

Report to the County of Kauai Commission on the Status of Women
on the
Resolution Supporting and Urging Equity, Inclusion, and Social and
Economic Justice Principles in COVID-19 Related Recovery Initiatives

Office of the Mayor
August 2021

The County of Kauai recognizes the vulnerability faced by women, children, and minorities, especially during the most challenging of times such as the crisis we are currently experiencing with the COVID 19 pandemic.

With the reality that women most often serve as provider and caregiver to their children, one of the first steps Mayor Kawakami introduced in the support and recovery of the COVID 19 crisis was implementing a flexible work schedule. The flexible work schedule was created with the coordination of the Department of Human Resources Director, Annette Anderson; HR Manager II, Janine Rapozo; and HR Manager III, Jill Niitani.

This flexible work schedule included the ability to telework from home with flexible hours, and a 4-10 schedule (four 10-hour shifts). Ideally, this schedule allowed the flexibility of caregivers to work from home and offer not only love and support to their children, curriculum assistance as most schools transitioned to distance learning, and a safe work environment that continued the financial support for the family. Employees' work product was reviewed by department heads in daily reports.

Additionally, Mayor Kawakami introduced the Kauai Economic Recovery Strategy Teams to support the recovery to the COVID 19 crisis. Under the leadership of the Director of Economic Development, Nalani Brun, ten teams were developed to address and guide the County in recovery and support efforts. The ninety members of these teams were comprised of forty-five women and forty-five men and included a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds along with the expertise in their areas.

We are grateful for the leadership, time, and expertise these team members gave in providing direction and stability in the early days of our COVID response. The Office of Economic Development continues to guide our residents with the Kupaa Kauai webpage <https://kauaiforward.com/economic-recovery/>.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, provided the economic stimulus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our grantees were awarded funds for programs that support women, children, our houseless community, and kupuna. Please see some of our awardees below.

Food distribution for kupuna and houseless populations:

Seven grants were awarded for food distribution programs to support kupuna and/or houseless populations, awarded \$1,279,816 total to support thousands of individuals and families per week. These providers allowed for those most vulnerable to continue to provide healthful food to their families and selves during this economic and health crisis.

- Partners included:
 - E Ola Mau Na Leo O Kauai
 - Kauai Independent Food Bank
 - Kauai Government Employers Federal Credit Union
 - Hoomana
 - Kauai Economic Opportunity
 - Nourish Kauai
 - Hawaii Food Bank

Organization: Church of the Pacific, United Church of Christ

Project Name: Hookipa Kauai Food Pantry

Funding: \$101,186

- The Hookipa Kauai Food Pantry saw a 133% increase in family participation as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic and 163% increase in the number of individual family members being served from April through December of 2020.
- Provided food supplementation for an average of 495 Kauai residents. The level of participation has continued in 2021.
- The CARES Act funds enabled them to upgrade their facilities and fully serve these people providing a large variety of food items, personal hygiene supplies, pet food and safe and sanitary facilities.
- Distribute approximately 2 1/2 tons of food each week. They also provide food, facilities, and administrative support for a weekly food pantry in Anahola, a bi-weekly food pantry at Kilauea Elementary School, and a weekly delivery of food to local beach camps for houseless residents.

Non-Profit Economic Loss Support Grants:

Organization: Women in Need

Project Name: WIN's Rent/Mortgage Asst. & Childcare Subsidy

Funding: \$360,000

- Women in Need's program was able to provide services for 192 households for rent/mortgage assistance and 18 families for childcare subsidy to Kaua'i residents who suffered a loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organization: Homestead Community Development Corporation

Project: Micro Business Recovery Project

Amount: \$28,715

- This project made it possible for almost two dozen micro businesses on Kauai to keep their physical locations.
- Made required COVID-19 improvements to their facilities.
- Worked on improving their online business presence.
- 100% of the microbusinesses awarded are owned and operated by Kauai residents, with 5 or fewer employees.
- 82% native Hawaiian, female, or minority-owned businesses.

Organization: Easterseals Hawaii

Project Name: Coronavirus Pandemic Support

Funding: \$92,450

- Easterseals Hawaii has been serving the disabilities community for more than 73 years.
- The generous support from the Kauai County Cares grant allowed them to purchase personal protection equipment and rigorously sanitize their locations to help ensure the health and safety of our program participants, their families and our staff on Kauai.
- Safely serving over 200 program participants and with more than 30 team members on Kauai.

Organization: Big Brothers, Big Sisters

Project Name: BBBS Kaua'i: Connection for a Virtual Future

Funding: \$40,000

- Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii expanded mentoring services virtually, through a new free Mentoring App that connects keiki with supportive mentors who will supervise their mentees as they learn, practice, and master important new skills.
- Served Kauai youth in need of additional support to deal with the many challenges of 2020 through an online virtual application.
- Youth were able to continue meeting with their Big Brother or Big Sister despite social distancing requirements and the closure of many spaces and activities.
- Mentors helped provide an outlet for youth who were facing adversity even before the pandemic began, to offer advice, to model good social emotional health, and to provide a fun supportive distraction from stressful home environments.
- Youth also received mentoring relationship support from a Big Brother Big Sister staff member who helped to facilitate and monitor conversations as well as provide virtual mentoring activity ideas.
- 50% of youth are male; 50% of youth are female.
- 75% of youth are native Hawaiian.
- 50% of youth qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- 75% of youth live with a single parent or guardian.

Mental Health & DV Prevention Grants to Non-Profits:

Organization: Kauai Economic Opportunity

Project Name: Mental Health Counseling for Homeless

Funding: \$37,800

- Through the CARES Act grant, KEO provided a licensed private provider available for mental health counseling during scheduled appointments for all participants in the Homeless and Housing Programs.
- These services include psychological assessments, individual or family counseling with a licensed, certified mental health professional.

Organization: Women in Need

Project Name: WIN's Domestic Violence Intervention Program

Funding: \$40,000

- WIN's Domestic Violence Intervention Program is designed to assist clients, who could not otherwise afford to pay for Domestic Intervention classes, who experienced job loss, business closure, furlough and reduction in work hours due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organization: Hale Opio Kauai

Project Name: Fostering Mental Health Wellbeing, Domestic Violence Prevention, & Suicide Prevention

Funding: \$250,000

- Hale Opio Kauai used the grant to foster Mental Health Wellbeing, Domestic Violence Prevention, and Suicide Prevention utilizing TrustCircle powered Social Emotional Learning Programs for the Kauai community impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic.

Organization: YWCA Kauai

Project Name: YWCA of Kauai Domestic Violence Services COVID-19 Response

Funding: \$178,587

- The YWCA eliminated access and transportation barriers related to COVID-19 for temporary restraining orders by creating a Temporary Restraining Order Mobile Unit.
- Ensured that all direct service staff can continue to operate in remote work environments.
- Installed social distancing upgrades in the Shelter and Women's Center.

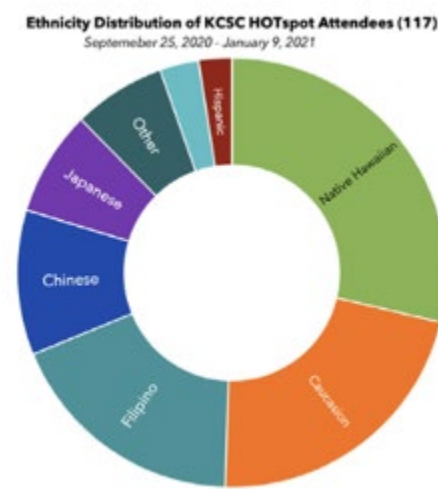
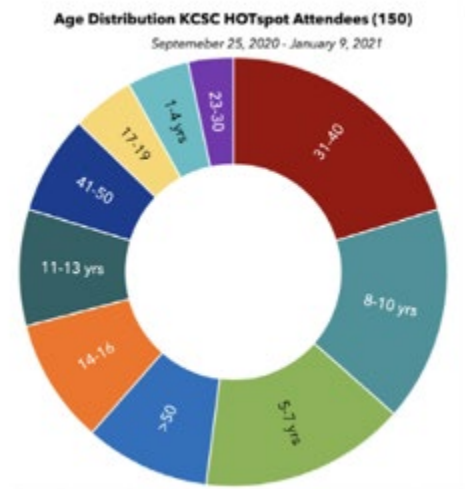
Educational Support

Organization: Kaua'i Community Science Center

Project Name: Hookui Project

Funding: \$176,506

- Purchased a van to create a mobile WIFI STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Culture, and Math) resource.
- Served K through 12 students, parents, and teachers from Kekaha to Eleele.
- Provided mobile Wi-Fi and STEAM events.
- 9 free community events featuring 3D printing and robotics demonstrations.
- "Brown bag" hands on activities, free books.
- Provided a small socially distanced community event supporting the welfare of students and allowing for some social interaction.



Organization: ClimbHi

Project Name: Educational Portal

Amount: \$42,000

- All of Kauai's HI DOE schools (high schools, middle schools, and elementary) have a career development tool to connect with business directly.
- Over 200 local businesses are now connected with Kauai educators.
- Contractor for business development was sourced from Kauai.
- Marketing materials sourced from Kaikini on Kauai.

Organization: St Theresa
Project: Distance Learning
Amount: \$28,000

- Integrated technology to continue to enhance education despite the challenges of COVID-19.
- Bought laptops and improved wifi.
- Utilized School Speak and Google Classroom.
- Increased academic rigor for learners and 6th and 8th grade by offering forensic science in participation with Na Lei Wili with expanded network.

Employment Assistance

Rise to Work - Non-Profit Grants (e.g., Ag, IT, and Conservation Workers)

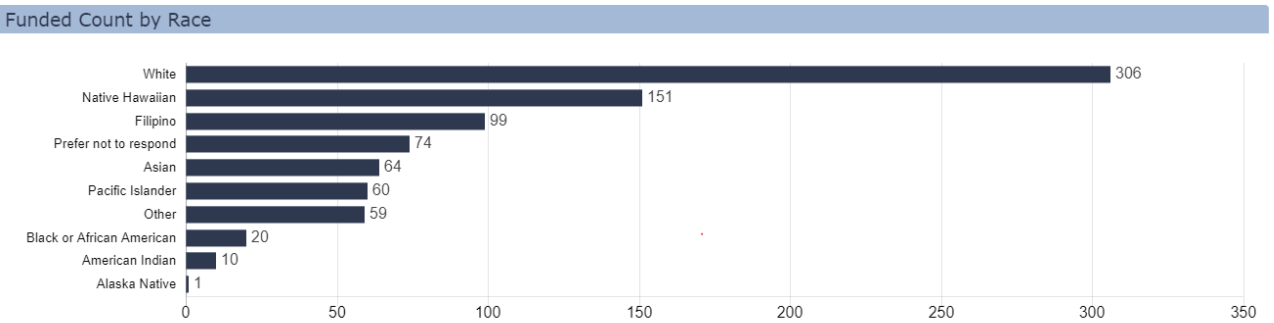
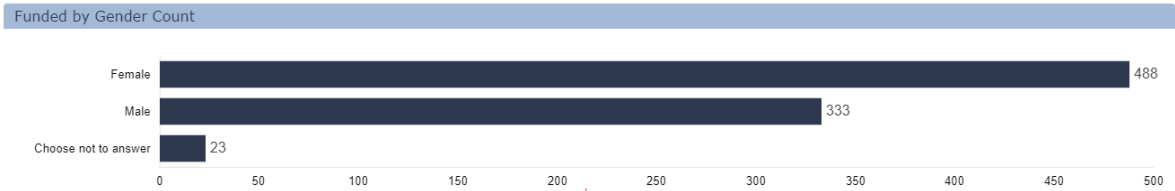
Organization: County of Kauai
Project Name: Rise to Work
Funding: \$2.6 million

- The Rise to Work program was created by the County of Kaua'i in partnership with ProService Hawaii to help displaced workers on Kaua'i connect to temporary job opportunities with local employers.
- Participants in the program receive weekly pay, free health insurance benefits and the opportunity to learn new skills and gain professional connections.
- Positions are funded by the program for 12 weeks.
- With the first launch of the Rise to Work program 280 people were employed with 100 employers, both in non-profit organizations and private businesses.
- The second launch of the 2021 Rise to Work program was made possible through the generous support of Dr. Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg through the Chan Zuckerberg Kaua'i Community Fund of the Hawaii Community Foundation; this expanded program supported 365 employees with 150 employers.
- Several of the non-profits previously highlighted in this report were able to extend their services to women, children, and minorities through this employment boost including Malama Kauai, Kauai Food Hub, Hawaii Food Bank, Kauai Independent Foodbank, Nourish Kauai, Hale Opio, and Kauai Community Science Center.
- In addition to supporting displaced workers, the Rise to Work program also benefits local businesses and nonprofit organizations on Kaua'i by allowing them to bring on new hires to increase their capacity or pivot their business model without taking on additional payroll costs.
- 55% of Rise to Work hires in 2020 were female.
- One of the most visual and beautiful products of the Rise to Work program can be seen in the murals on the Lihue Civic Center. One of the teams included an all-woman team of young artists.

Housing Assistance

In addition to CARES funding, the County of Kauai has also received funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Our Housing Agency continues to work with the Kauai Government Employees Federal Credit Union in providing rental assistance and soon will also be providing mortgage assistance.

As of Aug. 3, there were 1241 applications requesting just over \$8.5 million in rent assistance and \$440,000 in utility assistance. \$6,187,439 has been dispersed. We expect this number to increase significantly in late August early September as we issue a second three-months of assistance to already qualified and assisted applicants.



The County of Kauai is a proud partner of the Resolution Supporting and Urging Equity, Inclusion, and Social and Economic Justice Principles in COVID-19 Related Recovery Initiatives and looks forward to continuing to work with the Kauai Commission on the Status of Women.