

**PROTECT
PUBLIC HEALTH**

**REVIVE
THE ECONOMY**

**STRENGTHEN
OUR COMMUNITY**

CAPITOL CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 2020

A critical time for jobs, health and Hawai'i's economy

Governor Ige called the Oct. 15 trans-Pacific pre-travel testing launch “our single biggest effort since the pandemic began to revive our economy.” With Hawai'i's future at stake, federal, state and county governments worked with the airlines, hospitality and business communities to create a multi-layered system of protection. Balancing public health and economic survival depends on everyone staying vigilant and following safety measures. That we've come this far is a tribute to all of us doing our part because we love Hawai'i. That's something to be grateful for as we head into the holidays.



Q. How is the pre-travel testing program working so far?

A. The response has really exceeded our expectations. We had more than 10,000 incoming passengers on the first day, and an estimated 80 to 85 percent of them had completed a pre-test so they could avoid the 14-day quarantine. Passenger counts are now leveling off. Those who had a pre-test done with one of our trusted travel partners and uploaded the results to our Safe Travels site made it through the process pretty quickly. We're working through other issues for those who need to quarantine until their results come in. With the Safe Travels form, we have a record of everyone coming into the state and their contact information so we can verify they're abiding by the quarantine.

Q. What is the latest on inter-county travel and what are the differences?

A. Inter-county travelers to Kaua'i, Maui and Hawai'i counties can bypass the 14-day quarantine if they take a NAAT test from one of several trusted testing partners no earlier than 72 hours prior to departure and receive a negative result. Those traveling to Hawai'i County can instead choose to get a post-arrival test from a trusted partner but would have to remain in quarantine until the negative test is reported and verified. Travelers must register and upload their results to their Safe Travels Hawai'i account and have their test result with them when they arrive. No test and no quarantine are required for in-state travel to O'ahu.



Q. What gives you confidence that we can handle the influx of travelers while still keeping our case numbers low?

A. We have a strong, multi-layered system to protect the health of our community. That includes having the pre-test for incoming travelers, along with thermal screening at the airports and follow-up testing where possible. We've also asked the airlines, hotels and attractions to be our public health partners in reminding visitors about masks and other safety precautions. We still have state and county quarantine enforcement on the job and increased testing, tracing and isolation capacity to combat community spread. It's all about managing risk to keep our community safe while reviving our economy and continuing to wear a mask, wash our hands and watch our distance.

Q. What update can you provide on the state's budget deficit and cost-cutting measures?

A. Even with a gradual recovery in tourism, our budget situation is still very bad. Right now we're projecting an annual deficit of between \$1.3 and \$1.5 billion every year. Clearly, that's not sustainable. Furloughs and layoffs are the last resort, but most of our costs are in personnel, so even with other budget cuts we're still going to have to reduce the size of state government. Every month that we delay is costing us \$30 to \$40 million. We anticipate having significant budget challenges for the next four years, so we'll have to come to an agreement with the unions soon. We're negotiating with collective bargaining representatives to see how we can move forward and right-size state government.

New guidelines for trans-Pacific, interisland travel

It's taken a monumental effort by many, but the state's launch of pre-travel — and in some cases post-travel — testing for travelers marks a milestone for Hawai'i. While nothing is "foolproof" when it comes to COVID-19, Hawai'i is doing more than every other state in the nation to protect public health for residents and visitors, say state officials. "The pre-travel testing program is just one part of our multi-layered system that we believe is making Hawai'i once again a safe place to travel," said Governor Ige at an Oct. 15 media briefing. "Today begins our single biggest effort since the start of the pandemic to revive our economy. We are asking for the same diligence and care from our visitors that we expect from our residents."

The multi-layered program combines pre-travel testing involving "trusted travel partners" and a possible second layer of COVID-19 testing, depending on the island, for arriving passengers who aren't going into quarantine. The pre-travel testing of passengers — both residents and visitors — age 5 and older 72 hours from the final leg of departure allows those with a negative result to avoid the state's 14-day mandatory quarantine. Media reports from travelers who made the journey Oct. 15 said the pre-travel testing system was "really pretty easy," as well as uploading information to the Safe Travels site. According to early reports, the majority of arriving passengers came into the state with their test results in hand. "To me that's a great indication that the testing program is working," said Department of Transportation spokesperson Tim Sakahara.

SAFE TRAVELS HAWAII QUICK FACTS
Beginning October 15, 2020

Domestic Trans-Pacific Travel
14-Day Quarantine

To Bypass Quarantine:

- Show proof of negative test result upon arrival or remain in quarantine until received.
- Must take a nucleic acid amplification (NAAT) pre-travel test within 72 hours from the final leg of departure. The State of Hawaii will accept test results ONLY from TRUSTED TESTING AND TRAVEL PARTNERS.
- Applies to all passengers ages 5 and over; travelers pay for test.
- Must complete Safe Travels Hawaii's online form prior to arrival.
- Or other exemption provided by the state.
- Travelers arriving in Hawaii with pending test results will remain in quarantine until negative test results uploaded to the Safe Travels Hawaii's account and the State Department of Health issues confirmation that traveler is removed from quarantine.

Second Test After Arrival

City and County of Honolulu Not required	County of Hawaii Required at airport; free	Maui County Voluntary 72 hours after arrival; free	Kauai County Voluntary 72 hours after arrival; free
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Traveling Inter-Counties (between counties)
14-Day Quarantine

To Bypass Quarantine:

- Traveling into City and County of Honolulu: No test and no quarantine required.
- Traveling into County of Hawaii: OPTION 1: Pre-test 72 hours prior to departure, same requirements as domestic Trans-Pacific; OR OPTION 2: Post-arrival test to quarantine until negative test received and verified. May break quarantine to test.
- Traveling into Maui County: Pre-test 72 hours prior to departure, same requirements as domestic Trans-Pacific.
- Traveling into Kauai County: Pre-test 72 hours prior to departure, same requirements as domestic Trans-Pacific.
- Or other exemption provided by the state or county.

International Trans-Pacific Travel
14-Day Quarantine

Currently, no pre-travel test exemption.

For more information, visit [HawaiiCOVID19.com](https://hawaiiCOVID19.com)
1-800-GOHAWAII

Let's all mālama each other.

Please do your part to protect yourself and others by following the 3 Ws.

Follow the 3 Ws:

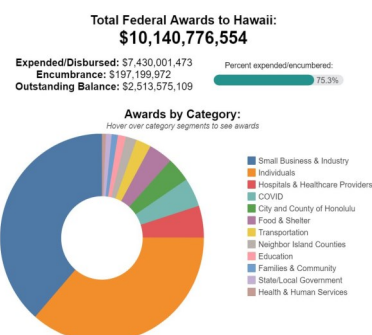
- Wear a mask**
- Wash your hands**
- Watch your distance**

Go to Quick Facts at <https://hawaiiCOVID19.com/travel/getting-to-hawaii> for a summary of the different guidelines. Messaging to visitors and residents emphasizes health precautions to stay safe.

For travel within Hawai'i, people can bypass quarantine for Kaua'i, Maui and Hawai'i counties by getting a pre-test 72 hours before departure. Hawai'i island also offers a second option of a post-arrival test, but travelers must remain in quarantine until a negative test result is received. Only test results from trusted testing partners approved by the state Department of Health will be accepted. The growing lists for trans-Pacific and interisland pre-travel testing, including registration instructions and costs for both trans-Pacific and inter-county travel, can be found at <https://hawaiiCOVID19.com/travel/faqs/>. Visitors can also email info@gohawaii.com or call 1-800-GOHAWAII.

From the visitor industry side, John DeFries, CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, said COVID-19 safety messages to visitors, including a "Kuleana Campaign" to teach about safety precautions and Hawai'i's cultural etiquette, is being widely promoted. "The visitors must exhibit a level of sensitivity and responsibility toward our people as they come to enjoy their vacation in the islands." For the months ahead, DeFries spoke with feeling and concern about the "economic freefall" Hawai'i finds itself in. He emphasized, "This is an imperfect scenario executed by imperfect people who have one thing in common: aloha for Hawai'i. We need to hold onto that spirit. The cynicism has to stop. We've got to create a healthy attitude to support our leaders."

'Every penny' of COVID-19 relief funds to be used



Gov. David Ige has announced that 98 percent of the \$863 million of the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) or CARES Act monies received by the state in April has been set aside to assist with COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. He added that all remaining CRF funds have been designated and will be used to support the three priority areas of the Hawai'i Pandemic Action Plan, which aims to protect public health, revive the economy, and strengthen our community. The CRF has already helped to support: \$100 million for rent and mortgage relief, \$14 million to bring in nurses and healthcare workers from the mainland to support our local healthcare industry, \$10 million for job re-training programs, \$31 million for devices and connectivity to support schools and \$61 million for PPE and supplies for schools, hospitals and businesses. More details are at the Hawai'i Data Collaborative website at hawaiidata.org.

"The state will not leave any of the federal funding unused as we provide a crucial lifeline to our residents and businesses. We are going to use every penny," said Governor Ige. Any funds unspent at year's end will be placed in the state's unemployment insurance trust fund to help repay a \$1 billion loan that was secured to pay unemployment benefits to local residents.

Hawai'i Restaurant Card hailed as a 'win-win-win'

For thousands of Hawai'i's jobless residents, restaurants and suppliers hardest hit by the pandemic, some good news has arrived in time for the holidays. A pre-loaded \$500 debit card — called a "win-win-win" for the unemployed, local restaurants and the entire local supply chain of farmers, fishers and ranchers — has been mailed statewide. The new **Hawai'i Restaurant Card Program**, funded with \$75 million from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), is aimed at helping those who received unemployment benefits in September. **The cards are valid until Dec. 15** and can be used statewide at any local restaurant. "We wanted to create a program to help as many people as possible," said the governor at a news conference at Highway Inn. The program is a public-private partnership with the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.



The state's partnership with the business community was praised by Sherry Menor-McNamara, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i, and Denise Hayashi Yamaguchi, executive director of the Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation. Without help, some 60 percent of Hawai'i restaurants were expected to shut down for good because of the pandemic, Menor-McNamara said. Monica Toguchi Ryan, owner of Highway Inn, said the restaurant card initiative is "exactly what our restaurants need right now. When you make the choice to support local restaurants, you're also choosing to invest in our communities." For more details on the program, go to <https://www.hawaiirestaurantcard.com/>.



(TOP) Governor Ige joined advocates for the launch of the new Hawai'i Restaurant Card. READ ONLINE: The Nook owners Hailey Berkey and Anicea Campanale find ways to survive.

Pivot grants, DA BUX program help businesses, families

Help is on the way for thousands of small businesses and organizations that had to pivot or change their operations in response to COVID-19. The \$25 million program will offer grants up to \$10,000 to reimburse costs or cover future expenses. "In recent months, businesses have had to show creativity and grit just to survive," the governor said. "They've had to pivot

from one way of working to something radically different." The **HAWAII BUSINESS PIVOT GRANT** program, funded with federal CARES Act funds, is a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i, which will administer the grants. For details, go to hawaii.biz/pivot.org. The application portal will remain open through **Nov. 23**, as long as funds are available.

Components

HAWAII BUSINESS PIVOT GRANT

Grant program

Technical assistance

Online marketplace

DA BUX PROGRAM - The State of Hawai'i is matching a donation of half a million dollars from a hui of private-sector partners to double the value of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits spent on locally grown food. Those with **DA BUX Access Cards** will get 50 percent discounts on qualifying locally grown fruits, vegetables and proteins at participating grocery stores statewide, including KTA Super Stores and Times Supermarkets. For details, go to dabux.org.

Reporting fraud and waste

The Department of the Attorney General and the Hawaii State Ethics Commission are joining forces to identify fraud, waste and abuse involving government funds. "This partnership allows us to do more to instill public confidence in government," said Attorney General Clare Connors. "We all need to stay alert, particularly when substantial federal dollars are flowing through state and local governments at a fast rate."

The public can confidentially report misuses of such funds by emailing antifraud@hawaii.gov or calling 587-0000. For more details, go to <https://ethics.hawaii.gov/anti-fraud/>. For fraud complaints involving non-government funds, go to <http://cca.hawaii.gov/sec/files/2015/10/Fraud-Guide-2.pdf>.

Free PPE, DLIR calling . . .

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency is distributing free personal protective equipment (PPE) using \$61 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds. Eligible groups include independent medical providers, hospitals, child care providers, eldercare facilities, non-profit organizations, schools and small businesses. To apply, go to <https://hawaii-medical-alliance.myshopify.com/> until **Nov. 15, 2020**.

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations has a new virtual call center and has added 100 trained adjudicators to reduce the backlog of claims but says its biggest challenge is claimants and employers not answering phone calls from DLIR staff because they think it may be spam or telemarketers. The adjudicators will call from an 808 number. **The department says it is working as fast as possible to process claims**, including the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) extensions.

BRIGHT SPOTS

A helping hand for keiki and kūpuna statewide

Providing practical information in a more personal way for families during the pandemic — that's what First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige is focused on for her Facebook page with regular weekly posts. Whether it's free meals for keiki or answers to basic questions on big issues such as pre-travel testing, contact tracing, or unemployment, Mrs. Ige is using her Facebook page to help people access information simply and easily.



Mrs. Ige urged families to take advantage of the **free Grab-and-Go meals** being offered at 203 public schools across the state through Dec. 18. "For parents left unemployed due to COVID-19, getting a free breakfast and lunch for their children can make a big difference," she said. Mrs. Ige has partnered with the Department of Education, the No Kid Hungry Foundation and other community partners to promote the schools' food service program. A list of schools can be found online at www.ainapono.org/grabandgo.

Caring for our kūpuna, especially during the pandemic, is also a major concern for her. As the state's honorary chair of the **2020 Walk to End Alzheimer's**, she wants to raise awareness about programs and research related to the disease. The next two events, on O'ahu Nov. 7 and Kaua'i Dec. 5, will include participation in small teams or individually. The Alzheimer's cause is close to Mrs. Ige's heart since her mother, who is 95, has the disease. "Like so many families, we can't visit her in the nursing home," she said. "We know the isolation is hard for seniors." For more details on this year's walk and other resources, go to www.alz.org/hawaii. For more services and support for seniors, visit the **Executive Office on Aging** at health.hawaii.gov/eoa/.

As the holidays approach, the Iges, like many islanders, are wrestling with how to handle family gatherings differently for safety. "Our children are hoping to come home for Christmas, but not for Thanksgiving," she said. "We want people to take every precaution as they're making holiday plans. We know these family gatherings are so important to all of us in Hawai'i." For advice on precautions for the holidays, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html> and <https://hawaiiocovid19.com/guidance-for-everyone/>.

In a turbulent year, Hawai'i's top teachers honored

If ever there was a year to be thankful for teachers, it's this year. The pandemic has meant everyone — students, parents, and teachers — have had to adapt in ways like never before. All of this made the Hawai'i Department of Education's Teacher of the Year Awards that much more meaningful as 16 finalists statewide were honored in the first-ever virtual ceremony.



This year's winner, **Lori Kwee**, a 4th grade teacher at **Ala Wai Elementary**, was recognized for fostering student leadership through community-based projects, a nationally recognized anti-bullying campaign and helping promote gratitude and kindness in her students as ambassadors of aloha. Other teachers were praised for their passion and dedication to their fields — whether it was in science and technology, sustainability, cultural literacy, civic engagement or community service. But they all had one thing in common: a love of their profession as teachers shaping the future leaders of our state. Kwee will represent Hawai'i next spring in Washington, D.C.

Governor and Mrs. Ige, who usually host the awards ceremony at Washington Place, congratulated the finalists virtually and praised all teachers for meeting the challenge of the pandemic. "Some things don't change, and that includes our teachers' devotion to our students and our appreciation of our teachers." As a former teacher herself, Mrs. Ige said, "COVID-19 has presented numerous challenges for our families. You all somehow found the grace and the grit to innovate and inspire." **DOE Superintendent Christina Kishimoto** added, "Our teachers are heroes in the classroom and in their communities. These teachers have ensured that our haumana continued to learn, develop and grow, no matter how difficult and unpredictable the circumstance." To watch the ceremony and hear from all the finalists, visit the Hawai'i Public Schools' Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HIDOE808/>.

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