

FAQ

Pu'uhonua o Nēnē (Temporary Shelter)

A safe place refuge for Maui Fire Survivors

The State of Hawai'i, in coordination with Project Vision Hawai'i, has established Pu'uhonua o Nēnē, a temporary shelter, to serve people who were experiencing homelessness pre-disaster to recover from the Maui Wildfires.

Pu'uhonua o Nēnē was established to provide pre-disaster homeless with a place to stay, bathroom and shower facilities, and other helpful amenities in the aftermath of a disaster event. Pu'uhonua o Nēnē is located at the north corner of the Hana Highway and Mayor Elmer Carvalho Way. This shelter location opened on September 29, 2023. Project Vision Hawai'i, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Transportation worked together to erect the site.

How many individuals are expected to be served at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē ?

Pu'uhonua o Nēnē is currently set up to serve 150 individuals but may be expanded or downsized depending on demand.

Who is allowed to stay at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē ?

Adults who experienced homelessness prior to the disaster events.

What is the contact information for Pu'uhonua o Nēnē ?

Phone: (808) 754-1241

Email:

mauistrong@projectvisionhawaii.org

Website:

www.projectvisionhawaii.org

Why are some survivors still in hotels and Airbnbs but individuals experiencing homelessness are treated differently?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and American Red Cross eligibility requirements cover people with a verified structural loss. They do not cover people who were experiencing homelessness wildfire pre-disaster.

Because the state prioritizes treating everyone with dignity, the agency decided to work with Project Vision Hawai'i to set up Pu'uhonua o Nēnē . Project Vision Hawai'i will be providing many services to help residents transition into permanent or long-term housing. Individuals and families at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē will be treated with respect and provided stable, safe housing.

The state is proud to partner with Project Vision Hawai'i on Pu'uhonua o Nēnē . Department of Human Services and Project Vision Hawai'i have a shared history of doing important work together. Project Vision Hawai'i will coordinate wraparound services and help survivors throughout their continuum of healing and restoration.

Was this Pu'uhonua o Nēnē erected because of the Maui Wildfires?

Yes, Pu'uhonua o Nēnē was established because of the 2023 Maui Wildfires. In early September 2023, Governor Josh Green made establishment of Pu'uhonua o Nēnē a priority. This goal was achieved by a dedicated group of state/local agencies and non-profit groups who worked very hard to turn a vacant lot into a safe community for homeless impacted by 2023 Maui Wildfire.

Who is setting up Pu'uhonua o Nēnē and who will run it?

DHS has contracted with Project Vision Hawai'i to set up and manage Pu'uhonua o Nēnē. Project Vision Hawai'i has experience providing mobile health, hygiene, and other services to homeless individuals. You can read more about Project Vision's impressive work on their [website](#).

Is any support available to help survivors navigate the recovery process?

Disaster case managers will work with survivors at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē to help them recover from the wildfire. Disaster case managers will help each person with their individual recovery needs.

Why can't pre-disaster homeless return to where they were before the wildfire?

Currently, the burned area is not safe. Ash and other hazardous materials can cause serious health problems if inhaled, ingested or if there is contact with exposed skin. Because the state believes everyone deserves dignity and humanity Pu'uhonua o Nēnē was established to give pre-disaster homeless people a safe place to live and work on obtaining long-term housing.

How will residents of Pu'uhonua o Nēnē know the location will be safe?

Staff will be on site at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē around the clock. The property will be completely fenced and not visible from the road. In addition, security will be provided 24/7.

Are pets allowed?

Residents will be allowed up to two pets. The Maui Humane Society will provide kennels and other veterinarian services. Pets will need to be leashed. A dog walking area will be available.

Will alcohol and smoking be permitted in Pu'uhonua o Nēnē?

Emergency shelters do not allow on-site alcohol consumption. A designated smoking area is available. Illegal substances will not be permitted on the premises.

Will unaccompanied minors be allowed to stay at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē?

Pu'uhonua o Nēnē staff will help connect unaccompanied minors with proper housing resources.

Will families with children be able to stay at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē?

No. Families with children will have other accommodations available.

What can be brought to Pu'uhonua o Nēnē?

Pu'uhonua o Nēnē residents can bring personal possessions to the shelter. Lockers for smaller items and secured compartments for larger items are available for Pu'uhonua o Nēnē residents. Shelter management will not allow items that may be unsafe or cause significant disturbances.

How will people know if they are eligible to move to the Pu'uhonua o Nēnē?

The County of Maui, DHS and partners have been working to assess all survivors' situations. The team is working to contact everyone who is eligible to move to Pu'uhonua o Nēnē. Disaster survivors who have not taken advantage of hotel housing services are also welcome at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē .

Will transportation to Pu'uhonua o Nēnē be provided?

Project Vision Hawai'i staff worked to contact survivors who are eligible to stay at Pu'uhonua o Nēnē and coordinated transportation to the site. The Maui Bus Public Transportation system is another resource.

Is Pu'uhonua o Nēnē open to all of Maui's Homeless?

Pu'uhonua o Nēnē was established to provide 2023 Maui Wildfire Survivors who were homeless pre-disaster a safe place to stay when federal and non-profit shelter assistance expired for homeless individuals on September 29.

How many people have moved in so far?

As of October 4, 60 residents will have moved in. We anticipate additional residents will be transferring from hotels in the coming days.

How many people were homeless in Lahaina prior to the disaster?

The County of Maui Homeless Program Division will have the most accurate numbers on the homeless population in Lahaina pre-disaster.

How many people who were homeless received non-congregate shelter housing after the fire?

Please refer to the American Red Cross of Hawaii.

How many acres is the site and what was the prior use?

The 1.5-acre area was vacant land manage by the Hawaii Department of Transportation.

Is it state land?

Yes, see above.

How many tents there are total and what are they used for?

There are 24 large tents in total, most are for housing residents. Some tents are used for dinning, medical, shower, tv/recreation area, and staff tents. Total capacity is 150 residents, with 10-12 residents in each tent.