He lani i luna,
he honua i lalo.
HEAVEN ABOVE, EARTH BENEATH.

Said of a person who owns his own property, or of one who is sure of his security.
KEY FINDINGS

Relative strengths/progress over time

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

Native Hawaiians tend to live with family members.

- More than nine out of ten Native Hawaiians (91.9 percent) lived in family households, compared with the statewide average of 86.4 percent.
- Native Hawaiians were the most likely of the state’s major ethnic groups to have households where grandparents live with and care for their grandchildren.

Native Hawaiian households with children ages 5–17 had the highest rate of nonparental caregiving among the state’s major ethnic groups, which is consistent with the traditional cultural practice of hānai parenting or child fostering.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect among Native Hawaiians decreased from 29.5 per 10,000 in 2006 to 23.8 per 10,000 in 2009.

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Native Hawaiian arrest rates for violent crimes, robbery, and drug manufacturing or sales decreased between 2003 and 2009.

- Arrests for violent crimes decreased from 61.3 to 56.8 per 10,000.
- Arrests for robbery decreased from 5.5 to 4.4 per 10,000.
- Arrests for drug manufacturing or sales decreased from 7.4 to 4.1 per 10,000.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support from an adult, with whom a student could talk, was more common among Native Hawaiian high school students than among their non-Hawaiian peers.

Reliance on family support during difficult times was more prevalent among Native Hawaiians than among non-Hawaiians (90.6 percent compared with 86.9 percent, respectively).

SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

When encountering challenges, Native Hawaiians more frequently turned to a higher power than did non-Hawaiians (76.4 percent compared with 63.2 percent, respectively).

High levels of spiritual fulfillment were more common among Native Hawaiians than among non-Hawaiians (51.6 percent compared with 42.5 percent, respectively).

Native Hawaiians were more likely to describe their spirituality, or relationship with God, as perfect or really good than were non-Hawaiians (63.6 percent compared with 56.4 percent, respectively).

Membership in a religious organization was more common among Native Hawaiians than among non-Hawaiians (59.2 percent compared with 46.3 percent, respectively).

QUALITY OF LIFE

Compared with non-Hawaiians, Native Hawaiians were more likely to report that life had gotten better over the past five years (43.2 percent versus 36.0 percent) and to expect that life will get better over the next five years (60.8 percent versus 47.8 percent).

STRESS AND SUICIDE

The suicide rate among Native Hawaiians decreased from 57.2 per 100,000 in the 2001–06 reporting period to 46.2 per 100,000 in the 2007–11 reporting period.
Areas of concern

**CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS**

Native Hawaiian children were more likely to live in single-parent households than were the children of other major ethnic groups in the state.

Native Hawaiians had the largest proportion of single-mother family households among the major ethnic groups in the state.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Abuse and neglect have continued to afflict a disproportionate number of Native Hawaiian children. The rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect among Native Hawaiians (23.8 per 10,000 children) was significantly higher than the statewide average (13.4 per 10,000).

**ANTISOCIAL AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR**

Physical fights—both on and off school property—were more common among Native Hawaiian high school students than among their non-Hawaiian peers.

The rates of arrest for violent crime, aggravated assault, robbery, and drug manufacturing or sales among Native Hawaiians continued to exceed statewide averages.

Compared with juveniles across the state, Native Hawaiian youth had the highest rate of arrest for all serious offenses (commonly referred to as index offenses) combined and for less serious (part II) offenses combined.

**INCARCERATION**

Native Hawaiian adults constituted 17.7 percent of the total adult population in Hawai‘i in 2010. However, in 2012, Native Hawaiians accounted for 37.0 percent of the state’s male prison population and 40.0 percent of the state’s female prison population.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

One in eleven Native Hawaiians (8.9 percent) reported being extremely or very dissatisfied with life, compared with 6.5 percent of non-Hawaiians.

Native Hawaiians were less likely than were non-Hawaiians to describe themselves as extremely or very happy (51.5 percent compared with 55.4 percent, respectively).

**STRESS AND SUICIDE**

Thoughts and behaviors associated with depression and suicide were more likely among Native Hawaiian high school students than among their non-Hawaiian peers.

One in fourteen Native Hawaiians (7.4 percent) reported sadness or depression for fifteen or more days in the past month, compared with one in eighteen adults (5.7 percent) statewide.

Among individuals ages 15–44, Native Hawaiians were more likely to commit suicide than were their counterparts from other major ethnic groups in Hawai‘i.

**KEY IMPLICATIONS**

Native Hawaiian families struggle with challenges such as single parenting but continue to use coping strategies like grandparent and hānai caregiving that are grounded in Hawaiian cultural values. Although progress is apparent in many areas of social and emotional well-being, Native Hawaiians continue to face disadvantages, limited opportunities, and institutionalized inequities that leave a negative social impact. Taken together, these data indicate the need to leverage Native Hawaiian social networks, spiritual strength, and cultural traditions to navigate contemporary problems and create a path toward a more positive future.
INTRODUCTION

FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

Grandparent Caretakers

Nonparental Caregiving

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIORS AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Arrests

Incarceration

SOCIAL SUPPORT

SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

QUALITY OF LIFE

STRESS AND SUICIDE

CONCLUSION
Social, emotional, and cultural well-being are closely related concepts that center around the mind and spirit. Social well-being—our external connections to the world around us—encompasses the collective set of relationships we have with others, from our immediate family to the community at large. Social well-being is reflected in the structure and depth of our social networks, how we communicate and interact with others, how we make sense of and navigate cultural contexts, and our engagement with the community. In contrast, emotional well-being is an internally focused state that includes one’s feelings of place and purpose, outlook on life, and capacity to handle life’s stressors, from routine challenges to significant events. Culture is the milieu within which social and emotional well-being develop—the knowledge, values, beliefs, norms, customs, and traditions that bind a community together and shape one’s worldview.

Although the title of this chapter—“Social, Emotional, and Cultural Well-Being”—might suggest an in-depth exploration of the dynamic interdependence of social, emotional, and cultural resources within the Native Hawaiian community, we must, regretfully, temper such expectations. The social and emotional dimensions of well-being are by themselves difficult to quantify and are, therefore, often tracked with somber measures of deficiency (e.g., arrests, domestic violence, suicides). Emotional stability and social cohesion are less likely to be monitored than are the conspicuous behaviors associated with social or emotional dysfunction.

Cultural dimensions of well-being remain an even more elusive construct. Culture is a highly personal attribute that expresses itself differently in different people, and its manifestations may be constrained by opportunity. For example, many Native Hawaiian elders were forced by Westernized schools to abandon their native tongue as children but now act as cultural resources, sharing traditional ‘ike, nohona, and mo‘olelo with their children and grandchildren. Are these kūpuna less culturally grounded because they are not fluent in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i? Such questions are impossible to answer, and the misconceptions they can invite oblige researchers of Hawaiian culture to proceed with caution. Speed in data accumulation is often sacrificed in favor of a more respectful developmental process that includes the evolution of more authentic means to collect, analyze, and disseminate cultural data. The existing body of quantitative data on Hawaiian cultural well-being thus remains limited and incomplete as evidenced by the narrow set of cultural data included in this volume.
Because of such data constraints—and the closely related nature of social, emotional, and cultural assets—we chose to integrate these three facets of well-being into a single chapter. This consolidation is not intended to diminish the importance of each individual dimension. Social, emotional, and cultural well-being are perhaps less tangible than physical or economic well-being but are just as critical. Even the more individualistic and empirically oriented traditions of mainstream social science have generated a substantial body of research documenting the impact of social, emotional, and cultural resources on children’s developmental and educational outcomes. For example, studies have shown that children who have supportive and stable families and who are nurtured by strong relationships with a caring adult have higher achievement levels and are more resilient to challenges (Benard 1991; McClure, Yonezawa, and Jones n.d; Werner and Smith 1977). Similarly, spiritual and emotional wellness are highly correlated with decision-making, risk-taking behavior, and other wellness outcomes (Cotton et al. 2005).

Social and emotional well-being may be especially important for the Native Hawaiian population because of the sustained significance in Hawaiian culture of ‘ohana, community, and Ke Akua (God), as well as connections to one’s ancestors, cultural heritage, and ‘āina (land). Social connections and pilina (relationships) form the foundation upon which traditional Hawaiian society was built and upon which contemporary Hawaiian culture continues to evolve. The continuing importance of culture is apparent in the relative successes of programs and service models that replace Western approaches with culture-based strategies that leverage the Hawaiian focus on collective and spiritual wellness. For example, a study conducted by Kamehameha Schools in collaboration with several Hawaiian-focused charter schools and the Search Institute found that spirituality had a moderate, positive correlation with pro-social values and behaviors and with attachment to family, place, and culture (Scales 2009).

As the field of Hawaiian research and strengths-based models of social and emotional health continue to grow and flourish, we hope that future studies will reflect a more expansive understanding of social, emotional, and cultural well-being. In the meantime, we provide as much of the picture as we are able, drawing on a mix of conventional data sources—like the 2010 US Census and various state agencies—and a handful of more culturally focused resources.

The predominance of the government-derived and deficit-focused data points may suggest a lack of social and emotional assets within the Native Hawaiian community, which is faced with high numbers of single-parent families and high rates of arrest, incarceration, and depression. However, a closer look at some of the more probing measures highlights the spiritual strength of Native Hawaiians and the value of cultural strongholds such as the ‘ōhana. Although the resources on which many Native Hawaiians rely (e.g., grandparent caretakers, hānai families, and spiritual connections with Ke Akua) may be considered by some to be unconventional and markers of dysfunction or distress, these represent cultural underpinnings of social and emotional health in the Hawaiian community. Understanding the role of these cultural assets in addressing other challenges is critical to describing, understanding, and portraying the strengths and well-being of the Native Hawaiian community.
Families and Households

Family living situations and household structures are strong predictors of educational, economic, behavioral, and emotional outcomes. Research shows that children from single-parent families are less successful academically (e.g., test scores, grades) and have lower levels of educational attainment (e.g., college enrollment and completion) than are students in married-couple families. This may not be surprising given the challenges single parents face as the sole providers of income and caregiving within their families. However, claims about the extent to which this disparity can be explained by other correlates, such as income and educational attainment of parents, differ from one study to the next (Painter and Levine 1999; Biblarz and Raftery 1999; Sandefur and Wells 1999; Mulkey, Crain, and Harrington 1992; Grissmer et al. 1994).

Research also indicates that the children of single-parent families have poorer social and mental health outcomes. For example, Bramlett and Blumberg (2007) found that, compared with their counterparts raised by married parents, children in single-mother families were more likely to exhibit mental health problems such as depression or anxiety, difficulty managing emotions, behavioral issues, and learning disabilities. Similarly, in a review of the research literature, Parke (2003) cited a number of sources indicating that children who did not live with both biological parents were more likely to have behavioral and psychological issues. In particular, Parke (2003) found that children with divorced parents “are more than twice as likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems as children of intact families” (p. 4). Looking at longer-term consequences, Harper and McLanahan (2004) reported that children raised without their fathers faced an increased risk of incarceration even after controlling for other contributing factors, such as teenage parenting, low parent educational attainment, poverty, and racial inequities.

The data in this section provide an in-depth look at the composition of households and families in Hawai‘i and highlight strengths and challenges within the Native Hawaiian community. For example, Native Hawaiian children are significantly more likely to live in single-parent families than are children from the state’s other major ethnic groups, but they are also more likely to enjoy the benefits of living with grandparent caregivers. We begin with an examination of household size.
The average household size among Native Hawaiians was 3.5 persons between 2006 and 2010, compared with the statewide average of 2.8 persons.

Filipinos were the only major ethnic group with a larger average household size than Native Hawaiians (3.8 persons compared with 3.5 persons, respectively).

One of the primary reasons Native Hawaiian households may be larger is that they are more likely to include minor children.
More than nine out of ten (91.9 percent) Native Hawaiians lived in family households between 2006 and 2010, compared with the statewide average of 86.4 percent. \(^1\)

Seven in ten Native Hawaiians lived in households with minor children (70.0 percent), compared with just over half of the population statewide (54.6 percent).

The proportion of Native Hawaiian individuals in single-parent households with minor children (26.4 percent) was greater than that of all other major ethnic groups in Hawai‘i. \(^2\)

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1. In this publication, family household is defined as a household comprised of a married couple (with or without minor children) or a single adult and his or her minor child. By contrast, nonfamily households consist of either a single person or multiple persons, none of whom are related by marriage, birth, or adoption. See Appendix A for more information.

2. According to the US Census Bureau, a “single-parent family” is any household in which at least one minor child lives in the absence of married, opposite-sex parents. We recognize that families come in many configurations and that the commonly cited indicators of childhood outcomes do not always consider the protective factors present in many non-Western or “untraditional” families, e.g., cohabitating, unmarried biological parents, hānai families, and same-sex couples with children.
The prevalence of single-parent households within the Native Hawaiian population is especially salient when we focus in on children, roughly two-fifths of whom live in single-father or single-mother households. Young Native Hawaiian children are particularly affected.

**FIGURE 3.3** Distribution of young children by type of family household
[as a percentage of all children 4 years and younger, by race/ethnicity, 2006–10, Hawai‘i]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Married-couple family households</th>
<th>Single-father family households</th>
<th>Single-mother family households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawai‘i Total</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Three in five young Native Hawaiian children (59.6 percent) lived in married-couple family households, compared with 72.3 percent statewide.
- Young Native Hawaiian children were more likely to live in a single-parent family household than were young children of any other major ethnic group in the state. The proportion of young Native Hawaiian children in single-parent family households (40.4 percent) was 12.7 percentage points higher than the statewide average (27.7 percent) and more than twice the rate among young Japanese and non-Hispanic White children.
Similar but less pronounced racial disparities in household type are seen in the population of school-age children. Compared with their younger counterparts, school-age Native Hawaiian children are more likely to live in married-couple households, while school-age Japanese and non-Hispanic White children are less likely to do so.

**FIGURE 3.4** Distribution of school-age children by type of family household

[as a percentage of all children ages 5–17, by race/ethnicity, 2006–10, Hawai’i]

- More than one in three school-age Native Hawaiian children (37.7 percent) lived in family households headed by a single parent between 2006 and 2010, compared with 29.4 percent statewide.

- Among school-age children, Native Hawaiians were the least likely of the major ethnic groups to be raised in married-couple family households. Just 62.3 percent of school-age Native Hawaiian children lived in married-couple family households, compared with 70.6 percent of school-age children statewide.

- Across all major ethnic groups in the state, school-age children were two to three times more likely to live in a single-mother family household than in a single-father family household.

*Source: US Census Bureau 2006–10, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata (5-year files).*
Even as the unit of analysis shifts from individual children to family households, the pattern of disparities persists, with Native Hawaiian family households more likely to be headed by a single parent than are family households from other major ethnic groups in the state.

**FIGURE 3.5** Family households with young children
[as a percentage of all family households, by race/ethnicity and family household type, 2006–10, Hawai‘i]

- Between 2006 and 2010, a total of 27.5 percent of Native Hawaiian family households included young children, compared with the statewide average of 19.7 percent.
- One in ten Native Hawaiian family households (10.5 percent) consisted of single parents raising young children, compared with one in seventeen family households (5.7 percent) statewide.

*Source: US Census Bureau 2006–10, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata (5-year files).*
More than one-half of Native Hawaiian family households (a total of 53.1 percent) included school-age children between 2006 and 2010, which was 13.0 percentage points higher than the statewide average (40.1 percent).

One in five Native Hawaiian family households (20.5 percent) consisted of single parents raising school-age children, compared with one in eight family households (12.2 percent) statewide.
Recent data from the American Community Survey suggest that the percentage of Native Hawaiian family households headed by a single parent has increased slightly over the last decade. For the purposes of tracking such trends, we focus in the following figures on single-mother family households only, which are two to three times more common than single-father family households.

**FIGURE 3.7** Trends in single-mother family households with young children

[as a percentage of all family households with children 4 years and younger, by race/ethnicity, 3-year weighted averages, selected years, Hawai‘i]

- More than one in four Native Hawaiian family households with young children (27.5 percent) were headed by a single-mother in 2009, which was 2.9 percentage points higher than in 2003 (24.6 percent) but slightly lower than in 2006 (29.2 percent).
- The prevalence of single mothers among Native Hawaiian family households with young children was the highest in the state, 7.8 percentage points higher than the statewide average in 2009 (19.7 percent).
The proportion of Native Hawaiian family households with school-age children that were headed by a single mother increased 1.2 percentage points between 2003 and 2009.

The prevalence of single mothers among Native Hawaiian family households with school-age children (28.4 percent) was the highest in the state and 5.7 percentage points higher than the statewide average in 2009 (22.7 percent).

Grandparent Caretakers

The effects of single-parent family households may be mitigated by the number of households within the Native Hawaiian population where grandparents and grandchildren live together. Such living arrangements are consistent with Native Hawaiian cultural values, emphasizing the importance of both ‘ohana and kūpuna, and have been shown to act as protective factors for children. DeLeire and Kalil (2002) looked at the relationship between household types and the likelihood that teenagers would complete high school, enroll in college, and/or engage in risk behaviors (e.g., drinking, smoking, engaging in sexual activity). Their research found that teenagers in single-mother family households who lived with at least one grandparent had outcomes that were as good as—and often better than—those of children in married-couple family households (DeLeire and Kalil 2002). Such studies highlight the continuing relevance of traditional Native Hawaiian values and their potential benefits for families struggling with contemporary challenges.
Figure 3.9 shows that compared with other major ethnic groups in the state, Native Hawaiian households are among the most likely to have grandparents and grandchildren living together, and that grandparents are more likely to be responsible for the care of their grandchildren in Native Hawaiian households.

**FIGURE 3.9** Households with grandparents and young grandchildren
[as a percentage of all households with children 4 years and younger, by race/ethnicity and grandparent responsibility, 2006–10, Hawai’i]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawai’i Total</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- More than one-third of Native Hawaiian households with young children (a total of 35.5 percent) included grandparents living with grandchildren.
- The percentage of Native Hawaiian households with young children and live-in grandparents was 9.2 percentage points higher than the statewide average (26.3 percent).
- In nearly one-third of these multigenerational Native Hawaiian households, grandparents served as caregivers for their young grandchildren.
Households with school-age children are less likely than those with young children are to have grandparents and grandchildren living together.

**FIGURE 3.10** Households with grandparents and school-age grandchildren
[as a percentage of all households with children ages 5–17, by race/ethnicity and grandparent responsibility, 2010, Hawai‘i]

- Native Hawaiian households with school-age children were more likely to have grandparents and grandchildren residing together compared with the statewide average (28.6 percent versus 21.8 percent statewide).

- Among the major ethnic groups in the state, Filipino households with school-age children were most likely to have grandparents living with grandchildren (a total of 31.3 percent). About one-quarter of those households indicated that the resident grandparent was responsible for the grandchild(ren), compared with one-third of multigenerational Native Hawaiian households.

Nonparental Caregiving

Another cultural tradition that mitigates the impact of family challenges is the concept of hänai parenting, or child fosterage, in which children who do not live with their parents are cared for by other adults. The adults are often relatives from the child’s extended family or close friends of the ‘ohana. Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12 show the prevalence of hänai parenting within the Native Hawaiian population.

**TABLE 3.11** Households with nonparental caregivers and young children
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii Total</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Among households with young children, Native Hawaiians had the second highest rate of nonparental caregiving (6.9 percent); only Filipino households were more likely to be headed by a nonparental caregiver.
- The rate of nonparental caregiving among Native Hawaiian households with young children exceeded the statewide average (5.1 percent) by 1.8 percentage points.

Nonparental caregiving is more common among households with school-age children than those with young children.

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3. A nonparental caregiver is defined as the head of a household with a minor child who does not reside with his/her own parents, and whose relationship to the head of household is that of a grandchild, sibling, in-law, other relative, foster child, or other nonrelative.
One in nine Native Hawaiian households with school-age children (11.4 percent) was headed by a nonparent caregiver.

Among households with school-age children, Native Hawaiians had the highest rate of nonparental caregiving of the state’s major ethnic groups, 3.2 percentage points higher than the statewide average (8.2 percent).

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Despite the protective effect of cultural values and practices, the prevalence of destabilizing stressors such as financial insecurity and unemployment among Native Hawaiian family households contributed to a disproportionately high rate of child abuse and neglect.

The Hawai’i Department of Human Services changed the way it processes reports of child abuse and neglect in 2005. This resulted in a significant reduction in confirmed cases (US Department of Health and Human Services 2005, 131). Therefore, the data reported below should not be compared to historical data (e.g., trends in abuse and neglect reported in Ka Huaka’i 2005).
The rates of confirmed child abuse and neglect among Native Hawaiians since 2006 have been roughly six times those of the next highest ethnic groups, Filipinos and Whites.

The prevalence of confirmed child abuse and neglect among Native Hawaiians decreased from 29.5 per 10,000 in 2006 to 23.8 per 10,000 in 2009.

In 2009, the rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect among Native Hawaiians (23.8 per 10,000 people) was 10.4 per 10,000 more than the statewide average (13.4 per 10,000).

Previous versions of this volume have complemented child abuse and neglect statistics with information on the rate of arrests for offenses against family members and children; however, significant changes to the methodology used for categorizing such arrests have undermined the reliability and utility of these data. Additional information about the prevalence of domestic violence with data sources disaggregated by race/ethnicity could not be located.
Within populations that face longstanding historical disadvantage, antisocial behaviors among adolescents tend to be higher. Figure 3.14 shows that Native Hawaiian high school students are especially prone to physical fights.

FIGURE 3.14 Violence and safety concerns among high school students
[as a percentage of all high school student respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i]

- Were in a physical fight on school property 1 or more times during the past 12 months: 12.8% Native Hawaiian, 8.1% Non-Hawaiian, 30.1% Hawai‘i Total
- Did not go to school on 1 or more of the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on the way to/from school: 6.9% Native Hawaiian, 6.3% Non-Hawaiian, 6.6% Hawai‘i Total
- Carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property on 1 or more of the past 30 days: 3.9% Native Hawaiian, 4.3% Non-Hawaiian, 4.2% Hawai‘i Total
- Carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on 1 or more of the past 30 days: 15.3% Native Hawaiian, 13.4% Non-Hawaiian, 13.9% Hawai‘i Total

Source: Hawai‘i Department of Health, YRBS 2011.
• Native Hawaiian high school students were more likely than were their non-Hawaiian peers to engage in physical fights, both on and off school property.

• Approximately one in three Native Hawaiian high school students (30.1 percent) and one in five non-Hawaiians (19.2 percent) was involved in a physical fight at some point during the previous year.

• The proportion of high school students who skipped school because they felt unsafe and who carried weapons on school property was roughly comparable between Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians.

Disparities in the prevalence of antisocial behaviors like fighting among Native Hawaiians and their non-Hawaiian peers carry over into more serious and criminal behavior. Rates of crime and drug use are disproportionately high within the Native Hawaiian population. This problem is exacerbated by a criminal justice system in which race and ethnicity unduly influence outcomes at multiple points in the process (Rosich 2007), including arrests (Tapia 2010; Parker and Maggard 2005; Beckett, Nyrop, and Pfingst 2006), prosecution and sentencing (Kutateladze, Lynn, and Liang 2012), and incarceration (Kansal 2005).

Although most research on race in the criminal justice system is national in scope and focused on discrimination against the African American population, two recent reports looked at the question of differential treatment of Native Hawaiians by Hawai‘i’s criminal justice system. The first was a comprehensive examination of the local penal system carried out by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The study used multivariate analyses to control for factors such as age, gender, and type/severity of charge, and found that compared with other major ethnic groups, Native Hawaiians are more likely to be sentenced to prison, to receive longer prison sentences and probation terms, and to have their parole revoked (Office of Hawaiian Affairs et al. 2010). The second study, which was commissioned by the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council and the State of Hawai‘i Office of Youth Services, looked specifically at local juvenile justice data. This study concluded that “Native Hawaiian youth are the most overrepresented group relative to their proportion of the youth population and face disproportionately negative outcomes at the greatest number of decision points [in the juvenile justice system] compared to other ethnic groups” (Umemoto et al. 2012). Together, these two studies highlight the role that institutional structures play in perpetuating historical disadvantages—a fact that must be considered in any serious study of criminal behavior among Native Hawaiians.

Arrests

Our review of local disparities within the criminal justice system starts with an examination of juvenile arrest rates and trends in arrests over time. These figures should be interpreted with caution because of data quality and comparability issues and because the methodologies used to collect and report on arrests have changed repeatedly over time without consistent documentation. Despite these limitations, we find the data useful as a depiction of ongoing racial/ethnic disparities within the criminal justice system; disaggregation according to the state’s major ethnic groups shows that Native Hawaiians generally have the highest arrest rates across most types of offenses.

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4. Due to changes in methodology, the data are not comparable with Ka Hu‘oka‘i 2005 data. Refer to Appendix A for more information about crime data.
We begin with an examination of index offenses, which are more serious in nature and are used to monitor crime rates over time and across the nation. The data also show that Native Hawaiian juveniles are more likely to be arrested for an index offense than are juveniles of the other major ethnic groups in the state.5

TABLE 3.1 Juvenile arrests for index offenses [number of arrests per 10,000 children ages 10–17, by race/ethnicity, 2010, Hawai’i]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native Hawaiian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hawai’i Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>146.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible rape</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated assault</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny-theft</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>109.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle theft</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Compared to other major ethnic groups in the state, Native Hawaiian juveniles had the highest rate of arrest for all index offenses combined.6
- Native Hawaiian juveniles were the most likely to be arrested for murder, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft, but they had the second-highest rate of arrest for arson and the third-highest rate of arrest for forcible rape.

Racial/ethnic disparities in arrest rates persist when we aggregate the population of juveniles and adults.

5. See Appendix A for more information on juvenile arrest statistics.
6. In both tables relating to juvenile arrests, the statewide average (i.e., the Hawai’i Total) exceeds the rates associated with each of the major ethnic groups in the state. The seeming contradiction can be attributed to the “alone or in combination” definition we use to estimate the population associated with each major ethnic group. This inclusive approach creates substantial overlap between the ethnic groups because multiracial/multiethnic individuals are counted in more than one category. Since these population estimates are used to scale the arrest counts, the denominators of the arrest rates for the major ethnic groups sum to a number nearly 60 percent higher than the denominator of the state total, which counts each individual—whether multiracial/multiethnic or not—just once. In short, the count of arrests for each ethnic group is scaled against a relatively high estimate of that group’s population. This deflates that ethnic group’s rate relative to the total population rate, which is scaled against an unduplicated count.
• The rate of arrest for aggravated assaults among Native Hawaiian juveniles and adults increased from 8.8 per 10,000 in 2003 to 9.1 per 10,000 in 2009.

• Among the major ethnic groups in the state, Native Hawaiians have been the most likely to be arrested for aggravated assault since at least 2003. In 2009, the Native Hawaiian rate of arrest for aggravated assault exceeded the statewide average by 1.8 arrests per 10,000.

• Although the Native Hawaiian rate of arrest for robbery decreased by 1.1 arrests per 10,000 between 2003 and 2009, the 2009 rate exceeded the statewide average by 1.2 arrests per 10,000.
• Between 2003 and 2009, Native Hawaiians had the highest rate of arrest for robbery and were the only major ethnic group whose robbery arrest rate consistently exceeded statewide averages.

Across all of the less serious (part II) offenses tracked by law enforcement officials, Native Hawaiian juvenile arrest rates exceeded the rates of all other major ethnic groups in the state.

**TABLE 3.2**  Juvenile arrests for part II offenses  
[number of arrests per 10,000 children ages 10–17, by race/ethnicity, 2010, Hawai‘i]  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hawai‘i Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>643.8</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>331.4</td>
<td>142.4</td>
<td>357.2</td>
<td>661.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property related</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug manufacturing/sale</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug possession</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol related</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>185.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>124.0</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>212.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>281.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>133.3</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>156.7</td>
<td>275.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Hawai‘i Department of the Attorney General 2010; US Census Bureau 2010, Summary File 2.*

• The rate at which Native Hawaiian juveniles were arrested for part II offenses (643.8 per 10,000) was more than four and a half times the rate in the Japanese population and twenty-two times the rate in the Chinese population.
• For violent and property-related crimes, Native Hawaiian juvenile arrest rates were more than twice the rates of the second-highest group (Whites).

Again, these disparities persist when we look at juvenile and adult arrests for part II offenses aggregated into a single rate.
FIGURE 3.17  Trends in arrests for violent crimes (part II offense)
[number of arrests per 10,000 people, juveniles and adults combined, by race/ethnicity, 3-year weighted averages, selected years, Hawai‘i]

- Native Hawaiian juveniles and adults were arrested for violent crimes at a higher rate than that of any other major ethnic group between 2003 and 2009.
- The rate of Native Hawaiian arrests for violent crimes declined by 7.9 per 10,000 from 2003 to 2006, but has escalated in recent years, increasing by 3.4 arrests per 10,000 Native Hawaiians between 2006 and 2009.
- In 2009, Native Hawaiians exceeded the state’s average rate of arrest for violent crime by 14.1 per 10,000 people.

Antisocial Behaviors and the Criminal Justice System

**FIGURE 3.18** Trends in arrests for drug manufacturing or sales (part II offense)

[number of arrests per 10,000 people, juveniles and adults combined, by race/ethnicity, 3-year weighted averages, selected years, Hawai‘i]

- Arrests for drug manufacturing or sales among Native Hawaiians decreased from 7.4 arrests per 10,000 in 2003 to 4.1 per 10,000 in 2009—a slightly steeper decline than the decrease in statewide figures from 5.2 to 3.2 per 10,000 over the same period.
- The arrest rate for drug manufacturing or sales among Native Hawaiians in 2009 (4.1 per 10,000) exceeded the statewide average by 0.9 per 10,000.

**Incarceration**

Elevated arrest rates among Native Hawaiians and a criminal justice system with acknowledged inequities (Native Hawaiian Justice Task Force 2012; Umemoto et al. 2012) contribute to the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in the state’s prison system. The high incarceration rates among Native Hawaiians affect not only those incarcerated but also their families. Children may grow up without the social, emotional, and economic support of one of their parents and may be vulnerable to emotional problems, social stigma, high-risk behaviors, and future incarceration (Hairston 2007; Murray and Farrington 2008; Travis, McBride, and Solomon 2005).
Figure 3.19 shows the percentage of the incarcerated population accounted for by Native Hawaiians. Statistics are disaggregated by sex and by custody level, the latter of which is determined based on behavior and on the duration and balance of the sentence being served.\footnote{The five custody levels shown are defined by the Hawai‘i Department of Public Safety (2012) as follows:} 

- Native Hawaiian adults constitute 17.7 percent (not shown) of the total adult population in Hawai‘i. However, in 2012, Native Hawaiians accounted for 37.0 percent of the state’s male prison population and 40.0 percent of the state’s female prison population.
- In 2012, Native Hawaiian women constituted two-fifths (40.0 percent) of females incarcerated in state prisons and 34.5 to 62.5 percent of each security classification.
- Native Hawaiians accounted for 37.0 percent of the state’s male prison population and 34.6 to 44.5 percent of each custody classification.

\footnote{The five custody levels shown are defined by the Hawai‘i Department of Public Safety (2012) as follows:} 
- Community: “for inmates who have 24 months or less to serve on their sentence and are eligible to participate [in] furlough programs, extended furlough, or residential transitional living facilities.”
- Minimum: “for inmates with less than 48 months until their parole eligibility date; who have demonstrated through institutional conduct that they can function with minimal supervision in a correctional setting, or in the community under direct supervision.”
- Medium: “for inmates who have more than 48 months to their parole eligibility date; whose institutional conduct and adjustment require frequent supervision/intervention.”
- Close: “for those who have minimum sentences of 21 years or more, who are serious escape risks or have chronic behavioral/management problems.”
- Maximum: “inmates who are chronically disruptive, violent, predatory or are a threat to the safe operation of a facility.”
FIGURE 3.20 Trends in the racial/ethnic distribution of the incarcerated population
[as a percentage of the state prison population, selected years, Hawai‘i]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Hawai‘i Department of Public Safety 2008; Ka Huaka‘i 2005.

- The ethnic distribution of Hawai‘i’s incarcerated population has remained relatively stable in the last decade.
- Since 2002, the Native Hawaiian population in prison has been nearly twice the size of the next largest ethnic group, Whites (39.0 to 39.5 percent versus 21.0 to 23.6 percent, respectively).
Despite the high number of single-parent family households and high rates of arrest and incarceration, data from a variety of sources indicate that ‘ohana, community, and faith serve as critical resources for Native Hawaiian resilience. For example, Native Hawaiian high school students are more likely to have adults with whom they can talk, both inside and outside of school, than are their non-Hawaiian peers.

**FIGURE 3.21** Social resources among high school students
[as a percentage of all high school student respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i]

- Nearly three out of every four Native Hawaiian high school students (72.4 percent) had at least one teacher or adult in their school with whom they could talk if they had a problem, compared with two out of every three non-Hawaiians (64.3 percent).
- Almost four out of every five Native Hawaiian high school students (79.0 percent) reported that they had an adult outside of school with whom they could talk about things that were important to them.

Native Hawaiians, like other groups, seek support from a variety of sources in times of adversity. Compared with non-Hawaiians however, Native Hawaiians more often draw strength and support from spiritual and family relationships and less so from friends.
Four out of five Native Hawaiians (80.5 percent) reported that they maintain a positive opinion of themselves during difficult times.

Three out of four Native Hawaiians (76.4 percent) reported that they turn to a higher power when they encounter challenges, compared with two out of three non-Hawaiians (63.2 percent).

Native Hawaiians were slightly more likely than were non-Hawaiians to rely on their family for the majority of support during difficult times (90.6 percent compared with 86.9 percent, respectively).

Native Hawaiians were less likely than were non-Hawaiians to report that their friends provide the majority of support in times of need (49.0 percent compared with 56.9 percent, respectively).

Source: Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian Community Well-Being Survey 2011.
SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

As highlighted in Figure 3.22, Native Hawaiians look to spirituality as a source of strength and resilience. Spiritual well-being takes on many forms. We define spirituality as an individual’s connection to a power or purpose greater than his or her own. The self-reported quality of this connection is positively correlated not just with overall well-being but also with educational outcomes and risk behaviors in adolescence and early adulthood (University of California 2005; Scales 2007a, 2007b).

FIGURE 3.23  Spirituality among adults
[as a percentage of all adult respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i]

- Native Hawaiians were more likely than were non-Hawaiians to describe their relationship with God or their spirituality as perfect or really good (63.6 percent compared with 56.4 percent, respectively).
- Native Hawaiians were more likely to express high levels of fulfillment with their spiritual lives than were Non-Hawaiians (51.6 percent compared with 42.5 percent, respectively).

Source: Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian Community Well-Being Survey 2011.
Religious participation is an important indicator of the extent to which individuals seek connection to a higher power and a spiritual community, both of which act as social and emotional assets. Compared with non-Hawaiians, Native Hawaiians are more likely to be members of a church or organized religious group but are slightly less likely to attend regularly.

**FIGURE 3.24** Membership and participation in religious groups among adults
(as a percentage of all adult respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i)

- Native Hawaiians were more likely than were non-Hawaiians to belong to a church, temple, or other organized religious group (59.2 percent versus 46.3 percent).
- Weekly participation in religious services was less common among Native Hawaiians (65.8 percent) than among non-Hawaiians (68.0 percent).
- There was little difference between the proportion of Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians who said they attend service once a month or less (28.4 percent and 27.6 percent, respectively).

*Source: Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian Community Well-Being Survey 2011.*
QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is often correlated with tangible indicators of well-being such as wealth, employment, social connectedness, and physical health. However, quality of life is largely a subjective measure based in part on individuals’ perceptions of their current lives and future prospects. The following figures suggest that, compared with non-Hawaiians, Native Hawaiians are slightly less satisfied with their current lives but more optimistic about the future.

FIGURE 3.25  Satisfaction with quality of life among adults
[as a percentage of all adult respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i]

- Native Hawaiians were more likely than non-Hawaiians to use the term “satisfied” when asked about the quality of their lives (54.1 percent versus 48.9 percent) but less likely to describe themselves as “extremely” or “very satisfied” with life.
- One in eleven Native Hawaiians (8.9 percent) reported that they were extremely or very dissatisfied with their life, compared with one in fifteen non-Hawaiians (6.5 percent).

Source: Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian Community Well-Being Survey 2011.
One way of measuring emotional well-being is to ask questions that prompt individuals to reflect on their lives and make predictions for their futures.

**FIGURE 3.26** Retrospective and prospective views about quality of life among adults
[as a percentage of all adult respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i]

- Native Hawaiians were more likely than were non-Hawaiians to report that their lives had gotten better over the past five years (43.2 percent versus 36.0 percent).
- Three in five Native Hawaiians (60.8 percent) expected that their lives will get better over the next five years, compared with nearly half (47.8 percent) of non-Hawaiians.

Source: Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian Community Well-Being Survey 2011.
Happiness is a difficult concept to measure because it can be defined and expressed in many different ways. Still, questions about the perception of happiness (i.e., how happy people say they are) can also contribute to discussions of emotional well-being.

- Native Hawaiians were more likely than were non-Hawaiians to use the term “happy” when asked about their lives (43.3 percent versus 40.1 percent), but they were less likely to describe themselves as “very happy” or “extremely happy.”
- The proportion of Native Hawaiians who were extremely or very unhappy (4.5 percent) was roughly equal to the rate among non-Hawaiians (4.0 percent).

Source: Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian Community Well-Being Survey 2011.
Despite a relatively strong network of social, emotional, and spiritual resources, Native Hawaiians are subject to a disproportionately high burden of stressors, disadvantages, and inequities that can take an emotional toll, particularly among adolescents. The problem is apparent in the relatively high rates of depressive symptoms among Native Hawaiian teens and adults.

**FIGURE 3.28** Depressive symptoms and suicidal risks among high school students

[as a percentage of all high school student respondents, by Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, 2011, Hawai‘i]

- Overall, Native Hawaiian high school students were more likely than were their non-Hawaiian peers to report thoughts and behaviors associated with depression and suicide.
- Nearly one out of three Native Hawaiian students (31.2 percent) felt sad or hopeless for two weeks or more, compared with 28.7 percent of non-Hawaiians.
- Almost one out of five Native Hawaiian students (18.5 percent) seriously considered attempting suicide, and one out of six (16.1 percent) made a plan to attempt suicide.
- One out of ten Native Hawaiian students (10.5 percent) attempted suicide and one in twenty-seven (3.7 percent) made an attempt that required medical attention.

*Source: Hawai‘i Department of Health, YRBS 2011.*
Disproportionate rates of depression and suicidal ideation are not limited to the adolescent population of Native Hawaiians. Figure 3.29 shows that, on average, Native Hawaiian adults report feeling sad or depressed for longer periods than do adults of other major ethnic groups in the state.

**FIGURE 3.29** Adults who felt sad, blue, or depressed
[as a percentage of all adult respondents by race/ethnicity and by number of days in the past month, 2008, Hawai‘i]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hawai‘i Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–7 days</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–14 days</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ days</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Native Hawaiians adults were the most likely of the state’s major ethnic groups to have felt sad or depressed for more than seven days in the month prior to being surveyed.
- Approximately one in fourteen Native Hawaiians (7.4 percent) reported being sad or depressed for at least half of the previous month (i.e., fifteen or more days) compared with one in eighteen adults (5.7 percent) statewide.
- The proportion of Native Hawaiians who felt sad or blue for eight days or more during the previous month (11.3 percent) was more than twice that of either Chinese or Japanese adults (4.7 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively).
Approximately 57 Native Hawaiians committed suicide per 100,000 in the total Native Hawaiian population during the 2007–11 reporting period.

Between the 2001–06 and 2007–11 reporting periods, the Native Hawaiian suicide rate decreased by 11.0 percentage points from 57.2 suicides per 100,000 to 46.2 per 100,000. A portion of the decrease may be attributable to differences in the length of the reporting periods, but the decline in the Native Hawaiian rate is the smallest among the major ethnic groups in Hawai‘i.

The Native Hawaiian suicide rate was nearly six times the rate of the Chinese population and twice the rate of the Filipino population during the 2007–11 reporting period.

The suicide rate among Native Hawaiians (46.2 per 100,000) trailed that of Whites (57.2 per 100,000) by 11.0 per 100,000 during the 2007–11 reporting period.
• Within the Native Hawaiian population, suicide rates were disproportionately high among young adults and declined in older age groups. The opposite was true for the Japanese and White populations.

• Among adults ages forty-five and older, Whites were significantly more likely to commit suicide than were adults of the other major ethnic groups.

• Between 2007 and 2011, Native Hawaiians ages fifteen to twenty-four were more than twice as likely to commit suicide as were their counterparts in the Filipino and Japanese populations (70 per 100,000 versus 31 per 100,000, respectively).

Note: Comparable rates for the Chinese and statewide population were not provided by the data source.
Conclusion

Data for the last decade paint a complex picture of Native Hawaiian social and emotional well-being that points to ongoing inequities, important cultural assets, and significant improvements over time.

Native Hawaiian families struggle with challenges such as single parenting—particularly families with young children—but also continue to tap resources like grandparent and hānai caregiving that are grounded in Hawaiian cultural values emphasizing ‘ohana, kūpuna, and community. Culture also underlies the social support networks and spiritual faith that Native Hawaiians credit as sources of strength and resilience as well as the optimism with which Native Hawaiians assess their quality of life.

Despite these social and emotional assets, the ongoing disadvantages, limited opportunities, and institutionalized inequities faced by Native Hawaiians have a negative social impact, contributing to high rates of arrest, incarceration, and adolescent depression. However, trend data also show signs of progress, including a decline in child abuse and neglect rates, and decreases in the rates of arrest for violent crimes, drug manufacturing/sales, and robbery. Taken together, these data indicate the need to leverage Native Hawaiian social networks, spiritual strength, and cultural traditions to navigate contemporary problems and create a path toward a more positive future.