



HAWAII CARPENTERS APPRENTICESHIP & TRAINING FUND

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NEWS RELEASE

NINE INMATES GRADUATE FROM PRE-APPRENTICESHIP CARPENTRY PROGRAM

Pearl City, Hawai'i – Marking a transformative milestone for both workforce development and criminal justice reform, the Hawaii Carpenters Apprenticeship & Training Fund (HCATF) celebrated the graduation of 9 men who completed the pre-apprenticeship program at Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF).

This class of 9 joins approximately 15 men and women from both Waiawa Correctional Facility and the Women's Community Correctional Center who have successfully completed the HCATF's pre-apprenticeship program while incarcerated.

"This program helps break the cycle of reincarceration while meeting our industry's workforce needs," said Edmund Aczon, HCATF Executive Director. "By providing comprehensive skills and training and a clear career pathway, we're not just creating skilled craftspeople – we're offering an opportunity for genuine second chances and sustainable careers."

The participants completed a six-week course taught by an HCATF instructor, during which they received similar training to that offered at the HCATF facility. The students took courses covering math, safety, learning to read blueprints, framing and other hands on lessons.

"Our goal at Waiawa Correctional Facility is to ensure inmates can be contributing members of the community upon release," said Roseanne Propato, Corrections Education Program Manager with the Department of Corrections. "This program and partnership with HCATF have allowed many of our formerly incarcerated inmates to not only contribute but earn a living wage and contribute to building for our community."

WCF provides an environment that helps inmates successfully re-enter the community from prison. Inmates participate in education or substance abuse treatment programs. One of the graduates of this class is Lokahiokalei Liu who looks forward to being able to work on projects across the state.

"This program was really good for me," said Liu. "It gave me confidence and hope for myself. I also learned how this is a career opportunity, not just a job where I can be productive, responsible, and provide for my kids. I didn't know where I wanted to go in life, but this program has given me direction."

Honolulu Community College (HCC) is also providing funding for the program. HCATF will continue to partner with both the DPS and HCC in 2025. The next program will be at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) scheduled for the first half of 2025.

Since the program started in 2024, 24 men and women in WCF and WCCC have completed the pre-apprenticeship program. Thus far, 6 are currently indentured apprentices with the Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters.

"We're extremely proud of these men and women who completed the pre-apprenticeship program," said Aczon. "They exemplify the quality workmanship and professionalism our industry demands. We look forward to seeing them join the apprenticeship program and be able to work and contribute to the growth and success of our industry."

HCATF is a partnership between the Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters, the General Contractors Labor Association, the Building Industry Labor Association, the Wall and Ceiling Industry Association of Hawaii, the state and federal government, and the University of Hawaii. Together, these organizations provide the funding, guidance, training and industry insight to ensure apprenticeship success.

Those interested can learn more about HCATF's apprenticeship opportunities at hicarpenterstraining.com.

HCATF has also partnered with the Hawaii State Department of Education to create trades pathways for high school students, the University of Hawaii Community Colleges, and other workforce development organizations. To learn more about HCATF visit <https://hicarpenterstraining.com/>

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*** Link to video and photos ***

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