



HO‘OPONO MAMO

THE HAWAI‘I YOUTH DIVERSION SYSTEM

YEAR 1 EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Ho‘opono Mamo: The Hawai‘i Youth Diversion System was developed as a data-informed and community-driven initiative to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in the Hawai‘i juvenile justice system. The reduction of DMC is one of four core protections mandated by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for young people involved with the juvenile justice system. The trial implementation of Ho‘opono Mamo (HM) was overseen by the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Community Services. Honolulu Police Department District 5 (HPD D-5), encompassing the communities of Kalihi and Moanalua, was selected for the pilot phase. The Office of Youth Services (OYS) provided initial funding for the Susannah Wesley Community Center (SWCC) to serve as the Kalihi Palama Juvenile Assessment Center (KPJAC) and for the Wahi Kana‘aho, a component program supported by a combination of funding from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) and OYS to serve as the Cultural Healing and Learning Center. The University of Hawai‘i was contracted by OYS to conduct an evaluation of the process and outcomes, with a focus on how the implementation was addressing DMC reduction with recommendations for improvements for the next phase of development. This evaluation covers the first 12-months of the first phase of the trial, from March 16, 2015 to March 15, 2016.

The Ho‘opono Mamo Model

Vision: To see our children as mamo and to help them chart a pono path in harmony with all their relations and with generations past and future.

Mission: Ho‘opono Mamo is a diversion system made up of partnering government agencies, community-based organizations and families working together to support youth arrested for low-level offenses to heal themselves and their relationships, make amends, and chart a pono path for their future.

Ho‘opono Mamo was designed as a preferred process to divert youth away from the juvenile justice system to a pathway of supportive programs to help them address those issues that may be leading to risky or harmful behavior. The intention was to offer youth avenues to overcome challenges that lay at the root of their actions and to realize their own kuleana as valuable and gifted members of their communities.

As stated in the Ho‘opono Mamo Implementation Plan, the goals of Ho‘opono Mamo are:

1. To reduce the number of youth who penetrate the juvenile justice system.
2. To decrease disproportionate minority contact (DMC) among overrepresented ethnic groups.
3. To provide timely and customized intervention to youth upon arrest or apprehension.
4. To connect the juvenile justice system, schools, youth-serving agencies, community-based organizations, and families in collaboratively supporting our youth.
5. To provide multiple opportunities for learning, reflection, and positive development in a family-centered and youth-driven process.

The evaluation questions for the study were:

1. Was Ho‘opono Mamo implemented as designed and what are the factors impacting implementation?
2. Is Ho‘opono Mamo reaching its stated goals?
3. What improvements are needed to increase program fidelity and success towards the stated goals of Ho‘opono Mamo?

Summary of Findings & Recommendations

During the first year of HM implementation (from March 16, 2015-March 15, 2016), 349 youth received a total of 458 citations. The ethnic distribution among individual youth who received citations was reflective of juvenile arrest trends in HPD D-5. Micronesian youth, particularly Chuukese youth, comprised the largest share at 110 or 31.5% of youth cited. Youth of Filipino, Native Hawaiian, and Samoan ancestry followed (18.9%, 16.0%, and 11.2%, respectively). A slight majority of youth receiving citations were boys (197 youth or 56%) compared to girls (152 youth or 44%). The age at first citation ranged from 8-17 years old, with the greatest frequencies at age 15 (81 youth), followed by age 14 (65 youth), totaling a combined 42% of the cases. Of the 458 citations issued, 117 (26%) were for 1st-time law violations and 341 (74%) were for status offenses, regardless of any prior history of offense.

Upon receiving a citation, 240 or 69% of individual youth were successfully contacted by KPJAC staff and engaged in a talk-story style assessment with follow-up services provided by case workers, SWCC programs, or other referrals. Of the 349 youth who received citations in the first year of HM, 200 cases (57%) were reported to be closed within the first 18 months (March 16, 2015-September 15, 2016). 120 youth’s cases were closed as successful and 80 cases

were closed as unsuccessful (34% and 23% of individuals cited, respectively). Among the successful completions, the average case processing time was about 194 days or 6.5 months. For cases that were closed as unsuccessful, the average period from citation to closure was approximately 167 days or 5.6 months.

Interviews with a random sample of parents and youth who did participate highlighted the strengths of the program. Participants expressed that HM helped provide them different types of support that made a positive difference for themselves and their families in the following areas:

- Coping and decision-making skills
- Understanding the social and legal consequences of their actions
- Accountability and resources to reach their goals
- Youth involvement in positive activities
- Parent self-reflection and parenting skills
- Parent and child relationships

Overall, the program had limited, but statistically significant success and, if fully implemented with fidelity, the potential for success may be even greater based on these initial findings. The re-arrest analysis indicated a lower rate of re-arrests for HM participants compared to non-HM participants, with a 7.7% lower arrest rate for HM youth compared to the matched sample. There was also a trend that when police transported the youth directly to the assessment center with warm hand-offs, the positive difference for those cited for misdemeanors (with no prior offenses) was 3-4 times in magnitude (i.e., 8.7% vs. 28.1%). Among HM youth, those who received services had a 12.2% lower re-arrest rate than those who did not receive services. Those who completed the program had a 16.6% lower re-arrest rate. This positive effect was somewhat greater for those with first-time misdemeanors (with no prior offenses).

The impact of HM on re-arrest rates, however, appeared to differ by ethnic group. HM appeared to decrease re-arrests more for Samoan and “Other” non-Pacific Islander (including Filipino) youth, but did not appear to decrease the re-arrest rate for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander youth, compared to non-HM youth of those corresponding ethnic groups. Examining gender effects, there was a trend that HM appeared to decrease re-arrests more for boys than for girls. Finally, factors for re-arrest were identified from the data as: (1) having a prior arrest, (2) current arrest being a status offense, (3) being 13 years old or older, and (4) being of Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander ancestry. These factors can help identify cases that may need more attention and greater support.

The major limitation of the demonstration project was a lack of funding to fully implement the model, especially two key components designed specifically to address youths’ relationship with their family members. These components were the Wahi Kana‘aho (only partial funding) and Ho‘ala Conferencing Circles, both culturally grounded and designed to work with indigenous populations. A second limitation was the low number of youth taken immediately to the

Assessment Center upon contact with law enforcement; only 10 percent of citations issued during the first year of HM resulted in youth being transported directly to KPJAC by police. The low number of warm hand-offs from police required more time by KPJAC staff to make contact with youth and their parents or guardians. A third related factor affecting the fidelity of implementation was the use of a case worker model rather than an approach that mobilized a greater network of community-based supports, such as nonprofit and grassroots organizations and extended family in a “whole village” model. On one hand, the case worker model resulted in many youth receiving high quality support in the immediate term, but this approach did not necessarily result in the establishment of a stronger long-term support system. Also, a stronger emphasis on connecting youth and their families to appropriate service partners and community-based supports would have allowed more time for KPJAC case workers to pursue youth who were harder to reach and at higher risk of re-arrest.

The following recommendations were developed in response to the limitations described.

Recommendation 1: Implement the full Ho‘opono Mamo model

A commitment to fund and implement the full Ho‘opono Mamo (HM) model with all core components is the best way to test its effectiveness in reaching the goal of reducing racial and ethnic disparities among the groups who are disproportionately impacted by the Hawai‘i juvenile justice system. While this may not be feasible for a single agency’s budget, funding agreements between OYS and other partners, such as the Judiciary, the Child Welfare System (CWS), and the Native Hawaiian trusts could be developed as part of comprehensive systems change strategy.

The Wahi Kana‘aho and Ho‘ala Conferencing were key components that were centrally placed in the model based on DMC study findings and general knowledge that many of the arrested youth are facing serious challenges at home and have strained relationships with their parents or guardians. To understand the full potential of the model, it would be important for the key components to be implemented. Given the findings of the re-arrest analysis that participation in HM did not appear to significantly decrease the re-arrest rate for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander youth, helping youth and their families forge connections with culturally based interventions could prove to be critical in reducing DMC.

Recommendation 2: Remediate weaknesses of the trial implementation

The successful aspects of the trial implementation could be further strengthened by making improvements to a few areas.

Steps to Strengthen Weaknesses in Citation Procedures:

- Institute face-to-face training on Ho‘opono Mamo philosophy and citation procedures for all HPD D-5 officers with each quarterly rotation.
- Make it possible for D-5 officers to transport and drop off all eligible youth directly to the Assessment Center.
- Convene meetings with HPD to identify and address obstacles to bringing youth to the Assessment Center during its operating hours to increase the rate of warm handoffs.

Steps to Strengthen Weaknesses in Assessment Practices and Protocols:

- Implement a standardized risk-needs assessment at intake to determine case planning according to risk level.
- Systematize data collection and sharing at multiple levels.
- With Assessment Center staff and HPD, assess the safety risks of current eligibility requirements for citations and what changes might need to be made.

Recommendation 3: Cultivate a Community-Based Network of Care

The HM model centered on a collaborative network of available programs, organizations, individuals and services to which youth would be connected for longer term community engagement or more intensive services. The following steps could help to structure the implementation of this approach.

- **Shifting priorities at the Assessment Center** to make time for staff to broaden and strengthen the network of service-providing partners who are willing to serve HM youth across the continuum of care, including grassroots organizations and networks of mentors in their respective communities.
- **Conducting community outreach efforts and coordinating existing resources** (e.g., 808youth.com) through regular network gatherings with existing and potential partners to share what type of support they can offer and for what types of youth.
- **Establishing an operational work group** to develop clear criteria, agreements, and protocols for determining appropriate referrals and making referrals through a “warm handoff” to ensure that a connection is made between the youth and the referral program or organization.
- **Convening an advisory group** to oversee care of the network, with kupuna and other trusted cultural practitioners and members who contribute to keeping the work grounded in the concerns and values of youth, families, and communities.