HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-251

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE CITY AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE HOMELESS OUTREACH AND NAVIGATION FOR UNSHELTERED PERSONS PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, Section 3-501 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu 1973 (Amended 2017 Edition), as amended ("Charter"), establishes the Office of the City Auditor, headed by a City Auditor; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Charter Section 3-502, the City Auditor is responsible for conducting performance audits of the agencies and operations of the City and County of Honolulu ("City"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Charter Section 3-114, the City Council ("Council") may direct the City Auditor to conduct a performance audit of any City agency or operation; and

WHEREAS, homelessness remains one of the City's most persistent and serious public policy challenges and requires a coordinated response that prioritizes public health and safety, respects the dignity of those experiencing homelessness, and responsibly expends public funds; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 Point in Time Count ("PIT Count") counted 4,539 individuals experiencing homelessness in the City, an increase of 1 percent over the 2024 PIT Count; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 PIT Count also reported a 35 percent increase in the number of sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness compared with the 2024 PIT Count, while 78 percent of unsheltered individuals reported experiencing homelessness for one year or more; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Department of Community Services ("DCS"), in partnership with the Honolulu Police Department ("HPD"), established the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons program ("HONU program") as a mobile temporary shelter and navigation program to provide immediate, short-term support for individuals experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the HONU program was originally launched and funded as a three-year pilot program with a total budget of approximately $6,000,000, which included the purchase of specialized inflatable shelter structures; and

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the number of HONU program sites simultaneously operating has fluctuated since its inception and, at various times, has operated a single active site; and

WHEREAS, the HONU program is funded through a combination of federal, State of Hawai‘i ("State"), and City funds, and the sources and levels of funding have changed over the course of the HONU program's existence; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's $8,000,000 supplemental budget request for homeless triage and medical respite programs was not approved by the State Legislature during the 2026 legislative session and therefore was not included in the State's Fiscal Year 2027 supplemental budget; and

WHEREAS, the Council finds that, given the HONU program's continued operation, evolving funding structure, reported program activity, and level of public investment, a performance audit would provide the Council and the public with an independent assessment of the HONU program's administration, operations, costs, outcomes, and effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the HONU program involves coordination among multiple City agencies, including the DCS and the HPD, as well as contracted and community service providers, and a performance audit would provide an independent assessment of the HONU program's governance, interagency coordination, contracts, data collection, reporting, budgeting, and operational controls; and

WHEREAS, concerns have been raised through media reports and neighborhood board meetings regarding HONU program sites and their potential impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, nearby public facilities, public safety, and the usability of an area following the relocation or closure of a HONU program site; and

WHEREAS, a performance audit would assist policymakers in evaluating the HONU program and informing future policy and budget decisions relating to the City's response to homelessness; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the City Auditor is directed to conduct a performance audit of the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons program ("HONU program"); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the performance audit is requested to address, but not be limited to, the following areas:

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1. **Purpose and responsibilities:** Assess whether the HONU program has a clearly defined purpose, governance structure, and policies and procedures that establish the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Community Services, the Honolulu Police Department, contracted providers, and other applicable agencies; and whether interagency coordination is effective;

2. **Costs and outcomes:** Determine costs and funding sources of the HONU program since its 2019 inception, including related contracts, memoranda of agreement, memoranda of understanding, and grants; evaluate whether the HONU program is achieving its intended outcomes, including housing and service placements for individuals experiencing homelessness; and to the extent that reliable data is available, compare the HONU program costs and outcomes with selected comparable City- or State of Hawai‘i-funded homelessness programs; and

3. **Processes and their efficiency:** Evaluate whether program management processes operate effectively and efficiently, including site selection, capacity management, intake, eligibility determination, prioritization, referral, exit practices, and how the HONU program considers and responds to impacts on surrounding communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the performance audit should not interfere with or hinder direct service delivery of the HONU program or law enforcement operations, and the City Auditor shall maintain the confidentiality of client information and legally protected privacy interests obtained during the audit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Auditor is requested to complete the performance audit within one calendar year of the adoption of this resolution and to file the final report with the City Clerk, in accordance with Section 3-114.2 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu 1973 (Amended 2017 Edition), as amended; and

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Director of Community Services, the Chief of Police, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, and the City Auditor.

INTRODUCED BY:

A. Kpola

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

OCT 29 2026

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

Report Title:
Audit Request; Office of the City Auditor ("OCA"); Department of Community Services ("DCS"); Honolulu Police Department ("HPD"); Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons ("HONU"); Homeless; Homelessness; Unsheltered; Program

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