH services are provided free of charge based on income. Thus, potential clients have to income qualify. "A lot of people lost their jobs last year, so we've had a lot more calls."

"The ironic part is a lot of non-profits, not just us, we've all been hit this last year," said Min. Because so many people lost their jobs last year during the worldwide pandemic the services non-profits provide were in greater demand than ever before, but like most non-profits, funding dried up. "It is what non-profits go through. It is not abnormal, but it is hard."

In 2020, Min came to HCDA asking for a rent waiver, that was approved. She returned to HCDA again on June 2, 2021, asking the Board to waive the rent due from VLSH for the months of July through December of 2021, that request was also approved. "HCDA's willingness to work with us helped keep our doors open and provide critical legal services."

A small office, VLSH has only seven staff. "I am very thankful I've been able to keep my whole staff during the entire time. I know some of the larger non-profits probably had to lay off some staff. But I've been able to keep my whole staff and it's been very important to me not only because it's their jobs, but because of what

we are able to do in the community. We really need all of us on deck to answer all the calls, and place people where they need to be."

The Re-Employment and Community Service (RACS) work program is the second most popular topic for callers. "It is for individuals who have things like old tickets in collections, for driving without a license, or driving without insurance," said Min. "The State of Hawaii issues stoppers on their accounts so they can't renew their license. Unfortunately, if you can't pay one ticket, you can't pay two tickets, you probably can't pay more than that, or your renewal fee."

The RACS program is for non-DUI cases. VLSH asks the court if these cases can be converted to community service. This allows people to work off what they owe, while giving back to the community. Once completed, they may return to the DMV, which will lift those stoppers and they can get a drivers' license and drive.

"This program helps people in so many areas," said Angela. "We work with the first circuit court here in Hawaii and were very happy that even during Covid, we were able to expand programs like this." VLSH expanded to another version of RACS, for individuals that were not able to pay off what they owe with community service because they could not commit to the twenty hours of community service every week due to work. "So, we asked the court to help them go on a payment plan," said Min. "Then they get a court version of a learner's permit, so they can drive. It's the court trying to help them out and keep them motivated."

A lot of their employers will be their sponsors because they want their employees to have a driver license. "Even though Hawaii is not very big, it is hard to get around if you don't have a car or a license," said Min. "This has been a very popular program."

To learn more about RACS and the other services VLSH provides, or to donate to VLSH visit [www.VLSH.org](http://www.VLSH.org).

## Streetscapes

We explore the Kakaako Farmers Market at Ward Village, and ask: **“What do you like about the Kakaako community?”**

“Streetscape” generally refers to the natural and built fabric of the street. It is the design quality of the street and its visual effect. The concept recognizes that a street is a public place where people congregate and engage in various activities. In this feature, we take to the streets of our communities to interview people.



“I like the outdoor things mostly, more than the indoor things. People need to get out and meet people and hang out with each other, at the Farmer’s market and parks.” Charlene, Ewa resident



“I like the convenience of living in Kakaako because it is very family oriented.” Daniel and daughter Eloise, Kakaako residents



“I frequent, don’t miss, the Saturday market. Perfect location, near the ocean. Lots of parking. Lots to do. Lots of food. We invite friends—a wonderful venue.” Kehau, Punchbowl resident

## Design Elements

### First of its kind in the State

#### Nohona Hale’s Innovative Photovoltaic Panels

By George Atta and Craig Nakamoto

On your next walk along Cooke, near Queen streets, look at the Nohona Hale building and try to find the photovoltaic panels. The panels are easy to miss. For this Design Elements article, we spoke with Jonathan Lee, Project Architect, Senior Associate, at WCIT Architecture, whose firm was the project architect.

“First of its kind in the state”, said Jonathan Lee. He is referring to the vertically installed panels on the southeast facing wall of the building. These solar panels provide electricity for the building’s common areas, thereby reducing the building’s operating expenses. The Lumos LSX Module panels and mounting system, manufactured by Lumos and installed by Swinerton/Sunetric, allows for either horizontal or vertical mounting. The support system is the same for horizontal or vertical mounting, the only difference being a careful coordination of the structural embedding in the building wall to receive the support angles and framing. The 96-panel system is ultra-low profile with built in wireways and concealed junction boxes and conductors, making for a clean aesthetic on the façade. The system was projected to provide 27.36 kW which is around 98% efficiency. The system blends aesthetic, function, and contributes to a greener environment.

The idea for the vertical panels was inspired by the request for proposals issued by the Hawaii Community Development Authority. It encouraged a building design that incorporated industrial aesthetic and an interesting façade. “We took this a step further

and wanted the building design to be high performing, technologically innovative, contemporary, easy to maintain, constructible and appropriate to the developer and their affordable rental economic model”, said Lee. “Absolutely”, said Lee, when asked if this technology could be installed on existing buildings to provide power for common areas or individual units. When asked if additional panels could be added to Nohona Hale to provide power to the residential units, Mr. Lee said that panels could be installed on the north facing wall of the building to provide power for individual units. Vertically mounted panels may be the best option for retrofit applications given that rooftops could be occupied by other items. The biggest challenge may be the mounting and revising the electrical system.



Photo: Courtesy of WCIT Architecture

With the current climate crisis and the goal of the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative to achieve 100 percent clean energy by 2045, why isn’t this kind of technology being embraced for other residential projects, both affordable and market-priced? If vertical photovoltaic panels on a building can reduce the operating expenses of a building, be aesthetic, and contribute to a greener environment, shouldn’t that technology be embraced?

Nohona Hale is an affordable rental apartment project containing 111 micro units that was jointly developed by EAH Housing and Bronx Pro Group LLC on a 9,660 square foot parcel leased from HCDA.

## What’s cooking?

### Cowboy Stew

By Craig Nakamoto

My wife’s parents, Edna and Takashi, grew up in Kakaako in the 30’s and 40’s. Both were from large families. Meals were often made to “stretch” ingredients, as Edna often reminded us because a large family needed to be fed. Edna had her favorite recipes—most of them were simple dishes, but were prepared with love as the unwritten main ingredient. Cowboy stew was one of the dishes that nourished her family back in the day and was a favorite of the following generations. The children in our family, especially, enjoyed the stew over rice, maybe because

the name conjured up images of cowboys riding on horses. Hope you enjoy cowboy stew as much as our family did.

- 2 lbs. ground beef, turkey, or chicken
- 2 round onions, diced
- 1 14.5 oz. can of diced tomatoes with the liquid
- 1 can corn with the liquid
- 1 package of bean sprouts
- Salt, pepper & Oil
- 1 15 oz. can of chili no beans
- 1 large carrot, cubed
- 1 package chili seasoning

Brown the ground meat in oil and pinch of salt and pepper, and add diced onions. Add chili, diced tomatoes, corn, cubed carrots, bean sprouts, chili seasoning, and simmer until carrots and bean sprouts are cooked. To taste, add more chili seasoning to taste.