

# OVERVIEW

THE AUDITOR  
STATE OF HAWAII

## Audit of State Vocational Education Programs and Job Training Programs

### Summary

State vocational education programs and job training programs are important to the State because they provide residents with the essential skills necessary to become self-sufficient and contributing members of the society, and to achieve self-fulfillment goals. The Office of the Auditor initiated this audit in response to concerns over the roles and responsibilities of the various state agencies and the use of funds for these programs.

The differentiation between vocational education and job training is not sharp. But, generally vocational education is viewed as developing skills in work context and not for a specific occupation—that is, a “first chance” to gain occupational skills. On the other hand, job training offers a “second chance” to gain specific occupational skills. The second chance may be needed because initial occupational skills were inadequate, or because changes in job market conditions require that new skills be learned.

Most of Hawaii’s occupational programs exist in five state agencies.

The Department of Education is one of two lead agencies. Its Vocational and Applied Technology Education program and career academies spent \$8 million in state and federal funds in FY1995-96.

The University of Hawaii, the other lead agency, offers vocational education programs through its community college system and the Employment Training Center. For FY1995-96, the university spent approximately \$18.6 million for vocational education programs, mostly in state funds.

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations administers four primary job training programs through its Workforce Development Division. The federal Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 accounts for most of the department’s job training programs at approximately \$11 million of the department’s \$13.3 million expenditures in FY1995-96. The state’s Employment and Training Fund program spent about \$2 million.

The Department of Human Services administers only the Ho’opono Workshop for the Blind. Its revolving fund showed a net loss of \$76,000 on net revenues of \$700,000 in FY1995-96.

The Department of Public Safety is required by statute to provide vocational education and occupational training programs. It offered such programs at seven of the eight correctional facilities at a cost of \$1.1 million in FY1995-96. The correctional industries program, required to be self-sufficient, showed a net profit of \$400,000 on sales of \$6.4 million for FY1995-96.

We found that not all departments perform adequate evaluations of their vocational education and job training programs. The community colleges have a comprehensive evaluation system while the DOE's evaluation efforts are inconsistent. The Department of Public Safety lacks an evaluation system.

We also found that many oversight bodies have been created for these programs, primarily to satisfy federal requirements. However, current federal trends combine programs and funding under block grants. The need for as many oversight bodies in the future may be reduced and DLIR has already led state efforts to consolidate. We believe that further consolidation should be encouraged.

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## Recommendations and Response

We recommended that the Legislature require the DOE and Department of Public Safety to submit annual performance reports on all their vocational education and job training programs and services. We also recommended that these agencies develop and maintain comprehensive systems of program monitoring and evaluation for their programs. Finally, we recommended in the interests of streamlining that the Legislature review the need for existing oversight bodies, and assess the feasibility of using existing agencies or offices to fulfill the functions of any proposed, new oversight bodies.

DOE concurred with our recommendations, but provided information on additional evaluation and monitoring efforts. DLIR provided additional information to support workforce consolidation. A point of clarification was incorporated into the report. The Department of Public Safety found the report to be thorough and comprehensive. It pointed out that vocational education programs contracted under the University of Hawaii's Community College System are subject to the same evaluation as all of the university's other vocational education services.

The Board of Education, Department of Human Services, University of Hawaii, and Board of Regents, did not respond to our recommendations.

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