



# UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I® at MĀNOA

## 2024 Quality of Life & Well-Being Dashboard highlights economic strain, health disparities, more

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Contact: [Marc Arakaki, \(808\) 829-0750](#)

Spokesperson, UH Communications

[Erica Yamauchi, 808-859-0051](#)

Director of Communications and Engagement, Office of Wellness and Resilience

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The [College of Social Sciences](#) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, in partnership with the Office of Wellness and Resilience in the Office of the Governor, launched the 2024 Hawai'i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard, December 10. Surveying more than 8,000 residents statewide, the dashboard provides an in-depth look at pressing social, economic and health issues affecting Hawai'i's residents.

"The release of this dashboard comes at a pivotal moment," said Governor Josh Green. "More than a year after the devastating Maui wildfires, the recovery efforts are a stark reminder of the potential for even more weather-related disasters. This underscores the urgency of disaster preparedness, a theme echoed in the dashboard, where only 12% of respondents felt well-prepared for a community-level disaster. Building resilience in Hawai'i's communities is no longer optional in our climate crisis—it is essential."



"The dashboard reveals the resilience of Hawai'i's communities in the face of serious challenges, including rising costs of living, health disparities and a shifting workplace landscape," said Jack Barile, the lead researcher, associate dean for research and director of the [Social Science Research Institute](#) in the UH Mānoa College of Social Sciences. "It also highlights the unique needs and strengths of different communities, from households with lower income to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander residents, providing valuable insights to guide policymakers, community leaders and employers toward targeted actions that can improve well-being across the state."

### Key findings from the dashboard include:

- **Economic strain and stress:** The economy (73%), personal finances (73%), and housing costs (64%) rank as the most significant stressors for residents, particularly for households with incomes below \$50,000. Among those surveyed, 40% considered moving out of the state in the past year due to high living costs, a rate even higher among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities (47%).
- **Health disparities:** Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander residents experience notably higher levels of stress and unhealthy days compared to White and Asian residents. These disparities are compounded by challenges in accessing affordable healthcare, with 19% of all surveyed residents reporting medical debt over \$500.
- **Community strength and workplace support:** Despite hardships, 67% of residents feel safe in their neighborhoods, and a similar percentage report that neighbors are willing to help each other. Workplaces are also viewed positively, with 83% of employees feeling respected by their employers and 78% feeling that their contributions are valued.
- **Workplace priorities:** The dashboard data reveals a shift in workplace expectations. Employees looking to change jobs prioritize flexible work schedules, paid family leave, and telework options, while those planning to stay with their current employer value traditional benefits like health insurance and retirement contributions.

### Policy implications and future directions

The survey findings underscore the need for strategic policy initiatives that address Hawai'i's unique challenges. Governor Josh Green, M.D., recently signed an executive order declaring Hawai'i a trauma-informed state, an initiative that aligns closely with the survey and dashboard.

Data from the dashboard highlight several potential areas for action for policymakers, grantmakers and advocates:

- **Health equity:** Expanding access to affordable health care through programmatic improvements and community health clinics, focusing on culturally sensitive care for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.
- **Economic stability:** Addressing economic stress through affordable housing, wage increases and essential benefits to reduce household financial pressures.
- **Disaster preparedness:** Strengthening disaster response plans and resilient infrastructure to ensure communities are prepared for emergencies.
- **Workplace innovation:** Encouraging Hawai'i employers to adopt flexible, family-friendly workplace practices that support well-being and align with employee priorities.

“Since introducing the legislation that established the nation’s first statewide Office of Wellness and Resilience in 2022 (Act 291), the state has taken strides to make Hawai‘i a trauma-informed state,” said Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz. “I am proud to have continued these efforts by advocating for legislation (Act 106, SLH 2024) that resulted in the largest statewide survey on health in Hawai‘i ever , as well as the largest dataset using the Center for Disease Control (CDC)’ s [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Worker Well-Being Questionnaire](#) (NIOSH WellBQ).”

“The data in this report shows that we must continue to increase the economic opportunities for our residents, so they can remain in Hawai‘i,” said Dela Cruz. “Diversifying our economy in the areas of creative industries, agriculture, and technology must be paired with investments in workforce development so our residents can fill the good-paying jobs here in the state.”

### **Empowering residents with data**

The interactive dashboard allows residents to explore data specific to their communities. This tool aims to foster transparency and community engagement, providing individuals, community leaders and policymakers with the information they need to drive meaningful change.

“The 2024 Hawai‘i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard is more than a collection of statistics—it’s a call to action,” said Barile. “By making this information publicly available, we hope to inspire collaborative efforts to tackle the challenges facing our state.”

“This dashboard highlights our Health Policy Initiative,” adds Denise Eby Konan, dean, UH Mānoa College of Social Sciences. “I’m especially excited that our faculty responded to the call of the Governor and legislature to design an applicable dashboard that can change policy and people’s lives through evidence-based research.”

For more details and to explore the interactive dashboard, visit [health-study.com](https://health-study.com).

The 2024 Hawai‘i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard is a partnership between the [Health Policy Initiative](#) in the UH Mānoa [College of Social Sciences](#), and the Office of Wellness and Resilience in the Office of the Governor. All survey data is housed exclusively with UH Mānoa.

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