

'Imi Pono

Hawai'i Wellbeing Survey 2022

Waiwai and Community Assets

Native Hawaiian perspectives on wellbeing emphasize relationships, interconnections, and balance. 'Imi Pono seeks to provide a fuller picture of wellbeing among Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i residents in order to supplement data from surveys that are narrowly focused or deficit-based. The survey is a partnership among Kamehameha Schools, Lili'uokalani Trust, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Papa Ola Lokahi.

Key Findings

1. Hawai'i residents say **safe neighborhoods** (88%), **healthcare services** (77%), and **recreational spaces** (76%) are "very important" to their community's wellbeing.
2. Nearly half of respondents (47%) say they **visit cultural sites**, 45% **access healthcare**, and 21% **participate in youth out-of-school-time programs** at least monthly. Native Hawaiians utilize these community assets more often than non-Hawaiians.
3. Native Hawaiian families are twice as likely as non-Hawaiians to **rely on social services** (25% compared to 12%) and **childcare** (22% compared to 10%) at least monthly.
4. While in-person learning has resumed, Hawai'i residents still **access online resources for general education** (42%) and **career development** (29%). Native Hawaiians utilize these assets more often than non-Hawaiians.
5. Nearly a third (30%) of those surveyed report using **culturally-relevant educational activities online**; Honolulu County residents were most likely to say so (40%).



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Purpose

Research on the social determinants of health emphasize the powerful impact community characteristics have on our wellbeing.¹ This brief explores Hawai'i residents' perceptions and use of assets available to them in their communities. Differences between Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiians are explored as are differences across counties within the state. Understanding the significance of various assets to personal and collective wellbeing can inform community-level planning and action.



Image credit: on final page

Sample and Methods

Data were collected via electronic survey from February through April 2022. A total of 1,277 Hawai'i residents ages 18 and older participated in the survey, with 52% identifying as Native Hawaiian and 48% as non-Hawaiian. Among all respondents, 28% are from Honolulu County, 26% from Maui County, 24% from Hawai'i County, and 22% from Kaua'i County. The confidence interval for the state—including breakouts for Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians—is 95% or higher. The county-level confidence interval is 90%. To access all data and briefs from the 'Imi Pono Survey, please visit: https://www.ksbe.edu/research/imi_pono_hawaii_wellbeing_survey/. Data are available to download and explore through an interactive dashboard. In some cases, data presented in this brief are for a subset of the entire respondent sample (e.g., adults ages 25 and older). Therefore, data in this brief may not match what is displayed for all respondents in the dashboard.

Given the data collection methodology, **survey respondents are likely more financially affluent and hold higher education degrees** than the general Native Hawaiian and Hawai'i population.

¹Wiseman, J., Brasher, K. (2008) Community wellbeing in an unwell world: trends, challenges, and possibilities. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 29, 353-366.

Context

Community Wellbeing and Kūkulu Kumuhana

In 2017, a group of leaders within the Native Hawaiian community came together to engage in a discussion about improving the wellbeing of our people. What sprouted from the gathering was **Kūkulu Kumuhana**, a Native Hawaiian framework of wellbeing emphasizing wholeness, balance, and multidimensionality (*Figure 1*).

The Kūkulu Kumuhana dimensions are collective, speaking not only to the wellbeing of an individual, but also to the wellbeing of the community and the ability and willingness of the community to nurture its members. Community is more than a group of individuals—it is found in pilina (relationships) among people, places, histories, beliefs, and practices. Community wellbeing, as presented here, is a small exploration of kākou—the unique intersectional space among those elements and the mana (life force) manifest therein.

Figure 1. Kūkulu Kumuhana Dimensions



Waiwai –Ancestral Abundance and Collective Wealth

Our analyses rely on the Kūkulu Kumuhana dimension of Waiwai, which frames community assets as vehicles for maintaining ancestral abundance and collective wealth. In ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language), the word for wealth is waiwai (based on the root “wai” which means fresh water). Wai, and by extension waiwai, is a precious community resource meant to be shared and stewarded. This belief is reflected in the view that true wealth is not represented by what we own individually, but by what we receive and share.

Findings

Safety, Healthcare, and Recreational Spaces are Keys to Community Wellbeing

In the survey, respondents were asked how important a set of shared assets are to their community's wellbeing. The asset most frequently identified as "very important" is safe neighborhoods (88%), with only small variations by ethnicity or geography. Healthcare services (77%) and recreational spaces (76%) such as beaches, parks, and hiking trails are the second highest prioritized assets. There is little variation in the results except for healthcare, where non-Hawaiians (81%) prioritize it higher than Native Hawaiians (73%). Hawai'i County residents (71%) rank recreational spaces lower.

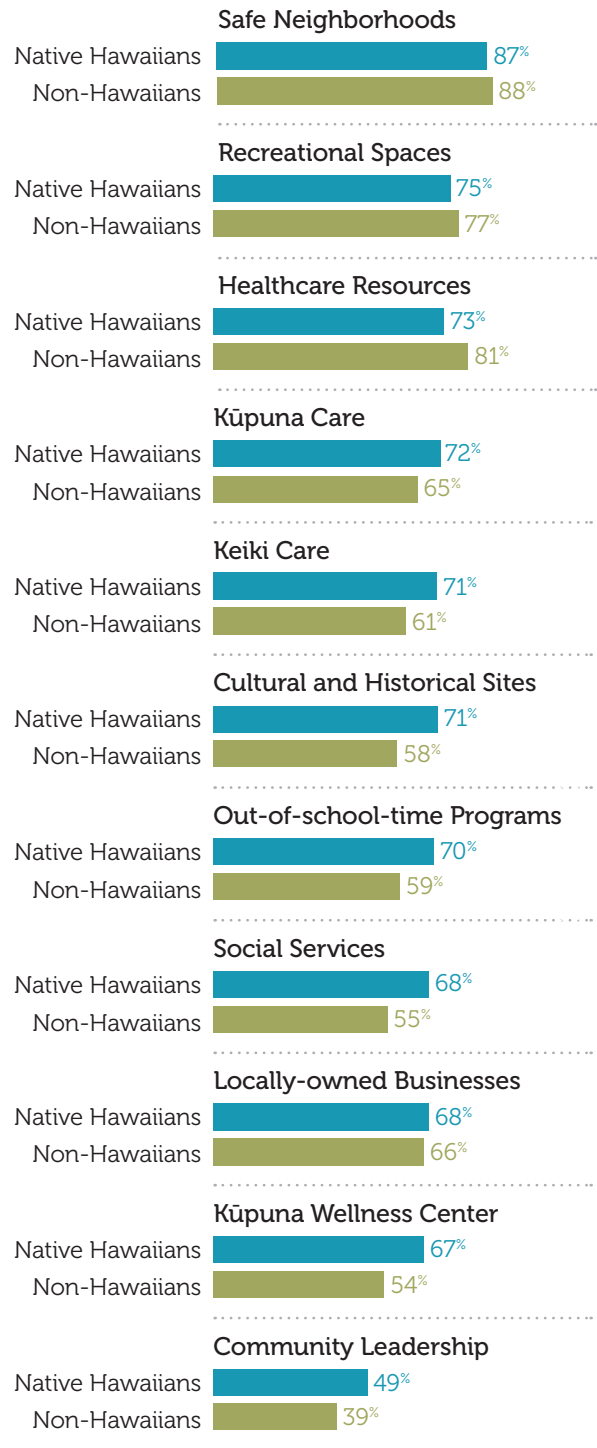


Findings Cont.

A third tier of priorities includes four different types of assets: locally owned businesses, out-of-school-time programs for youth, cultural and historical sites, and kūpuna wellness programs. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents identify locally owned businesses as very important, with very little variation by Hawaiian ancestry, but selected more often by Maui County residents than those from Honolulu, Hawai‘i, or Kaua‘i (72%, 64%, 66%, and 66%, respectively). Out-of-school-time programs for youth are selected by 65%, cultural and historical sites by 65%, and kūpuna wellness resources (for example, computer classes, exercise programs) by 60%. Figure 2 depicts the differences between Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians for these community assets.

Community leadership is rated “very important” by 44% of overall residents with a ten percentage point difference between Native Hawaiians (49%) and non-Hawaiians (39%). While it does not rank as high as other assets, community leadership is critical for generating and distributing waiwai.

Figure 2. Rating of Community Assets as “Very Important”



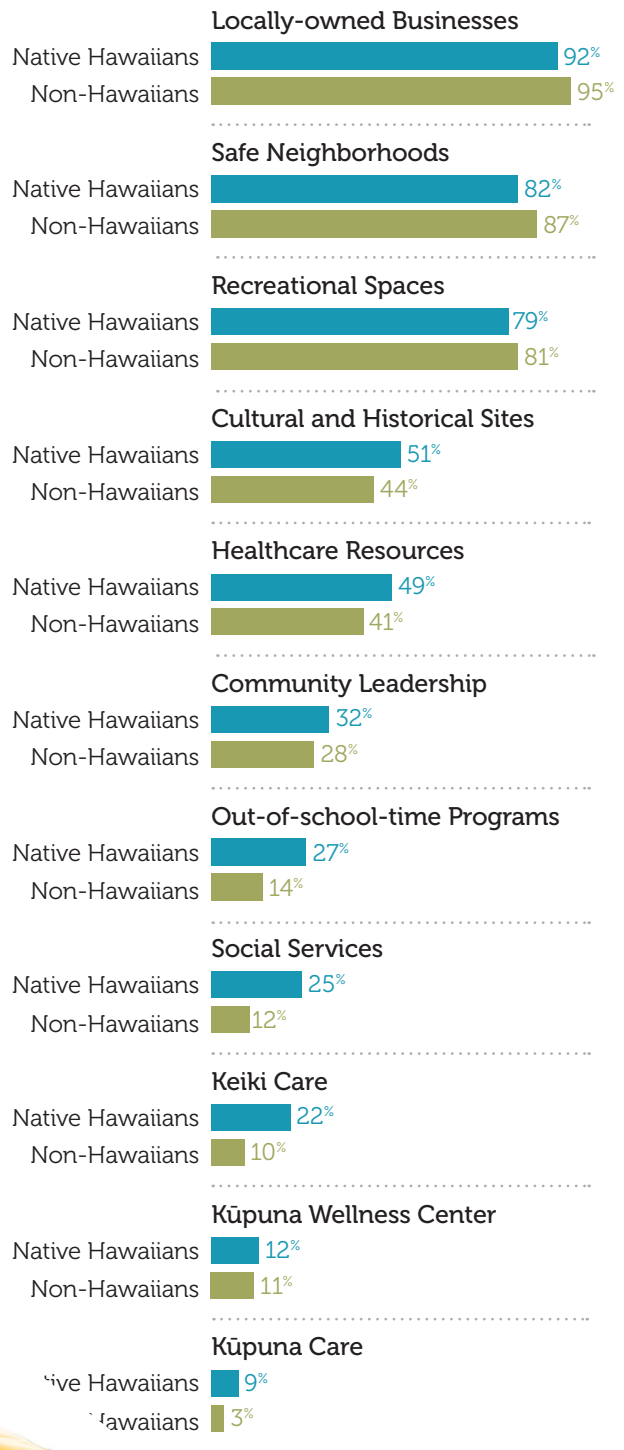
Findings Cont.

Native Hawaiians Access Cultural Sites and Healthcare More Often than Non-Hawaiians

Consistent with our understanding of interdependence and kuleana (responsibility) for one another, the priority placed on the assets included in the survey is somewhat independent of the frequency with which respondents access them. Figure 3 shows the proportion of respondents who used each asset at least monthly during 2021.² Use of community assets by county did not vary significantly, but can be seen in the [interactive dashboard](#).

² Survey data were collected during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which likely affected the availability of some resources and people's comfort in accessing them.

Figure 3. Use of Community Assets At Least Monthly



Findings Cont.

About 1 in 4 Hawai'i Families Utilize Various Community Services and Supports

Out-of-school-time programs for youth (for example, A+ after school, sports, YMCA) are used at least monthly by 21% of respondents overall, 27% of Native Hawaiian respondents, and 14% of non-Hawaiians. Social services like food and financial assistance are used monthly by 18% overall, 25% of Native Hawaiians, and 12% of non-Hawaiians. Use of keiki care (for example, daycare) is reported by 16% of all respondents, 22% of Native Hawaiians, and 10% of non-Hawaiians. Use of these services tend to be lower by Kaua'i County residents.

Results show services for kūpuna (seniors) are the least frequently used community resources. Kūpuna wellness resources (for example, computer classes, exercise programs) are used by 12% of respondents with no real variation by ancestry or county. Kūpuna care (for example, Meals on Wheels, assisted living, or memory care) is used by 7% of respondents, with notable differences among Native Hawaiians (9%) and non-Hawaiians (3%) and with the highest frequency cited by Honolulu County residents (9%).



Findings Cont.

Online Options for Healthcare, Education, and Work are Utilized by Many Residents

As a result of the pandemic, online services increased significantly. This shift expanded opportunities for households with existing access but created barriers for those with limited options. The use of online services for social, entertainment, and shopping purposes is most common among the majority of residents (77%) but noticeably higher among non-Hawaiians (81%) than Native Hawaiians (73%).



Three out of five respondents (63%) report that they or a household member access healthcare online (66% of non-Hawaiians compared to 61% of Native Hawaiians). When it comes to mental health, 18% of Hawai'i residents report using online services. However, Native Hawaiians (21%) say they do so more than non-Hawaiians (13%). Honolulu households report using online mental health services more often than other counties (23% compared to 18% of residents from Hawai'i, 15% from Maui, and 13% from Kaua'i).

Many general education and career development opportunities have gone virtual as well. Statewide, 42% of residents said they access "general educational activities" online (44% of Native Hawaiians and 40% of non-Hawaiians). More than a quarter (29%) report participating in online job-related skills or career development (34% of Native Hawaiians and 25% of non-Hawaiians). Online resources are also used for "culturally relevant educational activities" by 31% of Hawai'i residents (37% of Native Hawaiians and 23% of non-Hawaiians).

Findings Cont.

Digital Connectivity and Literacy are Challenges for Some Communities

Digital connectivity and literacy are now critical gateways for accessing public resources, employment opportunities, healthcare, and other essential services. As these services and opportunities move more and more into online spaces, serious concerns arise about equitable access.³ One aspect of digital equity is connectivity, which requires consistent, high-quality broadband access and appropriate internet-capable devices. A total of 56% of survey respondents report they have internet connections with sufficient speed and quality to meet their needs. There is no significant difference by Hawaiian ancestry, however, access is slightly lower among Hawai'i County residents (53%). A small proportion of respondents (5%) indicate they rely on public hot spots such as libraries, schools, or retail spaces for internet access.

Internet-capable devices are a bit more prevalent than satisfactory broadband connectivity. Overall, 60% of respondents agree they have enough devices for everyone to be online at the same time if needed. This ratio includes 54% of Native Hawaiians and 67% of non-Hawaiians, with only small differences across the counties. However, the adequacy of those



devices is problematic. Only 37% of respondents report that their devices “are easy to use for essential purposes like school or work.”

Another key component of digital equity is digital literacy. A total of 54% of survey respondents agree that at least some members of their households have the technical skills to navigate digital platforms and troubleshoot problems (52% of Native Hawaiians and 57% of non-Hawaiians). Respondents from Kaua'i are least likely to agree at 48%, compared to 58% of those from Honolulu.

³ <https://www.broadbandhui.org/>

Findings Cont.

Overall, 45% of residents report they have people or other resources they can consult to access and use online resources. Respondents from Honolulu and Kaua'i Counties are most likely to agree (48% and 49%, respectively), and those from Hawai'i County are least likely to agree (39%). When asked if members of their households know where to go for training and support to access and use online resources, 34% agree.

Increasingly, employment and advancement requires some amount of digital connectivity and literacy.

However, only 27% of Hawai'i residents say their work provides them with online skill-building and training (30% of Native Hawaiians and 23% of non-Hawaiians). Honolulu residents are more likely to agree (37%) compared to 27% of respondents from Hawai'i County, 23% from Kaua'i, and 19% from Maui. In all, 16% of respondents report that their children's school provides skill-building and online training (20% of Native Hawaiians and 11% of non-Hawaiians). This, too, varies by county, with Hawai'i and Honolulu residents more likely to agree (19% and 18%, respectively) compared to 13% of residents from Kaua'i and 12% from Maui.

Image credit: on final page



Conclusion

Mohala i ka wai ka maka o ka pua. Unfolded by the water are the faces of the flowers. This ‘ōlelo no‘eau (Native Hawaiian proverb) suggests plants grow where conditions are favorable. Like plants, people thrive when their community is healthy and restorative. Public health advocates agree, noting that “Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfill their potential.”⁴

Our findings confirm Hawai‘i residents deeply value community. The assets that matter most to community wellbeing are safe neighborhoods, quality healthcare services, and green, recreational spaces. That said, all of the community assets listed in the survey were considered “very important” to 44% or more total respondents. This observation underscores the need to account for a wide array of resources when assessing community waiwai and wellbeing.



⁴Wiseman, J., Brasher, K. (2008) Community wellbeing in an unwell world: trends, challenges, and possibilities. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 29, 353-366.

Conclusion

Although Hawai'i residents agree on the importance and use of community assets, some key differences exist. In general, more Native Hawaiians make use of healthcare, social services, online mental health support, keiki, and kūpuna care than non-Hawaiians. In addition, Native Hawaiians—more so than non-Hawaiians—look to community assets for education and growth opportunities (i.e., community leadership, general education, culturally-relevant activities, and career development).

The availability and quality of community assets varies by county as well. Hawai'i County residents are less likely to say recreational spaces are important to community wellbeing. Likewise, Honolulu residents report greater dependence on kūpuna care like Meals on Wheels and on online mental health resources than other counties. However, as more resources move online, digital equity has major implications for the wellbeing of communities and, by extension, of individuals across all of Hawai'i.



Next Steps

1. Adopt **holistic frameworks like Kūkulu Kumuhana** to better understand and promote community wellbeing.
2. Make greater **investments in leaders and organizations that mālama (steward) community assets**—especially those that contribute to safe neighborhoods, healthy lifestyles, and the preservation of open spaces and cultural resources.
3. Activate public-private partnerships to **address critical gaps in infrastructure, services, and access** for Native Hawaiians as well as rural and economically disadvantaged communities.
4. Support collaborative efforts like **Community First Hawai'i** and **Ke Ala Ola**, which seek to provide residents with **equitable and affordable access to healthcare**.
5. In line with **Broadband for A.L.L.**, **prioritize investments in digital connectivity and literacy** to ensure Hawai'i residents benefit from online resources and opportunities.
6. Expand **culturally-relevant learning activities** (on 'āina and online) to ensure future generations maintain kuleana for their 'ohana and communities.

The Artist

Nai'a Lewis



Credit: Nai'a Lewis | Title: Kanaloa (Abundant Ocean Mural)
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Art in the traditional sense is often my medium of expression but I also work as a healer, maker, communicator, community organizer, creative mentor, and life transformation coach.

Developed in collaboration with Hālau Kū Māna students, the Kanaloa mural depicts the ocean realm from where all life springs; it shows several iconic species for which we kanaka have kuleana to care for. As the students were preparing for a voyage after a year of training and sailing with the Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy, the mural includes a vessel navigating its way across the deep sea. In many ways, this symbolizes the journey we all make in this life. We are never in control of the elements, but we can live with values that allow us to live in harmony with nature and increase our chances not simply for survival but to thrive as a local and global community.