

# WHY RESIDENTS LEAVE HAWAII: A LOOK AT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ACROSS THE DECADES

## FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY "Hawaii in Motion: Understanding the Decision to Stay, Leave, or Return"

Hawaii in Motion is a statewide study conducted in 2018 to explore why residents choose to stay, leave, or return to the islands. Data shown here come from over 200 participant interviews. For more information, please visit: [https://www.ksbe.edu/research/hawaii\\_in\\_motion/](https://www.ksbe.edu/research/hawaii_in_motion/)

### DIFFICULT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE CONSISTENTLY THE MAIN FACTOR IN RESIDENTS' DECISION TO LEAVE HAWAII ACROSS DECADES.

- Economic conditions are consistently the most prevalent reason why residents leave the state.
- Although many report leaving in order to seek further or better education, this consideration has declined over time.
- Seeking experiences and opportunities remained a consistent reason for leaving across decades while social and environmental conditions (e.g., to be closer to family who live outside of Hawaii) increased as a reason to leave in the 2010s.

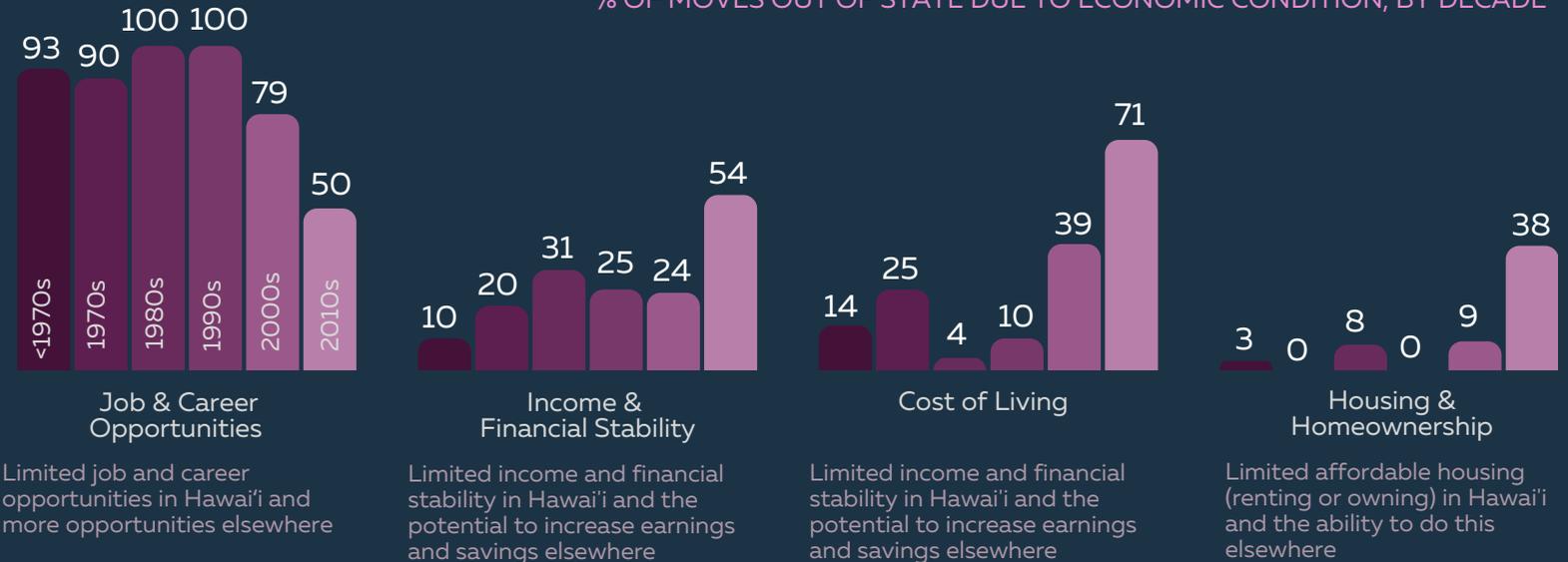
% OF MOVES OUT OF STATE DUE TO CONDITION, BY DECADE\*



### A CLOSER LOOK AT SPECIFIC ECONOMIC CONDITIONS\*\* ACROSS THE DECADES SUGGEST HAWAII'S EVOLVING ECONOMY MAY INFLUENCE RESIDENTS' MIGRATION DECISIONS.

- Limited job and career opportunities in Hawaii and seeking this elsewhere were cited in every move influenced by economics in the 1980s and 1990s before declining in half in the 2010s, in which other economic conditions became considerations for more residents.
- Higher income and financial stability increased as a migration influencer by 30 percentage points from the 2000s to the 2010s.
- A high cost of living grew to be a factor in nearly 3 out of 4 moves in the 2010s (71 percent).
- Affordable housing and homeownership increased by nearly 30 percentage points as a reason to move in the 2010s after little mention prior to the 2000s.

% OF MOVES OUT OF STATE DUE TO ECONOMIC CONDITION, BY DECADE\*



Limited job and career opportunities in Hawaii and more opportunities elsewhere

Limited income and financial stability in Hawaii and the potential to increase earnings and savings elsewhere

Limited income and financial stability in Hawaii and the potential to increase earnings and savings elsewhere

Limited affordable housing (renting or owning) in Hawaii and the ability to do this elsewhere

\*Percentages represent the proportion of moves from Hawaii that were influenced by the condition noted. One individual may have moved multiple times. The top graph contains the results from 186 respondents and 229 moves. The bottom graph represents 131 respondents and 152 moves. Percentages do not total 100 as respondents discussed multiple reasons for leaving and thus, are included in multiple categories.

\*\*Percentages reported are among the subset of participants who discussed economics as a factor in their decision of where to live.

