

## Hawaii homeless programs get funds

### Federal grants will be used for rental assistance as well as operational costs

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 20, 2011

Hawaii homeless programs gave a collective sigh of relief yesterday: Amid continuing budget woes and the fear of deeper cuts to local funding, the federal government renewed \$10.2 million in grants to keep 34 homeless programs running statewide.

"It's great news," said Keith Ishida, administrator for the city Department of Community Services, which applied for the funds on behalf of nonprofits. "Under the present fiscal environment, our first goal is to maintain what we have."

Advocates, too, said talking about funding coming through is a nice change.

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development grants were awarded to homeless programs on Oahu and the neighbor islands for operational costs and for rental assistance. The award was slightly reduced, by about \$400,000, from last year.

Connie Mitchell, Institute for Human Services executive director, said many families in the islands are struggling with homelessness following job losses or pay cuts. The economic downturn has also made it harder to get off the streets.

"As the economy improves, we'll see a lot more movement," she said.

IHS received \$1.3 million to maintain its Home at Last program, which provides housing and services to chronically homeless single people. Right now, Home at Last -- in its seventh year -- is sheltering about 110 people on Oahu.

The HUD grants for the islands, part of a nationwide release of funding yesterday, comes as the Obama administration is pledging to end the homelessness of veterans and chronic homelessness by 2015, and homelessness among families by 2020.

They also come as volunteers nationwide prepare to conduct "point in time" counts of homeless. The count is set to be done over the course of one night -- a "point in time" -- later this month in communities on every island.

Last year's count showed homelessness on Oahu increased by 15 percent -- or 533 people -- from 2009. Some 4,171 homeless people were counted on Oahu. Statewide, the count showed there were about 5,834 unsheltered and sheltered homeless in the islands, a 1 percent increase from the year before.

The rise in homeless, during the worst economic decline since the Great Depression, followed years of increased attention to homelessness statewide.

The state and city have spent tens of millions of dollars in recent years to address homelessness. But that funding has declined during tight fiscal times.

ADVERTISEMENT



**DIRECTV** has more of what you want to watch!

**Switch today!**

**1-888-778-0985**

NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY!  
NO STARTUP COSTS!

Offer ends 2/9/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only (lease required). \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable use tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™