



# Island Community Report: Kaua'i

## *Executive Summary*



*This Executive Summary of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA) Island Community Report presents an annual overview of key issues affecting Native Hawaiian communities on Kaua'i. It highlights community concerns monitored by OHA, current Native Hawaiian data, and updates on OHA's grant and loan initiatives. The topics covered align with OHA's four Strategic Directions: Educational Pathways, Health Outcomes, Quality Housing, and Economic Stability.*

### **Current Conditions**

Kaua'i County has a Native Hawaiian population of 17,105, representing 23% of the county's total population (73,247) and 6% of the state's total Native Hawaiian population (310,789) (2017-2021).<sup>1</sup>



#### **Educational Pathways Data**

- Approximately 40% of Kaua'i County Native Hawaiian public high school graduates enrolled in colleges across the nation compared to 49% of all Kaua'i County public school graduates and 36% of all Native Hawaiians statewide.<sup>2</sup>
- There are currently four Hawaiian Focused Charter Schools and two Hawaiian-medium schools on Kaua'i (SY22-23).<sup>3</sup>



#### **Health Outcomes Data**

- 77% of Native Hawaiian adults on Kaua'i report having a physical checkup in the past year, compared to 73% of all Kaua'i residents, and 74% of Native Hawaiians statewide (2021-2023).<sup>4</sup>
- 33% of Native Hawaiians in Kaua'i County report that they can converse 'ōlelo Hawai'i at a beginner level with others, compared to 14% of non-Hawaiian Kaua'i County residents, and 31% of Native Hawaiians statewide (2025).<sup>5</sup>



#### **Quality Housing Data**

- 44% (658 of 1,511) of Native Hawaiian renters in Kaua'i County pay affordable rent (<30% of household income toward rent), compared to 46% (3,788 of 8,153) of all households in Kaua'i County, and 42% (13,778 of 32,538) of Native Hawaiian renters statewide (2017-2021).<sup>6</sup>
- 61% (2,396 of 3,907) of Native Hawaiian households in Kaua'i County owned their homes, compared to 64% (14,515 of 22,668) of all households in Kaua'i County, and 57% of all Native Hawaiian households statewide (43,870 of 76,408) (2017-2021).<sup>7</sup>
- 8% (761) of all Department of Hawaiian Homelands leases statewide (10,048) are on Kaua'i (2024).<sup>8</sup>



#### **Economic Stability Data**

- Native Hawaiian median household income in Kaua'i County is \$82,376, 95% of the median income of all Kaua'i County residents (\$86,287) (2017-2021). Statewide, Native Hawaiian median household income is \$83,317 (95%), compared to \$88,005 for all households.<sup>9</sup>
- There are 1,942 Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs in Maui, Kalawao, & Kaua'i Counties. This is 19% of the 10,193 Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs statewide (2021).<sup>10</sup>

## Current Opportunities and Challenges / OHA Activities

*This section outlines key opportunities and challenges affecting beneficiaries on the island of Kauaʻi, organized according to OHA's four strategic directions. OHA continues to monitor these issues closely and respond with appropriate actions as needed.*

### EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

#### **Early Learning Apprenticeship Program**

The shortage of early learning professionals has forced preschools to close across the state, including on Kauaʻi. Throughout the 2025 legislative session OHA provided written testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 549, Relating to an Early Learning Apprenticeship Program, which would provide financial support to early learning service providers to participate in federal and state apprenticeship programs, expanding the number of qualified early learning professionals in the state. Although this bill died in conference committee, it will be automatically reintroduced in 2026 and OHA will continue to work with advocates throughout the year to plan how to advance this measure.

#### **Teacher Education Subsidy**

Due to a shortage of qualified teachers, more than 60,000 Hawaiʻi students have teachers that do not meet state certification levels, and the rate of qualified teachers leaving Hawaiʻi continues to accelerate.<sup>10</sup> HB1345, Relating to Teacher Education, would grant a tuition waiver and mandatory fee waiver to resident students enrolled in the College of Education at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa for the semester or term in which they complete their student teaching requirement. OHA supported this bill in written testimony throughout the 2025 session and it made it to the conference committee, but did not pass out. This bill will automatically be reintroduced in 2026 and OHA will continue to work with advocates throughout the year to plan how to advance this measure.

#### **Healthcare Workforce Initiative**

The 2024 Healthcare Workforce Initiative survey from the Healthcare Association of Hawaiʻi found that there are nearly 4,700 openings for non-physician, patient-facing positions in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and other health care facilities in the state.<sup>11</sup> The Hawaiʻi Healthcare Workforce Initiative has played a crucial role in mitigating this issue through various workforce development programs. Two key programs offered by the association are the public high school health care certificate programs and the certified nursing assistant to licensed practical nurse glidepath program. In the 2025 session OHA provided written testimony in support of HB714, Relating to Health Care Workforce Development, which would have appropriated funding to continue these and other programs in the Hawaiʻi Healthcare Workforce Initiative. This bill died in conference committee but will be automatically reintroduced in 2026.

### HEALTH OUTCOMES

#### **Protection of Iwi Kūpuna in Wainiha**

OHA began to receive phone calls from beneficiaries concerning disturbance of iwi kūpuna at the project site in late September 2024. At least 8 iwi kūpuna were encountered during ground disturbing work for a private septic tank conversion project at the Hale Makai Cottages in Wainiha, Kauaʻi. All iwi kūpuna were preserved in place, except for one, with burial protections memorialized in a Burial Site Component of a Preservation Plan (BSCPP). The first draft of the BSCPP was prepared in January 2025. On February 21, 2025, the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) requested that the second tank system be shut down and the

lines capped, consistent with OHA’s comment letter on the BSCPP dated February 14, 2025. To date, the draft BSCPP has not been revised and resubmitted to SHPD for review.

### **Protecting Natural and Cultural Resources at Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF)**

PMRF is currently going through the state environmental review process for continued land-based training and testing, including the continued bombing of Ka’ula Island with inert ordinances; and National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation to gather additional information about Ka’ula Island under an existing 2012 Programmatic Agreement.

## **QUALITY HOUSING**

### **Kūpuna Rent Supplement**

Hawai’i continues to experience a housing crisis that disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiian communities, including those on Kaua’i. For Kaua’i kūpuna, who often live on fixed retirement incomes, any increase in rent can quickly outpace their ability to pay and leave them vulnerable to displacement and homelessness. The continuation of the State Rent Supplement Program for kūpuna through 2028 (HB 703\_HD1\_SD1\_CD1) is one of the most important housing solutions passed this legislative session. OHA supported this bill through written testimony, emphasizing the importance of preserving kūpuna independence and dignity through stable housing. This measure is currently on the governor’s desk for his consideration.

## **ECONOMIC STABILITY**

### **Food Sovereignty**

Senate Bill 890, Relating to Business Regulation, would safeguard Native Hawaiian agricultural products by requiring any poi labeled for sale to disclose whether the taro (kalo) used was grown outside of Hawai’i. This bill died in conference committee but will be automatically reintroduced in 2026. This measure promotes economic stability for Native Hawaiian farmers and protection of the integrity of local food systems. It also aligned with longstanding recommendations from the [Taro Security and Purity Task Force Legislative Report](#) (2010), prepared and published by OHA, including the need to support traditional farming and increase access to agricultural land. The influx of imported taro poses economic and ecological challenges to Native Hawaiian farmers, who already face barriers such as limited land access, high production costs, and vulnerability to pests and plant disease. Imported kalo may introduce harmful pathogens, threatening traditional lo’i kalo and food security across the islands.

### **OHA Funding Activities for Kaua’i**

OHA disbursed nearly \$7.6M in funds to 13 grantees providing services on Kaua’i that range from supporting educational services Kaiapuni students and ‘ohana, reducing health hazards in the Anahola Coastal areas, funding for traditional healing practitioners, Native Hawaiian farmers, and vocational job training. Of the 13 OHA grantees servicing Kaua’i beneficiaries, five are exclusive to Kaua’i.

- 13 active grantees provide services on Kaua’i; \$7,619,614 total funds disbursed
- Five of these grants are exclusive to Kaua’i; \$1,648,962 total funds disbursed

OHA offers a variety of personal and business loans designed to support the financial wellbeing of Native Hawaiians. These loans can be used for purposes such as consolidating debt, covering educational expenses,

making home improvements, or addressing personal emergencies. OHA disbursed \$924,370 in loan funds to 25 borrowers on Kauaʻi through the Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund program. Active loans included five home improvement loans, 10 debt consolidation and 10 business loans.

- 15 active Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund/Consumer Micro Loan Program loans
- \$791,994 total dollars disbursed

## EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

### GRANTING ACTIVITIES

#### *Kauaʻi Island Only*

- Ho'akeolapono Trades Academy and Institute (\$435,325)

#### *Multi-Island/Statewide, including Kauaʻi*

- Kanu o ka ʻĀina Learning ʻOhana [Hawaiian-Focused Charter School Per Pupil Funding] (\$2,709,614)<sup>a</sup>
- Kanu o ka ʻĀina Learning ʻOhana [Federal Advocacy] (\$500,000)<sup>a</sup>

### LOAN ACTIVITIES

#### *Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund (NHRLF) Mālama Education Loan Activity on Kauaʻi*

- No open or new NHRLF Mālama Education Loans as of 6/2/25

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

### GRANTING ACTIVITIES

#### *Kauaʻi Island Only*

- Aina Alliance [Anahola Hazard Mitigation] (\$100,000)
- Aina Alliance [Indigenous Healing Hub] (\$400,000)

#### *Multi-Island/Statewide, including Kauaʻi*

- Polynesian Voyaging Society (\$200,000)
- Mana Maoli (\$300,000)

### LOAN ACTIVITIES

#### *OHA Consumer Micro Loan Program Loan Activity on Molokaʻi (for funeral and emergency health purposes)*

- No open or new Funeral and Health Consumer Micro Loans as of 5/27/25

## QUALITY HOUSING

### GRANTING ACTIVITIES

#### *Kauaʻi Island Only*

- No active Quality Housing grants only providing services to Kauaʻi

#### *Multi-Island/Statewide, including Kauaʻi*

- Hawaiian Community Assets, Inc. [Native Hawaiian Occupancy Ready Project] (\$1,500,000)

## **LOAN ACTIVITIES**

### ***NHRLF Mālama Home Improvement Loans on Kauaʻi***

- Open Mālama Home Improvement Loans as of 6/2/25: five loans, total disbursed \$168,065
- New Mālama Home Improvement Loans in FY25, 7/1/24 to 6/2/25: two loans, total disbursed \$97,000

### ***NHRLF OHA Consumer Micro Loans for unexpected home repair purposes on Kauaʻi***

No open or New Consumer Home Repair Micro Loans as of 6/2/25

## **ECONOMIC STABILITY**

### **GRANTING ACTIVITIES**

#### ***Kauaʻi Island Only***

- Malama Kauaʻi (\$313,637)
- Ho'akeolapono Trades Academy and Institute (\$400,000)

#### ***Multi-Island/Statewide, including Kauaʻi***

- Hawaiian Community Assets, Inc. [Kūkulu Kahua] (\$1,660,000)<sup>a</sup>
- Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (\$250,000)
- Homestead Community Development Corporation: Residential Employment Living Improvement Program (\$500,000)

## **LOAN ACTIVITIES**

### ***NHRLF Debt Consolidation Loans on Kauaʻi***

- Open Debt Consolidation Loans as of 6/2/25: 10 loans, total disbursed \$165,058
- New Debt Consolidation Loans in FY25, 7/1/24 to 6/2/25: 0 loans, total disbursed \$0

### ***NHRLF OHA Consumer Micro Loans on Kauaʻi (for auto repair, CDL, apprenticeship program, or career development course purposes)***

- No open or new Consumer Economic Stability Micro Loans as of 6/2/25

### ***NHRLF Mālama Business Loans on Kauaʻi (Loan amounts from \$2,500 to \$100,000)***

- Open Mālama Business Loans as of 6/2/25: 10 loans, \$591,247 disbursed
- New Mālama Business Loans in FY25, 7/1/24 to 6/2/25: three loans, \$144,000 disbursed

### ***NHRLF Hua Kanu Loans on Kauaʻi (Loan amounts from \$150,000 to \$1,000,000)***

- No open or new Mālama Business Loans as of 6/2/25

## GRANTING ACTIVITIES ENDNOTES

<sup>a</sup> Grants awarded, contract execution in progress

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, B01003, Total Population*. Accessed May 14, 2025.

[https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B01003?g=050XX00US15009\\_060XX00US1500990360,1500990450,1500990900,1500991530,1500991890,1500991980,1500992250,1500993060,1500993330,1500993690,1500993870&y=2021&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B01003?g=050XX00US15009_060XX00US1500990360,1500990450,1500990900,1500991530,1500991890,1500991980,1500992250,1500993060,1500993330,1500993690,1500993870&y=2021&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables)

[https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B01003?g=050XX00US15009\\_060XX00US1500990360,1500990450,1500990900,1500991530,1500991890,1500991980,1500992250,1500993060,1500993330,1500993690,1500993870&y=2021&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B01003?g=050XX00US15009_060XX00US1500990360,1500990450,1500990900,1500991530,1500991890,1500991980,1500992250,1500993060,1500993330,1500993690,1500993870&y=2021&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables); U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.) *2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, B02019, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone or in any Combination by Selected Groups*. Accessed May 14, 2025.

<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B02019?g=040XX00US15&y=2021&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables> and

<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B02019?g=060XX00US1500990360,1500990450,1500990900,1500991530,1500991890,1500991980,1500992250,1500993060,1500993330,1500993690,1500993870&y=2021&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables>

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i Data eXchange Partnership. (n.d.). *College and Career Readiness Indicators Graduate Profile*. Accessed May 14, 2025.

<https://www.hawaiidxp.org/data-products/college-and-career-readiness-indicators-graduate-profile/>; Hawai'i Data eXchange Partnership. (n.d.). *First fall college enrollment*. Accessed May 14, 2025.

<https://www.hawaiidxp.org/data-products/college-and-career-readiness-indicators-graduate-profile/>; Hawai'i Data eXchange Partnership. (n.d.). *College and career readiness indicators: Summary reports*. Accessed May 14, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission. (2023). *2023 annual report* [PDF file]. Accessed May 14, 2025.

<https://www.chartercommission.hawaii.gov/images/for-staff-and-schools/reports/2023-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Annual physical checkup rate among adults reflects adults who have visited a doctor for a routine health checkup within the past year in the state of Hawai'i. Hawai'i State Department of Health, Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Preventive services- checkup within the past year, Age Adjusted by Year, Adults who have visited a doctor for a routine health checkup within the past year, Filter: 2021, 2022, 2023, Island: Kauai, Display By (category): DOH Race/Ethnicity. Accessed May 28, 2025.

<https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/ChkupPastYear/ChkupPastYearAA11.html>

<sup>5</sup> Kamehameha Schools' Strategy & Transformation Group, Lili'uokalani Trust, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Papa Ola Lokahi. (2023). *Kamehameha Schools' Strategy & Transformation Group, Lili'uokalani Trust, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, & Papa Ola Lokahi. (2025). 2021 to 2025 'Imi Pono Analytic Dataset* [Unpublished dataset; to be made publicly available at a later date].

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *2021 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Selected Population Tables. B25070: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months*. Accessed May 27, 2025

[https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B25070?q=B25070&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15\\_050XX00US15007](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B25070?q=B25070&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15_050XX00US15007)

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *2021 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Selected Population Tables. B25003G: Tenure*. Accessed May 28, 2025.

[https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B25003?q=Owner/Renter+\(Tenure\)&t=001:062&g=040XX00US15\\_050XX00US15001,15003,15007,15009](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B25003?q=Owner/Renter+(Tenure)&t=001:062&g=040XX00US15_050XX00US15001,15003,15007,15009)

<sup>8</sup> State of Hawai'i Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. (2024, April 22). *Hawaiian Homes Commission Meeting/Workshop Agenda, Moloka'i*, Pg 96. Accessed August 2, 2024.

<https://dhhhl.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/April-22-23-2024-HHC-Packet.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *2021 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Selected Population Tables. B19013: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)*. Accessed May 14, 2025.

[https://data.census.gov/table?q=B19013:%20MEDIAN%20HOUSEHOLD%20INCOME%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS%20\(IN%202021%20INFLATION-ADJUSTED%20DOLLARS\)&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15,15\\$0500000](https://data.census.gov/table?q=B19013:%20MEDIAN%20HOUSEHOLD%20INCOME%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS%20(IN%202021%20INFLATION-ADJUSTED%20DOLLARS)&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15,15$0500000); U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *2021 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Selected Population Tables. B20017: Median Earnings in past 12 months (in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience*. Accessed Jun. 15, 2024.

[https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B20017?q=B20017:%20Median%20Earnings%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months%20\(in%202022%20Inflation-Adjusted%20Dollars\)%20by%20Sex%20by%20Work%20Experience%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months%20for%20the%20Population%2016%20Years%20and%20Over%20With%20Earnings%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15,15\\$0500000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B20017?q=B20017:%20Median%20Earnings%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months%20(in%202022%20Inflation-Adjusted%20Dollars)%20by%20Sex%20by%20Work%20Experience%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months%20for%20the%20Population%2016%20Years%20and%20Over%20With%20Earnings%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15,15$0500000)

<sup>10</sup> Due to sample size, Maui, Kalawao, and Kauai Counties are combined; State of Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism). *Hawaii's Native Hawaiian Entrepreneurs. Table 4: Age of Native Hawaiian Entrepreneurs, by County*. Accessed May 15, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Hawaii State Teachers Association, Hawai'i Has a Teacher Shortage Crisis, <https://www.hsta.org/crisis>

<sup>12</sup> Healthcare Association of Hawai'i. *2024 Healthcare Workforce Initiative Report*. P. 10-11.  
<https://hah.sharefile.com/share/view/s2482a25b1f8e45199adfc3bc4e96263e>