

**DEPARTMENT OF
HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**
dhhl.hawaii.gov

The legal basis for the establishment of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) is the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended (HHCA). Passed by Congress and signed into law by President Warren Harding on July 9, 1921,¹ the HHCA provides for the rehabilitation of the native Hawaiian people through a government-sponsored homesteading program. Native Hawaiians are defined as individuals having at least fifty percent Hawaiian blood.²

Pursuant to provisions of the HHCA, the Department provides direct benefits to native Hawaiians in the form of ninety-nine-year homestead leases at an annual rental of \$1. In 1990, the Legislature authorized the Department to extend leases for an aggregate term not to exceed 199 years.³ Homestead leases are for residential, agricultural, or pastoral purposes. Aquacultural leases are also authorized, but none has been awarded to date. The intent of the homesteading program is to provide for economic self-sufficiency of native Hawaiians through the provision of land.

Other benefits provided by the HHCA include financial assistance through direct loans or loan guarantees for home construction, replacement, or repair and for the development of farms and ranches; technical assistance to farmers and ranchers; and the operation of water systems.

HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

Pursuant to section 202, HHCA, the Department is headed by an executive board, the Hawaiian Homes Commission, whose nine members are appointed to four-year terms by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Three members are residents of the City and County of Honolulu; two are residents of the County of Hawaii, one being a resident of East Hawaii and the other a resident of West Hawaii; two are residents of the County of Maui, one being a resident of the island of Molokai; one is a resident of the County of Kauai; and the ninth member is the Chairman, who is appointed by the Governor from among the members of the Commission. Members must have been residents of the State at least three years prior to their appointment. At least four of the members must have not less than one-fourth Hawaiian blood. The Chairman of the Commission serves as the full-time administrator of the Department; other members of the Commission serve without pay.

¹ See chapter 42, 42 Stat. 108 (1921).

² See section 201, HHCA; sections 10-2 and 674-2, HRS.

³ See Act 305, SLH 1990; section 208, HHCA.

Homestead Services Division

The Homestead Services Division is involved in the direct servicing of homestead lessees and applicants for homestead leases. Its three branches are: (1) the District Operations Branch, which provides direct services to lessees and applicants on a statewide basis through its six district offices of East Hawaii, West Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, Oahu, and Kauai, and manages the homestead areas and projects on those islands; (2) the Homestead Applications Branch, which receives and processes applications for homesteads and maintains and updates waiting lists; and (3) the Loan Services Branch, which provides financial services for financing for new home construction, replacement homes, home repairs, farming, and ranching; provides access to other loan sources through its loan guaranty program; and undertakes collection activities to obtain payments.

Land Development Division

The Land Development Division is responsible for developing Hawaiian home lands for homesteading and income-producing purposes. Its two branches are: (1) the Design and Construction Branch, which designs and constructs on-site and off-site improvements for the development of residential, farm, and pastoral lots for homesteading purposes; and (2) the Master-Planned Community Branch, which prepares plans for entire communities with homes, businesses, services, open space, and recreational and cultural amenities.

Land Management Division

The Land Management Division is responsible for management of the Department's non-homestead land, maximizing returns from existing and potential income properties, enforcement activities, and development of a comprehensive land inventory. Its two branches are: (1) the Technical Services Branch, which provides the Division with appraisal preparations and documentation of license and easement agreements, as well as computerization of DHHL's land inventory; and (2) the Income Property Branch, which is charged with developing some of DHHL's lands for income purposes. When completed, the lands will be turned over to the Land Management Branch for management.

Administrative Services Office

The Administrative Services Office provides support services to the Department in the areas of personnel, budgeting, program evaluation, information and communication systems, and internal management assistance.

Fiscal Office

The Fiscal Office is responsible for providing accounting, fiscal services, and internal control systems for the Department, including collecting lease and loan payments and other activities. It provides management tools with its financial reports and statements, as well as information on financial trends and developments; and provides for investment on financial trends and developments and for the investment of cash not immediately needed for operations.

Information and Community Relations Office

The Information and Community Relations Office plans, organizes, and carries out public information and community relations programs and projects. It produces the Department's publications, exhibits, digital and online content, and displays. It also provides advice and assistance to the Hawaiian Homes Commission and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' staff on public relations and public information matters.

Planning Office

The Planning Office prepares preliminary studies required for future land development, water resource development, and the proper consideration of archaeological, historical, and environmental concerns. Functions of the Trust Resolution Project have been transferred to this Office.

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