

HELPING HANDS HAWAI'I 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Empowering Communities

Overcoming Challenges and Expanding Impact

Helping Hands Hawaiʻi®

Mission

Helping Hands Hawai'i provides critical social services to improve people's quality of life and empower them on their path to a better tomorrow.

Vision

Helping Hands Hawai'i envisions a thriving, resilient and self-sufficient community connected for generations through acts of aloha.

Core Values & Guiding Principles



HELPING OTHERS

We work with people to meet their self-identified needs, always looking for the best solution.



COLLABORATION

We foster partnerships with local social service providers, businesses, and the general public to secure needed resources to support our clients and meet their needs.



RESPECT

We practice the art of listening well to others, embracing the diversity among people, and ensuring success for all by sharing critical, timely, and useful information, resources, and support so we can all achieve the best possible outcomes.

Board of Directors

Taylor Kirihara, Officer - Chair Summer Kaiawe, Officer - Vice Chair Paul Iijima, Officer - Treasurer Shawn Nakamoto, Officer - Secretary Daniel Hughes, Director Travis Kikuchi, Director Drew Nagai, Director Joseph Sam, Director Long Vo, Director Emmanuel Zibakalam, Director



Message from Board Chair & CEO

Dear Helping Hands Hawai'i Ohana,

As we look back on the year gone by, we are filled with gratitude for the community that surrounds and supports Helping Hands Hawai'i. In 2023, your generosity and commitment have touched countless lives and made a profound difference.

Throughout the year, we've had the privilege of witnessing incredible stories of resilience and hope. From families finding stability through our outreach efforts to individuals overcoming challenges with the help of our dedicated staff and volunteers, each story is a testament to the power of compassion and solidarity.

One such story is that of Ebony, a single mother facing unexpected hardship. Through your support, we were able to provide not just material assistance, but also a lifeline during her time of need. Stories like Ebony's remind us why our mission is so important — to be there for our neighbors when they need it most, offering not just a handout, but a hand up.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by the strength of our community and committed to continuing our work with even greater passion and purpose. Together, we will continue to innovate, collaborate, and advocate for a stronger, more resilient community.

Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in our mission. With your support, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.





Taylor Kirihara Board Chair



Susan Furuta President & CEO

2023 At A Glance

In 2023, Helping Hands Hawai'i continued to expand services, strengthen partnerships, and empower lives across our community.

STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Increased outreach sites by 67%, breaking down barriers for individuals facing geographic isolation and mobility limitations.

ENHANCED CLIENT SUPPORT

Facilitated a 64% rise in SNAP applications and recertifications, providing crucial aid amid rising living costs.

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

Distributed more than 38,500 essential household items and holiday support worth over \$360,000.

NURTURING TALENT

Implemented pay transparency and increased professional development training, fostering a motivated team dedicated to service.

IMPACTFUL VOLUNTEERISM

Mobilized over 1,963 volunteer hours, valued at \$63,000, amplifying our mission through community engagement.

BILINGUAL ACCESS LINE

3,628

SNAP OUTREACH PROGRAM



13,380 individuals SERVED IN 2023

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE



COMMUNITY CLEARINGHOUSE



(including 173 people impacted by the Maui wildfires)





Empowering Through Language

In 2023, Helping Hands Hawai'i's Bilingual Access Line saw a notable shift in service dynamics aimed at enhancing accessibility and efficiency for language interpretation across various sectors:

- 12% increase in overall appointments
- 67% decrease in medical sector services, attributed to staffing challenges among healthcare professionals and inadequate reimbursements from Medicare, Medicaid, and Tricare
- 6% increase in phone appointments to accommodate scheduling flexibility
- Challenges in meeting in-person interpretation demands, particularly in Cantonese and Korean.

In response, the organization launched a community awareness campaign highlighting the importance of language services, started actively recruiting interpreters in Cantonese, Korean, Chuukese, and Marshallese, and promoted video remote interpretation to enhance effectiveness.

IRINA'S STORY

Imagine finding yourself in a country where you don't speak the language. Simple tasks like asking for directions, using public transit, buying groceries, or visiting the doctor suddenly become daunting challenges.

For Irina, life became overwhelming after her husband passed away. He had managed all their finances, ensuring bills were paid on time. Left alone, Irina faced a daunting new reality: understanding bills, making payments, and avoiding potential consequences for missed deadlines.

When Irina feared her electricity might be shut off, she reached out to HECO for help. However, the language barrier left her feeling frustrated and isolated. It was a distressing moment until HECO contacted Helping Hands Hawai'i's Bilingual Access Line.

Through the Bilingual Access Line, Irina was connected with a Russian interpreter. Finally able to communicate her concerns, she worked with the HECO representative to transfer the account into her name, ensuring she could manage her future bills independently.

This act of compassion and support not only resolved Irina's immediate crisis but also provided her with a sense of relief during a difficult time of loss and adjustment. Stories like Irina's illustrate the invaluable impact of bridging language barriers to provide essential services and support in our community.



Breaking Barriers, Transforming Lives

The SNAP Outreach Program is a lifeline for individuals and families across Oahu, ensuring access to vital nutritional assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In 2023:

- Increased sites by 67%, addressing barriers like transportation and physical limitations
- Experienced a 64% surge in SNAP applications and recertifications, driven by financial strains in housing, childcare, and medical expenses
- Seniors aged 60+ accounted for 49% of applications, with 58% from female-led households
- Community feedback highlights success: 98% report SNAP benefits ensured enough food, and 94% saw improved overall quality of life

Navigating Challenges

In 2023, our Representative Payee (RP) services continued to assist individuals with managing Social Security benefits amidst health challenges.

- Provided pro bono services to approximately 30 clients monthly, ensuring financial stability despite barriers such as ineligibility due to incarceration, loss of insurance, and financial constraints
- Managed challenges posed by Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) with delayed government communication and rule changes, initially excluding EIPs from beneficiaries' assessed resources for one year post-receipt, later extended indefinitely
- Addressed SSA penalties for benefit overpayments resulting from improperly excluded EIP balances, necessitating appeals involving extensive documentation and review of accounting data
- Enhanced client support through proactive outreach and education on evolving Social Security policies to empower informed decision-making

JOHN'S STORY

John received RP services for seven years, and he decided he could manage his own benefits. After going through the approval process to become his own payee with his doctor and SSA, he was awarded full responsibility for his benefits. Only a month later, John contacted RP to reestablish services, because the pressure of managing his own finances and bill payments was overwhelming. After reinstating payee responsibilities to Helping Hands Hawai'i, John's well-being improved because he now had a support system to make sure his living expenses were paid on time. Like John, our clients believe that HHH is the solution to improve their quality of life.



Strengthening Families

Helping Hands Hawai'i's Community Clearinghouse (CCH) stands as a beacon of support for struggling households, offering a lifeline through a range of vital services.

- Witnessed a 19% increase in walk-in services in 2023
- Experienced an 87% surge in clients seeking assistance with mortgages, rent, or utilities, despite 56% being employed, due to financial challenges exacerbated by COVID-related layoffs
- Distributed nearly 38,500 household items valued at approximately \$191,000, stabilizing situations for 94% of recipients
- Directly distributed over 30,000 school supply items, valued at more than \$26,000, throughout the state
- Received donations exceeding \$146,000 during the holidays, supporting direct adoption and gifts at Wishing Tree locations

EBONY'S STORY

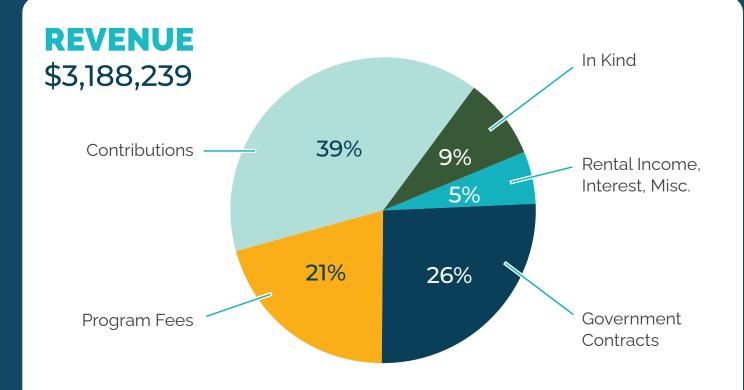
Ebony, a dedicated single mother of three, faced a challenging setback in April 2023 when she injured her ankle and couldn't work for three months following surgery. Despite receiving temporary disability insurance, her income ceased for two months after benefits expired. With mounting rent arrears upon returning to work in July, Ebony turned to the Community Clearinghouse for rental assistance and financial guidance. Through our support, she successfully managed her budget, cleared her overdue rent, and has since maintained timely payments.

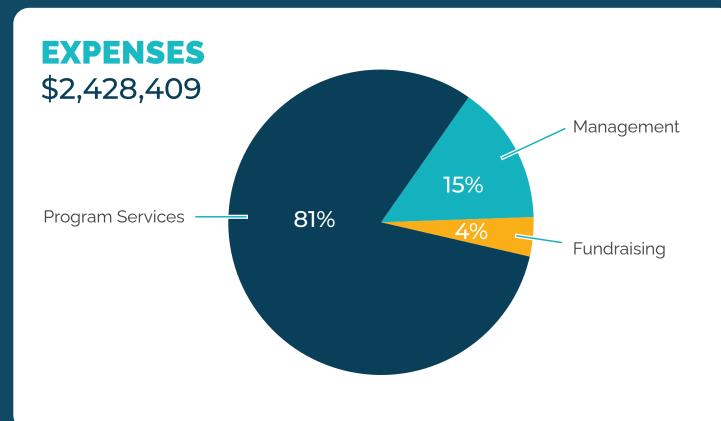
Even amidst financial strain below the poverty line, Ebony selflessly took in her nieces after their parents faced homelessness, ensuring they have a stable home. Although her budget remains tight, she ensures her household's basic needs are met. Visiting CCH, Ebony accessed essential household items—clothing for her children and nieces, bedding, kitchenware, furniture, and more which alleviated financial pressure and allowed her to prioritize essential bills. She is now preparing her children and nieces for school through Ready to Learn, ensuring they have the supplies they need for academic success.

Ebony's resilience and commitment to her family exemplify the strength found within our community, and her story underscores the transformative impact of support from organizations like ours.



Financial Summary





Helping Hands Hawaii®

(808) 536-7234 HelpingHan awaii.org

Building a Stronger Team

Helping Hands Hawai'i implemented strategies to attract and retain talent effectively. By transparently listing salary and benefits in job postings, we fostered trust and attracted well-informed applicants, resulting in increased applications.

We also adapted to employee needs by offering hybrid work options and flexibility, promoting a better work-life balance. HHH prioritized employee well-being with initiatives like Wellness Days, enabling staff to focus on health and personal enrichment activities. Engagement was enhanced through regular all-staff meetings, celebratory events like potlucks, and a welcoming tradition for new hires.

Based on employee feedback, we expanded professional development opportunities, including cybersecurity training, building awareness and ensuring readiness to prevent risks.

These efforts have nurtured an empowered team committed to delivering exceptional services to our community.



Mahalo to Our Volunteers

At Helping Hands Hawai'i, volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization, embodying the spirit of aloha through their dedication and compassion. In 2023, over 300 volunteers dedicated more than 1,900 hours to support Helping Hands Hawai'i's mission. Many contributed to seasonal projects like Adopt a Family and Ready to Learn.

Brie Lacaille, a Starbucks district manager in Waikiki, has passionately volunteered with Helping Hands Hawai'i for nearly two years. Inspired by her parents' legacy in nonprofits, Brie initially connected through Starbucks' Coffee With a Cop, strengthening community ties.

Volunteering isn't just about giving time; it's about making a meaningful impact.

Alongside her team, Brie organizes collections of school supplies and holiday gifts, and champions Helping Hands Hawai'i through Starbucks' Neighborhood Grant program. Leading by example for her children, she believes in the transformative power of volunteering.

"Volunteering isn't just about giving time; it's about making a meaningful impact," Brie shares. "It's like going to the gym—once you start, the rewards are immeasurable."

Brie's dedication embodies the spirit of aloha, positively impacting the families supported by Helping Hands Hawai'i. Her story underscores the profound influence of volunteers who enrich communities through compassion and commitment.

Ways to Support Helping Hands Hawaiʻi

HELPING HANDS HAW

ANDS HAWAII

MAKE A GIFT

Whether by cash, check, or credit card, your donation directly supports our programs. Visit **helpinghandshawaii.org/donate** to make a secure online donation or learn how to donate by mail.

DEDICATED SUPPORTER

Consider setting up a recurring monthly donation and join other supporters who make consistent contributions that have a significant and sustained impact on the lives of those we serve.

EMPLOYER MATCH

Many employers offer matching-gift programs that can double or even triple the impact of your donation. Check with your employer to see if they participate and how you can maximize your contribution.

SHARE YOUR TALENTS

Volunteering is a powerful way to make a difference. Whether you can spare an hour or a day, your time and skills can change lives. Join us in creating positive change in our community.

When you give to Helping Hands Hawai'i, you are not just providing financial support; you are helping to improve the quality of life for individuals and families across Hawaii. Your generosity fuels initiatives that bring hope and opportunity to those in need, creating a brighter future for our community.