



## **Maui United Way's Fire Disaster Impact:**

### **Thanks to Our Donors, Maui United Way's Fire Response Is Making a Difference for Impacted Families**

When catastrophic wildfires forced Maui residents from their longtime homes and into an unknown future in early August, Maui United Way's small yet mighty local staff immediately transitioned to around-the-clock disaster response, leveraging our 75 years of community service on Maui.

Thanks to Maui United Way's trusted network of local community nonprofits and the generous giving from local kama'aina and people around the world, our Maui Fire Disaster Relief Fund has allowed us to fast track funds and make a difference for Maui's fire survivors every day. Here are some results so far:

**Emergency Financial Assistance for Adults in the Impacted Fire Zones:** On August 18, Maui United Way launched a one-time \$1,000 financial assistance payment program for adult fire survivors living in the impacted fire zones in Lahaina and Kula, limited to \$5,000 per household, as long as funds allow. Giving families the ability to choose what they purchase is empowering. Because Maui is one of the most culturally diverse places in the country, comfort food means different things to different people. Hear Hawaii Public Radio's report on this fund at this [link](#).

**Food:** Maui United Way's local providers are feeding thousands of survivors with compassion every day. They collect fresh produce and proteins from local growers and suppliers for distribution to the houseless and displaced, supporting the local economy as they keep families fed at this difficult time. With support from us and other organizations, Haiku's Common Ground Collective has been providing between 8,000 to 10,000 meals daily, and Salvation Army-Maui Corps is working with partners to prepare more than 2,000 meals per day.

**Shelter:** In addition to providing immediate shelter for survivors, your donation allowed us to give American Red Cross (Maui) funds to provide cots, blankets, cleanup kits, work gloves, ice chests, flashlights, tarps, dust masks, and funds for shelter staff. A homeless shelter in Lahaina burned down in the fires, and Maui United Way funds are helping Ka Hale A Ke Ola to shelter 70 adults and 38 children with clothing, household necessities, food, bus passes and more.

**Child Care and Services:** Maui Family Support Services' Early Head Start building was destroyed in the fires, and MFSS is now using Maui United Way funds to relocate students and to provide tuition for children to learn at a new location. Additionally, they are providing gas cards to provide transportation between school and work, and to provide household essentials. Na Keiki O Emalia is helping grieving children by providing services, books, toys and a child-friendly drop-in space, and will provide education and resources on helping children with grief. Pacific Birth Collective is providing Lomi & La'au Lapa'au services offered by cultural practitioners in Honokowai, which has become a hub for donations, distributions, and support for women, babies and families affected by the fire.

**Crisis counseling:** The human toll of the wildfires is almost unimaginable. Survivors need help with the trauma they've endured, and our partners are providing crisis counseling for survivors as well as first responders. The J Walter Cameron Center is hosting a group of therapists and counselors at a central location to assist in this need, and is providing space for other providers of services to make access convenient for survivors. Spirit Horse Ranch is making Trauma Informed Equine Therapy available in addition to other services.

**Health Care:** Our island is diverse, and trust is an essential part of healing. Our fund supports Hui No Ke Ola Pono's Native Hawaiian practitioners as they provide medical outreach, supplies, medicine, radios, batteries and other essentials to impacted families who need medical assistance.

**Disabled Services:** Some of Maui's residents with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities live in group homes and were evacuated during the fires. We're supporting ARC of Maui County's 24/7 work to house disabled residents in a safe and clean environment and provide meals until they can return to their Lahaina group home.

**Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation:** The fires have left thousands of cats, dogs, rabbits, horses and other pets and livestock injured or displaced. Our partners at the Hawaii Animal Rescue Foundation are providing food, medical supplies, veterinary care, and housing for these impacted animals.

**Transportation:** The fires have destroyed hundreds of family vehicles along with homes. Our partner agency, Na Hoaloha-Maui Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, is using your donation to provide transportation to essential services such as dialysis, chemotherapy, other doctors' visits, grocery shopping and pharmacy pick-up for fire survivors who lost their vehicles, as well as checking in on older adults who don't have transportation of their own.

**Financial Stability:** Homeowners who have lost their homes are receiving additional support from our partner agency, Hale Mahaolu, which is helping them navigate the complex insurance and mortgage payment forbearance processes, to help them prepare for a secure future. Habitat for Humanity Maui is likewise assisting fire survivors who have lost their homes and are being charged late fees on their mortgages on homes that have been lost in the fires. The per capita income for Maui residents is \$30,000, and good credit will be essential in rebuilding their lives.

**Access to additional services:** Survivors need identification in order to prove eligibility and access the housing, health care, child care, and other services intended for them. Our partners, including Maui Economic Opportunity, are helping families replace documents lost during the fires such as IDs, drivers' licenses and passports.

**Future needs:** The long-term needs of Maui residents will be great as they transition from temporary to permanent housing and rebuild their lives. We are vetting new applications for funding on an ongoing basis, and we are building a communications plan to maintain the momentum and continue connecting those with resources with those who need them for the long haul.

It's important as the fires recede from the daily news reports that we remind people around the world of the needs of Maui's fire survivors, and ensure the public understands that, though Maui welcomes visitors from around their world, our communities are not "tourist towns," but our hometowns, local communities made up of families with longstanding cultural traditions.

In 2020, the per capita income for Maui residents was \$30,000.

Our local population is one of the most diverse anywhere in the world, with more than eight languages spoken in Maui's homes. Maui United Way's work is guided by a deep desire to increase equity and decrease long-standing disparities for our diverse communities, including the AAPI populations, especially Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations.

We are so grateful to the generous donors around the world who have stepped up and shown aloha to our fire survivors. Recovery will take time, so please continue to

keep our 'ohana in your hearts. 100% of contributions to the Maui Wildfire Relief Fund will stay here in Hawaii.