

Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • August 2024

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

It has been a year since the devastating Maui Wildfires of August 8, 2023. Our commitment to the people of Maui remains strong as we continue to support them with their recovery, for as long as they need. Even though we have made significant progress in the past year, there is still much work to be done.

Let's keep the 102 individuals who tragically lost their lives in the fires close to our hearts and in our thoughts. Together, we will continue to rebuild and recover, ensuring a more resilient future for Lahaina and its residents. I'm grateful for the unwavering support from FEMA, the American Red Cross, our countless partner organizations and people from the community. Mahalo to everyone who has supported Maui from day one. We are truly grateful for your steadfast support.

Last month, we successfully concluded the Non-Congregate Sheltering program, which provided short-term housing and assistance to 7,796 individuals and 3,071 households displaced by the Maui wildfires. In addition, critical legislation has been implemented for fire safety and disaster resilience.

Mahalo,

Maui Wildfires Remembrance Events

As the anniversary of the August 2023 Maui wildfires draws near, we are encouraging the community to take intentional time this month to remember the lives of those we lost, as well as their families and loved ones. Everyone handles loss in different ways. Some may want to honor those lost privately, others might want to participate in community service or prayer, while others may want to honor loved ones alongside family or within a larger community event. Below, are some remembrance events being planned throughout this month on Maui. For more information, visit kuhiniamauui.org.

Thursday, August 8

Paddle Out

8 a.m. - Hanaka'ō'ō Beach Park, Lahaina

Upcountry Aloha Luncheon

10 a.m. - Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Pukalani

One-Year Tribute and Remembrance

5 p.m. - Lahaina Civic Center

Friday, August 9

Aloha for Kūpuna of Lahaina

9 a.m. - Lahaina Civic Center

Puana Aloha No Lahaina

6 p.m. - Lahaina Civic Center

Saturday, August 10

Kamehameha Schools, Kapālama student performance of Ka Malu 'Ulu o Lele

1 p.m. - Baldwin High School, Auditorium

Lahaina Obon Festival

5 p.m. - Lahaina Cannery Mall

Sunday, August 11

A Day of Hope and Prayer

10 a.m. - Lahaina Civic Center

Upcountry Aloha

4 p.m. - Oskie Rice Arena, Makawao

Ke Ala Hou intends to elevate, recognize, and celebrate the hard work done by our state departments. Our goal is to share top achievements from our state employees, emphasize aloha and kindness in action, and demonstrate caring leadership at the state level. It is our hope that by sharing these stories, we build trust and understanding in what we do everyday in service to you.



Scan the QR code to view our digital newsletter.



UH Research Studies Health and Environmental Impacts of the Lahaina Wildfire

University of Hawai'i (UH) researchers have been working to address a wide array of health and environmental issues caused by the deadly wildfire that destroyed Lahaina.

Since fall 2023, more than 30 UH researchers have been involved in 12 National Science Foundation (NSF) Rapid Response Research projects to address air and water quality, public health, ecosystem resilience and community evacuation responses. NSF is providing \$2.1 million to fund the projects that are being coordinated across the 10-campus UH System by the UH Mānoa Water Resources Research Center (WRRC).

WRRC is drawing on its previous experience with the Red Hill water crisis to quickly convene faculty, staff and students to explore collaborative research approaches. The coordination is being led by WRRC Director Tom Giambelluca and Mia Comeros, WRRC Pacific Water Resilience and Security Program lead.

A comprehensive health study of 679 Maui residents is examining the immediate exposures to environmental hazards and will repeat the tests annually over the next five to 10 years, and possibly longer, to link the exposures to long-term health outcomes. Two-thirds of the participants resided in Lahaina at the time of the fires and the others either worked in Lahaina, or lived or worked in fire-affected areas in Kula.



Above: UH researchers preparing the autosampler.

Principal investigators are UH Mānoa Professor Ruben Juarez of the UH Economic Research Organization and Professor Alika Maunakea from the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

A five-year, \$3.8-million study funded by the National Institutes of Health is looking into the government's response to the Lahaina wildfire and its impact on residents. The study will look at how well the response addressed the physical and mental health needs of affected residents and if it made any pre-existing health disparities worse for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Filipino and Mexican communities.

The study is being led by Alex Ortega, dean of the UH Mānoa Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health, and Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula, chair of the JABSOM Department of Native Hawaiian Health.

UH economists are also regularly analyzing a variety of economic impacts on Maui and the state caused by the Lahaina fire.

Governor Green Signs 253 Bills Into Law



In July, Governor Josh Green, M.D., celebrated the enactment of 253 of the 260 bills passed during the 2024 legislative session. He hosted 16 bill signing ceremonies for 137 bills on issues related to short-term rental regulation, good government, affordable housing, environmental protections, Native Hawaiian cultural preservation and health care systems, as well as historic income tax reform and reducing the cost of living.

"Despite the high costs of recovery, we've balanced the budget and reformed our tax system to put more hard-earned income in the pockets of our residents. I look forward to building on the incredible successes of this past session," said Governor Green.

The Governor also signed more than 116 additional bills, separate from the public signings and issued seven vetoes, due to legal, fiscal and governmental operational efficiency concerns.

In signing these historic pieces of legislation, Governor Green thanked legislative leaders, members of the legislators, partners and key community stakeholders for helping draft and pass important legislation to address state priorities.

To read more about the bills signed into law, visit capitol.hawaii.gov.

Highlights of enacted laws for the people of Hawai'i include:

- Good Government (6 bills)
- Short-term Rental Regulation Bill
- Affordable Housing (6 bills)
- Condo Owner Relief (5 bills)
- Historic Income Tax Reform Bill and Medical Care GET Exemption Bill
- Healthcare Access and Healthcare Workforce Development (22 bills)
- DHHL and Native Hawaiian (13 bills)
- Keiki and Kūpuna Wellness (16 bills)
- Agriculture (12 bills)
- Wildfire Resilience and Disaster Preparedness (16 bills)
- Environmental Conservation and Land Management (16 bills)
- Crime and Community Safety (17 bills)
- Designating State Snails Bill
- Water Safety (2 bills)

New Housing Project La'ikū Welcomes Maui Wildfire Survivors

The first four residents have settled into newly built accommodations at the La'ikū temporary housing project on Lahainaluna Road. La'ikū represents another step forward for those in the community who lost their homes in the devastating Maui Wildfires. The construction of this housing is a result of collaboration between Governor Green's Administration, the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT), the Department of Education, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) and the Hawai'i Community Foundation's (HCF) Maui Strong Fund.

"It is heartwarming to welcome the first four families to La'ikū as we continue to work with many dedicated partners across our state to provide safe and secure longer-term housing for survivors," said Governor Josh Green, M.D. "La'ikū is one of many collaborative housing initiatives that is helping to support individuals and families as they rebuild their lives."

La'ikū will provide 16 two-bedroom, one-bath units at 560 sq. ft. each. The homes are being built on approximately two acres of land that was previously acquired by the HDOT as part of the Lahaina Bypass project.

The \$3.9 million project is funded by HCF and the state of Hawai'i and developed by CNHA, which has a five-year revocable permit to use the HDOT parcel at no cost. Completion is scheduled for September 2024.



Above: One of the four 'ohanas and CNHA staff smile and pose for a photot in their new home.

"The space was named La'ikū, which means 'a calming space,' a fitting name for families affected by the wildfires, some of whom have moved six or seven times," said Kūhiō Lewis, CEO of CNHA.

"Providing safe and secure housing for Maui's fire survivors is one of the key funding priorities for the Maui Strong Fund," said Micah Kāne, CEO and president of HCF. "We recognized early on that in order to ensure that every person has a place to call home, we needed deep collaboration by government, the nonprofit sector and philanthropy."

There is no income limit for applicants, whose eligibility for tenancy will be verified as wildfire-impacted by the CNHA Kāko'o Maui Resource Center. Units must be occupied by a minimum of two, or up to a maximum of five people. For more information and to submit an application for La'ikū visit helpingmaui.org/mauilani or go to the CNHA Kāko'o Maui Resource Center at Maui Mall during regular business hours.

Success of MAILE AMBER Alert Program Shared by Attorney General's Office

The Department of the Attorney General (AG) recently shared information about the success of the MAILE AMBER alert program in Hawai'i. The alert has only been activated four times since it was implemented in Hawai'i in 2005 and all four times the children were safely located. The most recent activation was in February 2024, to find two abducted and missing children.

Missing Child Center – Hawai'i (MCCH) and MAILE AMBER alert coordinator, Amanda Leonard (who was also named the Department of the Attorney General (AG) 2023 Employee of the Year), was recently featured in Honolulu Magazine and explains the 100% program success rate.



Above: MCCH and MAILE AMBER alert Coordinator Amanda Leonard.

"The success of the MAILE AMBER Alert program is attributed to our community's passion and perseverance to safeguard our keiki. The public's response to the alert has resulted in positive outcomes for victims and our program is being praised as a national model by AMBER Alert professionals across the country," said Leonard "We are grateful for the life-saving

preparation and actions by our county police departments, in partnership with the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, Department of Transportation and our office, to fiercely protect Hawai'i's keiki."

In addition to the success of the MAILE AMBER Alert program, the AG and the Department of Human Services announced the results of a multiagency child recovery operation known as Operation Shine the Light in July. The state agencies worked jointly with the Honolulu Police Department, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Investigations Division and the Susannah Wesley Community Center, to locate, recover and provide immediate services to endangered missing children and youth reported as "runaways" across O'ahu.

The operation resulted in the safe location and recovery of 11 children and youth between the ages of 15 and 19.

The AG Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and MCCH originally initiated Operation Shine the Light in 2020 as a cooperative effort between county, state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations, centered on the recovery and protection of endangered missing foster youth who are at high risk of abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

Anyone with information regarding missing children or the exploitation of children is encouraged to contact your county police department or the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).



Hawai'i Department of Agriculture Encourages Small-Scale Farming through Micro-Grants

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) has announced that another round of funding for the Micro-Grant for Food Security Program (MGFSP) has become available. More than \$3.5 million in grants are available for home gardeners and small-scale farms, including livestock operations.

"In Hawai'i, we all appreciate families and neighbors sharing their homegrown harvests and the Department of Agriculture is pleased to support those who want to start a garden or increase their current food production," said Sharon Hurd, chairperson of the Hawai'i Board of Agriculture. "Growing your own food for family and friends is not only a healthy activity, it also increases our community's food security."

Under the MGFSP, individuals may apply for grants of \$5,000. The individual must be a Hawai'i resident, at least 18 years old and the head of the household. Organizations may apply for \$10,000 grants. The organization must be registered to do business in Hawai'i and is required to provide matching funds of at least 10% of the grant award from sources other than the federal government. The deadline to apply is noon on August 12, 2024.

The online application form for individuals and an informational webinar are available at: hdoa.hawaii.gov/add/mgfsp/.

Housing Solutions for Homelessness: A Visit to Community First Village in Texas

In June 2024, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and Housing Solutions, John Mizuno, joined by Department of Human Services Deputy Director Joe Campos, Maui Homeless Coordinator Naomi Crozier, Big Island County Housing Administrator Susan Kunz and Big Island Community Engagement Manager Sharon Hirota, participated in a symposium and engaged with the Community First Village founder Alan Graham.

Located in Austin, Texas, the Community First Village is located on 51 acres of land and houses nearly 400 homeless individuals.

"It is like Hawai'i's *kauhale* concept," Mizuno says about the Village, adding that the visit there allowed his team to "sharpen our focus on what works extremely well for housing our homeless and what we should avoid." During the symposium, the Hawai'i delegates and Community First leaders eagerly discussed methods of supporting their homeless populations, covering everything from housing to building self-confidence and self-worth. By building these systems of care and support into these housing initiatives, we increase the potential of success for our communities back home. These systems will serve as the launchpad for our homeless community to a lifetime of stability.

The visit also included a tour and meeting at Camp Esperanza in Austin, Texas, which includes a total of 100 tiny homes used for transitional housing for homeless. Residents stay from six months to two years before moving on to permanent support housing or to the Community First Village. Both models are currently being used in Hawai'i under the *kauhale* and shelter concepts.

The state of Hawai'i's *kauhale* concept and the Community First Village both have self-sustainability at their core. Both build the necessary skills within each member to become the shepherd of their own future and promote the longevity of the community. With our network of government agencies, social services providers, private businesses and faith-based organizations, the state has been able to house close to 400 individuals and build six *kauhale* with 11 more planned for this year across the state. Mizuno's visit to the Community First Village reaffirms Governor Green's message, Housing is Health Care, and his commitment to ending homelessness in the state of Hawai'i.



Above: Mielke Family on Kaua'i created raised vegetable beds and a poultry coop.

The Request for Proposals for organizations is posted on the State Procurement Office website at: hands.ehawaii.gov/hands/opportunities/opportunity-details/24573. Questions may be directed to: hdoa.md.microgrants@hawaii.gov or 808-973-9594.

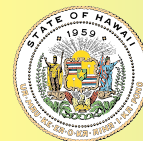
Examples of previously funded proposals include the purchase of seeds and tree crops, soil amendments, compost and gardening equipment. Also, the installation of irrigation systems, garden towers and raised beds for vegetable production, aquaponic and hydroponic systems, poultry coops and fencing to protect crops.

This is the fourth year of the program which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the 2018 Farm Bill. This program is only available to Hawai'i, Alaska and U.S. territories to help increase food security.



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

We invite you to stay connected with us!



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