

Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor · September 2023



GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

On August 8, 2023, the community of Lāhainā was devastated by the deadliest wildfire in U.S. history in more than 100 years. We are heartbroken by the loss of so many of our family, friends, and neighbors and the destruction of Lāhainā Town.

First, I want to commend the people within the community themselves, who upon realizing what was happening, took brave actions to help as many of their neighbors as possible. Quick actions taken as the disaster was occurring surely saved more lives.

Then, I must commend the first responders who did the best they could to save as many as they possibly could from the flames. And finally, a special mahalo to those who stepped up and came together quickly to provide immediate aid.

We've also received tremendous support from every level of government, private businesses, community organizations, and more from across the globe. We continue to work daily to support those affected by the wildfires.

Vital public–private–nonprofit partnerships have been forged and will continue to be forged in order to care for the survivors and bring healing to a community that has suffered the worst

natural disaster in our state's history. No one person, no one agency, no one organization, can do it alone.

The road to recovery will be long, costly, and challenging. We lost lives, landmarks, and cultural artifacts that can never be replaced. We have an opportunity and a challenge to work together, as one 'ohana, in solidarity with the people of Lāhainā and West Maui. Now is the time to come together to care for the residents of our state and for one another.

Please share the link to the Maui Strong Resource Hub at mauistrong.hawaii.gov with your colleagues, family, and friends to ensure that resources are available to those who need them.

We are grateful for the outpouring of support and aloha that Maui has received — and we are united as a state and as a nation in providing every support and resource we have to the survivors of the Lāhainā fires.

The world is watching, and we will show them the true strength of our culture, our people, and all that we are. We will heal, protect, and nurture one another, and the world will be reminded why it loves and embraces Hawai'i.

Josh Green



Providing Human Services with Humanity

In an inspiring display of community solidarity, Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Cathy Betts accompanied by Deputy Directors Joseph Campos and Trista Speer, led efforts on Maui to set up housing options for displaced individuals and families from keiki to kūpuna.

Maui staff rallied together on August 9, 2023, to volunteer and assist with the housing effort. Demonstrating true teamwork, O'ahu staff flew over on the weekends to alleviate the load on



the Maui staff. DHS played a key role in coordinating efforts with other agencies to successfully place all sheltered individuals and families in hotels or Airbnb accommodations.

Close to 1,000 residents were placed in less than

a week into various hotels that included the Outrigger, Royal Lāhainā, the Hyatt, Andaz, Fairmont, Westin, Maui Seaside, and Honua Kai. DHS leadership also collaborated with Airbnb, ensuring that those affected could find some comfort in available and donated Airbnbs while the process of search and recovery continued by responding emergency agencies.



DHS also worked with the Med-QUEST Division to provide continuous coverage for Medicaid recipients in Maui County. A pause on eligibility reviews and terminations has brought some relief to those already covered by Med-QUEST.

In addition, for impacted SNAP households, assistance was extended in various forms. Such affected households have until September 15, 2023, to request replacement benefits reflecting their loss. Details of the replacement benefit can be found at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SNAP-Replacement-Benefits-08.2023.pdf>.

Furthermore, Med-QUEST staff and the Benefit, Employment, Support Services Division has been assisting the community with information about QUEST and Medicaid coverage, as well as SNAP and other financial assistance programs, as needed.



DHS has been on the ground working to help affected individuals in various ways including coordinating the donation of 16 portable showers to be used across Maui where the need is greatest. DHS's Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program and Low-Income Water Assistance Program can also assist with generators, energy assistance, and water provision.



The department implemented a data-sharing agreement with the American Red Cross to assist in identifying individuals and families for case management, language assistance, food assistance, FEMA assistance, and any and all resources needed to help folks at this time. Details at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/>.

“Our hearts are with Maui, please know we are holding the Maui community in our hearts and minds. We will continue to assist in whatever way we can,” said Director Betts.



Emergency Relief Funding Assists Transportation Department with Its Response Efforts

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) assisted with emergency response to the fires in Lāhainā and Kula, including working with the Maui Police and Fire Departments on the evacuation of non essential individuals, and planning for needed goods to come into West Maui.

A few of the immediate needs HDOT Airports division focused on at the beginning of the disaster, surrounded working with the airlines to increase seat counts for emergency evacuation of visitors, working with the county to establish transportation for visitors and residents to shelters, working with TSA to eliminate checkpoint delays and feeding

stranded travelers overnight at Kahului airport as they waited to evacuate. It also worked to increase the capacity of the Kapalua airport to provide small plane and helicopter access for residents, service providers, and aid.

The HDOT Highways Division supported MPD to close and secure Honoapi'ilani Highway to allow for debris removal. Part of its efforts included providing labor, equipment for traffic control, and installing 30,000 feet of dust screen to confine the potentially hazardous materials in the impact site and protect the users of the highway. They also worked to ensure that transportation could be made available for students in need of relocation to open schools.

HDOT Harbors worked quickly with the Governor to waive wharfage, demurrage, and storage fees for certain types of cargo incoming to Kahului Harbor, to help accommodate donations and aid. As a

result, this provided space for donation collections at harbors, ensuring space availability for hazmat and debris clearance to support the eventual recovery efforts. Entry fees for boats that lost their berth spaces have also been waived.

HDOT continues to work on infrastructure restoration with the initial emergency relief funds from the Federal Highway Administration and is planning aggressive vegetation management statewide to reduce fire risks.



Photo: DLNR

DBEDT Supporting Hawai'i Fire Relief Efforts



The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), its core divisions, and attached agencies have been working with federal, state, county, and community groups to support the Hawai'i fire relief efforts.

In a swift response, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), DBEDT's attached agency, activated the Department Operations Center at the Hawai'i Convention Center. HTA and its partners worked with airlines and ground transportation companies to successfully evacuate more than 40,000 people from West Maui within 72 hours following the fire. Additionally, an Assistance Center was opened at the Hawai'i Convention Center in partnership with the American Red Cross to aid about 300 evacuees in finding accommodations on O'ahu or flights home. This endeavor was made possible by the efforts of HTA staff, the American Red Cross, the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawai'i, and the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea.

In addition to the efforts to evacuate people from Maui, DBEDT Director James Kunane Tokioka, and Disaster Management Coordinator for the Office of the Governor Luke Meyers, led a Joint Housing Task Force and worked with the hospitality industry, the American Red Cross, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to also find housing for survivors on Maui. Together they were able to relocate more than 4,400 Lāhainā fire survivors from evacuation shelters into West Maui hotels and timeshare units.

"What happened in Lāhainā was an overwhelming tragedy," said DBEDT Director Tokioka. "Seeing the devastation motivated all of us to provide unparalleled collaboration. We opened a command center at the Hawai'i Convention Center with multiple branches of FEMA, HI-EMA, American Red Cross, Small Business Administration, and DBEDT's attached agencies, which has been key to our disaster response."

Dozens of West Maui properties are also housing hundreds of first responders and

emergency workers, as well as their own employees. In addition to these efforts, Director Cathy Betts, Deputy Director Joseph Campos, and Deputy Director Trista Speer from the Department of Human Services worked with Airbnb to find housing for about 900 individuals.

DBEDT's attached agency, the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) also launched the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program within days of the fire. The program connects those in urgent need of housing with homeowners willing to assist by offering unoccupied rooms, units, or houses on a temporary basis. Landlords, management companies, and homeowners have offered to rent more than a thousand houses, apartment units, and rooms to thousands of Maui residents who lost their homes. More than a hundred families have been placed into housing through this program. All residents are currently out of shelters and living out of the housing being provided from the various programs and also from those who have rendered personal aid and offering to the survivors of the fires.



Resources

Maui County

- Visit Maui County's comprehensive website with information on how to get relief, volunteer, and make donations: www.mauinuistrong.info/
- For updates on Maui, visit the County of Maui website: www.mauicounty.gov/
- Civic alerts (most updated information): www.mauicounty.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx
- Facebook: [Facebook.com/countyofmaui](https://www.facebook.com/countyofmaui)
- Instagram: [@countyofmaui](https://www.instagram.com/countyofmaui)
- Twitter (X): [@CountyofMaui](https://twitter.com/CountyofMaui)
- Maui Police Department:
 - (808) 244-6400
 - Maupolice.com
 - Facebook: [MauiPoliceDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/MauiPoliceDepartment)
 - Instagram: [@mauipolicedepartment](https://www.instagram.com/mauipolicedepartment)
- Family Assistance Center (FAC):
 - Hyatt Regency's Monarch Ballroom
 - 200 Nohea Kai Drive, Ka'anapali
 - 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. daily
 - DNA samples collected by all agencies and staff will not be stored or used for anything other than identification.

Vital Records

- (808) 984-2400, ext. 6-4602
- Replace birth certificates through the Maui Department of Health
- Hours Monday-Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can also e-mail: DOH.MauiCR@doh.hawaii.gov

West Maui Coordinated Care Clinic (Health)

- (808) 984-8201
- (808) 984-8260
- No appointment needed, no insurance required. Open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

State Resources

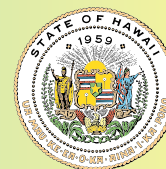
- The Hawai'i Department of Health has created a central Maui Wildfire Response page with information on resources for medical & behavioral health and health advisories: <https://health.hawaii.gov/mauiwildfires/>
- Office of the Governor Social Media
 - Facebook: [Office of the Governor of Hawai'i](https://www.facebook.com/OfficeoftheGovernorofHawaii)
 - Instagram: [@govhawaii](https://www.instagram.com/govhawaii)
- Disaster-related Emergency Proclamations are viewable here: <https://governor.hawaii.gov/category/newsroom/>
- View news releases from the Office of the Governor here: <https://governor.hawaii.gov/category/newsroom/office-of-the-governor-press-releases/>

Monetary Donations

- To verify an organization is legit/ check where the donation is going <https://charity.ehawaii.gov/charity/search.html>
- Donate here:
 - www.redcross.org/local/hawaii.html
 - www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/maui-strong

Other Resources

- SNAP (Food):
 - (855) 643-1643
 - Report between 8/14 – 9/15 regarding loss of food supplies. To apply for SNAP food replacement benefits, please visit your local Processing Center or call the Public Assistance Information Line at the number above.



Ke Ala Hou is a monthly publication of the Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.

We invite you to stay connected

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- ✉ gov.communications@hawaii.gov
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