



Island Community Report: Maui

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 Maui. 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

The island of Maui has a Native Hawaiian population of 32,290, representing 21% of the island's total population (154,762) and 10% of the state's total Native Hawaiian population (310,789) (2017-2021).¹



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.²
- There are currently no Hawaiian Focused Charter Schools and seven Hawaiian-medium programs/schools on Maui (SY22-23).³



Health Outcomes Data

- 73% of Native Hawaiian adults on Maui Island report having a physical checkup in the past year, compared to 69% of all Maui residents, and 74% of Native Hawaiians statewide (2021-2023).⁴
- 56% of Native Hawaiians in Maui County reported that they are able to converse 'ōlelo Hawai'i at a beginner level with others, compared to 7% non-Hawaiian Maui County residents, and 50% of Native Hawaiians statewide (2025).⁵



Quality Housing Data

- 36% (1,308 of 3,593) of Native Hawaiian renters in Maui County paid 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) Native Hawaiian renters statewide (2017-2021).⁶
- 61% (5,523 of 9,116) of Native Hawaiian households in Maui County owned their homes, compared to 64% (34,436 of 53,919) of all households in Maui County, and 57% of all Native Hawaiian households statewide (43,870 of 76,408) (2017-2021).⁷
- 14% (1,425) of all Department of Hawaiian Homelands leases statewide (10,048) are on Maui (2024).⁸



Economic Stability Data

- Native Hawaiian median household income in Maui County was \$86,968 or 99% of the countywide median household (\$88,249) (2017-2021).⁹
- 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).¹⁰

Current Opportunities and Challenges / OHA Activities

This section outlines key opportunities and challenges affecting beneficiaries on the island of Maui, 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 Maui. Throughout the 2025 legislative 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 Hawai'i students have teachers that do not meet state certification levels, and the rate of qualified teachers leaving Hawai'i continues to accelerate.¹¹ 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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i Healthcare Workforce Initiative. This bill died in conference committee but will be automatically reintroduced in 2026.

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Maui/Lāna'i Island Burial Council Recruitment

Across the pae 'āina, Island Burial Councils have had a difficult time meeting quorum. As of Jan. 1, 2025, Maui had three vacancies, and an additional two seats are set to expire on Jun. 30, 2025. In the spring of 2025, OHA successfully recruited for and filled the three vacant seats on the Maui/Lāna'i Island Burial Council (MLIBC), ensuring quorum for the council to meet and conduct business. The MLIBC now has a full council, with nine members.

Access to Telehealth in Maui County

Hawai'i's unique geography presents significant challenges in accessing healthcare services, particularly for rural and remote communities, including Hāna, Upcountry Maui (Makawao, Kula, and Pukalani), and communities along the coastline (Honokōwai, Kahana, and Nāpili). SB 1281_SD2_HD2_CD1, Relating to Telehealth, extends the sunset date of Act 107 from Dec. 31, 2025, to Dec. 31, 2027 to allow insurance to continue to cover and reimburse the cost of telehealth services. To support this vital measure, OHA submitted written testimony and a request to sign form to the Governor on May 9, 2025. The bill is on the governor's desk for his consideration.

Monitoring Lahaina Wildfire FEMA Restoration Efforts

OHA Compliance continues to monitor ongoing efforts to restore Lahaina town following damages from the 2023 wildfires. With funding coming through from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), almost all work must comply with National Historic Preservation Act Section 106. OHA Compliance receives email notifications of ongoing projects and active mitigation efforts as recovery work progresses and responses as necessary, including, reviewing and providing comment on FEMA's "Cultural Awareness Plan "Archaeological Treatment Plan" and proposed expedited processes for emergency undertakings. OHA also advocates for open communication between State Historic Preservation Division, the County, OHA, and interested NHOs, as well as the creation of cultural layers to flag previously identified sites, recommendations on separating monitoring and survey reports, support for cultural monitoring/observers, and having OHA notified of inadvertent discoveries. This advocacy allowed for a solid foundation to be established so that ongoing debris removal and recovery efforts had a baseline of best management practices to follow.

Chronic Health Disparities and Access to Care

There are significant health disparities in Maui County, particularly among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders.¹³ These communities experience higher rates of chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, and have a shorter life expectancy compared to other groups. Contributing factors include socioeconomic challenges, geographic isolation, and limited access to culturally competent healthcare services. For instance, Maui County has 28% fewer dentists and 3% fewer primary care physicians per 100,000 people than the state average, leading to unmet healthcare needs.¹⁴ The 2023 Lahaina wildfires exacerbated these health disparities. A study by the University of Hawai'i found that nearly half of the surveyed residents reported worsened health post-fire, with increased rates of depression, respiratory issues, and cardiovascular risks.¹⁵ Additionally, over 40% faced difficulties accessing medical care, highlighting the fragility of the healthcare infrastructure in times of crisis. OHA has been actively engaged in addressing chronic health disparities and improving access to care in Maui County through a multifaceted approach that includes research, advocacy, funding, and community partnerships.

QUALITY HOUSING

Kūpuna Rent Supplement

Hawai'i continues to experience a housing crisis that disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiian communities, including those in Maui. For Maui 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.

Kauhale and 'Ohana Zones Initiatives

The growing affordable housing problem is one of the most critical issues on Maui, especially for Native Hawaiian communities. To address this issue OHA supported HB431_HD2_SD2_CD1, which will appropriate funds to continue the Kauhale and 'Ohana Zones initiatives, establishes the 'Ohana 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.

Maui Wildfires Impact on Native Hawaiian Housing

There continue to be ongoing impacts from the August 2023 Maui wildfires, including a lack of housing inventory and continuing financial impacts. OHA's Kanaaho Grant, a commitment of \$5 million, continues to provide Maui homeowners and renters impacted by the fires with financial relief. This program, which provides financial assistance to Native Hawaiians in the wildfire impact zones of Lahaina and Kula through grants of up to \$9,000 for homeowners and \$4,000 for renters. Recently, the application period for the Kanaaho Grant has been extended to Jul. 31, 2025.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Maui Based Nursing Program

Hawai'i faces a growing nursing workforce shortage, with the current demand for nurses exceeding supply by approximately one thousand positions and The County of Maui is the largest county in the state without a college-level Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to train local students to compete in this high-paying employment field. SB 119_SD1_HD1_CD1, Relating to Nursing, would establish a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Hawai'i Maui to increase access to healthcare education, reduce the nursing workforce shortage, and enable Maui students to stay at home while receiving quality job training. OHA submitted written testimony in support of this bill for each of its committee hearings and submitted a 'sign' recommendation form to the Governor on May 9, 2025.

Food Sovereignty

The influx of imported taro (kalo) 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. On Maui, traditional taro farming continues in communities such as Keanae and Nā Wai Eha, but is threatened by land use pressures, water diversion, and competition from imported products. Beneficiaries have voiced concerns about the erosion of cultural agriculture and the commercialization of cultural foods without benefit to Native Hawaiian communities. In the 2025 legislative session, OHA submitted testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 890, Relating to Business Regulation, which would safeguard Native Hawaiian agricultural products by requiring any poi labeled for sale to disclose whether the taro used was grown outside of Hawai'i. Although, this bill died in conference committee, it will be automatically reintroduced in 2026.

OHA Funding Activities for Maui

OHA disbursed nearly \$6M in funds to 13 grantees providing services on Maui that range from supporting educational services for high-needs youth and 'ohana, funding for 'āina-based 'ōlelo Hawai'i programming in Maui Komohana, to supporting the establishment of a culturally-relevant Native Hawaiian owner-builder

program for Native Hawaiians on Hawaiian Home Lands, to supporting vocational career pathways for Native Hawaiian youth. Of the 13 OHA grantees servicing Maui beneficiaries, four are exclusive to Maui.

- 13 active grantees provide services on Maui; \$5,927,877 total funds disbursed;
- Four of these grants are exclusive to Maui; \$736,667 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 \$1.4M in loan funds to 45 borrowers on Maui through the Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund program. Active loans included 10 home improvement loans, 25 debt consolidation loans, and 10 business loans.

- 45 active Native Hawaiian Revolving Loan Fund/Consumer Micro Loan Program loans;
- In total, \$1,406,319 total dollars disbursed.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Maui Island Only

- Maui Hui Mālama (\$136,667)
- Nā Mamo Aloha 'Āina O Honokōhau (\$100,000)

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Maui

- EA Ecovercity (\$183,210)^a

LOAN ACTIVITIES

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

- No open or new NHRLF Mālama Education Loans as of 5/15/25

HEALTH OUTCOMES

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Maui Island Only

- Maui Nui Makai Network (\$200,000)

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Maui

- Health Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii (\$500,000)
- Polynesian Voyaging Society (\$200,000)

LOAN ACTIVITIES

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

- No open or new Funeral and Health Consumer Micro Loans as of 5/15/25

QUALITY HOUSING

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Maui Island Only

- No active Quality Housing grants only providing services to Maui

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Maui

- Hawai'i Community Lending (\$398,000)

LOAN ACTIVITIES

NHRLF Mālama Home Improvement Loans on Maui

- Open Mālama Home Improvement Loans as of 5/15/25: 10 loans, total disbursed \$312,961
- New Mālama Home Improvement Loans in FY25, 07/01/24 to 5/15/25: one loan, total disbursed \$50,000

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

No open or New Consumer Home Repair Micro Loans as of 05/15/25

ECONOMIC STABILITY

GRANTING ACTIVITIES

Maui Island Only

- Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike Building Program (\$300,000)

Multi-Island/Statewide, including Maui

- Hawaiian Community Assets (\$1,660,000)^a
- Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (\$250,000)
- Homestead Community Development Corporation: Residential Employment Living Improvement Program (\$500,000)
- Hawaiian Community Assets, Inc. (\$1,500,000)

LOAN ACTIVITIES

NHRLF Debt Consolidation Loans on Maui

- Open Debt Consolidation Loans as of 05/15/25: 25 loans, total disbursed \$419,429
- New Debt Consolidation Loans in FY25, 07/01/24 to 05/15/25: three loans, total disbursed \$49,461

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

No open or new Consumer Economic Stability Micro Loans as of 05/15/25

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

- Open Mālama Business Loans as of 5/15/25: nine loans, total disbursed \$523,929
- New Mālama Business Loans in FY25, 7/01/24 to 05/15/25: one loan, total disbursed \$43,000

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

- Open Hua Kanu Loans as of 5/15/25: one loan, total disbursed \$150,000
- New Hua Kanu Loans in FY25, 07/01/24 to 5/15/25 one loan, total disbursed \$150,000

GRANTING ACTIVITIES ENDNOTES

^a Grants awarded, contract execution in progress

SOURCES

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- 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 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. Accessed May 16, 2025. https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/ChkupPastYear/ChkupPastYearAA11_.html
- ⁵ 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].
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¹¹ Hawaii State Teachers Association, Hawai'i Has a Teacher Shortage Crisis, <https://www.hsta.org/crisis>

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