Island Community Report: Lānaʻi

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 Lānaʻi. It highlights community concerns monitored by OHA, current Native Hawaiian data, and updates on OHA's grant and loan initiatives. Topics covered align with OHA's four Strategic Directions: Educational Pathways, Health Outcomes, Quality Housing, and Economic Stability.

Current Conditions

The island of Lānaʻi has a Native Hawaiian population of 555, representing 18% of the island's total population (3,126) and 0.2% of the state's total Native Hawaiian population (310,789) (2017-2021).[1]

Note. When data points for the island of Lānaʻi are not available, Maui County data is provided. OHA continues to advocate for greater data disaggregation and accessibility to best represent island communities.

Educational Pathways Data

- Approximately 40% of Maui County Native Hawaiian public high school graduates enrolled in colleges across the nation, compared to 52% of all Maui County public school graduates, and 36% of all Native Hawaiians statewide (2024).[2]
- There are no Hawaiian Focused Charter Schools on Lānaʻi and one Hawaiian-medium school (SY24-25).[3]

Health Outcomes Data

- 82% of Native Hawaiian adults on Lānaʻi report having a physical checkup in the past year, compared to 77% of all Lānaʻi residents, and 74% of Native Hawaiians statewide (2014-2023).[4]
- 34% of Native Hawaiians in Maui County report that they are able to converse ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi at a beginner level with others, compared to 6% non-Hawaiian Maui County residents, and 31% of Native Hawaiians statewide (2025).[5]

Quality Housing Data

- 36% (1,308 of 3,593) of Native Hawaiian renters in Maui County pay affordable rent (<30% of household income toward rent), compared to 41% (7,976 of 19,483) of all households in Maui County, and 42% (13,778 of 32,538) of Native Hawaiian renters statewide (2017-2021).[6]
- 61% (5,523 of 9,116) of Native Hawaiian households in Maui County own their homes, compared to 64% (34,436 of 53,919) of all households in Maui County, and 57% (43,870 of 76,408) of all Native Hawaiian households statewide (2017-2021).[7]
- 0.4% (44) of all Department of Hawaiian Homelands leases statewide (10,048) are on Lānaʻi (2024).[8]

Economic Stability Data

- Native Hawaiian median household income in Maui County is $86,968, 99% of the median income of all Maui County residents ($88,249) (2017-2021). Statewide, Native Hawaiian median household income is $83,317 (95%), compared to $88,005 for all households.[9]
- There are 1,942 Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs in Maui, Kalawao, & Kauaʻi Counties. This is 19% of the 10,193 Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs statewide (2021).[10]

Current Opportunities and Challenges / OHA Activities

This section outlines key opportunities and challenges affecting beneficiaries on the island of Lānaʻi, 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 Lānaʻi. Throughout the 2025 legislative session, OHA provided written testimony in support of House Bill 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 leaning 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.

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.[12] 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 House Bill 714, 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.

Surfing as an Inter-Scholastic Sport

House Bill 133 aimed to establish surfing as an interscholastic sport by appropriating funds to the Department of Education. The bill designated necessary financial resources for fiscal years 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 to support this initiative. The bill was passed and signed into law in May 2025 and set to take effect on July 1, 2025. OHA strongly supported this bill in written testimony throughout the 2025 legislative session, highlighting surfing's cultural, social, and economic importance, and called for equitable access for public, private, charter, and Hawaiian language immersion schools. The Advocacy Paia continues to monitor and advocate for legislative, regulatory and other efforts that support educational pathways for Native Hawaiians.

Critical Shortage of Kaiapuni Kumu

Lānaʻi faces a compounded set of challenges in growing and retaining qualified educators, especially for kaiapuni (Hawaiian language immersion) and place-based classrooms. Issues range from licensing barriers, lack of access to housing, localized training, financial support, and culturally grounded mentorships. These barriers directly affect the educational outcomes for Lānaʻi's students and the long-term viability of Hawaiian-focused and kaiapuni education on the island. Community voices have been consistent: Lānaʻi requires solutions tailored to its unique community context and challenges. OHA's Strategy and Implementation Paia met with Kumu Kaiapuni over the course of several months to follow-up on their concerns and continues to work internally with other OHA departments to support systemic pathways toward teacher recruitment. While not limited to Lānaʻi, the work was intended to address the needs expressed by the Lānaʻi community at a systemic level.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Increasing Access to Telehealth

Hawaiʻi's unique geography presents significant challenges in accessing healthcare services, particularly for rural and remote communities. Telehealth offers a practical solution by enabling individuals to connect with healthcare providers from their homes or local community centers. This is particularly important for Native Hawaiians who often live in rural areas, including Lānaʻi, where healthcare services can be limited. Native Hawaiians experience health inequities in many areas, including chronic disease management, mental health, and maternal health. Telehealth can offer greater flexibility for individuals to receive timely care, enhance provider-patient communication, and promote preventive care, improving health outcomes for Native Hawaiians and other vulnerable populations. OHA supports telehealth as a critical tool to improve healthcare access for Native Hawaiians and underserved communities throughout the state. OHA supported Senate Bill 1281 during the 2025 legislative session which was signed into law on June 25, 2025 and is now Act 217.

QUALITY HOUSING

Kūpuna Rent Subsidy

Hawaiʻi continues to experience a housing crisis that disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiian communities, including those on Lānaʻi. For Lānaʻi 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.

Expanding Kauhale and ʻOhana Zones Initiatives

The growing affordable housing problem is one of the most critical issues on Lānaʻi, especially for Native Hawaiian communities. To address this issue OHA supported HB431_HD2_SD2_CD1, which will appropriate funds to continue the Kauhale and ʻOhana Zones initiatives, establishes the ʻOhana Zones program as a permanent program within the State Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions, and makes other amendments to the pilot and permanent programs including reporting requirements to allow for greater transparency, accountability for contractors and vendors, as well as legislative oversight of the program. This bill is on the governor's desk for his consideration. Once enacted, OHA will continue to work with advocates throughout the year to monitor implementation of the program.

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 Hawaiʻi. 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 loʻi kalo and food security across the islands. SB 890 died in conference committee but will be automatically reintroduced in 2026.

OHA Funding Activities for Lānaʻi

OHA disbursed nearly $2.61 million in funds to 4 grantees providing services on Lānaʻi that range from supporting residential employment and living programming, emergency financial assistance, and entrepreneur development. All 4 OHA grants provide services to Lānaʻi beneficiaries through statewide programs.

- 4 active grants provide services on Lānaʻi; $2,610,000 total funds disbursed
- 0 of these grants are exclusive to Lānaʻi

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 $0 in loan funds on Lānaʻi through the Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund program in Fiscal Year 2025.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Lānaʻi Island Only

- No active Educational Pathways grants

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Lānaʻi

- No active Educational Pathways grants

LOAN ACTIVITIES

Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund (NHRLF) Mālama Education Loan Activity on Lānaʻi

- No open or new NHRLF Mālama Education Loans as of 7/30/25

HEALTH OUTCOMES

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Lānaʻi Island Only

- No active Health Outcomes grants

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Lānaʻi

- Polynesian Voyaging Society ($200,000)

LOAN ACTIVITIES

OHA Consumer Micro Loan Program Loan Activity on Lānaʻi (for funeral and emergency health purposes)

- No open or new Funeral and Health Consumer Micro Loans as of 7/30/25

QUALITY HOUSING

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Lānaʻi Island Only

- No active Quality Housing grants

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Lānaʻi

- No active Quality Housing grants

LOAN ACTIVITIES

NHRLF Mālama Home Improvement Loans on Lānaʻi

- No open or new Mālama Home Improvement Loans as of 7/30/25

NHRLF OHA Consumer Micro Loans for unexpected home repair purposes on Lānaʻi

No open or new Consumer Home Repair Micro Loans as of 7/30/25

ECONOMIC STABILITY

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Lānaʻi Island Only

- No Economic Stability grants

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Lānaʻi

- Homestead Community Development Corporation ($500,000)
- Hawaiian Community Assets, Inc. [Kūkulu Kahua] ($1,660,000)[a]
- Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association ($250,000)

LOAN ACTIVITIES

NHRLF Debt Consolidation Loans on Lānaʻi

- No open or new Debt Consolidation Loans as of 7/30/25

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

- No open or new Consumer Economic Stability Micro Loans as of 7/30/25

NHRLF Mālama Business Loans on Lānaʻi (Loan amounts from $2,500 to $100,000)

- No open or new Mālama Business Loans as of 7/30/25

NHRLF Hua Kanu Loans on Lānaʻi (Loan amounts from $150,000 to $1,000,000)

- No open or new Hua Kanu Loans as of 7/30/2025: three loans

GRANTING ACTIVITIES ENDNOTES

[a] Grants awarded, contract execution in progress
[b] Project also aligns with Quality Housing
c Project also aligns with Health Outcomes

SOURCES

[1] U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Total population. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B01003*. Retrieved July 30, 2025, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B01003?g=060XX00US1500992070&y=2021&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Detailed+Tables; U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone or in any combination by selected groups. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B02019.* Retrieved July 30, 2025, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B02019?g=060XX00US1500992070&y=2021&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Detailed+Tables; U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). ACS demographic and housing estimates. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Selected Population Data Profiles, Table DP05.* Retrieved July 30, 2025, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5YSPT2021.DP05?q=population&t=001:062:Populations+and+People&g=040XX00US15,15$0500000&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Selected+Population+Data+Profiles

[2] Hawaiʻi Data eXchange Partnership. (2025). *College and career readiness indicators graduate profile* [Dashboard]. https://www.hawaiidxp.org/data-products/college-and-career-readiness-indicators-graduate-profile/; Hawaiʻi Data eXchange Partnership. (2025). *First fall college enrollment*. https://www.hawaiidxp.org/data-products/first-fall-college-enrollment/; Hawaiʻi Data eXchange Partnership. (2025). *College and career readiness indicators: Summary reports* [Dashboard].

[3] Hawaiʻi State Public Charter School Commission. (2025). Find a charter school. https://www.chartercommission.hawaii.gov/find-a-charter-school

[4] 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 Hawaiʻi. Source: Hawaiʻi State Department of Health, Hawaiʻi Health Data Warehouse, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. (2025) Query results for Hawaii's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data - Preventive services - Checkup within the past year, age adjusted [Dashboard]. Retrieved July 29, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/ChkupPastYear/ChkupPastYearAA11_.html; To view, select the following indicator: 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 by year (2014-2023) and island (Lanai); and display by (category): DOH Race/Ethnicity.

[5] Kamehameha Schools' Strategy & Transformation Group, Liliʻuokalani Trust, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Papa Ola Lokahi. (2023). Kamehameha Schools' Strategy & Transformation Group, Liliʻuokalani 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].

[6] U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Gross rent as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Selected Population Detailed Tables, Table B25070*. Retrieved July 29, 2025, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B25070?q=B25070&t=001:062:3925&g=040XX00US15_050XX00US15009

[7] U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Tenure. 2021 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey Selected Population Tables, Table B25003G. Retrieved July 29, 2025, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5YSPT2021.B25003?q=Owner/Renter%20(Tenure)&t=001:062&g=040XX00US15_050XX00US15009

[8] Hawaiʻi State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. (Apr. 22, 2023). *Hawaiian Homes Commission Meeting/Workshop Agenda, Molokaʻi* (Item No. D-1, Exhibit-A). Accessed July 7, 2025. https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/April-22-23-2024-HHC-Packet.pdf

[9] 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 on July 8, 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 ; 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 on July 8, 2025. 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

[10] 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. https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Hawaii_Native_Hawaiian_Entrepreneurs.pdf

[11] Hawaii State Teachers Association, Hawaiʻi Has a Teacher Shortage Crisis, https://www.hsta.org/crisis

[12] Healthcare Association of Hawaiʻi. *2024 Healthcare Workforce Initiative Report, pg 10-11.* https://hah.sharefile.com/share/view/s2482a25b1f8e45199adfc3bc4e96263e