

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE
Council of the County of Maui

M I N U T E S

Online Only via BlueJeans

July 1, 2021

CONVENE: 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Tasha Kama, Chair
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Vice-Chair (arrived at
1:32 p.m.)
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (arrived at 1:32 p.m.)
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member

STAFF:

Wilton Leauanae, Legislative Analyst
Laksmi Abraham, Legislative Analyst
Richard Mitchell, Legislative Attorney
Jean Pokipala, Committee Secretary
Pauline Martins, Committee Secretary
Kristeena Locke, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Lois Whitney, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Davideane Sickels, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Ellen McKinley, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King
Stacey Moniz, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Johnson

ADMIN.:

Mimi DesJardins, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel
Lori Tsuhako, Director, Department of Housing and Human
Concerns

OTHERS:

Matthew Uiagalelei, Catholic Charities of Hawaii
Jillian Okamoto, Catholic Charities of Hawaii
Cara Flores
Roland Wittel
Plus (2) other people

PRESS:

Akaku Maui Community Television, Inc.

CHAIR KAMA: . . . (*gavel*) . . . Will the Human Concerns and Parks Committee of July 1, 2021, come to order. It is now 1:30 pm. I am Tasha Kama, Chair of the Human Concerns and Parks Committee. I'd like to do roll call right now. I'd like

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to call on who I see is my purview. I'd like to welcome Member Shane Sinenci to our meeting this afternoon. Thank you very much, Member Sinenci, for coming.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Aloha nui, Chair. Aloha 'auinalā and Bonjour Ka ko.

CHAIR KAMA: Wonderful. I'd like to welcome Member Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha 'auinalā and Bonjour Ka ko.

CHAIR KAMA: Aloha 'auinalā Bonjour. Aloha 'auinalā. That's wonderful. I like that. So we're going to for now excuse Member Lee and Member Sugimura hopefully will be along pretty soon taking extended lunch. So Non-Committee Members are Gabe Johnson, Kelly King, Mike Molina, and Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. If they show they can participate in our discussions also. Also we'd like to welcome with us from the Department of the Corporation Counsel, Mimi DesJardins. Aloha, good afternoon, Mimi.

MS. DESJARDINS: Good afternoon, everybody. Nice to see you.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, and I'd like to say again lets go back to our Councilmember Alice Lee. Bonjour, Member Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Bonjour. Bonjour. Chair Kama and everybody. Sorry I'm late.

CHAIR KAMA: We anticipated that. Like to also introduce Lori Tsuhako, the Director of Housing and Human Concerns. Aloha 'auinalā, Lori. I saw you then I...then you disappeared Lori. Are you still with us Lori?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah her, she's muted.

MS. TSUHAKO: I am. I am. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Oh there you go. There you go. Okay. Welcome.

CHAIR KAMA: Also with us I think we have invited Jillian Okamoto from Catholic Charities. Is Jillian on the call? Hopefully she'll come or he'll come later. He'll come later. We also have with us our Committee Staff. Wilton Leauanae, I think he's on vacation though, our Legislative Analyst; and we have with. . .

MR. LEAUANAE: Bonjour Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, hello, hello. Welcome back. Welcome back. I know you went away for a day but it seems like longer. I think I'm just accustomed to having you around all the time. Welcome.

MR. LEAUANAE: Thank you.

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CHAIR KAMA: We also have with us Laksmi Abraham our Legislative Analyst. Aloha Laksmi.

MS. ABRAHAM: Aloha, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: We also have Jean Pokipala our Committee Secretary. Aloha Jean.

MS. POKIPALA: Aloha, Chair. Good morning Councilmembers.

CHAIR KAMA: We also have with us our Committee Secretary Pauline Martins. Aloha Pauline.

MS. MARTINS: Aloha, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: And we have our Legislative Attorney, Mr. Richard E. Mitchell. Aloha Richard.

MR. MITCHELL: Aloha and Bonjour Chair and Members.

CHAIR KAMA: Wonderful. So this online meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Governor's most recent emergency proclamation on COVID-19. Please see the last page of our agenda for more instructions and more information. So thank you Members for attending today's HCP meeting. And we only have three items on the agenda today. We have HCP-17, which is, Evictions During COVID-19 Pandemic. We also have HCP-18, which is, Hale Hawaii's Suggestions to Help Keep Hawaii Safe from COVID-19. And we also have HCP-22, Establishing a Rapid Response COVID-19 Task Force. Members the Chair's intent is to File the last two items seeing as how they are on my agenda, but have not been able to move forward for various reasons. So we will go into more of that when we come up to the item on our agenda. So do we have anyone signed up to testify, Laks?

MS. ABRAHAM: Chair we have no members, I'm sorry we have no one signed up to testify.

MR. LEAUANAE: Chair.

MS. ABRAHAM: And Wilton is here today.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, okay. Thank you. Okay Wilton I am going to be talking to you now. So we have no testifiers signed up to testify? Okay. So hearing that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Chair, I should have gave you half of mine.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. Okay so if that's the case then we'll just bypass the testimonies and if it's okay, if you have no objections, can we just continue to take written testimony and we'll just close public oral testimony, Members?

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Chair?

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: I wasn't sure. Like I said, I did have some people wanting to come on so. I don't know if it was okay to keep it open for a little bit and then at your, at your call if they don't jump on...on within a certain allotted amount of time. Then maybe we can close it but I just had some texts that I sent your meeting ID link to so. I wasn't sure--

CHAIR KAMA: ...*(inaudible)*...

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: --if people wanted to come on or not, yeah.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Do you think that we should stay, keep our testimonies open for a while? Or do you think?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: If can, maybe for 10 minutes. If they don't jump on within the first 10 minutes, then I'd be open to closing it then.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Tamara. Okay. So maybe what we could do. Oh, welcome Yuki Lei Sugimura. Just bearing that in mind so we can. Member Sinenci, would it be okay if we continued with our program and allowed Member, I mean Director Tsuhako, to maybe just do her presentation, and then we can go back to calling on testifiers maybe in about 10 minutes or so?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. I'm open to that. Members are you all open to that too?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Perfect.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Member Sinenci.

HCP-17 EVICTIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC (CC 20-419)

CHAIR KAMA: So lets continue on with our agenda item. So why don't we just take the first agenda item...item 17, HCP-17. So this is in regards to our evictions during COVID and but the whole issue of the eviction moratorium ending and what we we're, what we as a County are wanting to support our constituents regarding helping them with their rent. So, you know, Ms. Tsuhako has brought forth to and brought to my attention, that we do have some monies available for people. But it seems like people are not coming and putting in applications, and the concern is that because of the time sensitivity and the potential loss of these Federal funds put to our County, that we need to make a better effort in getting

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the word out to let our people know that money's available and to please come and utilize it. Because if not then we might lose it.. So Ms. Tsuhako has a presentation and she will also be having a...my understanding is we have a presentation also by Catholic Charities, County Administrator Jillian Okamoto. So if you would begin Lori, we'd certainly appreciate that.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon and good afternoon, Members and Staff. I'm not sure. Wilton, if you're helping me with the PowerPoint, but can you just load my two slides on the deck please.

MR. LEAUANAE: Yes.

MS. ABRAHAM: I'll have them in just a moment.

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you very much, Wilton. I appreciate it. So again thank you Madam Chair for allowing us some time to review this information with you, the Members, as well as to the listening public. Several months ago, the County was informed that Federal Funds were available to assist with rent as well as utility payments for those households that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic that began a little bit more than a year ago. The County made a request to the State, which is the primary grant, the primary grantee in this case, for \$40 million in this assistance. I think the Mayor attempted to kind of gage based on the comments that he's received from our community members that the need was very high for rental assistance. Thus lots of people lost their jobs as we all know, weren't able to pay rent, and yet they received the short-term protection of the eviction moratoriums that were enacted Federally as well as locally by the Governor. So this program is partly, was partly designed to sort of address the situation where many renters in the community had failed to pay rent over the period that the pandemic was in its full force. And helping them to be whole with their landlords and then the tie in with eviction is we're hoping that as tenants made their landlords whole with what was owed to them for rent, that they would not be at risk of being evicted because they hadn't paid rent. So the County worked very hard with the State to prepare ourselves to receive this funding. We did a formal procurement for the actual implementation of a program. We selected Catholic Charities as our vendor to operate this program on behalf of the County. So big picture is that our rental assistance and utility assistance program has been open since May the 10th. We've had almost 1,800 what they are calling prescreens, which are inquires where people actually go onto the website and they fill in their name and their income level and get a prescreening to determine if they meet the very basic eligibility requirements. So this program, once people are deemed eligible, can pay up to 2,500 a month in rent and utility arrears. And they can also...we can also pay up to \$2,000 for prospective rent, which is rent ahead of time, and up to \$500 a month for future electric, water and sewer, and gas bills. So certain income limits apply. We prioritize those who earn 50 percent and below area median income for getting the assistance quicker. We have gone through that prioritization and are now actually have now been serving people who are below or 80 percent and below area median income. So

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as I've said, the program can pay for rent and utility arrears, future payments. Maui residents are eligible. You have to be able to show COVID income or job loss as a result of COVID and be able to provide documentation of late rent or utilities that are old and then as I mentioned earlier there are household income limits attached to this. So my colleagues at Catholic Charities will go into a little bit more detail about the documents that are needed; such as government issued ID, tax documents showing income levels, recent paystubs, and then some way to prove the hardship caused by COVID-19. Next please, Wilton. Thank you. So this is...this information is a little bit dated because we've paid out almost \$3 million so far. One of the, you know, one of the things that I spoke with Member Paltin about and with Member King earlier and forwarded information about this program to your Chair, was about letting people know that the bulk of the applications have come from South Maui as well as West Maui, and then the third highest would be Central Maui. We've separated that by zip code, so there's a 96732 and a 96793 for that. We know that...we know that the need is there right. I think most of you...your interactions with your constituents have such that you hear about the struggles. You hear about the worries people have and I think with the looming end to the Governor's eviction moratorium which is scheduled to end on August the 6th. There are plenty of people who are renting, who have reason to feel much more anxious about what's going to happen to me and my family once this eviction moratorium is lifted. So this program is really a way to help alleviate that stress as...and to the degree that we can help families pay back rent that goes as far back as March of last year, of March of 2020. Help them get up to date with their power bills, with their water bills so that there is no threat of losing utilities in their household and, you know, I described it before, you know, lots of people who've successfully held jobs. They pay their bills on time. They know what that's like to feel pride in being able to take care of themselves. They've had the experience of losing their jobs or getting their hours reduced so much that they cannot pay all their bills and maybe their rent was something that they had to go without paying because they had to feed their kids right and so, you know, they might be slinking around their rental property kind of hiding from their landlords and not wanting to make eye contact with them because they know they owe the landlord money and they don't have a way of paying for it. Access to this kind of resource for rent and for utilities specifically can help those families fix those anxieties right to the extent that they can get that assistance. No need, you know, you can get that money paid to your landlord, no need be shame to look at them, no need feel scared that you're going to be thrown out because you haven't paid \$10,000 or \$11,000 over the past year. So really trying to encourage more people to simply go to the website. It's posted up here on the slide. It's mauicounty.gov/MauiRentHelp. There's prescreening forms. There's applications and here's the other thing. We also, those of us who are involved in developing this program. We also know that not everybody has a computer. Okay. Not everybody is comfortable going on to a website doing an electronic application. Not everybody has internet right. We know that. We know that other people may have challenges with English. English may not be their first language and so there's portions of our community that have different kinds of challenges. Some people may not have internet. If

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you tell somebody who has no experience working with a computer, well you got to upload your documents. They're not going to know what the heck that means. So there's built into the program some extra assistance so that people can get handheld through the application, right, handheld through the uploading of documents. So that those people who have those challenges can still access the resources. Because to us that's the most important thing. Right. We don't want just the people who have a computer, and who have internet, and who know how to do it to get assistance. If somebody else needs that assistance, they've come in upon us to offer the assistance that actually meets the need. So there's a help line that's also available. The phone number is 873-4673. You can call it during normal business hours. You should be able to talk to a live person, who can either help by inputting the information on the computer that's shared or can walk somebody through that process. The next couple slides that I'm going to show you were created by Catholic Charities' subcontractor MEO, who is actually going out into the community and holding events where people who cannot do this stuff online or who may not feel really comfortable calling on the phone to do this can actually go and see a real life person and they can seat with a real life person and have the real life person do the inputting for them and give them counsel about what needs to be turned in. My colleagues at Catholic Charities will go more in depth about what kind of documents are needed to justify and confirm eligibility and payment of these expenses and I encourage everybody who thinks they might be eligible or who knows somebody who they think is eligible to actually go onto the website if you can, do the prescreening application, and follow through with that request. So that the folks at Catholic Charities can vet the request, can contact all the utilities that need to be contacted, can contact the landlord to make sure that all of this information is accurate, and then start issuing assistance to people. In a little bit...in a few days more than a month, that eviction moratorium is going to end. Okay. The State Legislature passed some...a new law that says mediation is going to be required before landlords can process eviction through courts. We're working on a contract for those services as well. So that mediation services can be paid to do that part of the work. But, you know, for the most part, I think we can all agree that if a landlord can be made whole and they accept that payment, then we can avoid the word eviction, or the process of eviction to begin with, we would all prefer that. We'd prefer families remain secure in their housing. Landlords remain good on their financial obligations to their mortgage holders and all of that, and that, you know, things can sort of go back to being a little bit more normal relationship between landlords and tenants. So Wilton, would you please switch to the next slide please? Wilton, would you please switch to the next slide please?

MS. ABRAHAM: Pulling it up right now.

MS. TSUHAKEO: Thank you.

MS. ABRAHAM: In a moment.

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MS. TSUHAKO: Okay. That is actually Catholic Charities slide deck. I had one about MEO's outreach. But I can...we can just sort of go through that without a slide but thank you very much, Laks. So as I said earlier, MEO is a sub-contractor of Catholic Charities and they're actually going out into the community and inviting people who may not have the same electronic and technological access to physically come in and work with somebody in person to get applications submitted. So as a reminder, MEO is doing at their facility in Wailuku Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 4:00 and they're preferring to work by appointment. They're going be at Kihei Community Center from 8:00 to 12:00. Their next day is Monday, July the 12th and they'll be there again on Monday, July the 19th. They'll go Upcountry to the Hannibal Tavares Community Center on Tuesday, July 6th from 8:00 to 12:00 and again on Wednesday, July 14th from 8:00 to 12:00. They'll be in Lahaina at the Lahaina Civic Center from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., on Wednesday, July the 14th, and again on Wednesday, July the 28th. They have staff in their Molokai and Lanai offices and you can call for an appointment at both of those sites to see somebody in person and they'll be doing outreach events at the Hana Public Library on Wednesdays between 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. from all the way up until July 21st. So the assistance is being extended in that way for those folks who have, you know, language issues or technology issues that make it more challenging for them to follow through and seek this assistance. I have completed my section. I want to invite my colleagues from Catholic Charities to join us by audio. Matthew, are you on?

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yes, Lori.

MS. TSUHAKO: Okay. I think our colleagues have your slide deck. So when you're ready to go.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Okay. Do you want to load up the slide deck?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Laks. Can you load up that...there you go.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Okay. Hi I'm Matthew Uiagalelei from Catholic Charities Hawaii and I'm the Program Supervisor for the MERA program, the Maui Emergency Rental Assistance Program. A lot of information on this first slide was already covered by Lori. So let's go ahead into the second slide. The one thing that I'd point out is that there's a 15-month limit on the first request. So if there's any combination of requests for rent or utilities, they can occur in any combination of 15 months, starting from March 2020 up to today, and for right now, that's the maximum that can be requested. This is the URL for the prescreen application. As Lori mentioned, if people have difficulties with technology or they have difficulties with, there's some barrier with language, we are prepared either through our partners with MEO to meet them in person. We are prepared with translators, and we're also prepared to help them over the phone, to fill out an application by voice. So can you move to the next slide please. This is the program page for the Maui, from the Maui County Government for the program, and this is where the link is, that people can reach the prescreening application, and then the next

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slide will show what that prescreen application looks like. It is a web form to fill out and there are some basic questions that will determine your eligibility for the program. So that you don't have to fill out a full application with an invasive document request if you're not eligible. And the next slide will show eligibility questions that are asked during prescreening. We ask are you a resident of the State of Hawaii? Are you renting, are you a renter? Is your dwelling address where you are renting in Maui County? Is your household income at or below 80 percent of the area median income? And then most importantly, was your work and your income affected by the pandemic by COVID during the length, the time period of the pandemic? On and that's really the basis for eligibility. If you were not working before the pandemic started, then you are not necessarily eligible through the program. You had to have been working. You had to have had a business. You had to have business income. Some form of income that got interrupted because you were laid off, because you were furloughed, because you lost clients. There could be an indirect reason where you were not able to perform your business for some reason because of the pandemic. All of those confer eligibility per this particular application. And the last the question we ask is about the stability of your housing. It's kind of a basic question asking if you have unpaid rent or unpaid utilities or any other...if your landlord has threatened eviction, or any other condition that would make your housing unstable. Where you would not be able to continue in your rental in your dwelling the way that you had...the way that you would be used to, if there weren't a pandemic. So those are the basic questions of eligibility in the prescreen application. We can go on to the next slide please. And please stop me at any point if anyone...if the Chair or any of the Committee Members have a question. Once you complete a prescreen, a member of Catholic Charities will review it for eligibility and then send you an application. Usually you're sent an application a URL via your email address to fill out. You can also receive a paper application or we can help you fill out one over the phone if you need. And the full application is similar to the prescreen. The next slide will show that it is a web form similar to the prescreen application. Where we ask a series of questions about your households, about your income, and also ask for documentation. To support the application that you've filled out and you have the ability in the web form to drag and drop your files from a desktop. Some people don't have access to...they might have difficulty filling out the application without a PC or a desktop or a laptop. Sometimes it's a little difficult to on your phone. But many people have the capability of upload, not uploading files, but taking photographs of documents. So sometimes that's the actually the easiest portion of the application for people is to photograph their documents and text them or email them to Catholic Charities. Okay and then can we go onto the next slide? Now going to kind of details about how the documents that we're asking for...for the program. Here's a list of the documents. We need an identification for the head of household. Social security numbers, it's usually a social security card for any adults in the household to show the adult member. A copy of the current valid rental agreement for the rental property, and then a document that shows how you were impacted by the pandemic. How was it that you lost income or lost a job, or if you were furloughed when people lost part of their job. They still might have had hours. They might

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not have ever stopped their work, but they might have lost full-time status. So we're looking for documentation to show...to explain what happened and in many cases there's...how people have been impacted is...quite varied, so we certainly do take narrative certifications explaining how you, as long as you can show a link between the pandemic and your income, then that's the documentation that we look for. Income documentation, pay stubs, or in the case of a recipient of unemployment or the pandemic, unemployment would show a screen shot of the web portal. You can also show the determination letter that you received from unemployment or from the pandemic unemployment. The other documents that we ask for, if you owe rent, would be a notation of how much rent you owe. Did you receive a late notice. Did you receive an email from your landlord. Is there a ledger showing unpaid rent or usually just a note from your landlord dating what you owe and then the same for unpaid utilities. That of course would be like an utility form a bill, an unpaid utility bill. And those are the, that's the basic documentation that we're looking for and the phone slides have. We'll go through them more detailed about what constitutes ID. And I'll just go over what doesn't constitute documentation for the nature of ID. What we're, what's not acceptable would be not having an identification or identification that was expired before the pandemic started. There's many other forms of ID that are acceptable and the Committee can through those if you have any questions. To the next slide. The issue of a social security number, the preferred method would be to show a social security card, not everybody has a card, or some people have lost their cards. You can also show a 1099 form showing some form of income, a W-2 form, or a filed tax return. But we are requiring like...we are requiring a full social security number to document the wage earners in the house, the adults in the house. Okay and the next slide. A valid rental agreement would constitute a template showing an agreement. Showing the parties that have engaged in an agreement for tenancy. That would also show the members of the household, the tenants in the household, and most importantly would show the address, the street address, as understood, as recorded in the tax map key, and it would also show clearly the rent amount. Some people have verbal agreements, so we have templates for applicants in that situation to fill out, to give to their landlord to mimic a rental agreement to show that the, to show the information that's contained in a verbal agreement. Okay then the next slide. And as I was mentioning before, documentation to show how you've been impacted is quite varied. In many different ways, you can show that you were laid off, or lost work, or your business closed down, or you lost clients. You lost some form of income. The easiest is to show that you qualified for P.U.A the pandemic unemployment assistance. Anyone qualifying for P.U.A also qualifies for rental assistance. It's a very quick shorthand to judge whether you qualify. Most people on unemployment would qualify as well and then we have...many people have a direct furlough letter with their name on it from their employer saying that the date that they would be furloughed, and also in the case of being laid off, a letter from their former employer saying the dates and the nature of the layoff that they were being laid off because of the pandemic. But you can also document a business closing if you worked perhaps at a restaurant that's no longer open or that has been closed during the pandemic, it's easy enough to affirm the place

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where you worked and to show some form of evidence that the business is closed. Quite often it's easy to submit a screen shot of a closure online for example a yelp review showing that the restaurant had closed would suffice along with a certification of a statement saying where you had worked and then also documentation showing if you've just lost some income or some hours. It doesn't have to be full employment. If you've lost some of your clients. If you showed your income from 2019 versus your income from 2020, that can also suffice for documentation. Okay and then the next slide. And in general, what were...what's not acceptable is are general...are general statements from organizations saying that they shut down. You more or less have to show a link that you were employed somewhere and that's the one of the few instances where we would ask for alternative documentation. Okay and the next slide. Ways to document your income, there are many here to show...many ways here to show all the kinds of income you could have. I'll just focus on the ones that are not acceptable. Stating a verbal confirmation of your income. You really have to have some...some written form to show what you are earning. Income documents that are blurry or illegible, we'll ask for them to be resent. Documents that don't occur at the time of the application. We're really looking for a households' income when they apply. And many people when they've gone back to work, it's been interesting looking at the current applications. Many people have found themselves in situations where they've gone back to work. They still qualify for the program even if you go back to work, and their normal income even going back to work is still under 80 percent of the AMI, so they qualify. They have back rents or they're merely asking for, they're paid up on their rent. They're asking for future rent. What we're finding is that some people have excessive earnings in the first month when they go back to work and their household income is well over 80 percent AMI. But it's a case, but it's a situation that won't recur the following month, so we encourage people to reapply. They wouldn't be eligible that particular month, but if their income went back to a normal level, where they weren't perhaps working a lot of overtime or there wasn't some form of extra work, then they would be very welcome to reapply when they're at...when their area median income for their household fell back to 80 percent or below. So documents that also would not be acceptable would be documents.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, no. Okay.

MR. UIAGALELEI: I'm sorry. Documents that occur from before the application. So we're really looking at income at the time of application. Okay and the next slide. Okay. If you have rent that's due in general which you would... that would be a late notice or an email from your landlord or you can have your landlord fill out a certification showing what balance is due. We have a template for that. And then the normal way to show unpaid utilities is to show...(inaudible)...also fill out, if you pay your utilities to your landlord, your landlord could also do the same...sending a past-due notice for utilities. Okay and the next slide. Housing instability to document it, sometimes it could be a little difficult and some people have difficulty with the concept of housing instability is a technical phrase that people who work in housing use. So if you are able to show that you, if you owe

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rent, that's the easiest way to tell housing instability, or if you owe utilities. If you have an eviction notice or if your utilities are going to be shut off. If your... if you have difficulty, one of the ways to establish housing instability is to show that you're currently having difficulty paying your rent. You might be paid up on your rent but you're barely getting by compared to a normal month ...*(inaudible)*...instability. They forced someone to assert, to sign an attestation that they're having difficulty. That would constitute housing instability as well. And then there are cases where if you are in an unsafe or unhealthy living condition, you can document the living condition and that also can constitute housing instability during a pandemic. Any other...I'm sorry next slide please. This is the website to check your status, check the status of your application. Everyone receives their case ID as soon as they apply. Anyone can call at any time to check their status over the phone, but you can also do it by using this URL to update your status online. Okay next slide. Next slide please. And that's the end of the...my presentation today. Thank you so much for your time. If you have any questions?

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Matthew. That was very informative. Did I see Member Paltin. Is your hand up?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I did have questions, but I didn't want us to engage in the discussion prior to the closing of testimony.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: There was one testifier that I noticed.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. So Staff, so we have testifiers now?

MR. LEAUANAE: Yes, Chair. We have one, two signed up.

CHAIR KAMA: Oh, that's wonderful. Okay, so let me go back to our...the notice to our testifiers. So I have to reread. I have to read that. So that our testifiers are clear as to what we're doing. Okay. So we're gonna begin our public testimony. Oral testimony via phone or video conference is being accepted. Testifiers wanting to provide video testimony should join the online meeting via BlueJeans meeting link, bluejeans.com/221418021 as noted on today's agenda. Testifiers wanting to provide audio testimony should dial (408) 915-6290 and enter meeting code 221 418 021, also noted on today's agenda. Written testimony is highly encouraged through the eComment link listed for today's agenda on MauiCounty.us/agendas. Individuals are free to provide testimony via eComment on as many agenda items as they would like. Instructions on how to submit testimony via eComment can also be found at MauiCounty.us/eComment. Moving on to oral testimony is limited to three minutes per item. If you are testifying beyond that time, I will kindly ask you to complete your testimony. When testifying, please state your name, and if you are testifying on behalf of an organization or are a paid lobbyist, please inform the

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Committee. Please be mindful of the use of chat during the meeting. Chat should not be used to provide testimony or chat with other testifiers. If you are here to provide testimony, please be courteous to others by turning off your video and muting your microphone while waiting for your turn to testify. Once you are done testifying, you will be asked to disconnect from the call; however, you are welcome to continue to view the remainder of the meeting on Akaku Channel 53, Facebook Live, or on mauicounty.us. Participants who wish to view the meeting only without providing testimony, please also disconnect at this time and instead view the meeting on Akakū Channel 53, Facebook Live, or on mauicounty.us. Only Councilmembers, staff, and designated resource personnel will be connected to the video conference meeting once testimony concludes. I remind Committee members, Administration, and the public to sorry...please be patient if we run into any technological issues. Members, I'd like to now proceed with oral testimony. So Staff will be monitoring people's joining in today's meeting by phone and by video, and we will do our best to take each person up in an orderly fashion. And Staff will post a link to the testifiers log in chat, so that testifiers will be able to see where they are on the list. Staff will monitor individuals joining the meeting and will provide the person's name if participating by video, or number if participating by audio, and provide a real-time testimony log, which is shared in the chat. Staff will call the testifiers in the order as they appear on the list. If they are joining the meeting by phone, staff will call out the last four digits of the individual's phone number. Audio only participants should unmute themselves by pressing *-four. Chair has agreed to time the individual for three minutes per item and notify the testifier when their three minutes are up if they do not hear the alarm. So Staff, will you please take care of that for your Chair? If the individual called upon wants to listen in on the meeting only and NOT testify, they should state so, and staff will move on to the next person until all participants as noted in the chat are called upon. So Staff, will you please call our first testifier.

MR. LEAUANAE: Thank you, Chair. The first testifier is Cara Flores, followed by phone number ending 8804.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. Cara?

. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MS. FLORES: Aloha. This is Cara Flores. I'm testifying on behalf of Hale Hawaii and HPC-18 and 22 that are on the agenda today. I apologize. We did not realize we were on the agenda today, and we do not have a prepared testimony, and would love to have a chance to come back and testify again. But I did want to make comment on, I know that the COVID task force was turned down by the Mayor, but we did also propose a COVID special committee, or we support that. I know that a community member had recommended that, especially with the Delta variant here. We're seeing that it can transmit within seconds instead of minutes. Like the original wild type of COVID. We also have keiki who are going back to

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school in a month and we need some pretty clear guidance and transparency on how to move forward. Make sure our kids are safe going to school and that they're following the best guidance available at this time. We are seeing an increase in cases in younger groups especially in the kids and young adults. So luckily a lot of us are vaccinated now. We are seeing our numbers are dropping, but they could quickly and exponentially go up, now that we have these more dangerous, more transmissible variants here on island. So we would like to see this conversation keep going. We would like to see a special committee, so that the community does have some say in what happens. Right now, I know I've offended a lot of people by saying that the Mayor is opening and closing things on a whim, and I know it's not just a whim, but it's not something that's publicly being discussed, so as residents, we don't know the plan, and there's no tier system. We're not being told when beach parks are going open back to normal times and when other public things that we use are going to open; such as, public camping grounds for the County, and things like that. And so as residents, we deserve to know these things and understand what's happening and what the plan is; and hopefully if we had a special committee on this, we could have more clear communication with the public on, you know, what the plan is moving forward with opening, closing, and precautions, things like that. Thank you.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. Members any questions for our testifier? Yes, Ms. Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I am not super up to date on the Delta variant and I heard you say that it's, transmits in seconds compared to the regular one, and I thought I heard you say that it's also more dangerous. And I just was wondering what you meant by that.

MS. FLORES: So, you know, I think it would be good. This is why it's good to keep the discussion open and a special committee would be good to bring in someone like Dr. Pang. Who's an expert, but I can tell you because I have talked to a lot of doctors and we do regularly meet with experts. That it is much more transmissible. They're seeing a lot more like hospitalizations from it. And they are also seeing that it is affecting younger people. So we have all our keiki, who are twelve and under, who do not even have the opportunity to be vaccinated. And so what happens is when this variant gets into a group of people who is unvaccinated a lot more people are catching it and a lot more people, a higher percentage of them are ending up hospitalized with severe disease compared to like the original wild type of COVID.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay. Members any other questions for our testifier? Yes, Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you, Chair. Ms. Flores, could you tell us a little bit about your organization.

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MS. FLORES: Yes. So we are just a community advocacy organization. It's 100 percent volunteer run and we take...right now we been focusing this year mostly on COVID, but we plan to focus on sustainability and future causes just to make Hawaii a better place to live. So we like to support people you are under served and underrepresented and that's our objective.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you.

CHAIR KAMA: You are welcome, Ms. Lee. Any other questions, Members? Seeing and hearing none, thank you very much, Ms. Flores, for testifying.

MS. FLORES: Mahalo.

CHAIR KAMA: ...*(inaudible)*...do we have another testifier?

MR. LEAUANAE: Next testifier is listed as 8804 is the last digits of the phone number, followed by digits 2700.

MR. WITTEL: Aloha.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes, aloha.

MR. WITTEL: Aloha. Can you hear me?

CHAIR KAMA: Yes, we can. Can you please...*(inaudible)*...

MR. WITTEL: Hi so...yeah I just had a couple of questions, and I actually am on a home phone, so I just dialed that other number in disregard just because the call dropped out, but I actually got approved for the Catholic Charities support, which I'm very grateful for. And I was just wondering, there was a few confusions because of, we were attempting to generate our own income here on property just like through the organization and things ended up getting postponed because of the pandemic and anyways long story short, there wasn't a totally accurate number of what was owed because there was also like that...when something doesn't get fixed for six months or something like that, you know, especially because it caused me injury and then a bit of recovery time that three months or so of rent gets applied right or pardoned from just on general rental laws beyond the pandemic, and that inaccurate number got applied to my Catholic Church rental support. I actually just sent them a picture of what was up on the screen earlier and they said the landlord had agreed. You know, we're wanting to work together and everything, but to apply for three more...to apply with what I got supported with for three more months. So I'm okay but I just had, you know, questions as far as things that is an inaccurate number of like the 10,000 capper, whatever it is, you know, that was getting applied to the past and kind of, you know, making the future a little, you know, support a bit less. I was wondering what to do about that situation and how to make sure, you know, yeah that so pono and everything.

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CHAIR KAMA: Matthew. Are you still on the call, Matthew?

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yes, I am.

CHAIR KAMA: Would you please answer his question? Can he call you or something?

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yeah, so the best thing to do would be for the caller to check in with his intake specialist for his case and if he doesn't have one to call our main number. Let me get you the number for Maui County.

MR. WITTEL: Thank you.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yes and then actually I'll put my number in the chat. Are you able to see chat, or no?

MR. WITTEL: I am, but it's on Facebook live and it seems there's a bit of a lag from the phone, so if I could just...

MR. UIAGALELEI: I see.

MR. WITTEL: Okay. If I could just write down those numbers, that would be great. I got a pen ready here.

MR. UIAGALELEI: If you call the main number, then the person who answers should be able to locate your case, and also should be able to help answer your question. Did you have an intake specialist to begin with?

MR. WITTEL: I'm not sure. Yeah. I haven't spoke to anyone.

MR. UIAGALELEI: When you were...when you applied.

MR. WITTEL: So it was mostly over email and then like filling out the application, and also my neighbor supported me a bit with the process. So, but I don't, I haven't spoke to an intake specialist so.

CHAIR KAMA: So Matt, if you put number in chat.

MR. UIAGALELEI: So the easiest thing to do is.

CHAIR KAMA: Put your number in the chat.

MR. UIAGALELEI: All right. I'm going to...what I'm going to do is I'm going to put the general number so if you call (808) 521-4357.

MR. WITTEL: 4357?

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MR. UIAGALELEI: Chose option one.

MR. WITTEL: Is it 4357?

MR. UIAGALELEI: 4357.

MR. WITTEL: 4357. Okay, option one.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yeah. Option one, and then option one again.

MR. WITTEL: All right.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Sorry, option one and then option two. That's one and then two.

MR. WITTEL: Okay.

MR. UIAGALELEI: And you'll get through to the Maui program.

MR. WITTEL: All right. Great. Thank you, Matthew.

MR. UIAGALELEI: For sure, looking forward to speaking with you.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Matt.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yes.

CHAIR KAMA: Wilton, do we have any other testifiers?

MR. LEAUANAE: No testifiers currently signed up, but Chair, may we ask for the name of--

CHAIR KAMA: The caller?

MR. LEAUANAE: --the 2700 number for the record?

CHAIR KAMA: Caller 2700, could you please state your name, first and last name, please? Are you still on the call?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I think Roland Wittel.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yes.

CHAIR KAMA: W i t t e l.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Mr. Sinenci. Okay. Seeing as how there are no more testimonies and if there's no one else out there that would like to share testimony, I'd like to be able to close oral testimony without objections, Members.

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COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

CHAIR KAMA: Without objections, we'll take, we'll continue to take written testimony without objections, to enter into the record?

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, and now I will close public testimony.

. . . END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

CHAIR KAMA: So thank you to all you testifiers for coming and sharing and telling us some issues that you may have been going through. So thank you very much. Okay so now we're going to talk. We're going to go onto our regularly scheduled item HCP-17, Eviction During COVID-19 Pandemic. We just had our presentation by Lori...so and by Matthew from Catholic Charities. Members, did you have any other questions for any of our presenters? Yes, Ms. Paltin, and followed by Ms. Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I think my question is for Mr. Uiagalelei about indirect COVID impacts. I think where he was saying like, you know, reduced hours or things like that may still qualify you even if it's a reduced business. But one of the largest things I think that I've heard have been going on from since COVID started was an influx of out of state buyers, cash buyers of homes and the indirect result being that folks that are renting are being told that they need to vacate because the owner is selling the house and then they are looking for a new place to live and often they can't find something in the same price range as what they vacated and I was wondering if that would be considered a COVID impact or not.

MR. UIAGALELEI: Not under the terms of this particular program that I've heard of or that I understand. It's a good discussion point about, yes it's a good discussion point, but no.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. I figure try.

MR. UIAGALELEI: You're welcome.

MS. TSUHAKO: Madam Chair, may I please.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

MS. TSUHAKO: So Councilmember Paltin, really unfortunate circumstances. Right, with properties being sold out from under...right out from under and its. But we

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do have other sources of assistance that can help families who need to relocate to a different unit and who may have to pay more for that new unit. But there's rental assistance that's established through the County as well as rental assistance that has flowed through agencies such as Family Life Center through HUD. So families who find themselves in those situations of having to move because properties are being sold and they can no longer maintain tenancy can also reach out to our partners at Family Life Center, at MEO, Ke Hale A Ke Ola, and Women Helping Women for rental assistance. That a County program and then if that...if that source of funding is not available to do whatever the circumstance may be, there's no COVID...there's no tie in to COVID for that County funding. So you don't have to show and prove an impact from COVID for the County funding. But that...that other source of assistance is available through HUD funding, through the County funding. So I think if there's people, your constituents or others that you know of who find themselves in that situation, they can call us at the department. We can direct them to those grantees who have the rental assistance program, or they can call directly - MEO, Family Life Center, Ka Hale A Ke Ola, and Women Helping Women to get that assistance.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Director Tsuhako. Maybe for anyone watching, can you tell the County number that folks should call?

MS. TSUHAKO: Yeah. You can...they can call our County Housing Division which is 270-7351 or like I said, they can call the grantee agencies directly.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Great. Thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Lori. Thank you, Tamara. So Yuki Lei Sugimura you have a question for Lori?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes. I was really glad to see this presentation, Lori and Catholic Charities, because I must say that we've come a long way from the CARES Act to now with this new source of funding where...yeah it's...it's...it was kind of hectic and interesting the first round with CARES, but it was, everything happened so fast. But I appreciate learning what you've done. So just for clarification, our 80 percent AMI is what's being used for rent relief assistance and is that \$67,040? Do you know the amount per person?

MS. TSUHAKO: Oh, I don't have the chart with me Councilmember, but I that 67,000 may be for a family of four.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay and anyway that 80 percent is what's being used for eligibility for rent.

MS. TSUHAKO: That is...that is the high end of the eligibility. So the program is intended for those at 80 percent and below and when we first started, we

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prioritized those at 50 percent and below because it seemed like the need was more dire in the lower...the lower AMIs.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay, but now we've...now it's at 80 percent. Correct?

MS. TSUHAKO: Yes.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

MS. TSUHAKO: And now the Catholic Charities is actually working on all the applications between 80 percent and everything below that.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. So this is my question then. I'm hearing that the outer islands, the number of people applying has not been like the fury that we had on with the CARES Act, right, the first round. And of course, we were all in the middle of everything shutting down. It was kind of different times as we are slowly opening up. I wondered what the agencies are doing to market this. So that people will understand or know and what I...I had a discussion with this...about this with one of the State Legislators and I thought maybe the confusing thing for us, so we don't have as many applications, is on the radio we hear Oahu opening and closing. They're taking applications and they close it. They open, they close, and it sounds like it's what's happening Statewide was my perspective, and I wondered what we are doing at Maui County to market ours, so that people who may be eligible will not get sucked into the, you know, the Oahu rhetoric, but understand that we have our own programs going. So what is...what kind of marking are we doing? And do we need help, do we?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, excellent question. Thank you. The Oahu program has operated very differently from ours and I think the Catholic Charities is one of the administrators of Oahu funding as well and I think so we benefitted from their experience on Oahu and trying to avoid some of the pitfalls that they faced. What Oahu chose to do was, Oahu chose when they opened the applications to limit it to a certain number applications from the very beginning. I think it was like 8,000. So they took 8,000 and then they closed their application period to give their vendors a chance to go through all 8,000 of those request for help. We when...by the time we got started, which is about six weeks after Oahu, we didn't think that we would have the same challenges, so we didn't want to put a hard cap number on the applications that would be taken in. We felt confident that Catholic Charities would be able to work through all of the applications that we received initially. That being said, the rate of spending on some of the neighbor islands has fallen short of our projections. So I just checked during earlier part of our meeting and found out there's about 1,800 prescreens. Nine hundred plus residents have applied with...have followed through on an application. So that's about 50 percent and then that's pretty good, but it's still, you know, we could do a lot better. So one of the things that we've tried to do is the Mayor has discussed availability of this program assistance very regularly on his afternoon press conferences. I've gone on his radio show to talk about this program and

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the availability of that assistance. The Deputy Director and I, Linda Munsell, also did a Facebook live event with Jason Economou, from the Realtors Association of Maui, so that we could make sure property managers, you know, who manage a lot of rental properties in our community, were aware that they can lead their tenants through this assistance, work with them, and then be paid and made whole with this support. Furthermore, our contractor Catholic Charities also has an existing contract for with Becker Communications. And they've been very helpful with us to try and suggest different means by which we can promote the program additional...in addition to everything that we've already done. Our partners at MEO are always helpful. I think having them go out into the community, they're known to people right, so it's not like they are talking to a stranger. It's like they, they probably talked to them last year when the CARES program...the CARES Act money was being used. So all of those things pieced together we're hoping can encourage people to follow through and I think, you know, we've also reached out to all of the Council Members to ask for your help because, you know, you guys probably see the need in a more granular level than even I do or the Mayor does. So it's...we're trying to look at all different ways. I think there's a...we're going to start working on some public service announcements on radio and such. Also, we are totally open to hearing any other suggestions that might be brought up to help people get access to this assistance. So I thank you for that and, you know, it's totally okay to give suggestions about how we might to better in terms of giving people the information and encouraging them. It's really an encouragement because, you know, not everybody has a lot of patience to do an online application. I did it. Before we launched that website, I did the prescreen, and took my like 15 minutes. And a scale of one to ten, I'm not the most technically sound person, but I could do it. But I can imagine that somebody who has zero, you know, very little experience would be very frustrated, would not understand a drop-down menu, that sort of thing. So that's why we're trying really hard on the other side to provide those support so that people can still get the assistance but even if they're not able to navigate that entire electronic process.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Do you think that you could send us the flyer that you had with all the dates. I like that you're doing community outreach on it. If you could. Thank you very much. Good job.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. Mr. Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Chair, and mahalo Director Tsuhako. I just had a couple questions, clarification, the due date for the...

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: ...(inaudible)...

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: The due date...

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: :...(inaudible)...

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Ms. Sugimura's still... Mute...you got to mute. The due date again was July 21st for the County, the rental relief. Did you say July 21st?

MS. TSUHAKO: Thank you, Member Sinenci. No, I did not. The deadline for actually spending the first allocation of the Federal funds is September. So we are obligated to spend 65 percent of the initial allocation of \$15 million by September, so it roughly works out to about \$10 million. If we achieve that spending threshold, then we're entitled to claim the second half of the allocation, which is the \$25 million.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay, and so.

MS. TSUHAKO: It's 40 in total. We got 15 first and the second 25 is contingent upon our spending of the first allocation.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay, so we haven't gotten but to that 15...the 10, 15 million just yet, but we need.

MS. TSUHAKO: No.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MS. TSUHAKO: No.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, thank you. And then for some of the evictions is, from hearing from some of the constituents, is it still the two-week requirements if your landlord is asking you to leave? Till two weeks, I believe, of letting people know?

MS. TSUHAKO: Yes, I think it's Act 57 that the Governor signed into law about three weeks ago. Is...began as House Bill 1376 and it creates an additional requirement that before a landlord pursues eviction of a tenant, they have to go through a mediation process. So if you go to the State Legislature's website and you look up House Bill 1376, it sets out the new requirements in terms of notice, in terms of informing the mediation service, that, you know, we want to engage in mediation because I'm pursuing eviction. And it requires the landlord to agree to do the mediation in lieu of eviction and agrees not to evict the tenant during that mediation process and it sets up some different sort of timeline requirements for evictions to legally take place. But the bill as it is posted on the State, the Legislature's website have all those steps in place about the timeliness.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. And what was the site again that they could access the information, Director?

MS. TSUHAKO: It's on the State Legislature's website. So I think it's...you, gosh I think it's. I don't think it's Hawaii.gov, but it's. If you Google Hawaii State Legislature 2021 and then there's...it will take to a face page and there's a bar on the left,

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upper left-hand corner that says, the bill tracking. Then if you type in HB 1376 and press, it gives you the legislative history as well as the last version of the bill that was signed and passed.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, thank you for that. Yeah. I can go ahead and share that with some of the calls that we've been receiving. And then lastly, we have one case where we've got some residents that own their property, but because they haven't been able to pay for their property taxes. I mean is this, is the rental relief can also help them with some their bills like their property taxes?

MS. TSUHAKO: No. Unfortunately Councilmember, this program is specifically for renters. It's not for property owners. Our CDBG, our Community Development Block Grant program receives some assistance for mortgage assistance. That is being administered by MEO and by Family Life Center and I'm not really, really sure about all the parameters of that. Whether it's strictly only for mortgage assistance or whether there would be assistance for other landowner type responsibilities such as property taxes or—

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Right.

MS. TSUHAKO: --things of that nature. But I think it would...if somebody's in that situation, I would say it's probably worth a call to ask.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah, we can inquire with that. Thank you, Director. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: You're welcome, Mr. Sinenci. Ms. Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Sorry I just had one follow-up question. I shared the member...or the information that Director Tsuhako gave and I just wanted to clarify if folks are already on public assistance like HUD, would they still be eligible for these...this additional assistance?

MS. TSUHAKO: Usual...thank you, Member...(inaudible)...it would be considered a double dip, you know, because you're already receiving assistance. I think it's still worth a try if you're renting and you. So for example, you're renting and you're getting a Section 8 voucher, but if you're behind on utilities, the utilities could be paid right. If you're renting and you're getting a Section 8 voucher and your behind on your rent, I'm not positive that that's an eligible use of this fund. I know that there's also some applicability to people who are living in public housing through the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. So I think it's worth a call and check. Matthew, are you still on?

MR. UIAGALELEI: Yes, most definitely. Let me answer—

MS. TSUHAKO: Okay.

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MR. UIAGALELEI: --the Committee Member's question. So if you're receiving a voucher and you still have some portion of rent, the Mayor program can cover the portion of rent even if you're on HUD funding or if you're in public housing. It's still, most definitely still apply and then it's, we only cover the portion that isn't paid by the voucher and that can be both for unpaid portions or for future rent as well. And I believe this particular pandemic rental assistance program has been the first that was not a feature of most CARES Act funding. You weren't allowed to. It was counted as a double dip. But with this year's funding, it is allowed under the program.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Thank you. And I just wanted to share the feedback that I got from someone who's been trying to share this information and their feedback in addition to they think, them thinking they don't qualify because they're already on public assistance is that the application requirements are confusing and it's very time consuming. So I'm not sure if anything can be done about that, but I just wanted to make that you had some feedback from folks that are struggling.

MS. TSUHAKO: Yeah. Thank you for that Councilmember. You know, I think as a program administrator, we're put in a challenging situation because the Federal government has imposed guidelines on us so we, in order to get the money and be able to help people, we sort of have to align ourselves with those Federal guidelines to insure that we, the County doesn't end up paying the money back because we skipped a step or two yeah. At the very same time, it's understandable that people are very challenged to sit down for 20 minutes, make sure that their bills and all the documents that they need are organized, so that they are not starting the thing, then having to jump up, you know, chase their kids around the house, dig through all their old records to try and find all of these documents, and then sit down, and then they get timed out, and you know. Those are sort of the challenges that happen with this feature. So there is an understanding and there is a sense of I think compassion and feeling of...yeah I understand that it's hard. I understand that it takes time, but we cannot, we as a County, cannot risk having to repay that money back to the Feds because we didn't do a good job of administering this program the way it needs to be done. I think the other thing that I'll mention here is that there's a lot of vetting that has to go into approving one of these requests for assistance. So Catholic Charities guys are like...they're almost like forensic accountants because, you know, they've had, because of their experience last year with administering CARES Act, they've seen a lot of attempted fraud of these programs, you know, where tenant and landlord go oh, get money, you know, for rent. So let's go look at our old lease and we go sign one new one back date it to the old date, but instead of you paying me \$2000 a month, we go say you got to pay me \$2,000[sic] a month, and then when the check comes, we go just split the difference. So there's, you know, there's a potential collusion right between landlord and tenant to extract funding from this source. There's also, you know, false IDs being submitted. There's different...I don't know how else to explain it, but potentially criminal enterprises signing documentation of employment for each other right. So you're looking at

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it...it's all the same letter going around signed by different people with the same name showing up. So one guy signs a letter for guy number two, guy number two signs the letter for guy number three, guy number three signed the letter for guy number one. And so there's these attempts to perpetrate fraud in this program, and so that's another layer of what our vendors have to deal with and protect ourselves from because yeah there's plenty people who need the assistance, but I tell you that even though I'm a very optimistic person, I also am a very real person, and I know that there's people who have ill intent. So we need to protect our County and our...the integrity of our programs also from those people who would take unfair advantage of it. So that's another reason that applications have to be what they are and I would tell the people that, you know, have made those comments. Thank you for saying that and, you know, if they need somebody to support them and to help them with the physical nature of doing the application, then check out the MEO outreach events or go into MEO's office with an appointment and have somebody help you there. So you're not distracted by all the things that go on at home and that, you know, if you can get yourself organized before you go into those appointments, the chances of getting it done are way higher and that's one of the reasons that we really wanted MEO's presence in these different communities because think about it, if you have one 80-year-old aunty who is thousands of dollars behind in her utility bills and she needs help and she doesn't understand, she doesn't even have a computer much less know how to work one, but she can go into an MEO office in Hana, then she, you know, she can sit down with somebody and they'll say aunty, this bill that you brought me is from last year December. Like where is your most recent bill? Oh, I got to bring the most, the most recent bill is going to have a total of how much money you owe the electric company from last year up until today. That's the one you want to turn in because that's when you can get the most assistance right, catch up for all arrear. She aunty then has the ability because she's so close to where she lives, she can go home, look for the bill, come back, and get it done. But if we expect people from Hana or from Lahaina or from Kihei to drive all the way in to see somebody and they got to drive all the way back home to go dig up that newest bill, it's going to take longer and that's going to be more frustrating. So that's one of the really important features of trying to that community outreach out there where people are closer. They can, if they forget something, it's not such a hardship to run home, go find the thing, and come back. And that's what we want the service to achieve, is to make it more convenient and more likely to be successful for the people who need the help.

CHAIR KAMA: So Lori, I have a question. I have a question for Matthew, I think. So Matthew, you know on your prescreening slide, you talked about some of the information asking people for, one of things I mean or so that they would know if they qualified, the eligibility, and it said you had to be at 80 percent or below AMI. Is there a way that people would know what 80 percent of their AMI is. Is it printed somewhere so that they would know whether or not they qualified?

MR. UIAGALELEI: Thank you so much for your question, Chair Kama. Yes. There should be a matrix on the application. The question in the application is a

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question about household income, and if your household income goes over that amount, then we'll call you directly or get in touch with you directly to go over your income, and we will actually, we will work with you on the phone or work with you via email just to double check if you're going over the amounts. We will double check it before anything else, to make sure that the amount is accurate. The way that we calculate income could be a little unusual, and some people will state their income from the previous year. Some people will state their income of what they expect as opposed to their income at the time of application. So we'll always reach out to double check the amount first before anything. If someone is not aware, doesn't read the matrix or isn't aware of how to calculate, you know.

CHAIR KAMA: So we're attempting to spend down \$10 million by September, so that we can hopefully garner the other \$25,000...\$25 million. So if we find that we're barely being able to make that commitment with 80 percent AMI, is it possible to increase the AMI to include more people?

MS. TSUHAKO: No. So like I mentioned earlier, Chair, the...we're *...(inaudible)*... program within the Federal parameters and so it's money intended for that purpose. I think. You know, I think it anecdotally if we're correct about the actual need in the community, I'm hoping that we'll get more people who are eligible and who can take advantage of this program to apply and we, you know, we'll get to our spending goal. I think, you know, I don't know if you guys feel it. Sometimes I feel people are discouraged, you know. They feel like well maybe I got called back to work but I'm only working 20 hours instead of 40, and they think oh, I not going qualify because I'm working already. That's not true, you know. If they're...if they were impacted and their income still falls within the guidelines, they can potentially get help too. So just because you've been called back to work, it doesn't mean that you're not going to be eligible for this. So those folks who, you know, who never asked for help before, I hear time and again, it's like oh, I'm kind of shame do that. There's no shame attached to it. It's really a legitimate, it's a legitimate need. People were really, really impacted by COVID, and we want them to know that we're willing to help them. We are willing to go through the process with them to see if they're eligible, and get them as much of this assistance as is possible. We want to do it.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes. Okay. I have no other questions. Members, are you...have any other questions for our presenters? None. Okay. I just want to thank Matthew and Lori for sharing with us their presentation and informing us. So what we need to do as Councilmembers to be able to get the word out to our communities that this is available. Help is available and encourage them to apply for it. So thank you, Matthew. Thank you, Lori, very much. Yes, Ms. Paltin, your hand is up.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Sorry, I just had one further question on the AMI amounts. I believe Member Sugimura was saying like 60,000 or something was for a family of four, 80 percent AMI. And it's just like, you know, that's so low for a family of four to even be able to like afford groceries on Maui that having such a low AMI.

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I know the need is definitely there, but it's just, I think that could be part of the problem as well. Like how you said, us not being able to go up into the higher AMIs like, you know, I think for GAP housing or workforce housing we go up to 140 percent AMI. I think if we could do that for this assistance because if they're needing assistance to purchase a home up to 140 percent AMI and a lot of the rents especially in Lahaina as we heard this morning are more than a lot of folks mortgages. I can just imagine the need definitely doesn't tap out at 80 percent and so then we are going to lose a lot of our, you know, the workforce that makes that 120 to 140 because they are caught in that. So I mean it's so sad to me that we have this surplus that we're not able to get rid of, and it feels like there's still the need and it's because of the Federal parameters. And I'm not sure if anything can be done about that, but maybe we can appeal to our congressional delegation about the situation, you know. Hawaii is definitely a unique place where, you know, I think in the continent, the cost of bread, eggs, or milk is nowhere near what it is here, and so the AMI that we're referring to is not on an equal level to what it is in the continent. So I don't know if anything can be done about that, but I just wanted to acknowledge, you know. It's a sad situation to hear we have this surplus of money but...and also know there's this great need, but the Federal parameters is not working out for us.

CHAIR KAMA: Right. And that's...we're going to accomplish that in the next event. But so thank you, Lori. Thank you, Matthew. Thank you, Members. I think what I want to do is I'd like to be able to call for a recess. It is 3:06, and we can reconvene at 3:15, take up the last two items, and that should be really quick. So the Human Concerns and Parks Committee is now in recess at 3:06, and will reconvene 3:15. Thank you, everyone. . . . *(gavel)* . . .

RECESS: 3:07 p.m.

RECONVENE: 3:17 p.m.

CHAIR KAMA: . . . *(gavel)* . . . Human Concerns and Parks Committee is now reconvening at 3:17 p.m. So Members, I inadvertently forgot to defer our previous item... Item 17. So, I would like to be able to defer without objections to defer this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS. (Excused YLS)

ACTION: DEFER.

HCP-18 HALE HAWAII'S SUGGESTIONS TO HELP KEEP HAWAII SAFE FROM COVID-19 (CC 20-459)

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. I wanted to go to recess quickly. Okay, so Item 17 has been deferred. I'm going to go to Item 18, Hawaii save...Hale Hawaii's Suggestions, yes, Ms. Lee.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Chair Kama.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: As you know, this group is actually looking for some kind of committee or special committee to deal with various aspects of COVID-19, including the variant, the latest variant. And so I was wondering if we could ask some of the Members if they have any suggestions as to which group or groups this organization can...can latch on to, or work with, you know. I can't think of any offhand but maybe, maybe Tamara or Shane might be able to have couple of ideas on this. Shall we ask them?

CHAIR KAMA: Yes. Absolutely. Okay. Members Paltin, Sugimura and Sinenci. Yes, Mr. Sinenci, your hand is raised.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yes, Chair. Was there, has the Hale Hawaii, have they come before the Committee, or maybe do a presentation, or is it just a group that wants to link up with another like nonprofit or something like that?

CHAIR KAMA: I think what I understood from her...that they were a group of people who were concerned about the health and safety of Hawaii and their organization was to be able to help Hawaii our State to...and its leaders, keep people safe from COVID-19. So it's been a year-and-a-half since the pandemic, and we're continuing to lift restrictions related to the pandemic, but over the course of time, we have seen a reduction in the cases of COVID, State and Countywide, and that's probably because there's been an increase with the vaccinations that's been administered. So I think what the Hale Hawaii people are looking for is advisory, organization, or to keep the discussion going in regards to the Delta variant. So I think, I'm not sure how organized they are or, or think they know, but they seem very...very sincere in what they want to do...what they're doing.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Oh, okay. Mahalo, Chair. I, you know, I know that we've been approached by other State agencies for our small East Maui community only because of our vaccination rates and we did share that, you know, the importance of our small multi-generational household communities was to protect a lot of the kupuna that still live in multi-generational families' households. So, yet we're still...at...not at that point, and we're still looking at moving forward and vaccinating those families that want to vaccinate their children over 12 years of age. So I think those are some of our efforts, and if this group can somehow align with maybe education, we still experiencing hesitations from some of the families that say that it's...the vaccination has not...it's more for emergency use and did not receive full approval. So that's why we're getting a lot of hesitancy. So if the group can align with those efforts to, you know, as we move forward toward herd immunity, I think that we can reach out to them.

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CHAIR KAMA: I think Chair Lee was trying to see if there's another organization that is out there in the community that they could maybe associate with or partner with, so that they can work together on the next phase in which they are now going into is the...the variant. I think you're on mute, Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR KAMA: You're welcome. Any other comments, Members? Yes, Ms. Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. So I hadn't ever heard of Hale Hawaii before the Coronavirus. I'm not sure if that was the inspiration for them to get started. But, you know, what I found from them are like, you know, a dedicated group of volunteers that care a lot about Hawaii and our safety and it was through their videos that I first became acquainted with the COVID tracking app that we did a resolution for and, you know, I kind of follow them on social media and they...they're constantly like researching and they seem to have a good finger on the pulse of people's concerns and I know that we passed the resolution for a task force, but that didn't go very far. I just was wondering if we could designate them as the Council's task force and, you know, have them give us periodic updates about this situation. They seem to already kind of been doing the work. They educated me about the Delta variant this morning and, you know, if they can just, you know, give us, I don't know as frequently as they're available, their updates about their impression of things that we do need to focus on or that our being kind of slipping through the cracks or something. And, you know, just based on their performance to date, and it wouldn't need to be a formal thing where we assign staff to their meetings or anything, but they can just, you know, give us periodic updates about things that they think warrant our attention.

CHAIR KAMA: Comments? Anyone else, Ms. Sugimura. Yes..

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes, thank you. So I...because there's so much information out there, I don't know enough about this group. I don't get the text messages or alerts. I guess that Tamara is, but I am...I just want to make sure they have a Department of Health connection because I think that we should get our resource from a source that the rest of the community is. And I don't mean to be...I don't know enough about them to have a firm judgement, but before we go down a path of relying on somebody to be an informational source for the Council, I think we should be consistent with the rest of the community. So that it comes from, you know, Dr. Pang, and they're part of that group, or I don't know who the ultimate authority is, you know, besides the...our authorities I guess come from the Governor for directions with the emergency proclamations and then when things happen, we go to get it. I mean it is very, very important that the information that we are sharing I think comes from a source that everybody else is. So sorry if I'm not understanding what this, you know, this conversation is about, but I am concerned that it's...there's a Department of Health if we're going to talk about health has, you know, is involved in it, like Dr. Pang. And maybe he is. Is he?

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CHAIR KAMA: : I don't know either.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Are you asking?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. That's my concern. Information is so important.

CHAIR KAMA: Yeah. Ms. Lee, did that help you?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Well, I'm thinking. I know you want to file this item, but how about we keep it a little bit longer. And then ask this group, although it's, due to our schedule, it's difficult to establish a committee on this item right at this time. But, you know, we appreciate what they are doing and if they could propose or forward us any kind of...the latest legislation that we might consider to establish here in Maui County, you know, that we may not have at this time. But, you know, in a sense, you know, we could all, you know, they could be like our eyes and ears for things that we're not exactly focused on because we're pulled in so many different directions. I mean this would be information that they could forward to us that we would then take up in Committee for a full discussion yeah.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes. I think...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: I just thought, you know, when people offer their help, usually it's a good idea to take it because this group needs a lot of help because we're trying to do so many things, and we have so many balls in the air, that we and our staff can't, you know, we can't possibly follow everything we would like to follow. Thank you.

CHAIR KAMA: So that's...yes, Ms. Platin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes, I kind of agree along those lines. I know that they do...that their information, but I wasn't necessarily talking on relying...speaking to relying them...relying on them about Department of Health issues, but more so about, you know, things that the community has concerns about. Like for me, one of the things that I noticed on their social media, and I have elementary age children, and the concerns that they were bringing up regarding the return at school are things that I hadn't thought of because the kids don't return to school until like August and that's like not in my...one week outlook, you know. And I'm like oh shoot those are some concerns that I would have starting like August 1st or whenever school starts, you know. And so I really appreciate the way that they look at things and the concerns that they bring up that once they bring it up, I'm like, oh yeah, that is something I'm concerned about, and I didn't even realize it until I saw it writing, and I'm just focusing on what's immediately in front of me. And as a parent, I'm like oh shoot I didn't even think about when school starts again. Like none of these kids are vaccinated at elementary school. Delta variant, what's going to happen. And to some extent, you know, that's how it was with the DOE opening up, like, you know, we had all this time when we're closed. Now they're going to open up. They're going to open up to tourists.

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They're going to open up schools, and it was like pretty much the day before school started, we're like, are they going to open? Are they not going to open? What are we going to do with the kids? Are we going to go to work? You know, and so they kind of what I've noticed is they think ahead and they kind of identify issues that the community will be concerned about when the situation arises. And so to tap them as a resource of like, you know, this could be something big come August. When all thousands of the parents are thinking about sending their kids back to school and nobody's got vaccinated, and the Delta variant, and blah, blah, blah, it's like oh shoot. So then what do you guys suggest, you know, not so much like. I mean they did educate me on the Delta variant, and it could be true or it could not be true, but they've garnered my trust to some extent. And we don't have to, like any advisory group or task force, it's not a commitment to listen to everything that they said 100 percent. But for our edification and the greater public's edification, I think that they're definitely a worthwhile group and to have committed volunteers like that, it's something that we should thank them and use them as they're willing.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes. Thank you. Okay, Mr. Sinenci, is your hand raised? Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yes, Chair. Thank you. And mahalo for my second opportunity. Yeah, you know, particularly in this day and age, you know, where the data, the collecting data and sharing data of we still, and speaking of data, you know, where there was a recent Honolulu Star Bulletin article in the paper about how our administration wants to kind of take a pause and in that article, it says that how the congestion at the Kahului airport is at capacity and, you know, just reaching out to State officials, and I understand that Member Paltin said that our task force never really went anywhere. But in tandem with that article, there was also the HTA numbers that came out, and it looks like right there's not a lot of visitors from other countries. Of course, those other countries are still dealing with COVID clusters and getting vaccinated, so it's kind of good that we only had 2,733 international visitors in the month of May. However, those...the other ones are mostly coming from the U.S., west coast, some from the east coast. So I think maybe taking some of those numbers or looking at vaccination rates prior to, when we talk about the new variants, that those variants, I know it's in the U.S. already but if it's coming from out of country, maybe preparing, like Member Paltin said, preparing for the next couple months or the Fall. As we go into the fall months into the winter months, maybe the group could be instrumental in preparing us for the next six months. So I'm open to keeping the item Chair and then maybe meeting with them or having a presentation at a later date.

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Mr. Sinenci. So if I'm hearing our Committee correct, then they would like to defer this item. Is that correct? Okay, Members so without objections, I will defer this item.

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COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS.

ACTION: DEFER.

HCP-22 ESTABLISHING A RAPID RESPONSE COVID-19 TASK FORCE (MISC)

CHAIR KAMA: Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

CHAIR KAMA: Sorry my microphone is off. HCP-22, Establishing a Rapid Response Covid-19 Task Force. I wanted to be able to put this item to rest because we're not getting a rapid response team today or tomorrow, so it's just going to languish on my agenda. So if the Committee would...we could talk about it if you'd like to, but again, hopefully that we don't, or don't have a need for this. So Members, comments?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: You're going to file it?

CHAIR KAMA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: No objections.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: A'ole.

CHAIR KAMA: Okay, thank you. So I need a motion from someone to be able to file.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I had a question before the motion.

CHAIR KAMA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: If we file this, it wouldn't preclude us from designating Hale Hawaii as like a Council Task Force that helps us out?

CHAIR KAMA: No, I don't think so. This is just, this is different than what we're about talking with Hale Hawaii. It's COVID-19 urging the Mayor, it's two task force.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, okay. I get it. I get it. Thank you.

CHAIR KAMA: So no matter how much we urge, I don't think anything's going to happen, so might as well put this item to rest and we can go on with doing other things. So, did someone make the motion to file this motion?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay, I'll move. I'll move to file.

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CHAIR KAMA: Thank you, Members. So at this time Members, I see nothing else on our agenda. Therefore, unless you all have anything you'd like say, your Chair would like to adjourn this meeting. And hearing no comments, this meeting is adjourned at 3:38 p.m.. Thank you, Members. . . . (*gavel*) . . .

ADJOURN: 3:38 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



TASHA KAMA, Chair
Human Concerns and Parks Committee

hcp:min:210701

Transcribed by: Jean Pokipala