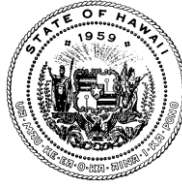


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.P.H., M.G.A.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. BOX 3378
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
President and Members of the Senate
Thirty-third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura,
Speaker
and Members of the House of
Representatives
Thirty-third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting a copy of the Annual Report to the Legislature of the Food Safety Branch (formerly the Sanitation Branch) and of the Status of the Sanitation and Environmental Health Special Fund, pursuant to Chapter 321, Sections 27.5 and 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, I am also informing you that the report may be viewed electronically at:

<https://health.hawaii.gov/opppd/department-of-health-reports-to-2026-legislature/>

Sincerely,

Kenneth S. Fink, M.D., M.P.H., M.G.A.
Director of Health

Enclosures

c: Legislative Reference Bureau
Hawaii State Library System (2)
Hamilton Library

**REPORT TO THE
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAII
2026**

Food Safety Branch (formerly Sanitation Branch) Annual
Audit
Sanitation and Environmental Health Special Fund
Fiscal Year 2025

**Pursuant to Chapters 321-27.5 and 321-27,
Hawaii Revised Statutes,
Requesting the Department of Health to Submit an
Annual Audit Report of the Sanitation Branch
And
Requesting the Department of Health to Submit a
Report on the Status of the
Sanitation and Environmental Health Special Fund**

**PREPARED BY:
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
STATE OF HAWAII**

November 2025

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a broad overview of the functional role and activities of the Food Safety Branch, formerly the Sanitation Branch, as required under Section 321-27.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), that states, “The Department shall perform annual audits of the sanitation branch to be completed by November 30 of each year, and shall include an audit of:

- 1) Fees collected;
- 2) The number and results of sanitation inspections;
- 3) The number of training seminars held; and
- 4) The cost of training personnel in the sanitation branch.”

This report is also being submitted under Section 321-27(d), HRS, which states that the Department shall submit a report to the Legislature concerning the status of the Sanitation and Environmental Health Special Fund, including the amount of monies taken in and expended from the fund, and the sources of receipts and uses of expenditures.

BACKGROUND

The function of the Food Safety Branch is to promote and maintain a sanitary and healthful environment for the people and visitors of Hawaii by implementing legally required programs for:

- 1) Food protection.
- 2) Assessing and assuring that hospitals and medical facilities meet sanitation requirements.
- 3) Licensing of tattoo artists and embalmers; and
- 4) Regulating tattoo shops, mortuaries, and public swimming pools.

The Food Safety Branch focuses on its food protection program, which has evolved into a complex program concentrating on public health practices through education, partnerships, prevention, assessment, and compliance.

Food is a significant element of Hawaii’s multi-ethnic culture and is a principal attraction for visitors to Hawaii. Food contamination presents a great risk to public health. The Food Safety Branch protects residents and visitors from exposure to food borne illnesses by conducting inspections and assessments of food service establishments to ensure that the food served is safe to eat. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 the branch maintained 10,577 active food establishment permits statewide, which includes restaurants and all food purveyors.

In addition, the branch promotes food protection through education. The Food Safety Consultation and Education Program plays a vital role in preventing food borne illnesses by developing and implementing food safety surveillance and control plans and conducting educational activities to assist the food service industry and food handlers.

Staff training is also a significant element for maximizing efficiency and effectiveness to satisfy program performance objectives. Mechanisms are in place to provide continuing education as the branch updates and cross trains staff to keep up with technological and organizational changes.

FEES COLLECTED

Under Section 321-11.5, HRS, the Department collects fees for permits, licenses, inspections, various certificates, variances, investigations, and reviews. These fees are deposited into the Sanitation and Environmental Health Special Fund under Section 321-27(a), HRS that supports training for staff in the Environmental Health Services Division and food establishment personnel; as well as provides educational outreach to the public regarding food safety.

FY 25 Revenue is expected to be approximately \$3.3M, consistent with revenues from FY24 as the number of permit issued is approximately 5% greater in FY25 than in FY24. The revenues have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Prior to the pandemic, revenue was stable, averaging \$3.2-3.5M million annually since the full implementation of fee increases and the change from biennial to annual permit fees.

NUMBER AND RESULTS OF FOOD SAFETY BRANCH FOOD FACILITY INSPECTIONS

The Food Safety Branch currently permits 10,577 food establishments statewide.

Year	Inspections Conducted*	Violations
FY 25	8,624	1,510
**FY24	4,956	1,188
FY 23	15,429	2,868
FY 22	15,680	2,956
FY 21	14,200	2,100
FY 20	10,200	2,300

*Inspections include routine and follow-up inspections

**Data from July 1, 2023 to Oct 31, 2023

Year	General Complaint Inspections	Food-Borne Illness Complaints*
FY 25	452	89
**FY24	177	51
FY23	480	164
FY 22	461	156
FY 21	852	66
FY 20	900	13

*Complaints received internally from the Department of Health’s Disease Outbreak and Control Division

**Data from July 1, 2023 to Oct. 31, 2023

Year	Green Placard	Yellow Placard
FY 25	86%	14%
**FY24	87%	13%

FY 23	88%	12%
FY 22	88%	12%
FY 21	90%	10%
FY 20	86%	14%

**Data from July 1, 2023 to Oct. 31, 2023

In FY25, the Food Safety Program transitioned to a new IT system, that handles all inspection, permitting and fiscal data due to performance issues. The program had temporarily reverted to manual systems during the transition and data from FY24 and partially into FY25 could not be compiled. However, the statewide food safety program demonstrated consistent productivity. Ongoing vacancies statewide does impact total inspection counts. Recruitment is ongoing.

The consistent number of yellow placards issued year over year is a direct result of quality inspections and the public posting of food inspection results. The consistent presence in the food industry is critical for the industry to continue to be committed to food safety.

NUMBER OF TRAINING SEMINARS HELD

	FY 25	FY 24	FY 23	FY 22	FY 21	FY 20
Food Certification Workshops	0	0	0	0	0	9
Students Attended	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	349
Students Certified	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	349
% Passed	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
Food Handlers Education Classes	267	283	285	360	567	242
Students Attended	3714	4133	3709	3470	2129	3143

Food Certification Workshops are 16-hour (2 days) classes that cover the principles of food safety and protection as it pertains to HAR 11-50 Food Safety Code. This workshop is equivalent to education typically required for all food managers in states and counties that mandate food safety training at the managerial level.

Food Handlers Education Classes are a 2-hour class designed to give basic instruction in food safety. Since 2017, HAR requires that all food establishments have always at least one employee available with a Food Handlers Certificate. The course addresses the four basic tenets of food safety. Clean, separate, cook and chill. The course is given at no charge and a course completion certificate is issued. The course utilizes hands on demonstrations and audience participation. The DOH also recognizes many ANSI certified online providers that provide the mandated Food Handlers Certificates for low cost (\$10-\$15) and in multiple languages.

COST OF TRAINING BRANCH PERSONNEL

**National Environmental Health Assoc Annual Education Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Dates: July 15 – 18, 2024
Attendees: Three Food Safety Specialist IV's
Cost: Total cost was \$11,789.50

Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Assoc

Dates: Sept 9 – 12, 2024
Attendees: Food Safety Specialist (FSS) IV -Shellfish Specialist
Cost: Total cost was \$1,590.23

**Western Assoc of Food and Drug Officials Conference
Sacramento, California**

Dates: Sept 23-27, 2024
Attendees: EH Program Manager
Food Safety Specialist VI
Food Safety Specialist V
Cost: Total cost was \$5153.09for 3 attendees

**Training for HSGovTech
Hilo DHO**

Dates: January 16-17, 2024
Attendees: EH Program Manager
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) VI Standards Office Supervisor
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) IV
Admin. Assistant II
Cost: Total cost was \$2,310.70

**Training for HSGovTech
Maui DHO**

Dates: January 21-22, 2024
Attendees: EH Program Manager
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) VI Standards Office Supervisor
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) IV
Admin. Assistant II
Cost: Total cost was \$2,322.58

**Training for HSGovTech
Kauai DHO**

Dates: January 23-24, 2024
Attendees: EH Program Manager

Food Safety Specialist (FSS) VI Standards Office Supervisor
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) IV
Admin. Assistant II

Cost: Total cost was \$2,252.79

**Conference for Food Protection
Denver, Colorado**

Dates: March 24-28, 2024

Attendees: EH Program Manager
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) V Standardization Officer
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) IV

Cost: Total cost was \$9,257.95

**National Conference of Interstate Milk Shippers
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Dates: April 13 – 16, 2024

Attendees: 2 FSS IV Staff

Cost: \$5,953.64

**Pacific Rim Shellfish Conference
Anchorage, Alaska**

Dates: April 7-10, 2024

Attendees: Food Safety Specialist (FSS) IV -Shellfish Specialist

Cost: Total cost was \$2,890.94

**Training for HSGovTech
Maui DHO**

Dates: June 9-10, 2024

Attendees: EH Program Manager
Admin. Assistant II

Cost: Total cost was \$1365.16

**Association of Food and Drug Officials Annual Education Conference
Dallas, Texas**

Dates: June 22-25, 2024

Attendees: EH Program Manager
Food Safety Specialist (FSS) VI Standards Office Supervisor
Food Safety Specialist V Section Supervisor

Cost: \$11,553.55

FD245 Shellfish Plant Standardization

Dallas, TX

Dates: September 24-28, 2024
Attendees: Food Safety Specialist IV (Hawaii Island Staff)
Cost: Total \$1738.39

Western Assoc of Food and Drug Officials Conference

Dallas, TX

Dates: March 4-7, 2025
Attendee: Food Safety Specialist IV (Hawaii Island Staff)
Cost: \$808.80 (airfare)
Note: conference was cancelled, airfare good for one year-expires March 2026

Western Assoc of Food and Drug Officials Conference

Honolulu, HI

Dates: September 23-24, 2025
Attendee: District Health Officer (Hawaii Island)
Cost: Total \$624.19

Training on Molokai for new FSS

Date: 09/3/2024
Attendee: Food Safety Specialist (FSS) Supervisor V (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$348.50

Training on Molokai for new FSS

Date: 10/4/2024
Attendee: FSS Supervisor V (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$292.00

Training on Molokai for new FSS

Date: 10/7/2024
Attendee: FSS Supervisor V (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$292.00

Training on Maui for new FSS

Dates: 10/14/2024 to 10/18/24
Attendee: FSS I (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$2,258.04

Training on Molokai for new FSS

Date: 11/06/24
Attendee: FSS Supervisor V (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$273.00

Training on Maui for new FSS

Date: 11/18/2024
Attendee: FSS I (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$2,187.92

Training on Maui and Lanai for new FSS

Date: 3/3/2025 to 3/7/2025
Attendee: FSS I (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$2,499.56

Training on Lanai for new FSS

Date: 3/5/2025 to 3/7/2025
Attendee: FSS Supervisor V (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$1,657.37

Training of FSS II and assist with inspections on Maui

Date: 4/21/2025 to 4/25/2025
Attendee: FSS II (Maui Staff)
Cost: \$2,229.80

TOTAL COST FOR TRAINING FY 2024 **\$71,649.66**

STATUS OF THE SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIAL FUND
(FY25)

Food Establishment Permits issued in FY24: 10,595
Food Establishment Permits issued in FY25: 11,227

Amount of money taken in (Datamart report for FY25): \$1,813,566.72

Note: This only includes revenues through the first 3 quarters due to delays in reconciliation associated with new software. Q4 is currently being reconciled and is expected to be approximately \$1.5M based on permits issued and permit cost. Total taken in for FY25 is anticipated to be approximately \$3.3M which is greater than the amount expended.

Amount expended: \$3,151,231.22

The sources of receipts and uses of expenditures are as enumerated in 321-27(a) and 321-27(b), HRS, respectively.