



Stellar Group

Research | Strategy | Impact

Ho'oiikaika  
PARTNERSHIP



# Preliminary Assessment of Family Services Supports and Needs on Maui County

A SYNTHESIS OF EXISTING RESOURCES & REPORTS

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Ho‘oikaika Partnership contracted Stellar Group to explore and synthesize existing data on Maui County’s child and family support system. While many disparate data sources exist, there is an overall dearth of current, Maui-specific research, which limited the ability to fully answer many research questions. As such, this report should be interpreted as a snapshot rather than a comprehensive needs assessment. Analysis gave rise to just as many questions as answers. Key takeaways are as follows:

### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MAUI COUNTY

Hawai‘i has relatively low rates of child maltreatment, and this deserves to be celebrated. However, available data on child maltreatment is insufficient. The lack of timely, complete data that is directly comparable to national, as well as an inability to query the data systems within the state to explore nuances, is a hindrance to data-informed prevention efforts.

- » *Maui County’s housing crisis is reflected in child maltreatment data and additional sources. Inadequate housing is cited as a precipitating factor more than twice as often in Maui County as statewide.*
- » *Heavy continuous childcare and inability to cope with parental responsibility are also cited much more often in Maui County than statewide.*
- » *Native Hawaiian children are disproportionately represented in foster care in Maui County.*

### FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM IN MAUI COUNTY

Demand for services and supports in Maui County grew during COVID-19, but there is little information about how well the system was able to meet those needs and how families with young children specifically have fared. Affordable housing continues to be a strong, persistent need in Maui County and across the state of Hawai‘i, as well as substance misuse treatment, particularly for drug use, which is one of the most common precipitating factors for removal of a child from a home. Additionally, there is little information on access and availability of other services that contribute to protective factors, such as early childhood education and social supports.

- » *Data indicates unmet need in the child and family support system workforce.*
- » *Program outcome data is limited.*
- » *Additionally, families’ own voices and experiences are currently lacking from research and data.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ho‘oikaika Partnership is a coalition of more than 60 child and family support providers across Maui County that seek to strengthen the provider system, prevent child maltreatment, and improve outcomes for children and families. In 2021, the Ho‘oikaika Partnership developed a 2021-2024 Strategic Plan to guide its work.

In the strategic plan, Goal 1 is to create a seamless safety net of services to support children and their caregivers. Within this goal area, Objective 1.3 is to identify and address needs and gaps in the provider network and system of supports available for Maui children and families, including family or person-centered services, and Activity 1.3.1 is to conduct a needs assessment/gap analysis to inform activities, including a survey of partners’ training, professional development, and self-care needs.

However, over the past few years, dozens of research reports have been conducted in Hawai‘i on the needs of children and families, and the systems that support them, including research conducted by the Ho‘oikaika Partnership, and its member agencies. Rather than conduct a new needs assessment, the Ho‘oikaika Partnership contracted Stellar Group to synthesize the existing data, research, and reports into an assessment of what is already known about Maui County’s child and family support system, guided by the following research questions:

1. What risk and protective factors for child maltreatment are most prevalent for children and families in Maui County?
  - a. Who is most at risk?
  - b. How does this compare to statewide/national risk and protective factors?
2. What services are available to support children and families in Maui County and specifically to prevent child maltreatment?
  - a. What are the needs or gaps in the system of services and supports? Do families and providers have the same perceptions?
  - b. What is known about the provider workforce and the challenges and opportunities it faces?

The Ho‘oikaika Partnership also identified three timely and relevant themes of interest and requested that Stellar Group look for information on these themes specifically:

- » *Impact of COVID-19 on families and services*
- » *Perceptions about CWS (family and providers)*
- » *Equity (access, cultural relevance)*

The needs assessment process is limited by the fact that no new data was collected, and data was not available on all topics and themes of interest within the existing reports. Therefore, this assessment is just a partial snapshot, rather than a comprehensive assessment of current

needs and gaps in the systems of support. It raises just as many follow-up questions as it provides answers.

## METHODOLOGY

**This report contains analysis of pre-existing data only**, provided by representatives of the Ho‘oikaika Partnership to Stellar Group in the form of reports, briefs, web links, and data files. An initial 61 data sources were reviewed. A matrix was developed to assess the relevance of each source. Those meeting the following three criteria were prioritized for inclusion:

1. *Focused on children and families*
2. *Included Maui-specific data*
3. *Published in 2018 or more recently*

A few additional sources from this matrix that did not meet the above criteria were deemed relevant to the research questions and also included (i.e., pre-2018 or statewide/national data only). A small number of additional sources were identified and included by the Stellar Group and the Ho‘oikaika Partnership throughout the process to supplement data and/or provide additional context for initial findings. In some instances, data sources between reports did not match. In instances where discrepancies were noticed, the data closest to the original source was used. However, Stellar Group did not verify the authenticity of all source data. Additionally, a small number of cited data sources contain secondary data (for example, a report citing U.S. Census data). In included graphs citing such sources, the original data source is noted in the graph’s citation but was not verified for accuracy. In its final form, this report utilizes 28 data sources. See Appendix A: Report Reference List for a full list.

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## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MAUI COUNTY

This section focuses on the children and families who call Maui County home. It contains the following subsections:

1. *Demographics – population, income, housing, and other data relevant to understanding the experiences of children and families in Maui County*
2. *Child Maltreatment – child maltreatment and foster care data, including risk factors present in families affected by child maltreatment*

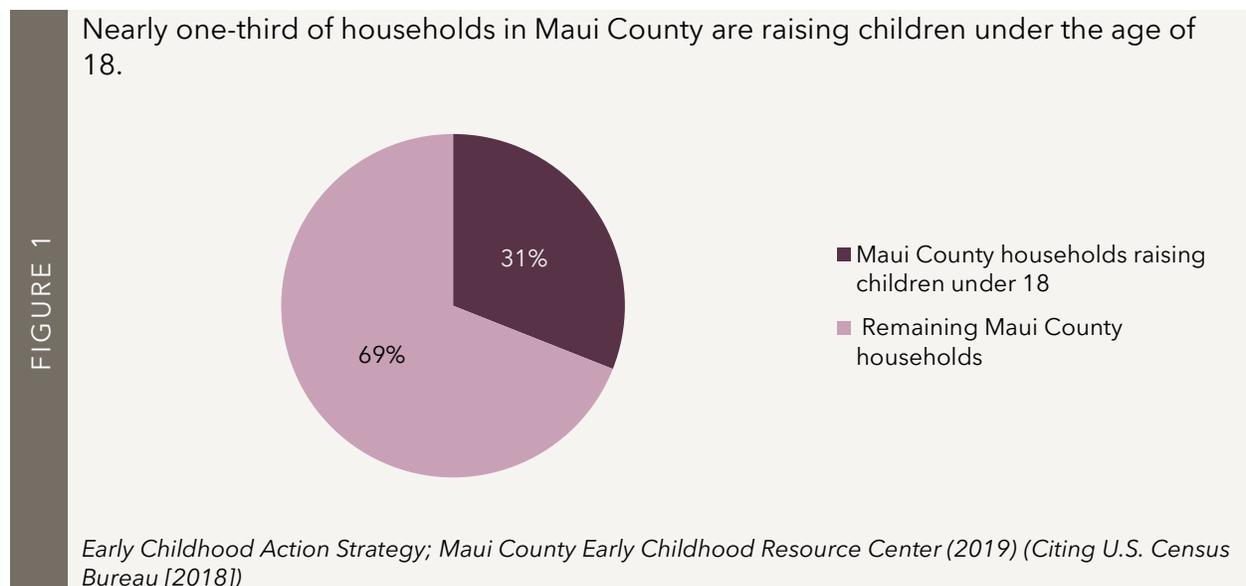
The prevalence of family protective factors was not specifically assessed in any of the data sources reviewed. However, discussion of community assets and programs that promote protective factors is included in the Family Support System in Maui County section.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

To identify and address the needs of children and families in Maui County, it is imperative to first understand who calls Maui County home. However, the demographic data here alone does not tell a complete story. For example, information on who in Maui County experiences poverty, homelessness, and unemployment was limited in reviewed reports.

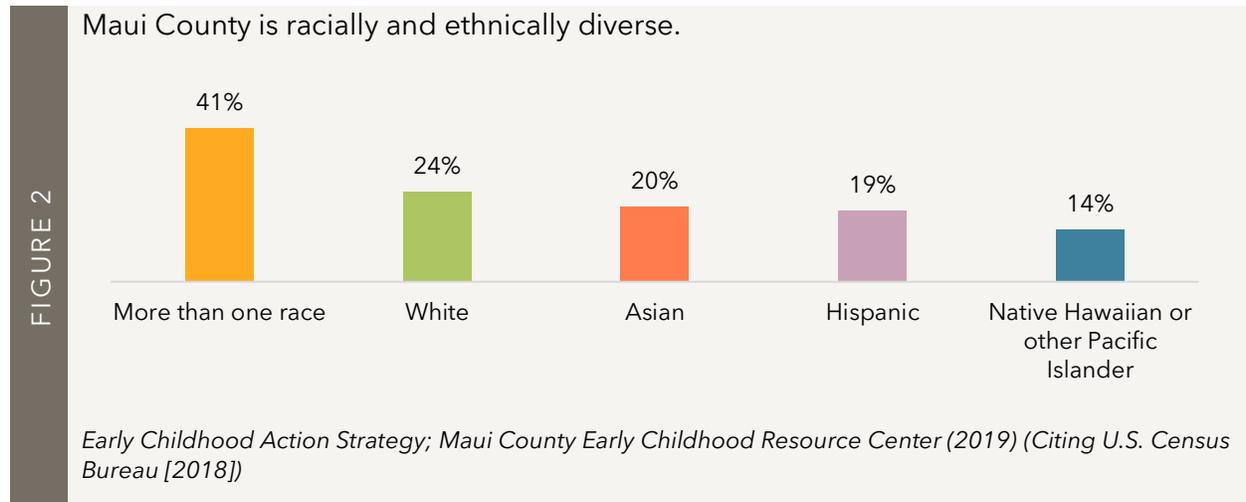
### POPULATION

In 2018, Maui County had an estimated population of 167,207 individuals,<sup>1</sup> including 9,640 children under the age of 5.<sup>2</sup> As of 2019, there were 52,800 households in the county, 31% (16,360) of which were families raising children under 18. Of these families, 40% (6,600) were raising children under five. Additionally, 6,899 grandparents in Maui County are raising children.<sup>3</sup>



## RACE/ETHNICITY

Maui County is highly racially and ethnically diverse. Four in ten (41%) residents identify as more than one race. Additionally, 24% identify as white, 20% as Asian, and 14% as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. About one-fifth (19%) of residents identify as Hispanic.<sup>4</sup>



## UNEMPLOYMENT

Financial insecurity, influenced by employment stability, is a risk factor for child maltreatment.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawai'i had the lowest unemployment rate in the country.<sup>6</sup> However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Hawai'i's tourism industry, resulting in the state's unemployment rate jumping to the highest in the nation, at 24% in 2020.<sup>7</sup> No reports were included that discussed how the reopening has affected unemployment rates.

## POVERTY AND ALICE HOUSEHOLDS

Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed (ALICE) is a framework developed by United Way to better understand the complex reality of families' financial situations.<sup>8</sup> According to Aloha United Way, families of four<sup>9</sup> need \$78,600 to live comfortably in Maui County.<sup>10</sup> However, as of 2018, **over one-third (36%) of families in Maui County have incomes below the ALICE survival budget, compared to 33% statewide; this is the highest rate of all counties.**<sup>11</sup> This is lower than the ALICE rates cited in the Early Childhood Profiles for Maui County. The reason for this discrepancy is not known.

In Maui County, 23% of single-parent households with at least one child under the age of five live below the federal poverty line.<sup>12</sup> Further, 50% of young children in poverty live in Maunaloa, Molokai, and 28% live in Lānai City.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, 25% of families in Maui County with a zero to four-year-old receive some form of public assistance, defined as Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance, or food stamps/SNAP, a form of concrete supports in times of need.<sup>14</sup> As COVID-19 persisted, 61% of families reported income lost due to the

pandemic and nearly a quarter (24%) reported having little or no confidence that they will be able to make next month's rent.<sup>15</sup>

## HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING INSECURITY

In 2019, it was estimated that 6,448 people in Hawai'i were experiencing homelessness, defined here as individuals or families residing in temporary living shelters or with a primary nighttime residence not ordinarily used for sleeping. Of these individuals, over half (56%) were unsheltered. Additionally, 32% (2,028) were experiencing homelessness as a family, and 18% (1,176) were under the age of 18.<sup>16, 17</sup> With the inclusion of children living in doubled-up situations, an estimated 1 in 35 children under the age of five statewide are experiencing homelessness.<sup>18</sup>

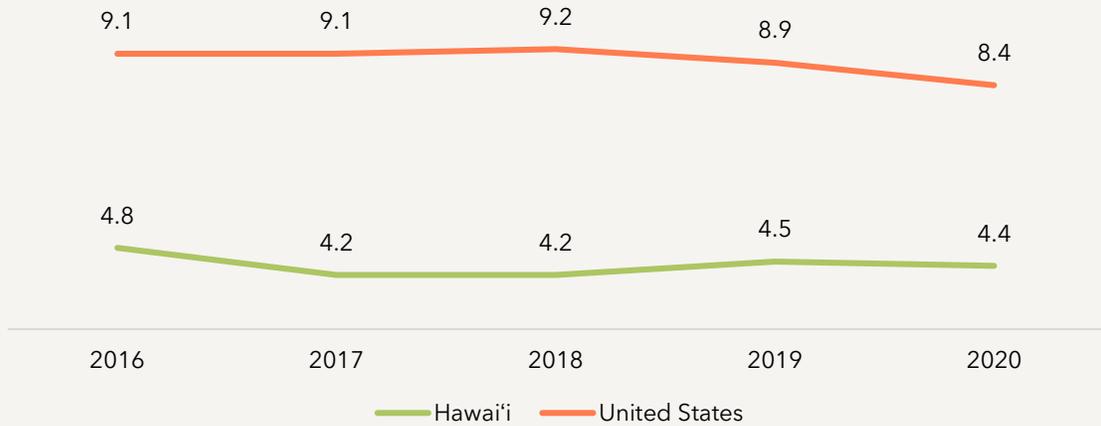
Housing concerns are also reflected in Aloha United Way (AUW) 2-1-1 telephone call data. In 2021, the most common category of calls (26%) were related to housing and utilities; this was true both at a statewide level and in Maui County. Of these calls, 86% were inquiries regarding payment assistance and 9% were related to homelessness. Statewide, both a majority of callers requesting payment assistance (66%) and homelessness-related requests (59%) were females. In 2021, Maui County residents made 755 housing and utilities-related calls, compared to just 333 in 2019.<sup>19</sup> Additional AUW 2-1-1 trends are explored in a later section.

## CHILD MALTREATMENT

Relative to national child maltreatment rates, recorded cases in Hawai'i are low, hovering around 50% less than national rates (confirmed unique cases per 1,000 children).<sup>20</sup> Hawai'i's first time-victim rate was also below the national average, with a rate of 3.4 per 1,000 children, well below the national rate of 5.9.<sup>21</sup> This is a positive finding, and the reasons for the lower rates were not explored in any reports. However, this is a potential success that can be built on, for example, by better understanding what protective factors communities and families in Hawaii have that contributes to these lower rates.

FIGURE 3

Compared to national child maltreatment rates, Hawai'i has a low rate (per 1,000 children) of confirmed unique cases.



*U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth and Families; Children's Bureau (2016-2020)*

This subsection explores child maltreatment rates and data on foster care in Maui County, including confirmed cases of maltreatment, precipitating factors, children in foster care, and the effects of COVID-19 on both reporting and actual incidents of child maltreatment.

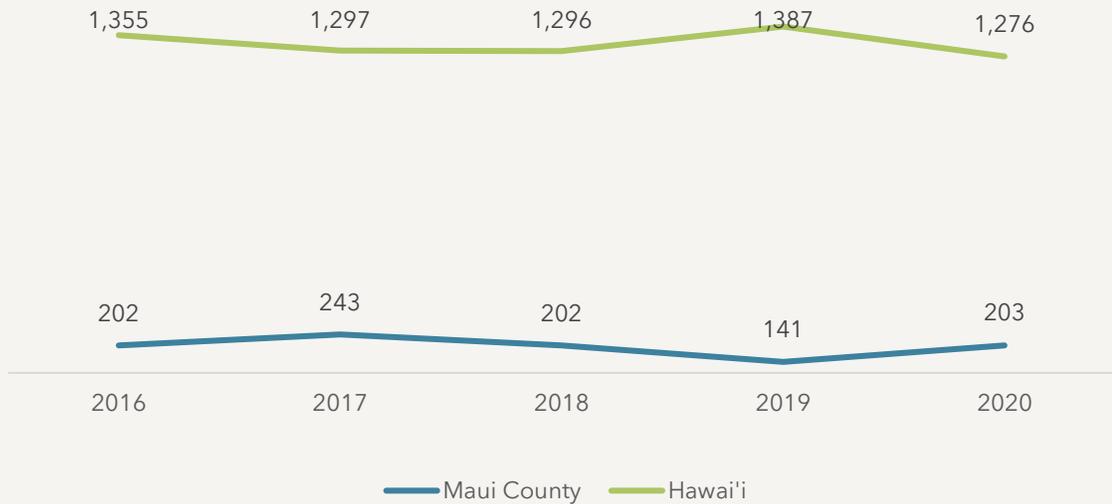
### DUPLICATED CONFIRMED CASES

Duplicated confirmed child count refers to the total number of times a child was affected by confirmed maltreatment in the same reporting period. Multiple types of maltreatment at one time are not counted more than once in this count, but multiple distinct instances of maltreatment against the same child are.<sup>22</sup>

In Maui County, confirmed duplicated cases of child maltreatment declined from 2017 to 2019 but rose again in 2020, with 203 duplicated confirmed cases. Additionally, trends in the number of duplicated confirmed cases in Maui County are in direct opposition to state trends in 2019 and 2020. The reason for this is unknown.<sup>23</sup>

FIGURE 4

Trends of the number of duplicated confirmed cases of child maltreatment in Maui County are in direct opposition to statewide trends.



State of Hawai'i; Department of Human Services; Audit, Quality Control and Research Office (2016-2020)

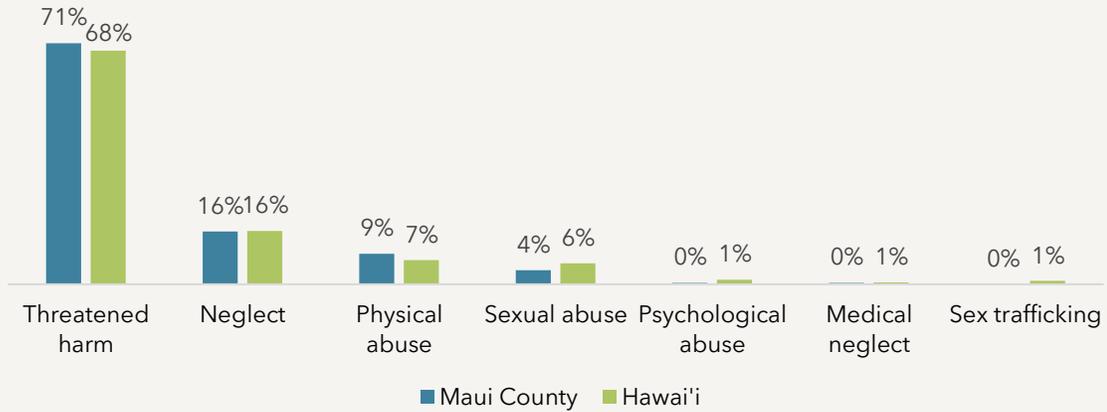
## TYPES OF MALTREATMENT

In Maui County in 2020, 245 unique confirmed types of child maltreatment were experienced by children.<sup>24</sup> (“Unique” refers to instances where multiple confirmed incidents of the same type of maltreatment against the same child in a reporting period are recorded only once.) More than one type of maltreatment can be recorded per case. Therefore, numbers of types of maltreatment may be higher than total number of cases (reported above).

In Maui County, threatened harm was the most commonly confirmed type of child maltreatment, with 173 incidents (71%).<sup>25</sup> Neglect (38 incidents; 16%) was second most common, followed by physical abuse (22 incidents; 9%) and sexual abuse (10 incidents; 4%). There was one case each of psychological abuse and medical neglect. These figures closely mirror statewide statistics. It is important to note that one child may have experienced more than one of the preceding types of maltreatment. However, threatened harm is not a category commonly used in other states, making it difficult to compare local and state data to national trends. Nationally, in 2020 76% of child maltreatment victims experienced neglect.<sup>26</sup>

FIGURE 5

Most unique confirmed cases of child maltreatment in Maui County in 2020 were threatened harm, followed by neglect, mirroring state trends.



State of Hawai'i; Department of Human Services; Audit, Quality Control and Research Office (2020)

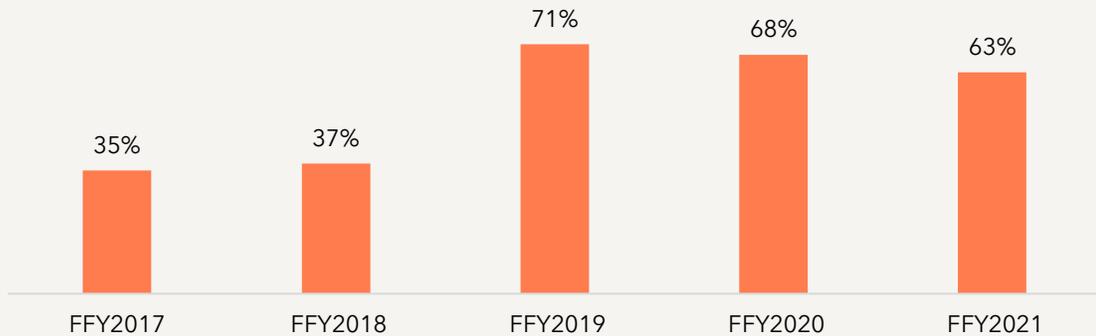
Data from Casey Family Programs illustrates factors experienced by children in foster care.

**Most children from Maui County in foster care have experienced neglect of some form.**

It is important to note that children may have entered foster care in a prior year, so data is not indicative of annual trends. The other most common factors in FFY21 were caretaker inability to cope (47%) and parent drug abuse (29%).<sup>27</sup>

FIGURE 6

Most Maui County children in foster care have experienced neglect of some form.



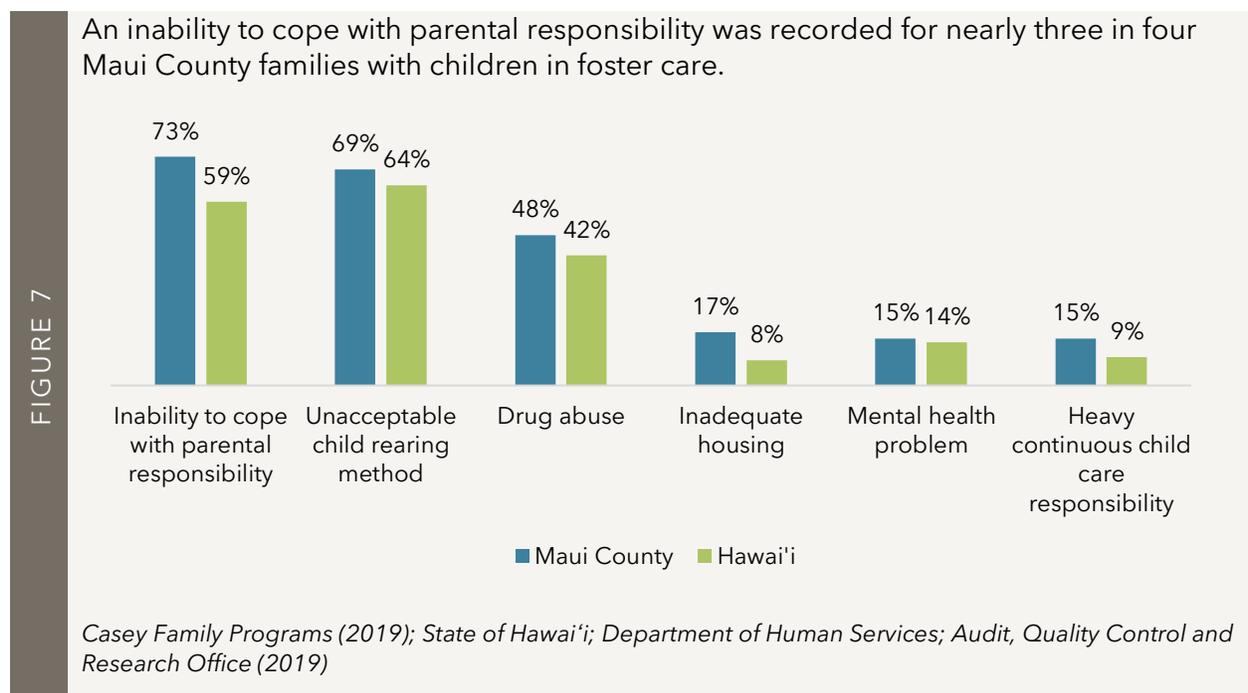
Casey Family Programs (FFY2017-FFY2021)

**FACTORS PRECIPITATING INCIDENTS**

State of Hawai'i Child Welfare Services (CWS) caseworkers can record up to five factors for each confirmed incident of child maltreatment.<sup>28</sup> **In Maui County in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2019, the most commonly reported precipitating factor in child welfare calls was an inability to cope with parental responsibility, recorded in 73% of calls, followed by**

**unacceptable child rearing method (69%)** Definitions for these factors were not provided in data. **Almost half (48%) of reports have a precipitating factor of drug abuse**, and almost one-fifth have inadequate housing (17%). Mental health problems and heavy continuous childcare responsibility were less common, but still present in one to two of every 10 reports.<sup>29</sup>

There are notable differences in the frequency of precipitating factors in Maui County and statewide. **Inadequate housing is cited as a precipitating factor over twice as often in Maui County as statewide, reflecting the impact of Maui County’s housing crisis. Heavy continuous childcare and inability to cope with parental responsibility are also cited much more often in Maui County**, indicating a need for deepening of protective factors.<sup>30, 31</sup>

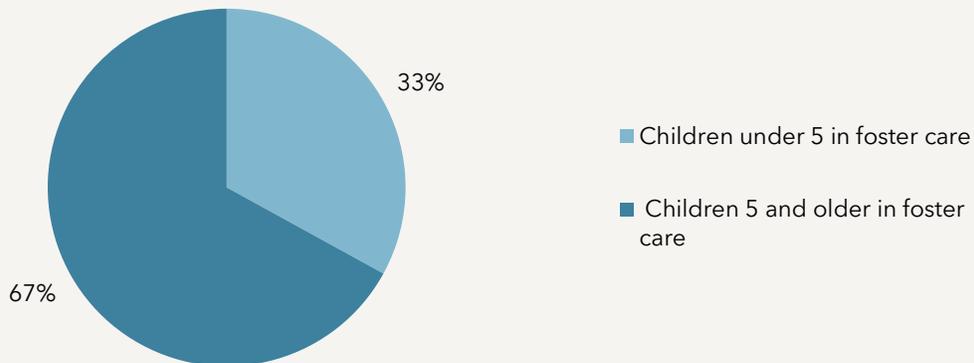


## DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2021, 212 children from Maui County were in foster care, 7% of whom were under one year old and one-third of whom were under the age of five.<sup>32</sup> This is not unique to Maui County: both statewide and nationally, a large proportion of children affected by child maltreatment are very young. Across Hawai'i in 2020, 15% of children involved in confirmed cases of child maltreatment were under one year old, and 37% were under the age of five.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, across the United States in 2020, 15% of all confirmed victims were under one year old, and 29% were under the age of three.<sup>34</sup> These trends emphasize the importance of strengthening protective factors in families and young children from the very beginning.

In 2021, one-third of children in foster care from Maui County were under the age of five.

FIGURE 8

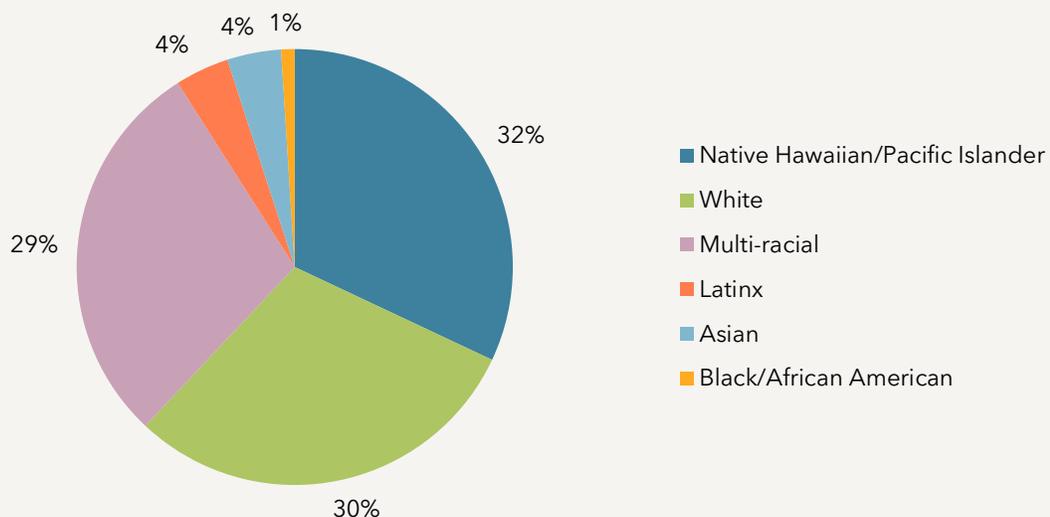


Casey Family Programs (2021)

**In Maui County, Native Hawaiian children are disproportionately represented in foster care.**<sup>35</sup> While only 14% of Maui County identifies as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (as noted above), 32% of children in foster care in FFY 2021 were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.<sup>36</sup> **Reasons for this over-representation were not discussed in the reports reviewed.**

In 2021, one-third of children from Maui County in foster care were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

FIGURE 9



Casey Family Programs (2021)

An additional finding was discovered upon review of recent data: data files prepared by different organizations or the same organization across years report race/ethnicity categories differently. The 2020 statewide Child Abuse & Neglect report, for example, lists Native Hawaiian or part Native Hawaiian, as well as mixed as race/ethnicity categories.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, in Casey Family Programs data, prior methods of reporting included the racial/ethnic categories “Hawaiian or Part Hawaiian and “Other Pacific Islander”.<sup>38</sup> However, a more recent version of reporting has combined these shifted these categories to “Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander,” with part-Native Hawaiian children now being reported under the less-specific category “multi-racial.”<sup>39</sup> The result is that the percentage of Native Hawaiian children affected by child maltreatment appears to be lower than in previous years, as children who are Native Hawaiian as well as another race are no longer specifically identified. This finding has implications for the way the experiences of Native Hawaiian families and children are understood.

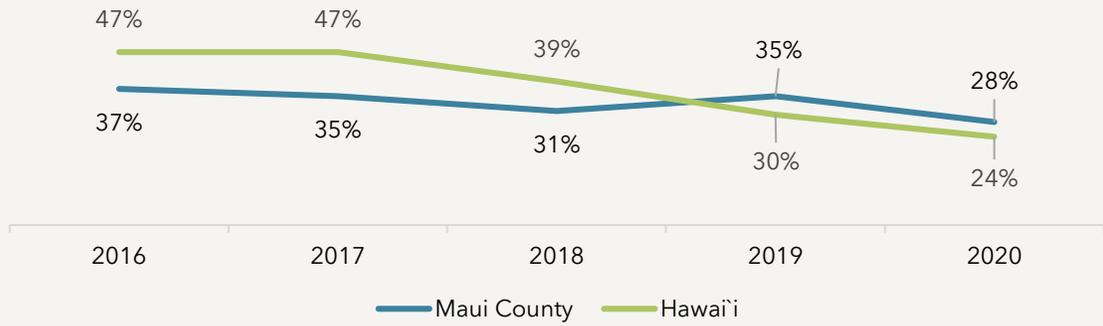
## EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON CHILD MALTREATMENT & REPORTING

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of child maltreatment have dropped across the nation, likely due to decreased contact with mandatory reporters.<sup>40</sup> However, this trend is not present in Hawai‘i or Maui County. Statewide data demonstrates that while reports made by educators fell in 2020, reports from medical, law, and justice personnel, as well as parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors, increased, resulting in an overall increase in reported cases.<sup>41, 42</sup>

The total reported number of duplicated reported cases statewide increased from 4,697 in 2019 to 5,389 in 2020.<sup>43</sup> The number of confirmed duplicated cases decreased from 1,387 (30% confirmation rate) in 2019 to 1,276 (24% confirmation rate) in 2020. (“Duplicated” counts include each instance of confirmed maltreatment involving one child in a reporting period.) **Maui County saw a more significant increase in the number of duplicated reported cases**, from 400 in 2019 to 722 in 2020. In contrast to statewide data, Maui County’s number of duplicated confirmed cases also increased, from a low of 141 in 2019 (35% confirmation rate) to 203 in 2020 (28% confirmation rate). **Despite the increase in reported cases, on average, confirmation rates have been trending down in recent years, both statewide and in Maui County.**

FIGURE 10

Confirmation rates for maltreatment reports have been trending downward in recent years (duplicated cases).



State of Hawai'i; Department of Human Services; Audit, Quality Control and Research Office (2016-2020)

## FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM IN MAUI COUNTY

This section summarizes and synthesizes key areas of Maui County's child and family services and supports network. It consists of the following subsections:

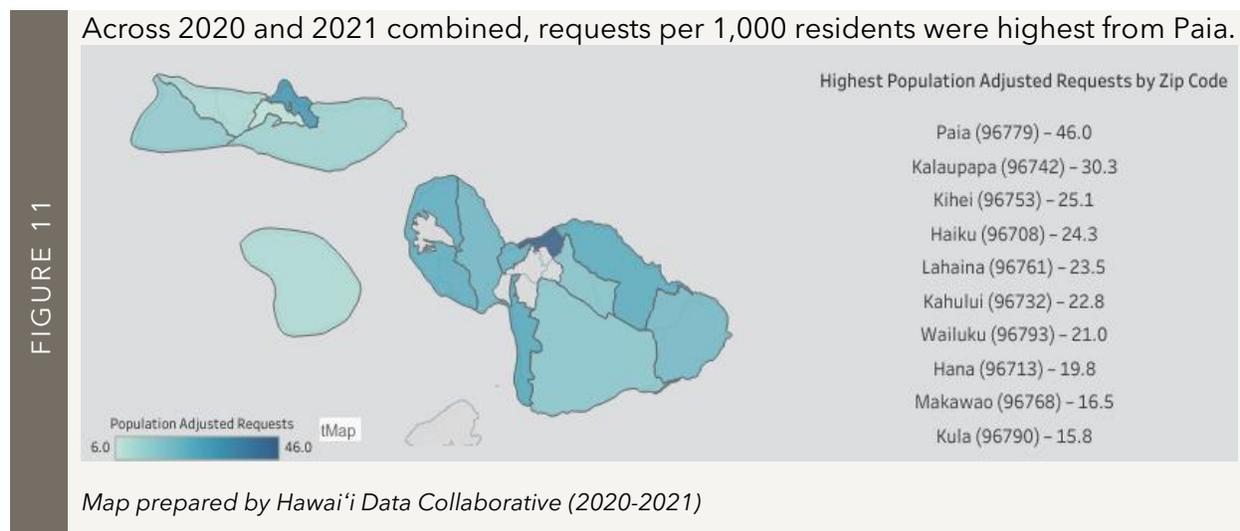
- » *Services and Supports - families' needs, available family support services and identified gaps in the system of services and supports*
- » *Workforce - demographics and other data surrounding the child welfare workforce in Maui County and/or statewide, including results of relevant workforce surveys and reports*
- » *Additional Efforts - key child maltreatment prevention plans, efforts, frameworks and taskforces being utilized in Maui County and/or statewide*

### SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

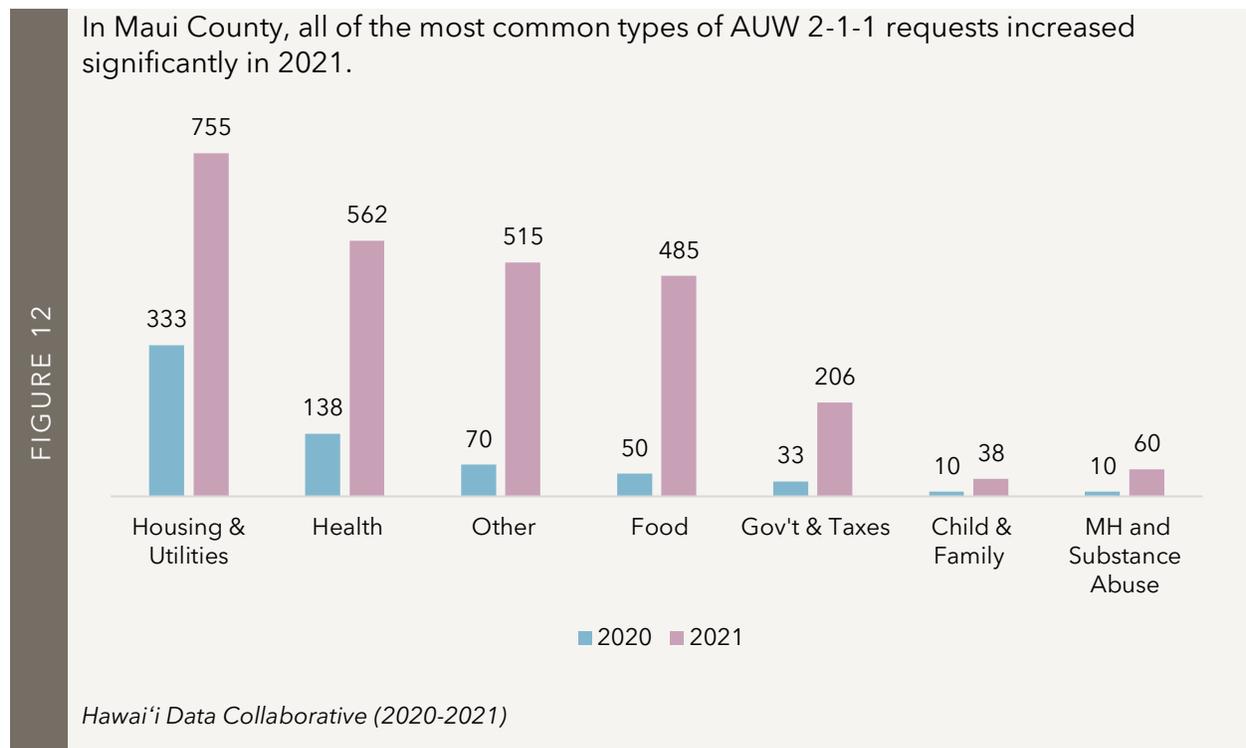
#### FAMILIES' NEEDS

Individuals in Maui County and statewide experienced increased need during COVID-19. Resource requests made to Aloha United Way (AUW) 2-1-1 by Hawai'i residents grew from 222 during the week of January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, to a peak of 1,968 requests just over a year later during the week of January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Calls have declined again, but are still well above pre-pandemic levels, with 789 requests the week of January 2, 2022. Average call numbers also increased in Maui County. This increase may be due in part to increased awareness of AUW 2-1-1 as a community resource. It is not known how many of the requests were made by callers with young children in their home, and if those request patterns differed from the general public.<sup>44</sup>

Across 2020 and 2021 combined, requests per 1,000 residents were highest from Paia, at 46 requests. There were 30.3 requests (per 1,000) from Kalaupapa and 25.1 requests from Kihei.<sup>45</sup>



The most common categories of requests in Maui County in 2020 were related to housing and utilities, health, other, food, government and taxes, child and family, and mental health and substance abuse. In each of these six most common categories, requests rose exponentially in 2021.<sup>46</sup>

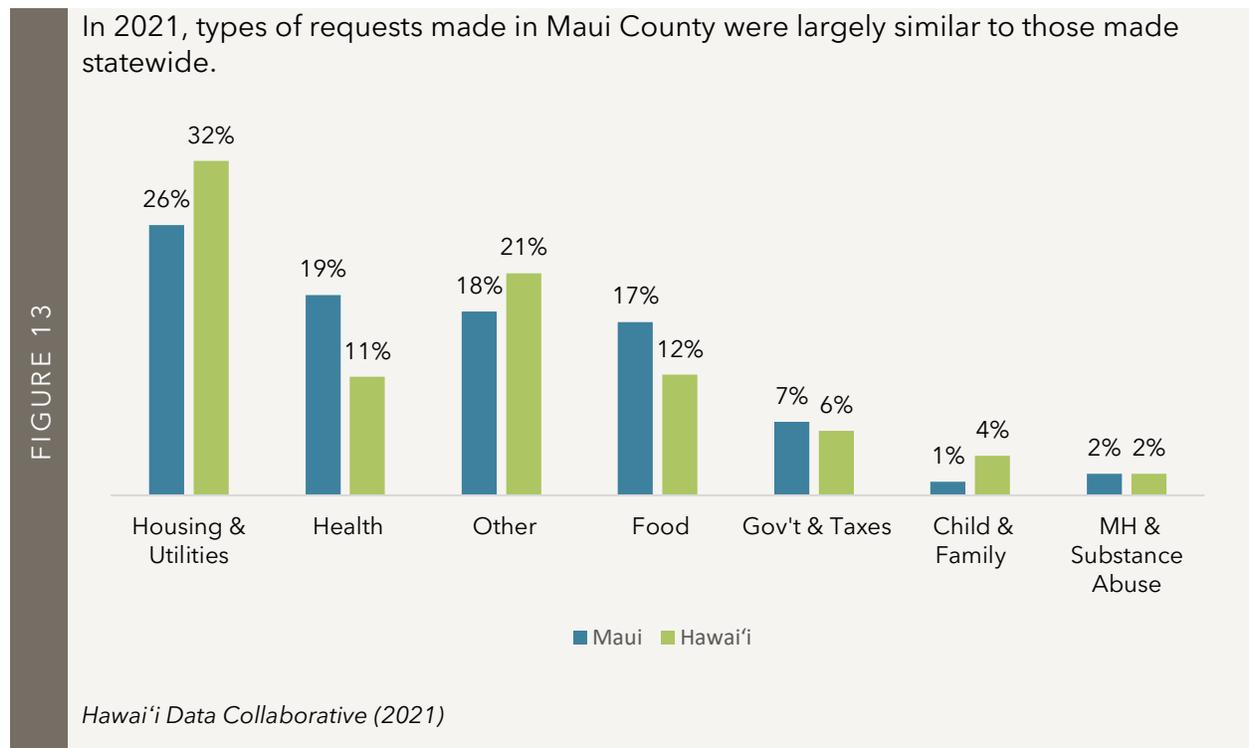


In both years, the vast majority (86% and 96%) of housing and utilities-related requests were related to payment assistance. These requests are explored in more detail in a previous section. In 2021, requests related to vaccines and immunizations accounted for nearly half of health-related requests. In both 2020 and 2021, at least nine in 10 food-related requests were for emergency food.<sup>47</sup>

In 2020, financial and other assistance accounted for 80% of child and family-related calls, with child care and violence prevention each at 10% (or one request each). In 2021, just 26% of such requests were for financial and other assistance. Child care requests accounted for 37% of such calls and violence prevention accounted for 18%.<sup>48</sup>

Domestic violence-related requests accounted for 70% of mental health and substance abuse calls in 2020, and mental health services accounted for an additional 20% of such requests. In 2021, mental health services accounted for 43% of such calls, and domestic violence-related requests accounted for 18%.<sup>49</sup>

In 2021, proportions of types of requests were largely similar between Maui County and statewide.<sup>50</sup>



## AVAILABLE SERVICES

Aloha United Way 2-1-1 (AUW 2-1-1) maintains a database of service providers across a wide variety of categories.<sup>51</sup> As of April 2021, AUW 2-1-1 identified 82 active programs providing support in the following seven categories in Maui County:

- » *Child - 13 programs*
- » *Counseling - 7 programs*
- » *Family - 13 programs*
- » *Housing/Homeless - 19 programs*
- » *Mental Health - 11 programs*
- » *Substance Abuse - 12 programs*
- » *Violence Prevention - 7 programs*

It is important to note that in some instances, multiple programs are offered by one organization.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, some programs may be appropriate under more than one categorization. AUW 2-1-1's own categorizations of the programs are used in this section, without additional analysis. No information on current capacity, waitlists or general availability was available, and many of the programs/services have eligibility criteria that must be met.

## Child

Maui County offers 13 programs identified by AUW 2-1-1 as focused directly on children. These services are broad, ranging from early learning programs, such as Early Head Start, to leadership programs, such as Boy and Girl Scouts programs. Many, but not all, programs are offered free of cost, and many offer transportation assistance to the program.<sup>53</sup>

## Counseling

AUW 2-1-1 identified seven counseling programs in Maui County, including mental health care for children and adolescents and sexual abuse treatment. Additionally, Maui County offers a sex offender treatment program. Transportation assistance varies, and most, yet not all, services are offered free of charge.<sup>54</sup>

## Family

There are 13 identified family-focused programs in Maui County. Among these services are multiple home visiting programs and a family strengthening program, as well as broader family support programs. None of these services have been identified as providing transportation assistance, and costs vary from free to paid.<sup>55</sup>

## Housing/Homeless

Maui County has 19 identified programs focused on addressing housing and individuals experiencing homelessness. These programs provide a wide range of services. Only one such service is identified as offering transportation assistance, although most are offered free of charge.<sup>56</sup>

One key support is Hawai'i's Housing First program. Housing First was initially piloted in Oahu in 2012, before being expanded to the state's remaining counties in 2017.<sup>57</sup> Housing First exists to assist individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, with an emphasis on individuals with substance misuse disorder or mental health issues. Individuals are prioritized for housing placement using the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). While Maui-specific outcome data is limited, early program indicators are very promising: 93% of individuals assessed by mid-2017 obtained housing and remained housed after one year. As of December 2021, 262 individuals and 51 families have been assessed and prioritized for housing in Maui.

## Mental Health

AUW 2-1-1 identified 11 mental health programs in Maui County, ranging from general mental health services to semi-independent housing. Transportation assistance and fees vary between programs. Of note, most programs require a doctor's referral which could be a potential barrier to access.<sup>58</sup>

## Substance Abuse

There are 12 identified substance abuse programs in Maui County. Services range from intensive outpatient treatment to support groups (e.g., Narcotics Anonymous), as well as a youth substance use prevention program. Most do not provide transportation assistance, and fees vary.<sup>59</sup>

## Violence Prevention

Maui County offers seven violence prevention programs. Programs range from CWS to intimate partner violence prevention services to juvenile counseling. Transportation assistance is varied, although most programs are offered free of charge.<sup>60</sup>

## GAPS IN SYSTEM

Multiple family support system needs assessments have been conducted at a state level in recent years, many with subsections focused on Maui County. However, very few are specific to both Maui County and family supports. One notable exception is Islands of Hope – Maui’s 2015 system analysis, which examined Maui County’s child welfare system’s likelihood of achieving its desired outcomes.<sup>61</sup> Findings from these various reports begin to speak to gaps in Maui County’s family support system. However, the reviewed reports do not address all aspects of the system and there was a notable lack of information on services and supports that build protective factors, such as early learning opportunities/child care, social supports and connections, social-emotional development for children, as well as use of public benefit programs and other concrete supports.

Equally important, **the voices of families themselves on their needs and experiences of the system were not present in the reports reviewed.** The effects of COVID-19 on the systems of supports and services in Maui was also not a part of any reports reviewed. However, in the statewide 2021 Hawai’i Sector Pulse survey of nonprofit staff, 71% of respondents reported that demand for their organization’s programs, products, or services had increased between 2020 and 2021. In the housing sector, 100% of respondents indicated increased demand.<sup>62</sup> Specific gap areas are discussed below.

## Lack of Adequate Housing

Housing continues to be a significant issue in Hawai’i. It was identified as an area of need in both Islands of Hope – Maui’s (IOH) analysis<sup>63</sup> and other recent needs assessments, as well as being reflected in demographic data and AYW 2-1-1 service calls (discussed above). In 2018, a community health needs assessment conducted by the Queen’s Medical Center identified public health needs of all types on each island of Hawai’i.<sup>64</sup> On Maui Island (not Maui County in its entirety), housing instability was a noted area of need. Additionally, a 2018 focus group of crime victim service providers in Maui County, including representatives from children and family support providers, also emphasized Maui County’s lack of adequate housing as a systemic gap.<sup>65</sup>

Families experiencing homelessness face additional barriers in securing early childhood education.<sup>66</sup> A 2020 needs assessment conducted by the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family identified potential challenges for such families, including families' ability to afford tuition or secure tuition assistance, access to adequate transportation, and access to required documents. Although this report is both statewide and specific to early childhood education, similar challenges are likely faced by children and families experiencing homelessness when seeking other family supports in Maui County.

### **Insufficient Mental and Behavioral Health and Substance Misuse Services**

While programs do currently exist, insufficient services for mental and behavioral health and substance misuse were noted in both IOH's analysis<sup>67</sup> and the crime victim service provider focus group.<sup>68</sup> IOH expanded on additional challenges faced by providers of other types of family support services in adequately addressing the needs of parents with mental health challenges. Providers are often not adequately aware of a family member's mental health challenges and/or lack resources to sufficiently assist such individuals.

### **Additional Gaps in System**

The Queen's Medical Center's needs assessment identified additional gaps not emphasized by Islands of Hope - Maui.<sup>69</sup> For Maui Island, **the report emphasized the need to "[create] more positive activities for youth, particularly for those with working parents."** Queen's Medical Center also flags the need for transportation assistance in remote neighborhoods to health resources and efforts to improve trust between residents of Maui County and health resources are also noted. Encouragingly, the report identified willing partners and/or existing efforts in many of these areas.

## **WORKFORCE**

There is little available data on Maui County's family services workforce in recent years. However, statewide and organization-specific data and reports begin to illustrate the experiences and challenges faced by individuals in these critical positions. Data indicate significant unfilled capacity in the child welfare workforce, as well as many specific opportunities for additional workforce training. These findings are explored below.

### **STATE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES STAFF (CWS)**

In May 2020, **CWS had 402 funded positions, 77 (19%) of which were unfilled.**<sup>70</sup> An internal survey found 80% of employees self-identified as female, 17% as male, and 3% preferred not to answer. Staff between the ages of 50-59 accounted for the largest age group (32%), with an additional 23% between the ages of 40 and 49. More than half (61%) of CWS employees have worked in the branch for at least five years, and one-third have worked at CWS for 16 or more years.<sup>71</sup>

All positions in CWS require a high school diploma or GED.<sup>72</sup> Caseworker positions additionally require a bachelor's degree and experience in human services, and employees

must be with CWS three years before becoming an intake worker. Advanced degrees are recommended for higher positions. Additionally, supervisors are required to have four years of professional experience in the field, and advanced degrees are recommended for both supervisors and higher-level caseworkers.

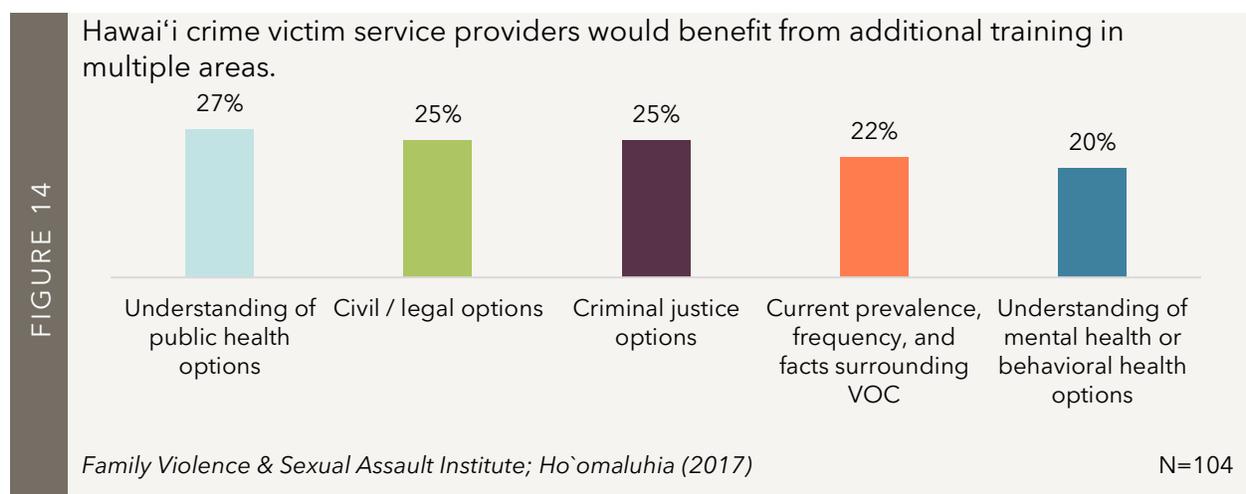
## WORKFORCE TRAINING NEEDS

Ongoing training is a common focus among providers in the child welfare system. For example, Hawai'i CWS offered at least 18 training opportunities to its workforce in SFY 2019 and SFY 2020, including training on increasing protective factors.<sup>73</sup> Multiple organizations conduct surveys to better understand additional training needs. Each survey was completed by a slightly different audience. As such, findings are largely distinct between surveys, as discussed below.

### Ho`omaluhia Crime Victim Service Provider Survey (2017)

In 2017, a crime victim service provider training needs assessment was conducted by Ho`omaluhia, Hawai'i's branch of the Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute.<sup>74</sup> The needs assessment data consisted of 104 service provider surveys, and 16 interviews and focus groups with 49 service providers, with each of the state's counties represented. Although not specific to Maui County or inclusive of all types of family service providers, it provides a useful look into the climate of the statewide victim's service provider workforce; many of whom reported providing services to victims of child abuse.

The survey asked providers which areas of knowledge or skills they feel least confident in when serving victims of crime (VOC).<sup>75</sup> The most common responses were understanding of public health options (27%), civil/legal options (25%), and criminal justice options (25%).



### Ho`oikaika Partnership Conference Survey (2019-2021)

Data on Maui-specific training needs also exist. Each year, the Ho`oikaika Partnership hosts a conference with local service providers and others working to reduce child maltreatment and

improve family support systems. A survey administered at the conference asks participants their desires and needs surrounding additional training opportunities. Analysis of the three most recent years of survey findings revealed the following training opportunities among local providers:<sup>76</sup>

- » *Expanded training on Hawaiian culture, cultural practices, and culturally appropriate prevention*
- » *More advanced training regarding trauma-informed care, adverse childhood experiences, and resiliency*
- » *Expanded emphasis on self-care practices*

Surveys also demonstrated interest in the following potential conference themes or approaches:<sup>77</sup>

- » *Increased efforts to engage youth and/or sponsorship of a youth-led conference*
- » *Increased emphasis on family engagement, social justice, parenting, motivational interviewing, and working with special populations*

### **Hawai'i Partnership Sector Pulse Survey (2021)**

In 2021, the Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) and Hawai'i Investment Ready (HIR) conducted a statewide survey of nonprofit organizations working in many social sectors to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on their operations. Three in four (74%) responding organizations have attempted and/or succeeded in hiring staff in the year preceding the survey. Of these respondents, three in four (73%) experienced hiring challenges. The two most common challenges were lack of qualified applicants (34%) and lack of interest in position, salary, or requirements (31%).<sup>78</sup>

The survey also asked organizational awareness and action regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the work they perform. 68% of respondents agree or strongly agree that their organization has discussed and/or defined DEI in their work. 26% strongly agree their organization has taken steps/action to address DEI in their work, with an additional 38% selecting "agree". The survey additionally found a range of understandings of what is meant by the term DEI.<sup>79</sup>

### **ADDITIONAL EFFORTS**

There are many state-level efforts to prevent child maltreatment and build family and community protective factors, including task forces, frameworks, and prevention plans. Although each represents a unique approach, they all share the vision of reducing child maltreatment and improving outcomes for families. Each of these efforts contributes to the larger child maltreatment prevention system and there are overlapping goals and priorities between them. There are opportunities for the Ho'oikaika Partnership to leverage and build off of these efforts, which are described below. Not included but also relevant to future

efforts is assessing which members of the Ho‘oikaika Partnership already participate in these efforts.

#### HAWAI‘I CHILDREN’S JUSTICE ACT STATEWIDE TASK FORCE (EST. 2000)

The Hawai‘i Children’s Justice Act Statewide Task Force was established in 2000 in accordance with federal Children’s Justice Act funds and is comprised of individuals knowledgeable of child maltreatment from each county in the state.<sup>80</sup> The task force’s mission is to review and reform child maltreatment systems at a state level. In 2019, the task force collaborated with others to develop the Hawai‘i Program Improvement Plan (PIP), consisting of four areas of focus:

1. *Supervision (CWS staff)*
2. *Child safety*
3. *Engagement (family)*
4. *Permanency*

To this end, the task force utilizes Children’s Justice Act funds to implement trainings, conferences, and systems improvements across Hawai‘i’s child welfare system.<sup>81</sup> They also coordinated development of the Hawai‘i Statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Framework, described below.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTION STRATEGY’S SAFE & NURTURING FAMILIES TEAM (EST. 2012)

The statewide Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) collaborative consists of over 150 partners and was formed in 2012 to improve Hawai‘i’s young child and family supports system.<sup>82</sup> It consists of the following six focus areas:

1. *Healthy & Welcomed Births*
2. *Safe & Nurturing Families*
3. *On-track Health & Development*
4. *Equitable Access to Programs & Services*
5. *High-quality Early Learning Programs*
6. *Successful Early Childhood Transitions*

For each focus area, a corresponding team is formed to identify and address gaps and opportunities for improvement.<sup>83</sup> ECAS’s Safe & Nurturing Families team has the following goals:

- » *Reduce family violence in homes with young children*
- » *Strengthen early childhood providers’ capacities to support families and refer at-risk families*

- » *Educate the general public about the prevalence of family violence and the impact on young children*
- » *Strengthen Hawai'i's systems of support for families*

To this end, the team develops and implements trainings to service providers, shares toolkits with families and gathers feedback from families on them, and distributes materials and online resources through virtual and in-person settings. The shared purpose of these activities is to increase skills of families and providers and decrease child maltreatment and gaps in the system.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, the team is working to develop and implement frameworks for services utilizing strengths-based and protective factor-informed approaches.

#### HAWAI'I TITLE IV-E PREVENTION PLAN (EST. 2018)

As part of the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018, the Hawai'i Title IV-E Prevention Plan was developed in 2021 and is being implemented by Hawai'i CWS. The plan is in service of Family First Hawai'i 's vision:

*"Hawai'i families and children are thriving with access to a range of effective child welfare prevention services that strengthen families, support parents, and keep children safe at home."*<sup>85</sup>

The plan's ultimate goal is to reduce the number of children in Hawai'i entering foster care.<sup>86</sup> As part of this expansive plan, four prevention efforts rooted in evidence-based practices are funded through IV-E:

1. *HOMEBUILDERS® - In-home counseling and support / interventions for families with children at imminent risk of out-of-home placement*
2. *Parents as Teachers (PAT) - Parenting education / interventions for expecting parents and parents with young children designed to increase protective factors*
3. *Healthy Families America (HFA) - Child Welfare Adaptation - Strengths-based home visiting program for families with child maltreatment risk factors present*
4. *Motivational Interviewing (MI) - Behavioral change / substance use disorder approach*

#### HAWAI'I STATEWIDE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION FRAMEWORK (EST. 2021)

The Hawai'i Statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Framework was developed in 2021 by a steering committee of child maltreatment professionals in Hawai'i to encourage collaboration between members of Hawai'i's family supports system to increase protective factors and strengthen families with the ultimate goal of reducing child maltreatment in the state.<sup>87</sup> Development of the framework was coordinated by Hawai'i Children's Action Network. The framework is in the early stages of being publicly shared.

1. *Commitment of leaders to prioritize child safety and well-being*
2. *Supports and Services are equitable and accessible to all families*

3. *Communities are safe and supportive to allow families to flourish*
4. *Policy, laws, and budgets support families and their needs*
5. *Coordination between members of the system to plan and implement data-driven prevention services*

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## CONCLUSION

This summary of current research is an incomplete picture of the status of children and families in Maui County, the individual and family risk and protective factors, and service sectors. None of the agencies that commissioned the original research have the same focus on primary prevention as the Ho‘oikaika Partnership, so each report offers only some parts of the puzzle. A few key areas stand out:

The low rates of child maltreatment in Hawai‘i deserve to be celebrated. More focus on the protective factors present that contribute to these low rates could be useful for future primary prevention work.

Data on child maltreatment continues to be frustrating. The lack of timely, complete data that is directly comparable to national, as well as an inability to query the data systems within the state to explore nuances, is a hindrance to data-informed prevention efforts.

Demand for services and supports in Maui County grew during COVID-19, but there is little information about how well the system was able to meet those needs and how families with young children specifically have fared.

Affordable housing continues to be a strong, persistent need in Maui County and across the state of Hawai‘i, as well as substance misuse treatment, particularly for drug use, which is one of the most common precipitating factors for removal of a child from a home. However, there is little information on access and availability of other services that contribute to protective factors, such as early childhood education and social supports.

Data indicates stress in the workforce, particularly in the child welfare workforce, which is persistently understaffed. At a national level, staffing has been an issue for many programs, further exacerbated by COVID-19. Staff quality and workload also influences outcomes.

Future research should explore:

- » *Conversations with families on how well the system is meeting their needs and opportunities for change*
- » *Prevalence of family / community / societal protective factors in Maui County, including how resources are distributed across the county and where there may be gaps and opportunities to increase equitable access for all families in Maui County*
- » *How providers incorporate equity into their work with children and families*
- » *A better understanding of how many unique children and families are served between agencies in Maui County and any current collaborations that exist*
- » *Which statewide efforts members of the Ho‘oikaika Partnership are already a part of*

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## ENDNOTES

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## APPENDIX B: AUW 2-1-1 ACTIVE PROGRAM SERVICE GROUP LIST

- » *Animals*
- » *Child*
- » *Commerce*
- » *Community*
- » *Counseling*
- » *Disabilities*
- » *Disaster*
- » *Donations*
- » *Education*
- » *Emergency*
- » *Employment*
- » *Environment*
- » *Family*
- » *Food*
- » *Government*
- » *Health*
- » *Housing/Homeless*
- » *Legal*
- » *Material Goods*
- » *Mental Health*
- » *Military*
- » *Recreation*
- » *Seniors*
- » *Substance Abuse*
- » *Taxes*
- » *Temporary Financial Assistance*
- » *Transportation*
- » *Utilities*
- » *Violence Prevention*
- » *Volunteer*