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1 in 3 Hawai‘i Households Considers Leaving: 2024 ALICE Report Calls for Urgent Action to Keep Families at Home

Rising Cost of Living and Housing Instability Highlight Need for Systemic Change

Honolulu, Hawai‘i — Aloha United Way (AUW), in partnership with Bank of Hawai‘i Foundation, has released the 2024 State of ALICE in Hawai‘i report, offering a sobering look at the financial struggles faced by Hawai‘i’s Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households.

With nearly one-third of Hawai‘i households classified as ALICE, the report emphasizes the urgent need for policies that address rising living costs, housing instability, and economic challenges. The findings underscore the importance of systemic change to ensure families can remain and thrive in Hawai‘i.

The report highlights the ongoing struggles of ALICE households while also shedding light on key factors driving outmigration, including housing costs, inflation, and food insecurity. This critical data underscores the urgent need for policy interventions to stabilize families and strengthen Hawai‘i’s workforce.

Key Findings:

- Fewer Households in Poverty:** Households below the poverty line dropped to 12% in 2024 from 14% in 2022, yet ALICE households remain steady at 29%, signaling persistent financial strain.
- Outmigration Concerns:** Over one-third (37%) of Hawai‘i households have considered leaving the state due to high living and housing costs.
- Housing Insecurity:** 27% of households statewide worry about being forced to move within a year, a figure that jumps to 41% for ALICE households.

4. **Food Insecurity:** Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food, compared to 28% statewide.
5. **The current and future workforce concerns:** A majority of young people under the age of 35 years old are below the ALICE Threshold (53%).
6. **Maui County Hardships:** The proportion of ALICE households in Maui County surged by 9 percentage points since 2022, reflecting challenges compounded by the August 2023 wildfires.

A Call to Action:

The 2024 ALICE Report presents an opportunity to enact meaningful systemic changes that address the root causes of financial instability and prevent the outmigration of Hawai‘i residents. Policymakers, community leaders, and advocates are urged to leverage this data to implement policies that reduce housing costs, enhance workforce development, and expand access to essential resources like food and affordable childcare.

“This report is a clear reminder of the challenges faced by Hawai‘i’s working families,” said Suzanne Skjold, COO of Aloha United Way. “It’s a call to action to create policies that allow families to remain in Hawai‘i and thrive in their own communities. With the data presented, we have the opportunity to build a future where leaving Hawai‘i is not the only option for financial stability.”

Sponsor and Partners:

This study was made possible through the financial support of the Bank of Hawai‘i Foundation, a steadfast supporter of Hawai‘i’s ALICE Initiative. The report’s development was a collaborative effort involving Anthology and FINN Partners, who expertly managed the survey and design, and the Hawai‘i Community Foundation, which co-leads efforts to propel financial stability and systemic change through the ALICE Fund.

“The 2024 ALICE Report brings to light the economic challenges that many of our neighbors face. As leaders in the community, we must rally together to create sustainable solutions that allow Hawai‘i families to stay and prosper in the islands they call home,” said Peter Ho, Chairman and CEO of Bank of Hawai‘i.

About Aloha United Way:

Founded in 1919, Aloha United Way brings together nonprofits, businesses, government, and community leaders to tackle Hawai‘i’s most pressing issues. Through programs like the ALICE Initiative and 211 Helpline, AUW drives systemic change and empowers families to achieve financial stability.

About Bank of Hawai‘i Foundation:

Bank of Hawai‘i Foundation is committed to fostering economic security and resilience for Hawai‘i’s communities. As a vital supporter of the ALICE Initiative, the Foundation continues to invest in research and programs that create meaningful change for working families.

To preview the report, please visit www.auw.org/ALICE-Report

For interviews and media inquiries, please contact Aga Conboy at 543-2201 or aga@auw.org.

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