



# KAU LI'ILI'I

## Characteristics of Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i and the Continental United States

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### P A S E R E P O R T

## Purpose of Our Study

Little is known about the differences between *kānaka maoli* (Native Hawaiians) living in the continental United States and those in the state of Hawai'i. This report highlights the differences and similarities that exist across the two groups by presenting a snapshot of selected well-being measures.

## What We Learned

- Compared with the Native Hawaiian population on the continent, Hawai'i has a larger proportion of young children but a smaller proportion of young adults.
- Native Hawaiians on the continent seem to enjoy greater socioeconomic standing than do those living in Hawai'i.
- Compared with their counterparts in Hawai'i, Native Hawaiian adults on the continent have higher levels of college enrollment and educational attainment.

## Key Implications

- Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i may experience a lack of local resources available to continental Native Hawaiians, such as education and occupational training opportunities.
- Social and economic pressures in Hawai'i may continue to threaten the ability of Native Hawaiians to remain in their ancestral home, which has implications for the well-being, unity and identity of the Native Hawaiian people.
- While continental Native Hawaiians appear to have greater socioeconomic advantage, Census 2000 data do not provide useful measures of emotional and cultural well-being, which for some on the continent may be affected by the great geographic distance from Hawai'i.

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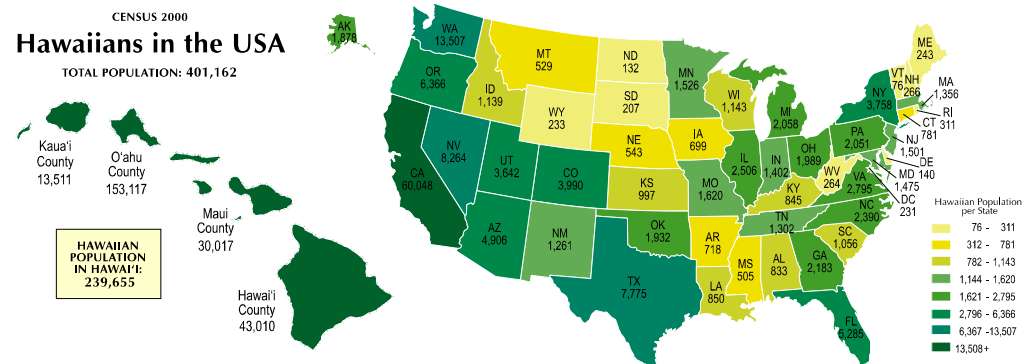


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## Characteristics of Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i and the Continental United States

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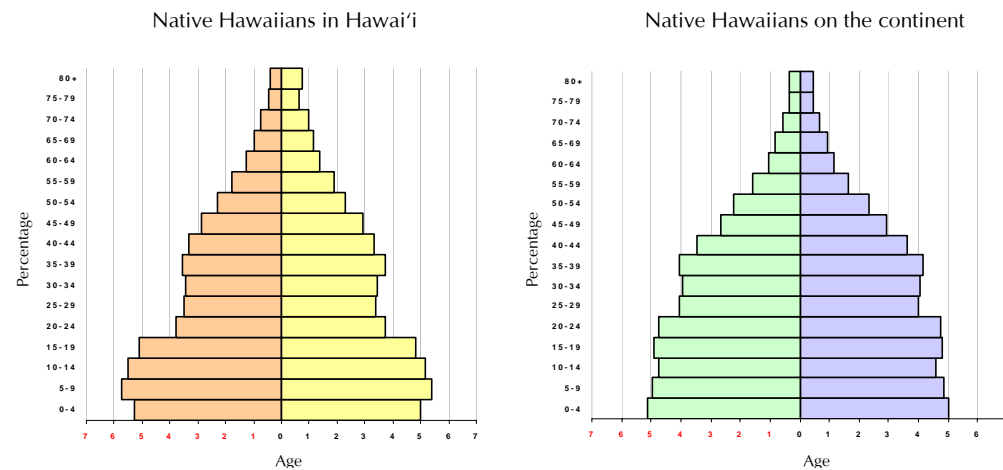


## INTRODUCTION

This report provides general well-being statistics for the Native Hawaiian populations residing in the state of Hawai'i and the continental United States. Data used in this report are based on Census 2000 and were gathered and tabulated by the Policy Analysis & System Evaluation (PASE) department of Kamehameha Schools. This report examines selected characteristics of the in-state and continental Native Hawaiian populations in order to inform general policy discussions, especially in light of the rising percentage of Native Hawaiians living outside Hawai'i.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure1.** Native Hawaiian population distributions  
[Hawai'i and continental United States, 2000]

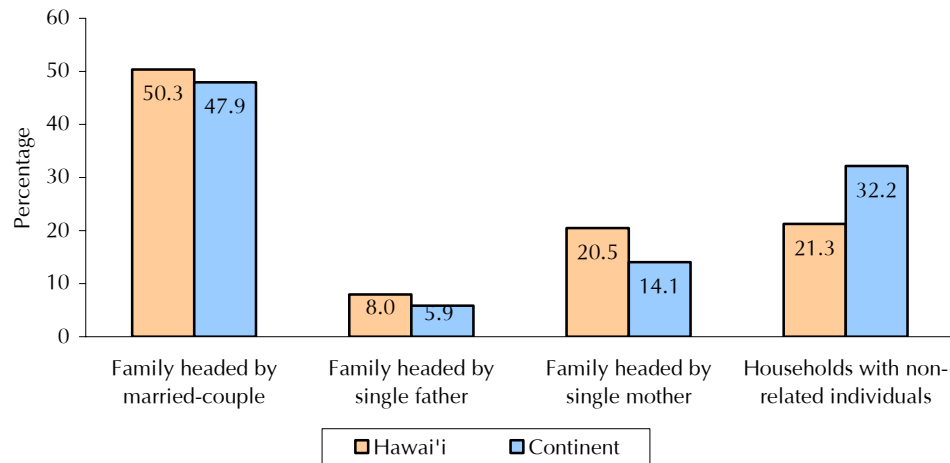


Source: Census 2000, Summary File 2, tabulations by Kamehameha Schools–PASE.

- The majority of Native Hawaiians live in Hawai'i.** Based on U.S. Census 2000 data (see map on the first page of this report), 239,655 Native Hawaiians reside in the state of Hawai'i (59.7 percent), while another 161,507 live on the continent (40.3 percent). This represents an increase in the percentage of Native Hawaiians living outside Hawai'i since 1990, when 72,272 (or 34.2 percent) of the nation's 211,014 Native Hawaiians lived on the continent.
- Hawai'i has more Native Hawaiian children, but fewer young adults.** Compared with the Native Hawaiian population on the continent, the Native Hawaiian population in Hawai'i has a larger proportion of young children but a relatively smaller proportion of young adults. These trends are evident from the two population pyramids shown in Figure 1, which illustrate differences in age structure. While changes in population are caused by any combination of fertility, mortality and migration effects, the disproportionate number of young Native Hawaiian adults on the continent is likely due to migration from Hawai'i for higher education and work opportunities. Conversely, the disproportionate number of elderly in Hawai'i may be due to the return of Native Hawaiian retirees from the continent.

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 2.** Distribution of Native Hawaiian household structures [Hawai'i and continental United States, 2000]



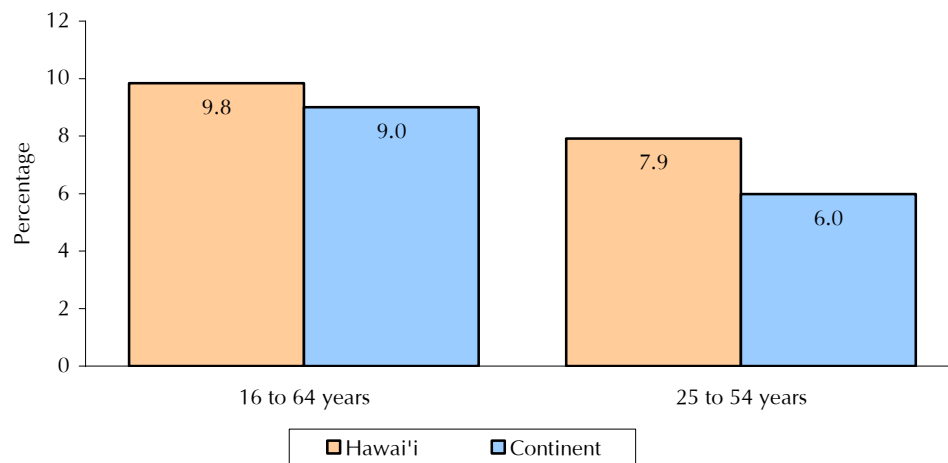
Source: Census 2000, Summary File 2, tabulations by Kamehameha Schools–PASE.

- **Households headed by Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i are more likely to include families.** As shown in Figure 2, more than half of Native Hawaiian households in the state (50.3 percent) are married-couple families, compared with slightly less on the continent (47.9 percent).
- **Native Hawaiian households in Hawai'i are more likely to be composed of single-parent families.** Nearly 21 percent of Native Hawaiian households in Hawai'i are headed by single mothers, while 8.0 percent are headed by single fathers. These groups constitute a smaller percentage of Native Hawaiian households on the continent: 14.1 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively (Figure 2).
- **Native Hawaiian households with unmarried partners are slightly more prevalent in Hawai'i.** In Hawai'i, 8.9 percent of Native Hawaiian households are headed by unmarried partners, compared to 8.1 percent on the continent (not shown). In both areas, the percentage of Native Hawaiian cohabiting couples is nearly double that of the general population.
- **Native Hawaiian households in Hawai'i are larger.** Native Hawaiian households in Hawai'i consist of an average of 3.44 persons, compared with 2.87 persons for Native Hawaiian households on the continent (not shown). This is consistent with overall household sizes in both regions (i.e., the average household size in the state of Hawai'i is larger than that of the United States as a whole).

- **Multifamily Native Hawaiian households are more common in Hawai'i.**<sup>1</sup> One in ten Native Hawaiian households in Hawai'i (9.7 percent) includes at least one subfamily, compared with 3.2 percent on the continent (not shown). This is consistent with overall trends in both regions (i.e., compared with all households on the continent, the average household in Hawai'i is more likely to contain at least one subfamily).

## ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 3.** Unemployment rates among Native Hawaiians  
[Hawai'i and continental United States, 2000]



Source: Census 2000, Summary File 2, tabulations by Kamehameha Schools–PASE.

- **Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i are more likely to be unemployed.** Figure 3 shows that among all Native Hawaiians ages sixteen to sixty-four, the unemployment rate<sup>2</sup> in Hawai'i is 9.8 percent, slightly more than the 9.0 rate on the continent. In addition, Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i are slightly more likely to not be in the workforce than those on the continent (not shown).

<sup>1</sup> Note: Census 2000 does not permit the identification of multifamily households unless all families are, in some way, related and coresiding.

<sup>2</sup> The unemployment rate is the percentage of the civilian labor force that is currently unemployed. Those who are “unemployed” are individuals who are jobless but actively seeking employment. Individuals who do not work and are not looking for work (retirees, students, homemakers, etc.) are considered “not in the labor force” and therefore are excluded from unemployment rate calculations.

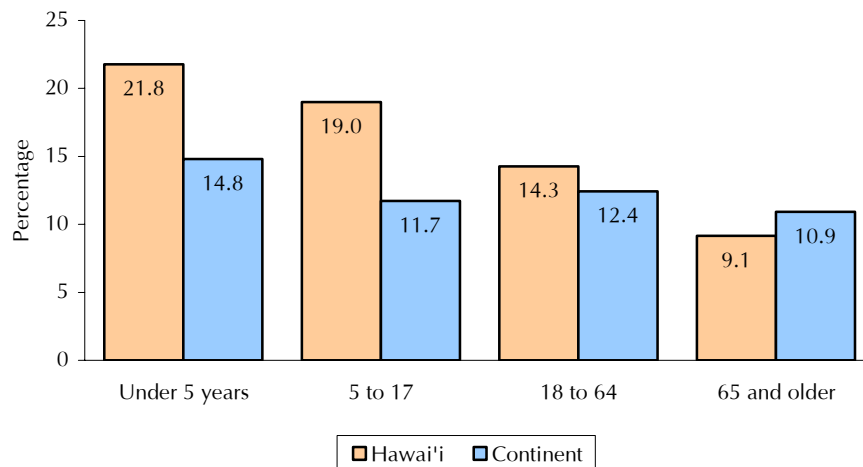
- **In-state Native Hawaiians in their prime working ages are even more likely to be unemployed.** Fully 7.9 percent of in-state Native Hawaiians between twenty-five years (after schooling) and fifty-five years (before retirement) are unemployed, compared with 6.0 percent on the continent (Figure 3). Regardless of location or age, the unemployment rate among Native Hawaiians exceeds that of the general population.
- **Native Hawaiians on the continent are more likely to have white-collar jobs.** On the continent, 28.5 percent of working Native Hawaiians held management, professional, and related occupations, compared with 22.8 percent of their peers in Hawai'i. This advantage persists for both men and women. Roughly half of all Native Hawaiian workers in both places work in sales, service and administrative positions (52.7 percent in Hawai'i and 48.8 percent on the continent), while the remainder work in jobs such as transportation, agriculture, and production (not shown).
- **Native Hawaiians on the continent earn less but have higher per capita income.** Native Hawaiian households in Hawai'i report average total incomes of \$45,381, compared with \$44,165 on the continent. Similar differences exist for total family income: \$49,282 among families in Hawai'i and \$49,110 among those on the continent. (Incomes are not adjusted for higher relative cost of living in Hawai'i.<sup>3</sup>) However, in terms of per capita income—the sum of all income for the population divided by the number of people in that population—Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i have a per capita income of \$14,199, compared with \$17,565 among Native Hawaiians on the continent (not shown).

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<sup>3</sup> Applying 1999 CPI-U estimates for the state of Hawai'i and the total United States (base 1982-84), the differences in all income categories presented would favor Native Hawaiians on the continent.

## POVERTY

**Figure 4.** Prevalence of individual poverty among Native Hawaiians [Hawai'i and continental United States, 2000]

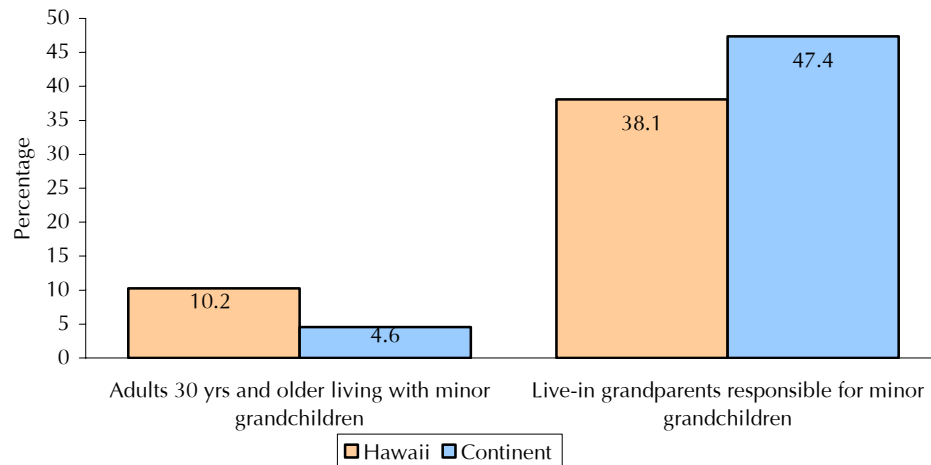


Source: Census 2000, Summary File 2, tabulations by Kamehameha Schools–PASE.

- Native Hawaiians in the state of Hawai'i are more likely to live in poverty.** Among all Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i, 16.0 percent live in poverty (as defined by the federal poverty threshold), compared with 12.4 percent of the Native Hawaiian population in the continental United States (not shown). The difference in poverty prevalence is most pronounced among Native Hawaiian children: in Hawai'i, 21.8 percent of preschool-age children (ages zero to five) live in poverty, as well as 19.0 percent of school-age children, compared with 14.8 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively, on the continent (Figure 4).
- Native Hawaiian kūpuna in the continental United States are more likely to live in poverty.** Figure 4 shows that in the continental United States, the percentage of elderly Native Hawaiians (age sixty-five and older) living in poverty is 10.9 percent, which is slightly higher than that of Native Hawaiian kūpuna living in Hawai'i (9.1 percent).
- In Hawai'i, Native Hawaiian families with children are more likely to live in poverty.** Among all Native Hawaiian married-couple families with minor children in the state, 8.1 percent live in poverty, compared to 5.2 percent of like families in the continental United States. Among single-mother Native Hawaiian families with children, 39.1 percent in the state of Hawai'i live in poverty versus 31.7 percent of those on the continent (not shown).

## EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

**Figure 5.** Prevalence of Native Hawaiian grandparents living with and caring for grandchildren [Hawai'i and U.S. continent, 2000]



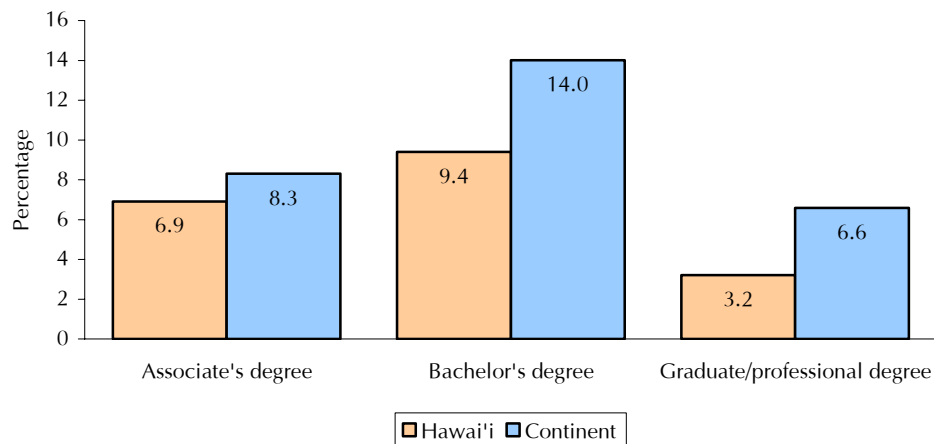
Source: Census 2000, Summary File 2, tabulations by Kamehameha Schools–PASE.

- Native Hawaiians in the state are more likely to live with their own grandchildren than are those in the continental United States.** One in ten Native Hawaiian adults 30 years and older (10.2 percent) lives in the same household as at least one of their own grandchildren, while only 4.6 percent do so in the continental United States (Figure 5). However, among all live-in Native Hawaiian grandparents, those on the continent are more likely than those in Hawai'i to be primarily responsible for the care of their grandchildren: 47.4 percent among U.S. continent Native Hawaiian grandparents compared to 38.1 percent among those in Hawai'i. In both locations, Native Hawaiians surpass the area averages for both measures, suggesting that multigenerational households are more common among Native Hawaiians than other groups.
- Native Hawaiian children in Hawai'i are slightly less likely to have disabilities.** Among Native Hawaiian children ages five to fifteen years, 7.0 percent of those on the continent have one or more disabilities, compared to 5.6 percent within the state.
- Native Hawaiian kūpuna on the continent are slightly less likely to have disabilities.** Among kūpuna (age sixty-five and older), those in the state of Hawai'i are more likely to be disabled: Fully 46.0 percent of Native Hawaiians age sixty-five and older in Hawai'i have at least one disability, compared to 43.5 percent of those on the continent. For Native Hawaiians of all ages, the prevalence of disabilities mirrors that of the general population in both areas (not shown).



## EDUCATIONAL WELL-BEING

**Figure 6.** Educational attainment among Native Hawaiians  
[Hawai'i and continental United States, 2000]



Source: Census 2000, Summary File 2, tabulations by Kamehameha Schools–PASE.

- Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i are less likely to have a college degree.** Figure 6 shows that 6.9 percent of Native Hawaiians in the state have received an associate's degree, slightly lower than the 8.3 percent of Native Hawaiians in the continental United States. Further, about one in ten Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i (9.4 percent) has a bachelor's degree, compared with 14.0 percent of Native Hawaiians on the continent. Conversely, the general population in Hawai'i is more likely to hold a college degree than is the general population in the continental United States. For advanced degrees, Native Hawaiians in the continental United States are more than twice as likely as Native Hawaiians in the state of Hawai'i to hold a graduate or professional degree (6.6 percent vs. 3.2 percent, respectively).
- Native Hawaiians on the continent are significantly more likely to be enrolled in college or graduate school.** Among eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old Native Hawaiians in the continental United States, two out of five (39.7 percent) are enrolled in college or graduate school, compared to 25.6 percent in the state of Hawai'i.
- School-age Native Hawaiian children on the continent are less likely to attend private school.** Among all school-age Native Hawaiian children in the state of Hawai'i, 8,861 (or 12.6 percent) attend private school. Of these, 55 percent are served by Kamehameha Schools. Among Native Hawaiian school-age children on the continent, 3,688 (or 9.4 percent) attend private schools (not shown).

## CONCLUSIONS

The data presented in this report show that Native Hawaiians in the state of Hawai'i and in the continental United States share many similarities, yet also exhibit many differences. For instance, the Native Hawaiian population in the continental United States is disproportionately concentrated among younger adults, likely owing to the more abundant education and employment opportunities that exist there. At the same time, Native Hawaiians in the state are more likely to be unemployed, have less per capita income and live in poverty than their peers in the continental United States, suggesting that Native Hawaiians living outside the state enjoy greater socioeconomic standing than those on the islands. Moreover, in the continental United States, Native Hawaiians are more likely than their counterparts in Hawai'i to be enrolled in college or graduate school, while Native Hawaiian adults on the continent are more likely to hold an associate's, bachelor's or graduate/professional degree.

Although the majority of Native Hawaiians live within the state of Hawai'i, the well-being measures summarized in this report may be indicative of a lack of local resources that are otherwise available to continental Native Hawaiians, such as education and occupational training opportunities. Further, the persistent pressures that may motivate Native Hawaiians to move to the continental United States may someday tip the scales such that the majority of *kānaka maoli* will live outside the Hawaiian Islands and away from the *ʻāina* that has historically been a cornerstone in the foundation of Native Hawaiian well-being.

Presently, Census 2000 data do not provide useful measures of emotional and cultural well-being. For many continental Native Hawaiians, the achievements they have made in the socioeconomic arena may be negated, in part, by losses of culture and identity owing to their great geographic distance from Hawai'i.

These findings point to the need for greater understanding of all domains of Native Hawaiian well-being and suggest that further research is needed to identify effective ways to serve unique needs of Native Hawaiians in both locations.