



Maui Wildfire Impact:

Native Hawaiian Businesses Needs Assessment

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Maui Wildfires Impact on Native Hawaiian Businesses Needs Assessment was to obtain first-hand needs assessment data of the impact of the August 8, 2023, Maui wildfires on Native Hawaiian small businesses on Maui and throughout the state. A survey was designed to collect data on critical business needs immediately after the wildfire disaster as well as into the long-term to empower OHA and its partners to better understand and support Native Hawaiian business needs. The results of the study were shared with the Maui Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce and are also be published to help inform efforts on behalf of businesses and business owners impacted by the wildfires.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

According to the data, there were noteworthy differences between how Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses were affected by the wildfires.

- Native Hawaiian businesses expected fewer revenue losses but experienced more damages and business closures. Non-Hawaiian business respondents were more optimistic about a faster recovery, despite indicating being more impacted by the fires.
- All businesses, regardless of Native Hawaiian ownership, experienced staff reductions with almost half reporting a decrease in employment. Native Hawaiian businesses experienced a larger decline in overall employees but reported an increase in Native Hawaiian employees.
- Businesses owned by Native Hawaiians were less dependent on the tourism industry, which may explain the differences in their experiences and expectations compared to non-Hawaiian businesses.
- Native Hawaiian business respondents reported higher rates of negative mental health effects, however, were less likely to seek professional mental health assistance. Most respondents from both groups felt at least moderately satisfied with their mental health.
- Few businesses had a continuity plan prior to the fires. Native Hawaiian businesses were less likely to seek federal aid preferring grants and state support. Both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses showed strong interest in grants, loans and tax credits.
- The greatest reported barrier among Native Hawaiian businesses was the lack of information about resources available to them as businesses.
- Native Hawaiian businesses showed a higher need in general marketing support while both business types prioritized business planning and general business recovery assistance.

CONTEXT

On August 8, 2023, wildfires tore through parts of upcountry and West Maui, taking the lives of over 100 people, displacing thousands, and destroying more than 3,000 homes, and hundreds of businesses, cultural and historical sites. The town of Lahaina and the Kula region sustained the heaviest damage, with Lahaina left nearly destroyed. The damage was estimated to be over \$5 billion.¹

The Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism reports that about 7,000 people were employed by more than 800 businesses in the impacted areas. The daily total revenue of those businesses was estimated to be \$2.7 million.² This disaster came just as many businesses were recovering from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was particularly hard on Native Hawaiian businesses.³

A year after the fires, through government agencies and local support systems, significant progress has been made. West Maui reopened to tourism two months after the fire, albeit with different opinions between business owners and residents. Cleanup efforts have been progressing ahead of schedule with residential debris removal completed in September 2024 and commercial debris removal slated to be completed in February 2025. A major focus has been addressing the housing crisis which included regulation of short-term rentals to address the pre-existing housing shortage and continued rental and mortgage assistance and temporary housing to accommodate displaced residents. Continued recovery also includes mental health support, re-building initiatives, and environmental monitoring and restoration.⁴

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) received a request from the Maui Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce (MNHCoC) to conduct a needs assessment for impacted Native Hawaiian businesses. The mission of MNHCoC is to promote and sustain Hawaiian culture, nurture a strong community of Hawaiian values, and to enhance opportunities for success in business and education. As the requesting partner, MNHCoC provided OHA with insights in the development of the survey instrument, the formulation of key findings, and the publication of this report.

METHODOLOGY

To assess the impact of the August 8, 2023, Maui wildfires on Native Hawaiian businesses, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, in collaboration MNHCoC administered an online survey.

OHA encouraged participation from Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian business owners, including self-employed individuals, artisans, and practitioners for the voluntary survey. The survey was made available to the public between November 1, 2023, through November 30, 2023, with an extension to December 10, 2023. The survey responses were kept confidential, and all data used for reporting was aggregated and de-identified. MNHCoC was provided a link specific for their mailing list while the general public was provided another link advertised through email, social media, and OHA's newspaper, *Ka Wai Ola*.

The survey was organized into three sections. The first section asked for general information about the business including questions about business type, business location, and reliance on the tourism/visitor sector. The next section included questions about the impact of the fires on the business overall, as well as the impact on finances, staffing, and mental health. Next, information was requested about the resources respondents may have already sought, any barriers they may have experienced, and the status of their applications with various resources available at the time of the survey. At the end of the survey, respondents were provided the opportunity to participate in a listserv compiled by the MNHCoC, to receive information on available recovery resources.

A total of 95 business owners provided responses to the survey. Of the responding businesses, 64.2% (61) were Native Hawaiian-owned, 26.3% (25) were not Native Hawaiian-owned, and 9.5% (9) chose not to indicate if they are Native Hawaiian-owned.

"Much reduces [sic] sales to wholesale customers across Maui, not only Lahaina"

- non-Hawaiian business owner, when explaining any assistance they require

Although the fires were primarily in Lahaina and upcountry Maui, their economic impact was felt across the entire State of Hawai'i. To evaluate how the impacts might have extended beyond the island of Maui, the survey was not limited to Maui businesses.

Survey findings related to business location include:

- 86.3% (82) of survey respondents had some business operations on the island of Maui, with 70.5% (67) having operations in Lahaina.
- 71.5% (68) businesses reported having headquarters on Maui, including 35.8% (34) with headquarters in Lahaina.
- 8.4% (8) of survey respondents had no operations on Maui but were included in the sample because they reported being impacted by the fires or are part of the broader Native Hawaiian business community.
- 83.6% (51) of the Native Hawaiian businesses operated on Maui, including 72.1% (44) who operated in Lahaina.

As reported by *Hawai'i News Now* on November 2, 2023, the Hawai'i Small Business Development Center on Maui noted that Lahaina housed approximately 1,100 business and at the time of reporting, more than half (600) had closed due to the wildfires.⁵

Due to the inaccessibility of specific industry data for the island of Maui, Maui County data is used for analysis. According to 2021 Census Bureau data, the top three industries for all businesses in Maui County were:

- 1. Retail trade (13.3%)
- 2. Accommodation and food services (12.1%)
- 3. Construction (11.1%)⁶

Disaggregated Native Hawaiian industry data is also limited, particularly at the island or county levels. The latest Census Bureau data from 2021 shows that the top three industries for Native Hawaiian businesses in Maui County were:

- 1. Professional, scientific, and technical services (14.9%)
- 2. Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (14.6%)
- 3. Other services (12.4%)⁷

While the survey was sent out by both OHA and MNHCoC to contacts across a multitude of sectors and locations, the responses show that the top Native Hawaiian business industries of survey participants vary greatly from the overall businesses of Maui County. None of the top three industries of Native Hawaiian businesses in Maui County correspond to the responding Native Hawaiian businesses.

More Native Hawaiian businesses respondents are concentrated in the arts, entertainment, and recreation and retail trade industries

Table 1. % of respondents in the top three industries

Native Hawaiian			Non-Hawaiian		
1	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	15.5%	1	Retail Trade	25.0%
2	Retail Trade	13.8%	2	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	16.7%
3	Construction	8.6%	3	Accommodation and Food Services (includes hospitality)	12.5%

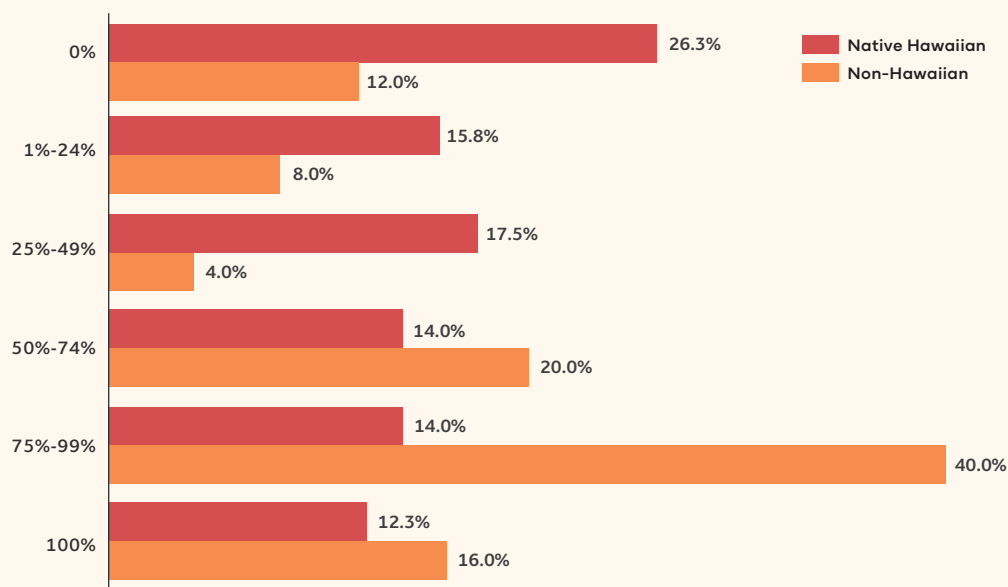
Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "What industry is your business? (For more information, including the types of businesses in each category, see 2022 NAICS reference table)." Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 89 (93.7%) businesses provided responses: 58 (65.2%) Native Hawaiian business, 24 (27.0%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and seven (7.9%) where no race was indicated.

Among survey respondents, two industries were in the top three for both Native Hawaiian businesses and all businesses in Maui County. Retail trade ranked second among Native Hawaiian businesses (13.8%), at parity with all business in Maui County, where it ranked first (13.3%). The construction industry ranked third (11.1%) across all business in Maui County as well as Native Hawaiian business (8.6%). Although arts, entertainment, and recreation was the number one industry for Native Hawaiian businesses responding to the survey (15.5%), it is the eighth most common industry of all businesses in Maui County (6.2%).

Note that these differences may be attributed to the concentration of businesses in our sample being predominantly located in West Maui compared to all of Maui County, which includes the islands of Maui, Molo-ka'i, and Lāna'i.

Native Hawaiian businesses reported less dependency on the tourism/visitor industry than non-Native Hawaiian businesses.

Figure 1. % of respondents with revenue dependence on the tourist/visitor industry



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "What percent of your revenue is dependent on the tourist/visitor industry?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 90 (94.7%) business provided responses: 57 (63.3%) Native Hawaiian business, 25 (27.8%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and eight (8.9%) where no race was indicated.

Responses show that 26.3% of Native Hawaiian businesses have no revenue dependent on the tourism industry. Only 40.4% of Native Hawaiian businesses have at least half of their revenue dependent on tourism, compared to 76.0% of non-Native Hawaiian businesses.

Overall, half (51.1%) of responding businesses had at least 50% of their revenue dependent on tourism, while 22.2% of all businesses had no revenue dependent on tourism. Notably, only 15.6% of responding businesses report being 100% dependent on tourism, which is 12.3% of the Native Hawaiian business and 16.0% of non-Hawaiian businesses.

"I am one of the people dependent on tourism to the Westside to make my bills. I will loose [sic] my place soon, if tourism isn't encouraged to the Westside."

- non-Hawaiian business owner, explaining the assistance they require

"... We didn't know how many people/tourii [sic] come to Hana from Lahaina."

- Native Hawaiian business owner, response to how the Maui wildfires affected their business

DATA LIMITATIONS

While this report provides valuable insights into the impact of the Maui wildfires on businesses in and around Lahaina and statewide, there are several limitations that must be recognized.

One limitation of this data is the relatively small sample size, which does not fully represent the population. This sample includes 95 businesses, of which 67 had operations in Lahaina. This is not a sufficient representation of the estimated 1,100 businesses operating in Lahaina. While the survey provided valuable insights, particularly when paired with other evaluation efforts such as the Maui County Office of Economic Development's Maui Business Health Check, because of the small sample size, results should not be generalized beyond the businesses who completed the survey.⁸

This concentration of responding Native Hawaiian businesses with operations in Lahaina also skews the data toward Lahaina businesses. Therefore, data cannot be generalized to all businesses in Lahaina or the broader Maui population.

The survey did not ask for the ancestry of the respondent, but instead asked if the business they were responding for was Native Hawaiian-owned. In the mental health section, analysis was completed with the assumption that the respondent was the business owner. As a result, it is possible that a business is Native Hawaiian, but the person responding may not be Native Hawaiian. This could affect the accuracy of the Native Hawaiian versus non-Hawaiian analysis in the mental health section.

FINDINGS

The devastating impacts from the Maui wildfires continue to affect the communities, businesses, and people of Maui and across the State of Hawai'i. The economic impact includes the loss of homes and property, business closures, and reduced employment opportunities. Residents face mental health challenges as they cope with economic hardship, the loss of loved ones and their way of life, and the overall trauma of the fires. Recovery efforts proved challenging in navigating the process to address both personal and business impacts through coordinated efforts of community, local, state and federal government agencies.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses both experienced the effects and challenges of the Maui wildfires, however, there were reported differences in the type and the extent of these impacts.

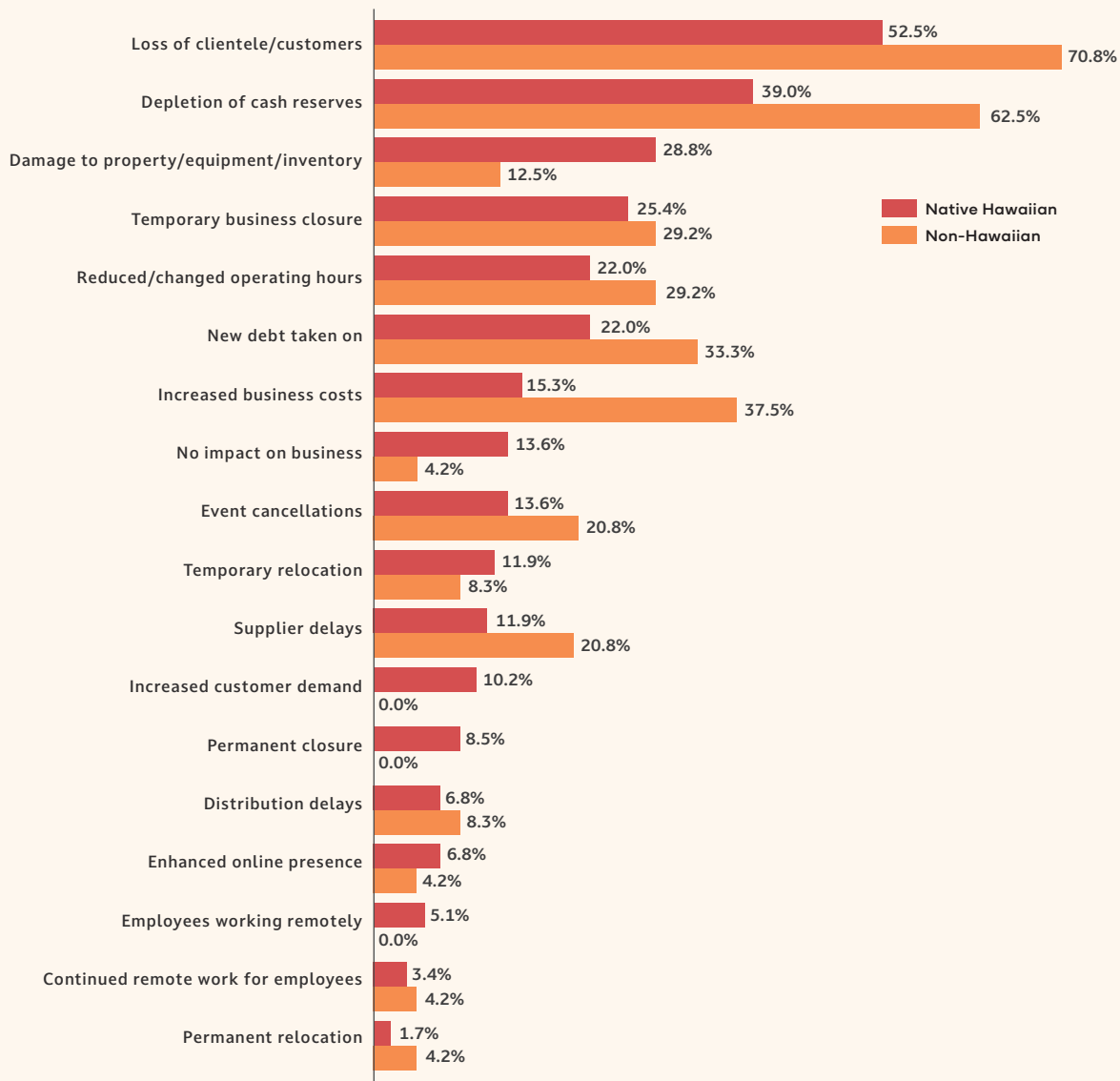
Based on responses regarding the effects of the wildfires, Native Hawaiian businesses experienced damage to property, equipment, and inventory at more than double the rate of non-Hawaiian businesses (28.8% versus 12.5%). They also experienced greater workplace disruptions, including temporary relocations (11.9% versus 8.3%), and the shifting of employees to remote work (5.1% versus 0%). One Native Hawaiian business respondent, when asked about assistance they require, shared the loss they experienced:

"Due to our operation location being from Lahaina Harbor we are not given another location by the state to operate out of. We also lost our shop where we store boats, parts and inventory. We have no storage location right now either."

-Native Hawaiian-owned business, when asked about assistance required

Native Hawaiian businesses reported greater damage and business closures than non-Hawaiian businesses.

Figure 2. % of respondents reporting business impacts from the Maui wildfire



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "In what ways have the Maui wildfires affected your business? Consider yourself and other owners as 'employees.' Select all that apply." Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 90 (94.7%) business provided responses: 59 (65.6%) Native Hawaiian business, 24 (26.7%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and nine (10.0%) where no race was indicated.

Comparatively, non-Hawaiian businesses reported larger impacts (more than an 18 percentage point difference) than Native Hawaiian businesses in loss of customers (70.8% versus 52.5%), depletion of cash reserves (62.5% versus 39.0%), and an increase in cost of business (37.5% versus 15.3%).

Before the fire, tourism generated 40% of Maui's GDP, contributing 70% of every dollar to Maui's economy. Following the fire, the University of Hawai'i estimated a 75% decline in tourism, translating to a daily loss of

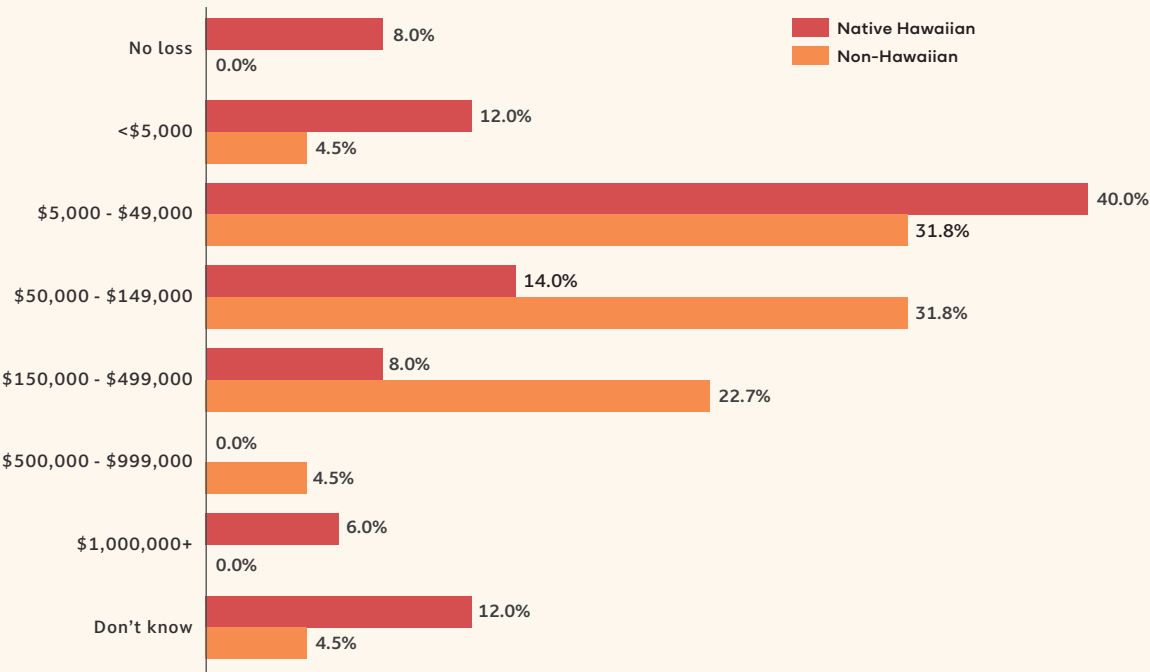
roughly \$13 million dollars a day.⁹ With non-Hawaiian businesses being more reliant on tourism than Native Hawaiian businesses, it is expected that non-Hawaiian businesses would be affected in the areas of clientele and finances.

Notably, although 8.5% of Native Hawaiian businesses reported permanently closing their businesses compared to 0% of non-Hawaiian businesses, more than three times as many Native Hawaiian businesses did not experience any impacts (13.6% versus 4.2%). Native Hawaiian businesses also reported an increase in customer demand at 10.2% compared 0% for non-Hawaiian businesses.

Six in 10 Native Hawaiian businesses (60.0%) expected to lose up to \$50,000 in revenue in 2023 compared to that of non-Native Hawaiian businesses (36.4%). Comparatively, more than half of non-Hawaiian businesses (54.5%) reported a revenue loss between \$50,000 and \$499,999 versus only 22.0% of Native Hawaiian businesses. Native Hawaiian businesses also reported the largest loss of revenue, with 6.0% of respondents expecting to lose \$1,000,000 or more compared to 0% for non-Hawaiian businesses.

Native Hawaiian businesses generally expected to lose less revenue in 2023 because of the fires than non-Hawaiian businesses.

Figure 3. % of respondents who expected a revenue loss in 2023



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "How much revenue do you expect to lose in 2023 as a result of the Maui fires?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 79 (83.2%) business provided responses: 50 (63.3%) Native Hawaiian business, 22 (27.8%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and seven (8.9%) where no race was indicated.

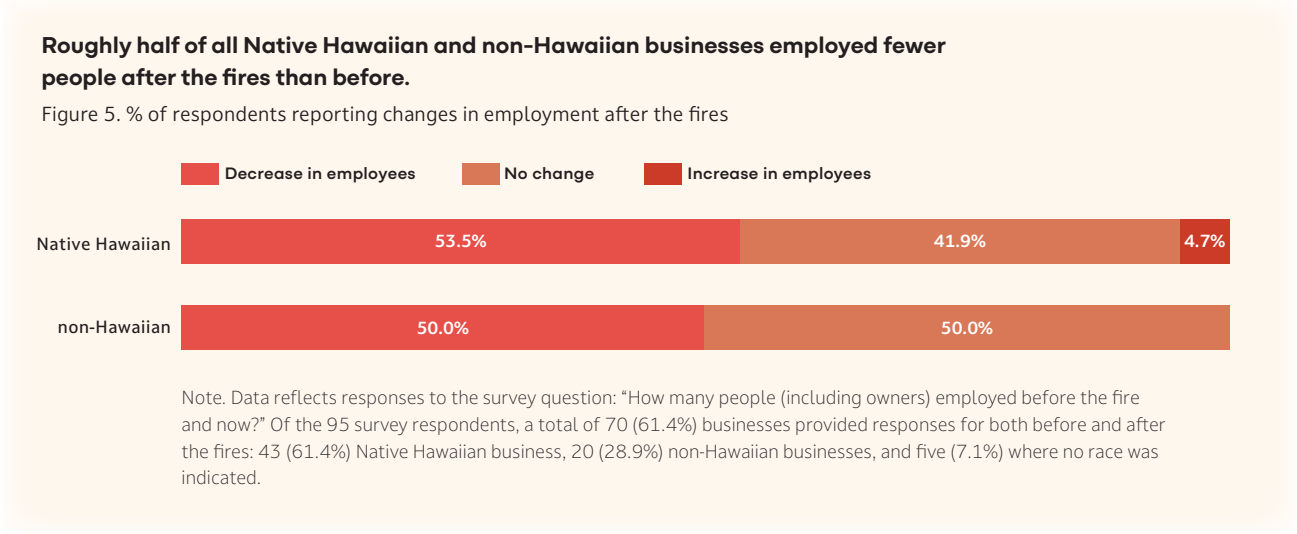
"Stalled planned investments"

- Native Hawaiian business owner, when asked how the Maui wildfires affected their business

Native Hawaiian businesses were much more uncertain about the impact of the fires to their 2023 revenue than their non-Hawaiian counterparts with 12.0% reporting not knowing how much revenue they expected to lose compared to 4.5% of non-Hawaiian businesses. Interestingly, 8.0% of Native Hawaiian businesses reported no loss, whereas no non-Hawaiian business reported the same.



Most Native Hawaiian businesses suffered less than \$150,000 in damages to structure, equipment, and inventory (70.6%) with more than one-third (35.3%) falling in the \$5,000 to \$49,999 range. Only 23.2% of all businesses who completed the survey provided an answer to this question. Furthermore, the non-Hawaiian business response rate for this question was very small, therefore, there are no comparisons to non-Hawaiian businesses.



As expected, both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses experienced changes within their workforce with roughly half of all responding businesses employing fewer people after the fires than before.

Although non-Hawaiian businesses employed more staff than Native Hawaiian businesses, the average loss was similar.

Table 2. Average number of staff employed before and after the fires

	Native Hawaiian	Non-Hawaiian	Total
Employed before the fire	6.0	12.4	7.8
Employed now	3.5	10.4	5.6
Difference	-2.5	-2.0	-2.2

Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "How many people (including owners) employed before the fire and now?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 69 (72.6%) businesses provided responses for both before and after the fires: 43 (62.3%) Native Hawaiian business, 20 (28.9%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and six (8.7%) where no race was indicated.

Before the fires, Native Hawaiian businesses employed an average of 6.0 staff members, while non-Hawaiian businesses had an average of 12.4 employees. Following the fires, the average number of employees in Native Hawaiian businesses dropped to 3.5, representing a decrease of 2.5 employees. In comparison, non-Hawaiian businesses experienced an average decrease of 2.0 employees, bringing their average down to 10.4. The largest total loss in employment for any single Native Hawaiian business was 34 employees compared to the largest loss for any single non-Hawaiian business of 10 employees. No non-Hawaiian business reported an increase in staff, whereas 4.7% of Native Hawaiian businesses saw an increase in staff. The biggest gain for any Native Hawaiian business was five employees within the construction and finance and insurance industries.

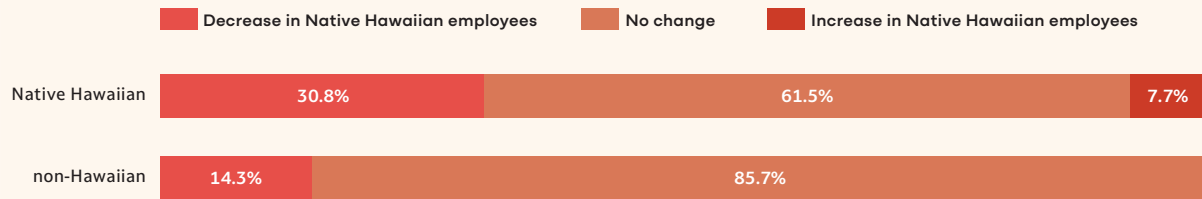
Before the fires, 88.4% of Native Hawaiian and 80.0% of non-Hawaiian businesses had 10 or fewer employees, with 30.2% of Native Hawaiian businesses and 25.0% of non-Hawaiian businesses having only one employee. Following the fires, the proportion of total businesses with at least 10 employees decreased from 85.5% to 65.2%; Native Hawaiian businesses decreased 30.2 percentage points to 58.1% while non-Hawaiian businesses reported no difference.

Single employee businesses before the fire made up 27.5% of the businesses which decreased to 26.1% after the fire. The percentage of businesses with only one employee decreased from 30.2% to 23.3% for Native Hawaiian businesses and 55.0% to 35.0% for non-Hawaiian businesses. After the fires, 32.6% of Native Hawaiian businesses reported having zero employees, compared to only 5.0% of non-Hawaiian businesses.

After the fires, 27.5% of responding businesses reported having no employees. Of the businesses who employed between two and 10 employees before the fires, 22.5% reported having no employees post fire. Notable was the disparity between Native Hawaiian businesses at 38.5% and non-Hawaiian businesses at 9.1%. Even more staggering is that 37.5% of single employee Native Hawaiian businesses before the fires reported having zero employees after the fires, compared to non-Hawaiian businesses who did not experience this situation.

Twice as many Native Hawaiian businesses experienced a decrease in Native Hawaiian employees, however, they also experienced the only increase in Native Hawaiian employees

Figure 6. % of respondents who reporting changes in Native Hawaiian employment after the fires



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "How many Native Hawaiians (including owners) employed before the fire and now?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 60 (63.2%) business provided responses for both before and after the fires: 41 (68.3%) Native Hawaiian business, 15 (25%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and four (6.7%) where no race was indicated.

Twice as many Native Hawaiian businesses had a decrease in Native Hawaiian employees compared to non-Hawaiian businesses (30.8% versus 14.3%, respectively). Noteworthy is the increase of Native Hawaiian employees by 7.7% of Native Hawaiian businesses compared to 0% in non-Hawaiian businesses.

Native Hawaiian businesses employed more, and experienced a greater decrease in, Native Hawaiian staff

Table 3. Average number of Native Hawaiian staff employed before and after the fires

	Native Hawaiian-owned businesses	Non-Hawaiian-owned businesses	Total businesses
Native Hawaiians employed before the fire	3.5	1.1	2.8
Native Hawaiians Employed now	2.2	0.8	1.8
Difference	-1.3	-0.3	-1.0

Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "How many Native Hawaiians (including owners) employed before the fire and now?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 60 (63.2%) business provided responses for both before and after the fires: 41 (68.3%) Native Hawaiian business, 15 (25%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and four (6.7%) where no race was indicated.

Prior to the fire, Native Hawaiian businesses employed an average of 3.5 Native Hawaiian employees, compared to 1.1 Native Hawaiian employees staffed among non-Hawaiian businesses. After the fire, Native Hawaiians employed by Native Hawaiian businesses decreased by 1.3 to an average of 2.2 while the average number of Native Hawaiian employees in non-Hawaiian businesses decreased by 0.3 to an average of 0.8 Native Hawaiian employees.

Before the fires, a total of 37.7% of all responding businesses had between two and 10 Native Hawaiian employees, with Native Hawaiian businesses making up 40.5% of those businesses and non-Hawaiian businesses at 28.6%. After the fires, the numbers decreased to 30.4% total businesses, with a decrease to 30.8% among Native Hawaiian businesses and a decrease to 20.0% among non-Hawaiian businesses. No non-Hawaiian

business employed more than 10 Native Hawaiian employees compared to 7.1% of Native Hawaiian businesses before the fires and 2.6% after. Seven out of 10 (71.4%) non-Hawaiian businesses did not employ a Native Hawaiian employee before the fire which increased to 80.0% after the fire.

Single employee businesses before the fire made up 37.7% of the responses, which increased to 42.9% after the fire. There is no non-Hawaiian comparison as, by the definition of a Native Hawaiian business, all Native Hawaiian businesses have at least one Native Hawaiian employee. Based on the question, all the single employee businesses are Native Hawaiian, and their single employees are Native Hawaiian.

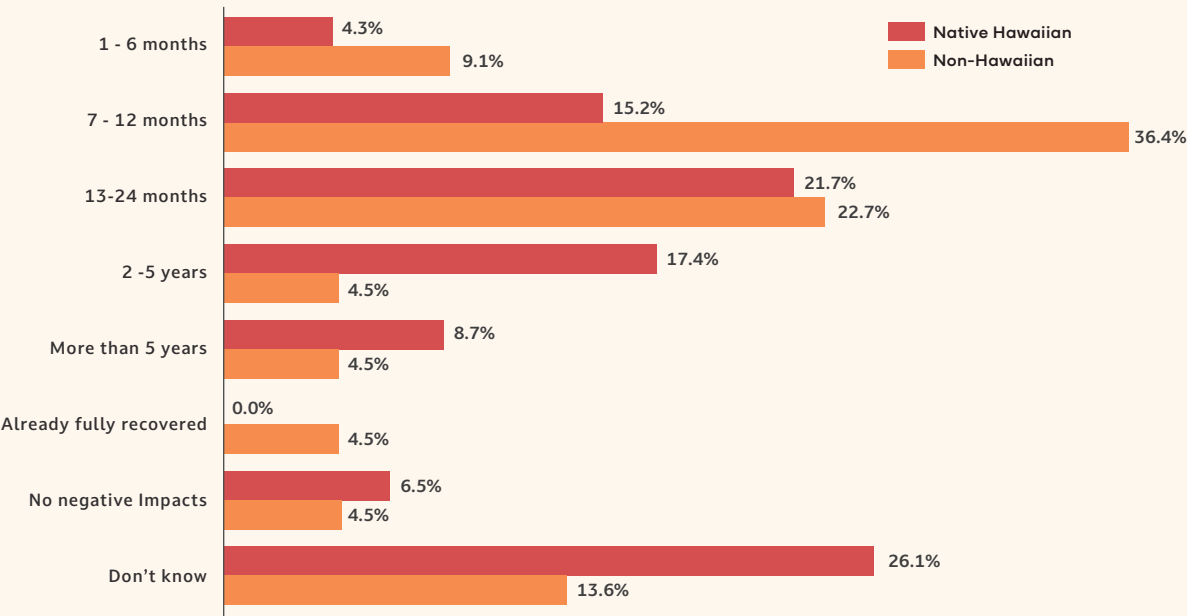
At the time of the survey there was still a lot of uncertainty regarding whether respondents would be able to hold onto their employees; when asked if they planned to let any additional employees go with in the next six months, 22.9% responded that they did not know. Two-thirds (68.2%) of Native Hawaiian businesses had no intention of letting additional staff go (of which only 32.0% are single employer businesses) compared to 75.0% of non-Hawaiian businesses. Only 9.1% of businesses, all Native Hawaiian, responded that they did plan to let additional staff go.

RECOVERY

While many businesses are committed to remain at home or return business operations to Lahaina, recovery projections from a similarly devastating 2018 fire in Paradise, California, showed that it would take 20 years for the town of Paradise to get back to being financially self-sustaining.¹⁰ However, note that “full recovery” is defined differently for individual small businesses compared to a town.

Despite reporting being more impacted by the fires, non-Hawaiian business respondents express greater optimism about the recovery time than Native Hawaiian businesses.

Figure 7. Estimated business recovery time following the fires



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: “How long do you estimate it will take for your business to fully recover from the impact of the fires?” Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 74 (77.9%) business provided responses: 46 (62.2%) Native Hawaiian business, 22 (29.7%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and six (8.1%) where no race was indicated.

Proportionally, more than twice the number of non-Hawaiian businesses compared to Native Hawaiian businesses estimate a full recovery within the first 12 months (45.5% versus 19.5%). A little over a quarter (26.1%) of Native Hawaiian businesses could not provide an estimate of how long it might take them to recover compared to only 13.6% of non-Hawaiian businesses. Only 6.5% of Native Hawaiian businesses and 4.5% of non-Hawaiian businesses report not being negatively impacted by the fires. At the time of the survey, 4.5% of non-Hawaiian businesses reported having already full recovered compared to no Native Hawaiian businesses.

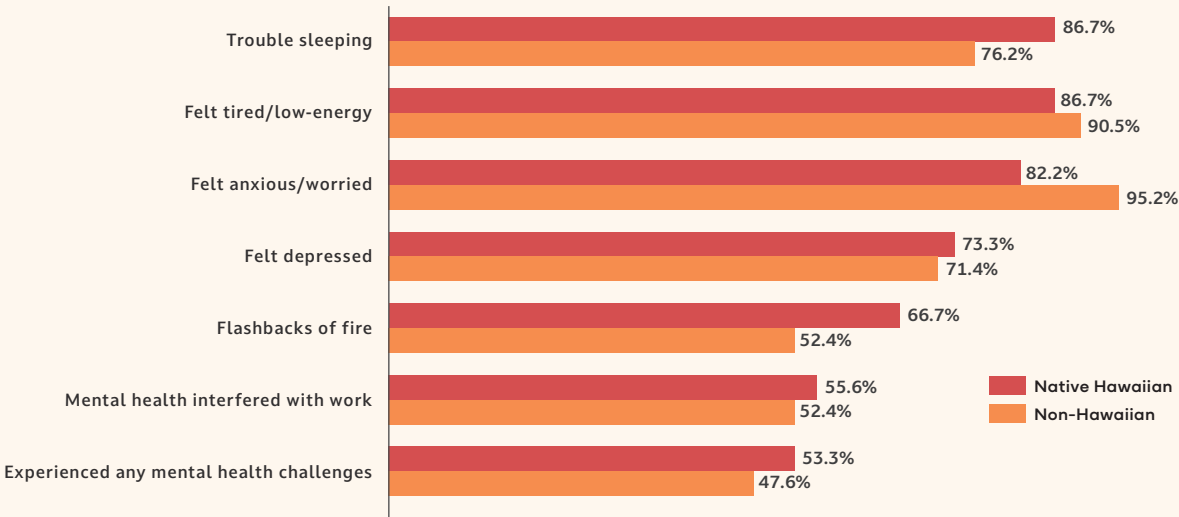
Of all businesses that closed temporarily, 37.5% said they had already reopened at the time of the survey, 20.8% said they would reopen within 1-3 months, 8.3% within 6-12 months, 4.2% believed it would take them more than a year, and 29.2% did not know when they would reopen. Of the Native Hawaiian businesses that closed temporarily, 40.0% said they had already reopened at the time of the survey, 6.7% said they would reopen within 1-3 months, 13.3% within 6-12 months, 0% believed it would take them more than a year, and 40.0% did not know when they would reopen.

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

The role of mental health and wellbeing within entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as important for decision-making, motivation, and success.¹¹ Evaluating both the physical and mental wellbeing of business owners is especially important in the wake of large-scale disasters.

Native Hawaiian business respondents experienced higher rates of negative mental health effects in a greater number of areas than non-Hawaiian business respondents.

Figure 8. % of respondents reporting mental health challenges in the past two weeks



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "How often during the last two weeks have you..." Response options included: "never, rarely, sometimes, often or every day." Denominators based on number of responses to each option. Numerators based on number of responses for "every day, often, and sometimes". Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 71 (74.7%) business provided responses: 45 (63.4%) Native Hawaiian business, 21 (29.6%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and five (7.0%) where no race was indicated.

Respondents were asked about their overall mental health by reflecting on how often during the two weeks prior to taking the survey they experienced an adverse mental health impact. The answers represented a point-in-time several months after the fires. The indicators are not necessarily indicative of respondents' feelings about the fire, but their mental state overall. Unsurprisingly, the overall results suggest most respondents struggled at least a little with their mental health during this time.

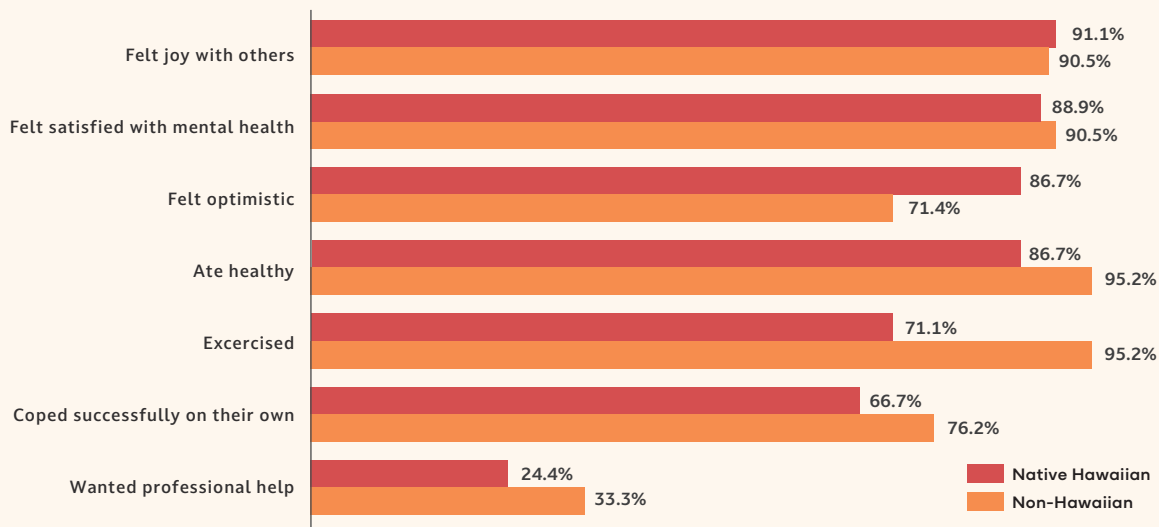
It is noteworthy that due to the small sample size of the survey and the time that had passed between the fires and the survey (approximately three to four months), this data cannot be used to draw conclusions regarding the overall status of the population's mental health in response to the Maui fires.

More respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses reported experiencing flashbacks of the fire (66.7%) and trouble sleeping (86.7%) than respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses (52.4% and 76.2% respectively). Whereas more respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses experienced feelings of anxiousness and worry (95.2%) than Native Hawaiian counterparts (82.2%). One respondent of a Native Hawaiian business shares how their mental health challenges, specifically feeling "not in the mood still recovering," has been a barrier to accessing resources and assistance.

Overall, more than half of respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses (53.3%) and almost half of their non-Hawaiian counterparts (47.6%) experienced some form of mental health challenges in the two weeks prior to this survey. Remarkably, a larger percentage of respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses reported negative mental health effects in five of the seven categories.

Most respondents of Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses felt satisfied with their mental health at least sometimes in the two weeks prior to the survey.

Figure 9. % of respondents reporting positive mental health experiences in the past two weeks

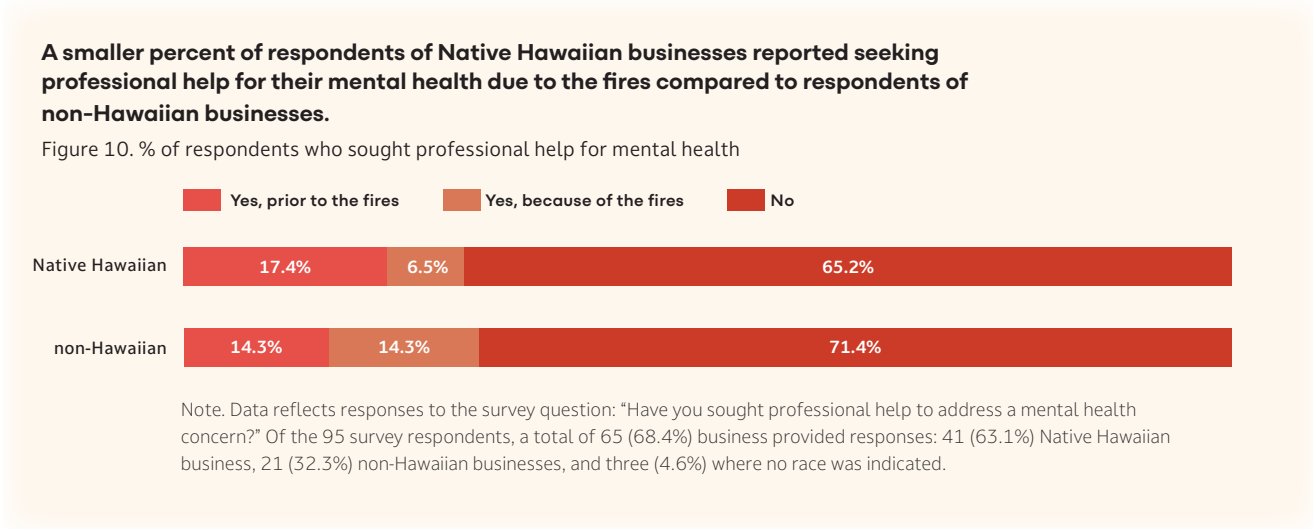


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Two in three (66.7%) respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses felt they were coping successfully on their own at least sometimes in the two weeks leading up to the survey, while only one in four respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses (24.4%) expressed wanting professional help. Comparatively, 76.2% of respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses felt they were coping successfully on their own with 33.3% wanting professional help.

“hugs n prayers and someone to just cry with”
-Native Hawaiian business owner, when asked of the assistance they require

More respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses felt joy with others (91.1%) and optimistic (86.7%) than respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses (90.5% and 71.4%, respectively). More respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses ate healthy (95.2%) and exercised (95.2%) compared to respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses (86.7% and 71.1%, respectively). Overall, roughly nine out of 10 respondents of both Native Hawaiian (88.9%) and respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses (90.5%) felt satisfied with their mental health at least sometimes in the two weeks prior to taking the survey.



In total, 26.8% respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses reported seeking professional help to address mental health concerns compared to 28.6% of respondents of non-Hawaiian businesses. This was possibly driven by those seeking professional help because of the fires, with only 7.3% of respondents of Native Hawaiian businesses reporting this, compared to 14.3% of non-Hawaiian counterparts.

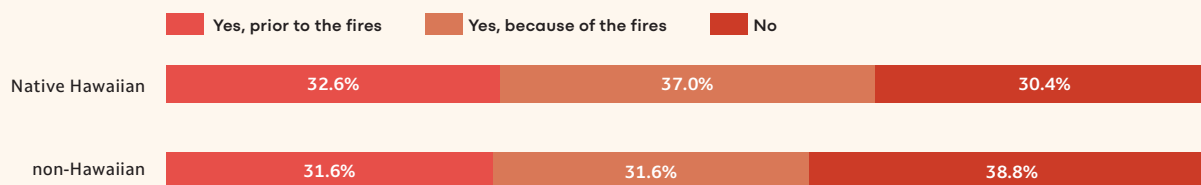
Two-thirds (66.6%) of those who indicated wanting professional help already sought help prior to the fires (66.6%) or sought help because of the fires (33.3%). Notably, 33.3% of the respondents who indicated wanting professional help did not seek that professional help.

RESOURCES NEEDED

After a disaster, businesses require various resources to assist in recovery and rebuilding efforts. Resources are essential for helping businesses stabilize and continue operations in the aftermath of catastrophic events. Financial support, including loans, grants, and donations from federal, state, and local programs, as well as from community and private organizations, is fundamental. Additionally, businesses may need assistance with insurance claims, access to new credit, and support for business continuity planning.

More than two-thirds of Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses reported not having a continuity plan.

Figure 11. % of respondents with or interested in having a business continuity plan

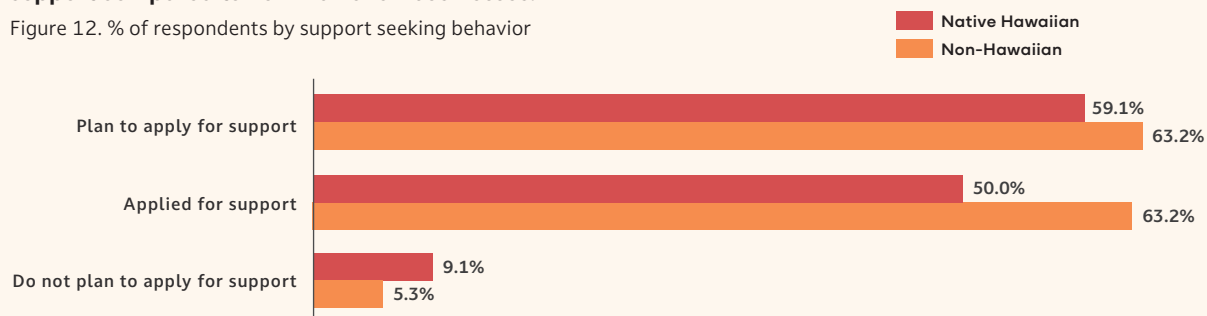


Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "Do you have a business continuity plan, which includes all the information your business needs to continue operating during an unplanned event or disaster?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 70 (73.7%) business provided responses: 46 (65.7%) Native Hawaiian business, 19 (37.1%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and five (7.1%) where no race was indicated.

Similar percentages of Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses reported already having a continuity plan (31.6% and 32.6%, respectively). However, a slightly larger portion of Native Hawaiian businesses without a current plan wanted to develop one (37.0% versus 31.6%) while more non-Hawaiian businesses were still not interested in having one (36.8% versus 30.4%).

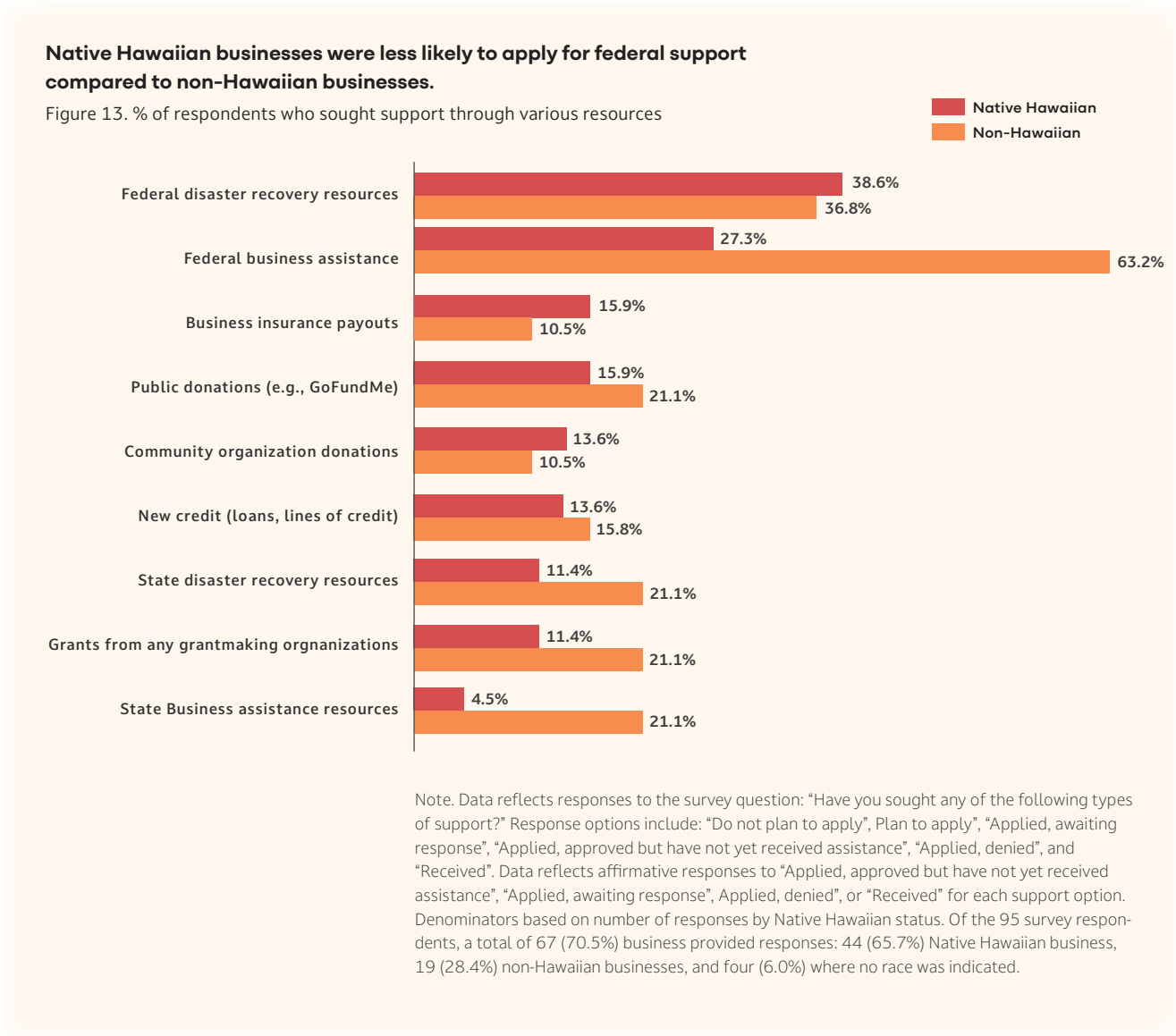
Native Hawaiian businesses appeared less inclined to apply for support compared to non-Hawaiian businesses.

Figure 12. % of respondents by support seeking behavior



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "Have you sought any of the following types of support?" Response options include: "Do not plan to apply", "Plan to apply", "Applied, awaiting response", "Applied, approved but have not yet received assistance", "Applied, denied", and "Received". Responses for "Plan to apply for support" include affirmative responses to "Plan to apply" to at least one type of support listed. Denominators based on number of responses by Native Hawaiian status. Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 67 (70.5%) business provided responses: 44 (65.7%) Native Hawaiian business, 19 (28.4%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and four (6.0%) where no race was indicated.

When examining the intentions of businesses seeking support, 59.1% of Native Hawaiian businesses expressed an intent to apply compared to 63.2% of non-Hawaiian businesses. However, only 50.0% of Native Hawaiian businesses have already applied for assistance compared to 63.2% of non-Hawaiian business. Meanwhile, 9.1% of Native Hawaiian businesses do not plan to apply for support.



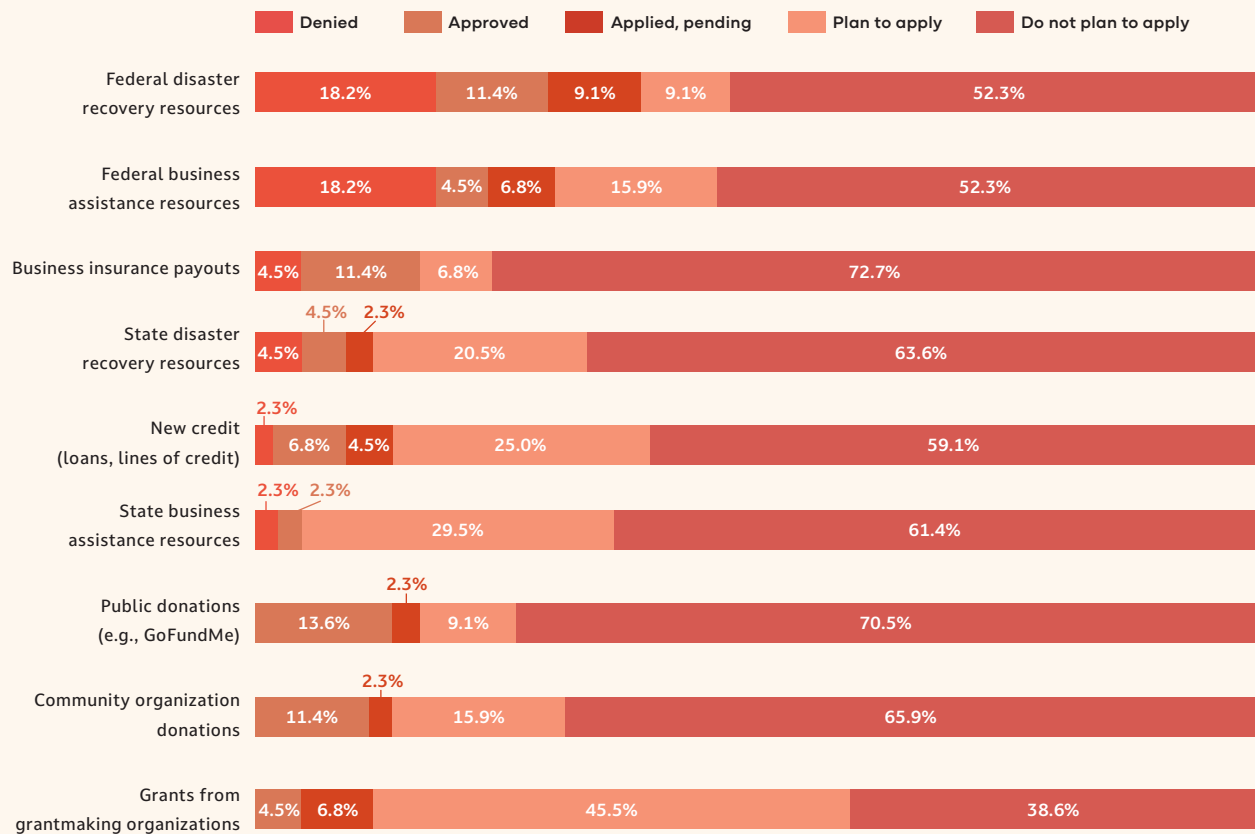
Slightly more than one-third of both Native Hawaiian (38.6%) and non-Hawaiian businesses (36.8%) had accessed federal disaster recovery resources. However, there appeared to be a large difference between the percent of Native Hawaiian versus non-Hawaiian businesses seeking federal business assistance resources (27.3% compared to 63.2%).

"I did my insurance claims. It's not enough to rebuild my home which was my place of business. I will need a loan or grant to help me to rebuild my home. It's going to cost close to one million to rebuild my home and my insurance only gave me \$600k so I'm short by \$400k."

- Native Hawaiian business, when asked about the assistance they require

Grant resources were more popular among Native Hawaiian businesses than other funding resources.

Figure 14. Status of applications submitted by respondents



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "Have you sought any of the following types of support?" Denominator based on total number of Native Hawaiian responding businesses. Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 67 (70.5%) business provided responses: 44 (65.7%) Native Hawaiian business, 19 (28.4%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and four (6.0%) where no race was indicated.

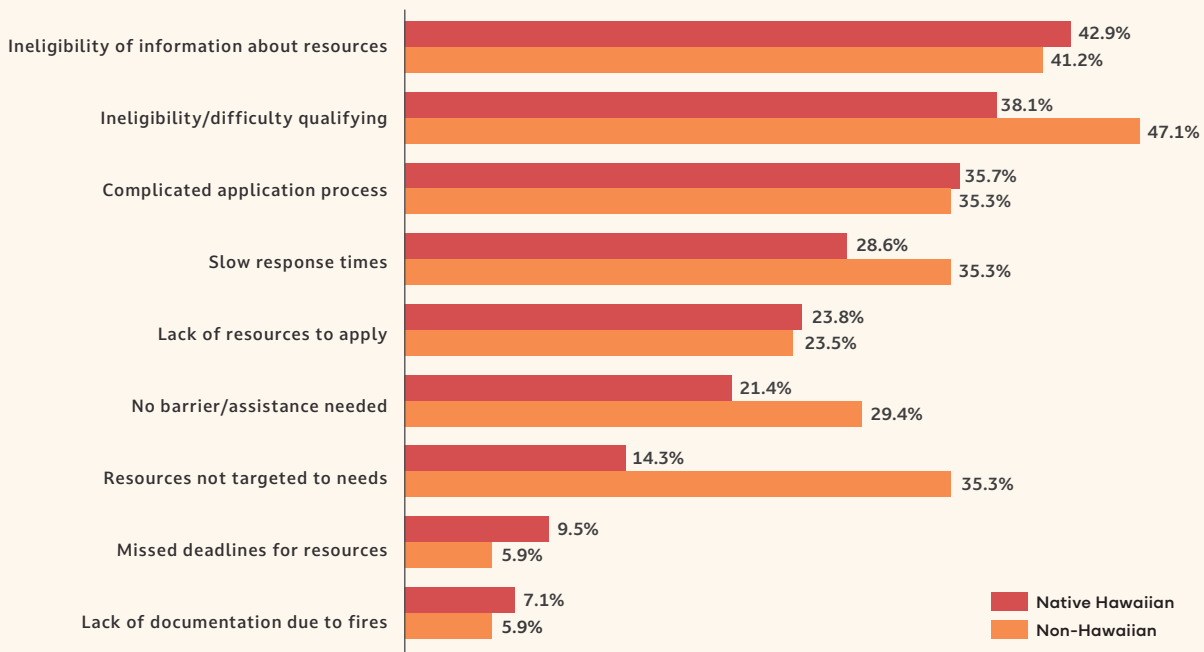
Among Native Hawaiian businesses who have applied or plan to apply for assistance, federal assistance and grants were the most popular with almost half of respondents (47.7%) having applied or planning to apply for federal assistance and more than half (56.8%) having applied or planning to apply for grants. This is further supported by one Native Hawaiian business owner who simply stated "need grants" when asked about assistance they required. Despite the strong interest in grant funding, the percentage of Native Hawaiian businesses who had applied for grants was relatively low (11.4%).

"I'll take whatever I can get right now"

-non-Hawaiian business owner, when asked about seeking support

A lack of information was the greatest barrier to accessing resources for Native Hawaiians businesses.

Figure 15. % of respondents who experienced various barriers to accessing resources



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "What barriers have you experienced accessing the resources/assistance your business needs?" Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 63 (66.3%) business provided responses: 42 (66.7%) Native Hawaiian business, 17 (27.0%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and four (6.3%) where no race was indicated.

For Native Hawaiian businesses, the largest barriers to accessing resources were a lack of information (42.9%), followed by ineligibility for resources (38.1%), and the complicated application process (35.7%) - all of which could significantly delay recovery for these businesses. As shared by two business owners when asked about the barriers experienced to accessing resources:

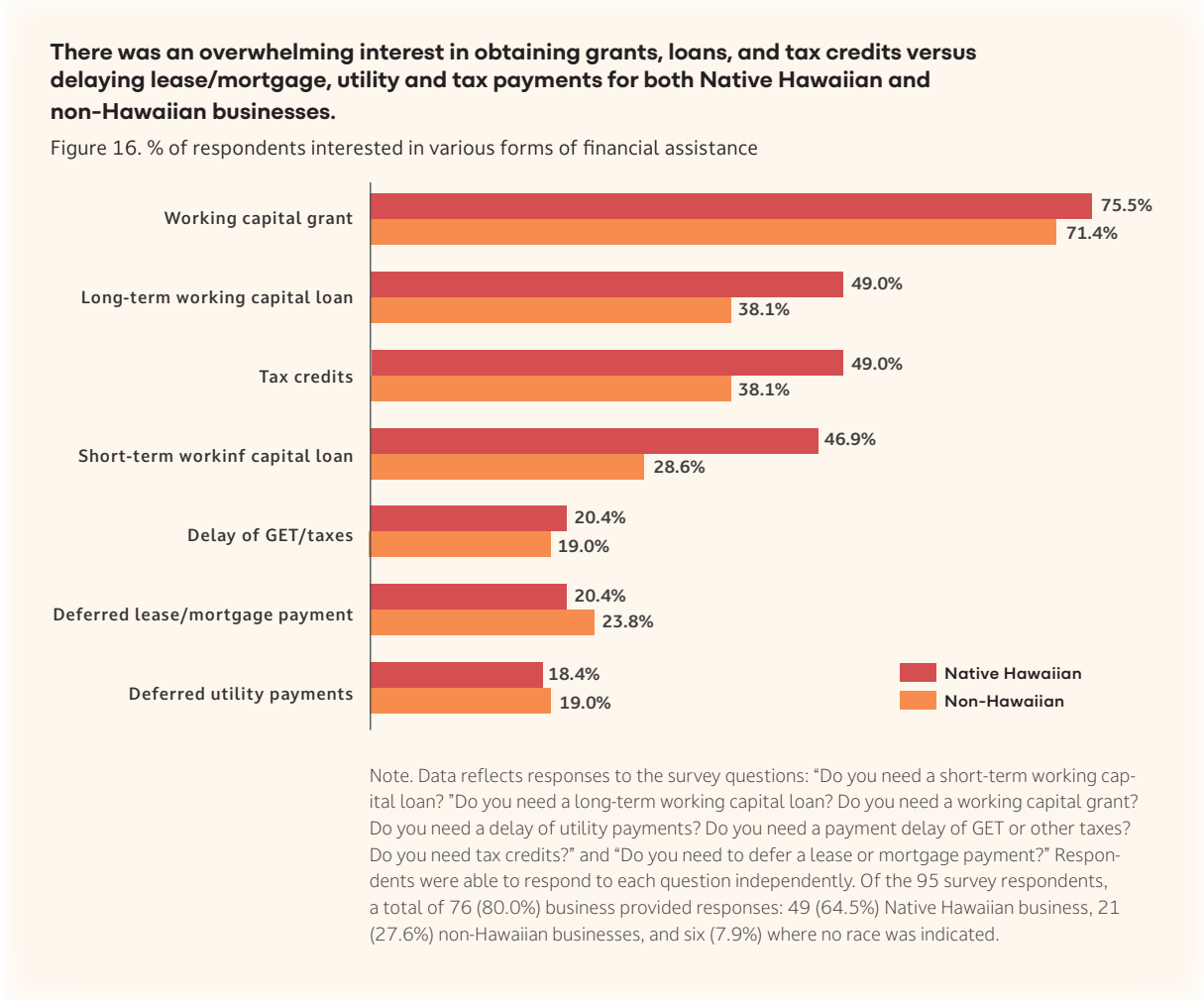
"Resources not available at this time. Only money will help."

- Native Hawaiian business owner

"Zero business resources available so far other than SBA loans"

- non-Hawaiian business owner

For the most part, Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses faced similar barriers. Apart from resources not being targeted to needs, where the difference between Native Hawaiian (14.3%) and non-Hawaiian businesses (35.3%) was 21 percentage points, response rates for the remaining barriers remained at less than a 10-percentage point difference between the two groups.

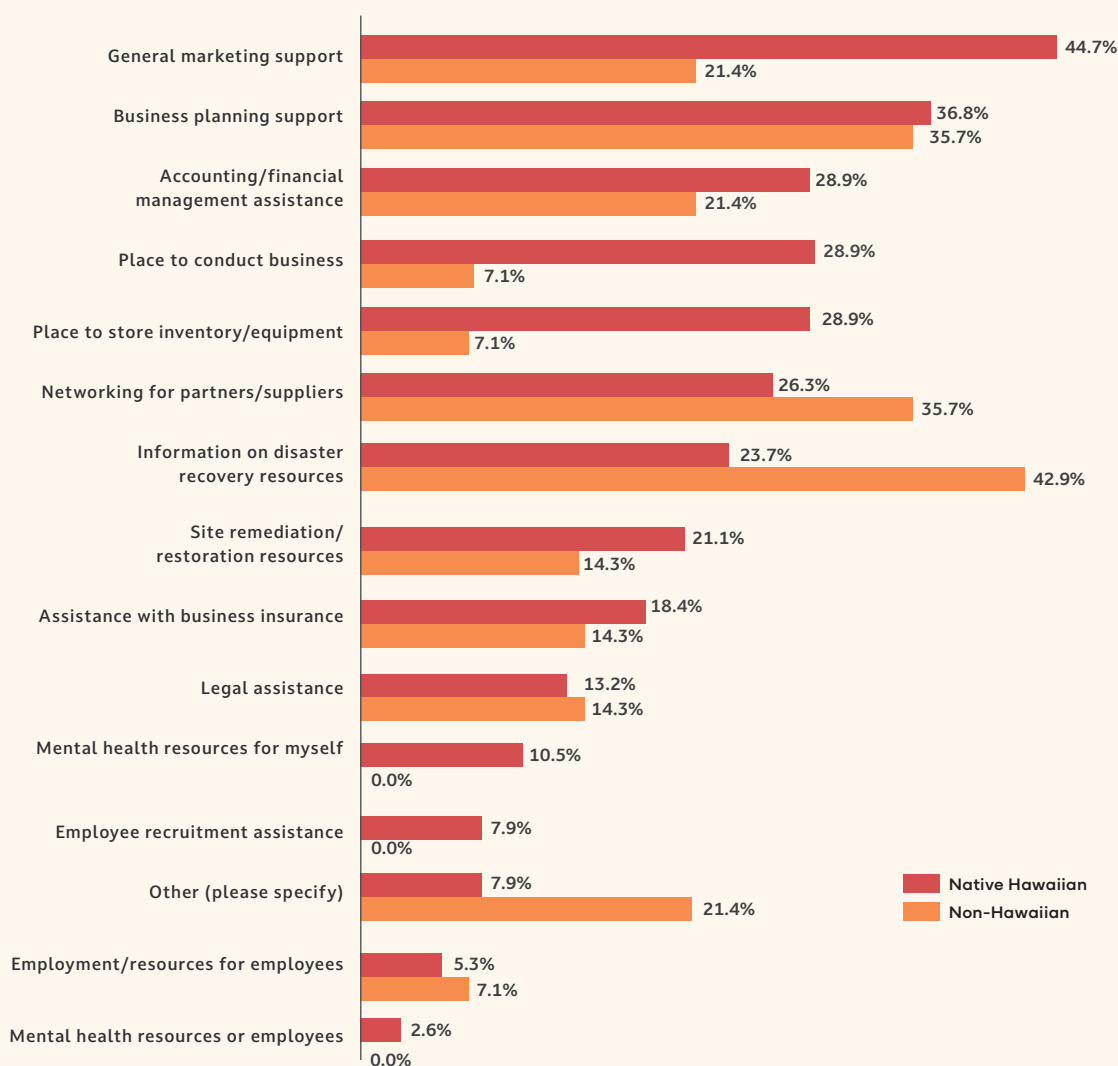


As noted in other reports on the impacts of the Maui wildfires,¹² there is a huge desire on the part of impacted businesses for more grant funding. The most needed financial resources were working capital grants: 75.5% of Native Hawaiian businesses and 71.4% of non-Hawaiian businesses.

Overall rates of needed financial assistance were similar between Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses with one notable exception: the need for loans. While fewer Native Hawaiian businesses reported taking on new debt because of the fires (22.0% versus 33.3%) as seen in Figure 2 or seeking out loans (13.6% versus 15.8%) than non-Hawaiian businesses as seen in Figure 13, they are clearly interested in doing so. Native Hawaiian businesses reported needing long-term working capital loans (49.0%) and short-term working capital loans (46.9%) at a higher rate than non-Hawaiian businesses (38.1% and 28.6%, respectively).

Native Hawaiian businesses report a higher need for general marketing support than non-Hawaiian businesses.

Figure 17. % of respondents interested in additional assistance



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "What additional assistance does your business need?" Respondents were prompted to select all applicable responses. Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 57 (60.0%) business provided responses: 38 (66.7%) Native Hawaiian business, 14 (24.6%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and five (8.8%) where no race was indicated.

More than twice the number of Native Hawaiian businesses reported needing general marketing support (44.7%) versus non-Hawaiian businesses (21.4%), representing the top response for Native Hawaiian business non-financial assistance needs and the fourth ranked response for their non-Hawaiian counterparts.

Next is business planning support, the second most popular response for both Native Hawaiian (36.8%) and non-Hawaiian businesses (35.7%). Native Hawaiian businesses also reported notably higher responses than non-Hawaiian businesses in needing a place to conduct business and to store inventory and equipment (28.9% vs 7.1% for both).

Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian business respondents ranked business planning support as the top priority need.

Table 4. Priority scores of additional assistance interested in

	Native Hawaiian-owned businesses	non-Hawaiian-owned businesses
Business planning support (e.g., planning to pursue new/alternative revenue streams)	18.6	25.7
General marketing support	13.2	2.9
A place to conduct business	12.4	0.0
Networking to find new partners, suppliers, distributors, etc.	10.9	17.1
Assistance navigating or acquiring business insurance (e.g., employee health insurance, liability insurance, property insurance, workers comp, etc.)	10.9	0.0
Employee recruitment assistance	7.0	0.0
Legal assistance	6.2	14.3
A place to store inventory and equipment	6.2	8.6
Accounting and financial management assistance	6.2	5.7
Access to mental health resources for myself	3.9	0.0
Information about disaster recovery resources	3.1	17.1
Site remediation/restoration/reconstruction resources	1.6	5.7
Employment or other resources for my employees	0.0	2.9
Access to mental health resource for my employees	0.0	0.0
Total businesses responded	33	10

Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "After considering all the needs your business has, how would you prioritize your three most urgent needs?" Options based on chosen responses to the question "What additional assistance does your business need?" Scores were calculated by giving each option a certain number of points based on how often they were ranked a priority 1, 2, or 3. Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 49 (51.6%) business provided responses: 33 (67.3%) Native Hawaiian business, 10 (20.4%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and six (12.2%) where no race was indicated.

Respondents were asked to prioritize their selected needs ranking their three most urgent needs. These rankings were used to create a priority score for each option, allowing for the assessment of the overall urgency of needs among respondents. The higher the score, the greater the urgency for that need to be met.

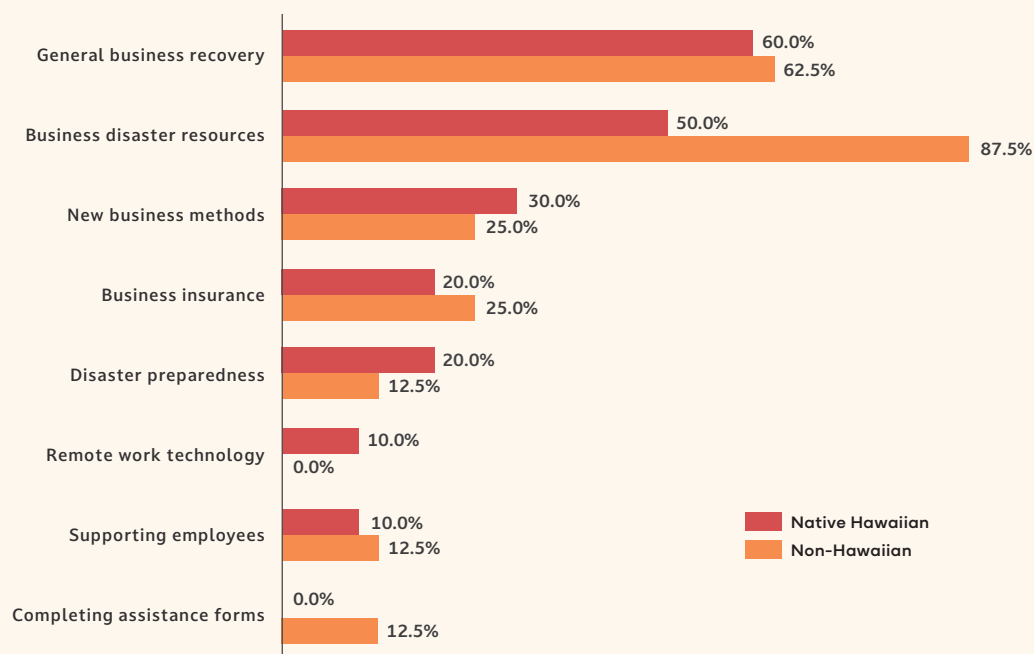
For both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses, although rated the second most needed non-financial businesses assistance desired, business planning support was ranked as the top priority need. General marketing support, the most needed support identified and a place to conduct business which tied for fourth with a place to store inventory and equipment (8th in priority ranking), ranked second and third for Native Hawaiian businesses but near the bottom for non-Hawaiian businesses. Remarkably, accounting and financial management was the third highest assistance Native Hawaiian businesses were interested in, yet it ranked ninth for priority of need.

"clear plan for future recovery"

- non-Native Hawaiian business owner

Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses had comparable interest in learning about general business recovery.

Figure 18. Interest in learning more about disaster assistance



Note. Data reflects responses to the survey question: "What information about disaster recovery resources are you interested in learning more about?" Respondents were prompted to select all applicable responses. Of the 95 survey respondents, a total of 20 (21.1%) business provided responses: 10 (50.0%) Native Hawaiian business, eight (40.0%) non-Hawaiian businesses, and two (10.0%) where no race was indicated.

Two-thirds of both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses were interested in learning about general business recovery (60.0% and 62.5% respectively). Information on business disaster resources was overwhelmingly selected by non-Hawaiian businesses (87.5%) and selected by just half of Native Hawaiian business (50.0%), a difference of 37.5 percentage points. Notably, although difficult application processes were listed as third in the top five barriers to accessing resources as seen in Figure 15, no Native Hawaiian businesses were interested in information on completing emergency assistance forms.

CONCLUSION

The 2023 Maui wildfires had a profound impact in Hawai'i, particularly on the island of Maui. Addressing both the immediate and long-term impacts and next steps in recovery efforts has been challenging. Rebuilding efforts are facing difficulties due to high costs in an already expensive state, cultural and environmental concerns, and the displacement of hundreds of residents and businesses. Recovery is expected to take years, placing an additional long-term financial burden on families and businesses. The loss of businesses in Lahaina and the ripple effect on businesses in surrounding areas left many residents without employment, and business owners having to navigate the combined loss of their homes and their livelihoods. Identifying both the common and distinct needs of these businesses is essential in providing needed resources.

Findings indicated clear differences in how Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses were impacted by the fire. Native Hawaiian businesses were more impacted by staffing, the general disruption of business activity, experiencing a higher rate of negative mental health impacts, and expressed having a lack of information about available resources and needing general marketing support. On the other hand, non-Hawaiian businesses were more impacted financially, possibly due to having more reliance on the tourism industry, but had a more optimistic view on recovery. Both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian businesses, indicated a need in financial support through grants and state aid. This shows that targeted support is needed to address distinct challenges and priorities as well as areas of mental health support and business recovery moving forward.

Mahalo to all businesses who participated in the Maui Wildfire Native Hawaiian Business Impact Survey. Your insights were valuable and provided a wealth of first-hand, lived experience that was captured through the survey.

Mahalo to the Maui Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce for partnering with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to design, deploy, analyze, and report on the needs assessment. It is our hope this report will add to the body of works developed in response to the tragic Maui fires and enable programming, advocacy, and other efforts to meet the evolving needs of the Maui and Native Hawaiian business communities.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 County of Maui. (2023). County of Maui updates [Press release]. Accessed August 7, 2024. <https://www.mauicounty.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=12683>
- 2 Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. (2023, Sept 6). Statement by DBEDT director on economic forecast. Accessed August 7, 2024. <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/blog/23-47/>
- 3 Kamehameha Schools. (n.d.). Native Hawaiian businesses. Accessed August 7, 2024. <https://sites.google.com/ksbe.edu/nh-covid19/native-hawaiian-businesses>
- 4 Winsor, M., & Deliso, M. (2024, August 7). Maui wildfires: 1 year later, major developments amid cleanup and recovery. ABC News. Accessed December 12, 2024. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/maui-wildfires-year-major-developments-amid-cleanup-recovery/story?id=112576644>
- 5 Hawaii News Now. (2023, November 3). Some 600 Maui businesses have closed since wildfires; hundreds more are on the brink. Hawaii News Now. Accessed August 7, 2024. <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2023/11/03/some-600-maui-businesses-have-closed-since-wildfires-hundreds-more-are-brink/>
- 6 Data includes both employer firms and non-employer firms; U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Nonemployer statistics: Nonemployer businesses by industry [Data table]. Accessed August 14, 2024. <https://data.census.gov/table/NONEMP2021.NS2100NONEMP?g=050XX00US-15009&d=ECNSVY%20Nonemployer%20Statistics>
- 7 U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). County business patterns: All sectors, by legal form of organization and employment size class [Data table]. Accessed August 14, 2024. <https://data.census.gov/table/CBP2021.CB2100CBP?q=CB2100CBP:%20All%20Sectors:%20County%20Business%20Patterns,%20including%20ZIP%20Code%20Business%20Patterns,%20by%20Legal%20Form%20of%20Organization%20and%20Employment%20Size%20Class%20for%20the%20U.S.,%20States,%20and%20Selected%20Geographies:%202021&g=050XX-00US15009&nkd=EMPSZES~001>
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- 9 Environmental and Energy Study Institute. (2023, August 24). Rethinking tourism in the wake of West Maui's wildfires. Accessed August 14, 2024. <https://www.eesi.org/articles/view/rethinking-tourism-in-the-wake-of-west-maui-s-wildfires#:~:text=Tourism%20directly%20or%20indirectly%20brings,dropped%20by%20nearly%20three%20quarters>
- 10 Hawaii Tribune-Herald. (2023, October 31). Maui's struggling small businesses driven by the spirit of aloha. Accessed August 14, 2024. <https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2023/10/31/hawaii-news/maui-s-struggling-small-businesses-driven-by-the-spirit-of-aloha/>; Civil Beat. (2023, December). Businesses in Lahaina may face significant barriers to reopening. Accessed August 14, 2024. <https://www.civil-beat.org/2023/12/businesses-in-lahaina-may-face-significant-barriers-to-reopening/>
- 11 Hatak, I. (2021). "Chapter 55: Mental health in entrepreneurship". In World Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved May 2, 2024, from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839104145.00062>; Ute, S. (2018). Entrepreneurs' Mental Health and Well-Being: A Review and Research Agenda. AMP, 32, 290–322, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2017.0001>
- 12 County of Maui Office of Economic Development. (March 2024). Maui Nui Strong Maui Business Health Check. Accessed August 14, 2024. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_lmlGjmHKD2dmTezJblezYsV61PwX0jv/view