



Hawai'i Access to Justice Commission sponsors the

2026 HAWAII ACCESS TO JUSTICE CONFERENCE

“JUSTICE FOR ALL MEANS ALL”

Friday, June 19, 2026

William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai'i
2515 Dole Street, Classrooms 2 and 3

- 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. Continental breakfast; registration
- 8:30 - 9:00 Welcome:
- Former Dean **Aviam Soifer** and **Robert LeClair**, co-emcees
 - **Hon. Joseph E. Cardoza**, Chair, Hawai'i Access to Justice Commission, former State of Hawai'i Second Circuit Chief Judge (Overview of activities of the Commission)
 - Chief Justice, Hawai'i Supreme Court (Overview of activities of the Judiciary)
- 9:00 - 10:00 Keynote speaker: **Erwin Chemerinsky**, Dean of Berkeley Law
- 10:00 - 10:15 Break
- 10:15 - 11:45 **“Meeting the Challenges in the Current Social, Political, Economic Climate”**
[Commission Chair Judge Cardoza (facilitator), Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean Camille Nelson, Hawai'i Supreme Court Associate Justice Sabrina McKenna]
A conversation about the difficulties and uncertainties in the current social, political, and economic climate.
- 11:45 - 12:45 Light lunch
- 12:45 - 2:00 Afternoon concurrent workshops:
1. **“The State of Public Interest Law: Voices from the Field”**
[Angela Lovitt (facilitator), Henderson Huihui, Ashley Kaono, Jamie DeMello, Nanor Wong]
Bringing together practitioners from diverse organizations to share candid insights into the realities of public interest lawyering. Panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities shaping their daily work, including resource constraints, systemic barriers, and successes.
 2. **“I Can't Pay My Rent, Now What?”** [Tracey Wiltgen (facilitator), Judge Shellie Park-Hoapili, Richard M. Crum, Konrad Ng] Act 278 provides tenants with the opportunity to participate in early mediation, before a landlord may file for eviction. The goal of the Act is to encourage communication and early negotiation of payment plans and other solutions that enable landlords and tenants to avoid the eviction process and keep tenants housed. The Act went into effect on February 5, 2026 and will run through February 4, 2028. The panel will describe the statewide mediation program created in response to Act 278, and whether it is making a positive impact on tenants and landlords.
 3. **“The Continuing Immigration Crisis”**
[Corey Park (facilitator), Veronica Mendoza, Neribel Chardon, Pilar P. Kam]
A panel of experienced immigration rights advocates will provide an update on how current policies are impacting Hawai'i's immigrant community, such as through roundups and increased detentions and removals, as well as the fallout effects of those policies, such as on family

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separation and economic destabilization. The panel will also address how others in the community can assist in expanding the services to help protect the immigrant community by providing volunteer legal and advocacy services.

4. **"Expungement and Compassionate Release"** [Makalika Naholowaa (facilitator), Kirsha Durante, Dawn Nekoba, Joshua Ching] Hawai'i allows expungement of certain arrest records and a limited number of criminal convictions, removing barriers to employment, housing, and education for people who deserve a fair chance. For individuals who are incarcerated and seriously ill, compassionate release offers the opportunity to spend their final days at home with family rather than dying in custody — while alleviating costly medical care for the state. This panel covers the law, policy, process, and resources for attorneys seeking to help with either form of relief.
5. **"Overcoming Barriers to Access to Justice for People with Developmental Disabilities"** [Heather Lusk (facilitator), Che Silvert, Louis Erteschik, Kathryn Mayer] This workshop will focus on local efforts to increase access to justice for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, as they frequently face barriers such as difficulty understanding legal proceedings and lack of appropriate accommodations. Presentations will focus on implementing best practices such as plain English, exploring the intersection of guardian ad litem (GAL), the GAL pilot project Kokua Kanwai and how to overcome systemic barriers to access to justice for this community.

2:00 - 2:15

Break

2:15 - 3:30

Afternoon concurrent workshops:

6. **"Key Aspects of Health Care Decision-Making in Hawai'i: Informed Consent, Capacity, and New Directions for Hawai'i"**
[James Pietsch and Marvin Acklin] Update on the Uniform Health Care Decisions Act; whether or not there are changes to the law relating to health care and mental health care decision-making, issues relating to surrogate decision-making will continue to be challenging for health care providers, patients, kupuna, families, and attorneys.
7. **"Debt Collection and Access to Justice"**
[Judge Joseph Cardoza (facilitator), Judge Michael Soong, Judge Jill Hasegawa, Christine Daleiden] This workshop concerns one of the most frequently filed civil cases in Hawai'i and the nation. The presenters will provide an update on the issues regarding debt collection litigation and how it affects access to justice for civil litigants.
8. **Appellate Pro Bono Program**
[Ethan Rabinowitz (facilitator), Sharla Manley, Judge Kirstin M. Hamman, Grant Teichman] The Appellate Pro Bono Program was formally established in 2017 in a joint effort by the Judiciary, the Hawaii State Bar Association's Appellate Division, and Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii to assist self-represented litigants before the Intermediate Court of Appeals. This session will provide an overview of successful outcomes and attorney-volunteer participation, as well as a discussion of possible program expansion to Special Education agency appeals before the Circuit Court.
9. **Increasing Access to Justice for All Ohana in Hawai'i**
[Judge Jessi Hall (facilitator), Judge Andrew Park, Carol Lockwood] Effective January 1, 2026, Hawaii's new parentage laws are now updated into the present and centers the best interests of the keiki, regardless of their parents' gender, sexual orientation or marital status. This session will cover the new parentage act and its implementation, including provisions to ensure that children of same-gender and diverse family structures are treated equally under the law.

3:35 - 4:15

Plenary: "Justice for All Means All"

Calvin Pang (moderator), Associate Justice Sabrina McKenna, Dean Chemerinsky, Catherine Fisk, Judge Joseph Cardoza (ret.)

4:15

"Hawai'i Aloha"

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