

WASSP Committee

From: Tamara A. Paltin
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 11:10 AM
To: WASSP Committee
Subject: FW: Homeless Verification Letter

From: Morishige, Scott S <smorishige@dhs.hawaii.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 11:08 AM
To: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Campos, Joseph H <jcampos@dhs.hawaii.gov>; Delfin Yoshida <Dellfin.Yoshida@mauicounty.us>
Cc: Staff BFED <Staff.BFED@mauicounty.us>; nicolehuguenin@gmail.com; Josiah.Nishita@mauicounty.gov; Erin Wade <Erin.wade@co.maui.hi.us>; Cynthia Lallo <Cynthia.D.Lallo@co.maui.hi.us>; Naomi Crozier <charleen.n.crozier@co.maui.hi.us>
Subject: RE: Homeless Verification Letter

Aloha Councilmember Paltin, Below is the e-mail I sent to Director Tsuhako.

As I mentioned earlier, HPO Outreach and Shelter providers are responsible for issuing and providing homeless verification per the RFP referenced earlier. However, I emphasized in all communications that the Shelter provider has the ability to verify homelessness based on information provided to them. As an example, I mentioned that if MPD encountered a homeless individual and brings them to the shelter, the shelter can use this information to verify homeless status along with information from the individual experiencing homelessness themselves. In addition, the shelter provider can check in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and shelter providers are also allowed based on their professional judgment to have 5% of the individuals or families they serve self-certify their homeless status. I've highlighted the relevant portion in my e-mail to Director Tsuhako that provides this explanation.

Additionally, I did share with both Director Tsuhako and with Maui Homeless Coordinator Naomi Crozier that HPO staff have spoken to the KHAKO shelter staff and have gone over the requirements in the RFP with them, and explained the ability that they as the contracted shelter provider have to verify homeless status based on information provided to them.

Director Tsuhako asked if Maui County could impose additional conditions on the homeless verification letter or specify what other parties could provide the HPO Homeless Verification Letter. Regarding this point, I did clarify to Director Tsuhako that the County does not have jurisdiction over the HPO outreach and shelter contracts. However, again, the shelter does have the ability to determine the homeless status of individuals outside of a Homeless Verification Letter provided by outreach, and the shelter has the ability to verify homeless status based on information provided to them. This is in recognition of the fact that not all homeless individuals may be referred by outreach or have a homeless outreach provider that is actively engaged with them.

I hope that this e-mail helps to provide clarification on this issue. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Scott

Scott Morishige
Division Administrator
State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services
Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD)
1010 Richards Street, Suite 412

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From: Morishige, Scott S

Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2025 3:46 PM

To: Lori Ann Y. Tsuhako LoriAnn.Tsuhako@co.maui.hi.us; Brackeen III, Harold HBrackeenIII@dhs.hawaii.gov

Subject: RE: Homeless Verification

Hi Lori, I touched base earlier today with Harold. We both understand the sensitivity and complexity around this situation and that there are a lot of politics involved.

Maui County does not have any jurisdiction over the homeless verification process, since it is tied to contracts for outreach and shelter that are both administered by the State / HPO. As outlined in Section H of the Service Specifications for RFP No. HMS-224-19-11 (still in effect), the authority to issue and recognize Homeless Verification Letters (HVLs) reside specifically with HPO-funded outreach providers, subcontracted agencies, and State funded shelters. Acceptance of these letters is a condition of State/HPO program compliance.

I did explain in my e-mail to Councilmember Paltin that the shelter has the ability to verify homelessness based on information provided to them. For example, if Maui Police Department (MPD) brings a homeless person to a shelter to refer them, the shelter provider could gather information from the MPD office and the individual to determine if the information is sufficient to verify homeless status. The shelter can also check if the person has an open enrollment in HMIS and can allow a certain percentage of individuals to self-attest to their homeless status.

The County can also be helpful in a number of other ways. For example:

- **Facilitating communication** between State-contracted providers and local stakeholders to ensure consistent understanding and application of the verification process.
- **Providing support or advocacy** for expanding outreach and shelter capacity to underserved areas of the County.
- **Educating local service providers** on State requirements so there is clarity and reduced friction in accessing services.

To be clear, Maui County does not have jurisdiction over Homeless Verification Letters and cannot dictate the way that State/HPO contracted providers provide services or the type of verification they can accept for homeless status. However, there are many other ways we have partnered with the County and hope to continue to partner with you in the future.

Thank you also for taking the time to discuss on the phone with me. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks,

Scott

From: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>

Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 10:52 AM

To: Morishige, Scott S <smorishige@dhs.hawaii.gov>; Campos, Joseph H <jcampos@dhs.hawaii.gov>; Delfin Yoshida <Dellfin.Yoshida@mauicounty.us>

Cc: Staff BFED <Staff.BFED@mauicounty.us>; nicolehuguenin@gmail.com; Josiah.Nishita@mauicounty.gov; Erin Wade <Erin.wade@co.maui.hi.us>; Cynthia Lallo <Cynthia.D.Lallo@co.maui.hi.us>; Naomi Crozier <charleen.n.crozier@co.maui.hi.us>

Subject: RE: Homeless Verification Letter

Same contract number shall has same meaning as must is my understanding

From: Morishige, Scott S <smorishige@dhs.hawaii.gov>

Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2025 6:22 PM

To: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Campos, Joseph H <jcampos@dhs.hawaii.gov>

Cc: Staff BFED <Staff.BFED@mauicounty.us>; nicolehuguenin@gmail.com; Josiah.Nishita@mauicounty.gov; Erin Wade <Erin.wade@co.maui.hi.us>; Cynthia Lallo <Cynthia.D.Lallo@co.maui.hi.us>; Naomi Crozier <charleen.n.crozier@co.maui.hi.us>

Subject: RE: Homeless Verification Letter

Aloha Councilmember Paltin,

Thank you for your email, and my apologies for the delay in response. In the Request for Proposals for DHS Homeless Programs Office current shelter contracts (RFP No. HMS-224-19-11-HPO), page 2-8 of the Service Specifications explains the process for shelters regarding Homeless Verification Letters and states that the shelter provider “*shall contact the Outreach Program provider(s) and/or shall verify and maintain adequate documentation*” for homeless verification. This language allows the emergency shelters to verify homeless status based on available information, such as third party verification as I mentioned earlier. In addition, the shelter provider can check in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and shelter providers are also allowed based on their professional judgment to have 5% of the individuals or families they serve self-certify their homeless status.

I did speak to Director Tsuhako yesterday regarding this and confirmed the information I provided to you earlier. The HPO Administrator is currently away at a conference, but when he returns I will confirm that his staff did reach out to Maui shelter providers regarding this information, and if not will ask that he follow up regarding this matter.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Scott

Scott Morishige

Division Administrator

State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services

Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division

1010 Richards Street, Suite 412

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808-586-5238

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From: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 10:20 PM

To: Campos, Joseph H <jcampos@dhs.hawaii.gov>; Morishige, Scott S <smorishige@dhs.hawaii.gov>

Cc: Staff BFED <Staff.BFED@mauicounty.us>; nicolehuguenin@gmail.com; Josiah.Nishita@mauicounty.gov; Erin Wade <Erin.wade@co.maui.hi.us>; Cynthia Lallo <Cynthia.D.Lallo@co.maui.hi.us>; Naomi Crozier <charleen.n.crozier@co.maui.hi.us>

Subject: RE: Homeless Verification Letter

Aloha e Jo and Scott,

Mahalo for your assistance on this issue. Just wanted to verify, that when Human Concerns Director Tsuhako says, “The State of Hawaii Department of Human Services Homeless Programs Office is the entity that dictates which outreach providers administer homeless verification for shelter placement eligibility. The State of Hawaii is the primary funder of homeless shelters, and thus the shelters that receive State funding are contractually obligated to accept homeless verifications only from HPO funded Outreach contractors. The State DHS Homeless Programs Office currently includes language in its contracts that a homeless verification letter for the purposes of accessing services must come from another HPO contracted provider. A main reason for this is that HPO does not have oversight over agencies that are not contracted by it for homeless services.”

That you folks still stand by the email sent that clarifies that the process for homeless verification is not just limited to the outreach provider, but also allows the shelter to verify homeless status based on available information. The available information to the shelter provider could include any current open enrollment in a homeless program in the Homeless Management Information System, or could be based off of third-party verification provided by Maui Police Department, County Homeless Coordinator, Churches or other social service providers and/or businesses who the homeless individual is known to. Has HPO staff followed up with Maui shelter providers and the Director to remind them of the shared responsibility they have to provide homeless verification, and that verification is not solely dependent on homeless outreach? That flexibility is needed so a shelter can serve a client that may not be connected to homeless outreach even though the completion of Homeless verification letter for its programs is limited to HPO contracted providers. Has the Department been able to remind Director Tsuhako and the HPO contracted providers that shelter programs are allowed based on their professional judgement to have 5% of the individuals or families they serve to self certify their homeless status?

Mahalo nui for your time and attention to this matter,
Tamara

From: Campos, Joseph H <jcampos@dhs.hawaii.gov>

Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 10:26 PM

To: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Morishige, Scott S <smorishige@dhs.hawaii.gov>

Cc: Staff BFED <Staff.BFED@mauicounty.us>; nicolehuguenin@gmail.com

Subject: Re: Homeless Verification Letter

Scott,

Please assist in examining the singular entity approach on Maui.

Thanks

Joseph H. Campos II
Deputy Director

Department of Human Services
1390 Miller Street, Room 209
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 586-4998

From: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>
Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 11:52 AM
To: Campos, Joseph H <jcampos@dhs.hawaii.gov>
Cc: Staff BFED <Staff.BFED@mauicounty.us>; nicolehuguenin@gmail.com <nicolehuguenin@gmail.com>
Subject: Homeless Verification Letter

Aloha e Joseph,

I am writing to inquire about entities qualified to provide Homeless Verification Letter procedures. We have been informed by our Department of Human Concerns Director Lori Tsuhako, that Maui County has one entity qualified to give Homeless Verification Letters and that decision has been made by and is controlled by the State DHS BESS Division. Constituents have commented only Maui County has only one entity and that is not the case for other counties in the State. My question is, why with our Homeless population ballooning in light of the fires, people falling through the cracks and those indirectly related to the fires losing housing, the end of the eviction moratorium, why Maui County is now only allowed to have entity qualified to provide Homeless Verification Letters per DHS BESS Division this is not helpful. Constituents have relayed previously Police, Hospital, Homeless coordinator and others have been qualified to provide Homeless Verification Letters and this is a hardship on top of everything else that Maui County has endured.

Mahalo,

Tamara

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