

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOPE Services Hawaii, Neighborhood Place of Puna and Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council offer emergency financial assistance to Hawai'i Island residents impacted by COVID-19

Thanks to a \$100,000 grant from Hawaii Community Foundation and a \$141,000 grant from Hawaii Island United Way's Rent & Utility Assistance Program, financial help is available to low-income Hawai'i Island residents experiencing financial hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Resilience Fund was established by Hawai'i Community Foundation and Pierre and Pam Omidyar to "rapidly deploy resources and encourage community giving to address the COVID-19 Pandemic," according to the Hawai'i Community Foundation website. United Way's Rent & Utility Assistance Program was established to assist those who are in immediate and urgent need of support with paying their rent and utility bills due to their income being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding will allow three Hawai'i Island non-profit organizations, Hope Services Hawaii, Neighborhood Place of Puna and Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council, the opportunity to approve one-time emergency financial assistance of up to \$1,000 per household to Hawai'i Island residents who have recently been laid off or whose income has been reduced.

Also, eligible applicants for financial emergency assistance must meet income limits, currently earning at or below 80% of Hawai'i County's Area Median Income (AMI). The 80% AMI cap starts at \$46,700 for an individual, and increases with each additional family member. Verification of income, proof of economic hardship as a result of the pandemic, and a government-issued Hawai'i ID is required. For a full list of required documents and grant guidelines (including AMI limitations) contact the following agencies for additional information:

Hope Services Hawaii
Phone: (808) 935-3050
Website: www.hopeserviceshawaii.org

Neighborhood Place of Puna
Phone: (808) 965-5550
Website: <http://neighborhoodplace.org/>

Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council
Phone: (808) 935-5219
Website: <http://hceoc.net>

Or call United Way at 211 for more information.

Funding is limited and agencies are asking for your consideration in making sure you meet all requirements before applying.

Hope Services Hawai'i will be able to assist households seeking mortgage, rent or utility assistance. HOPE will assist with the payment of one household bill or expense.

Neighborhood Place of Puna and Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council will assist with rent and utility costs only. Applicants of this program can apply once a month for up to 3 months.

Payments will be sent directly to creditors on behalf of applicants.

"More than half of Hawaii Island's residents live paycheck to paycheck making ends meet even before this pandemic," says HOPE CEO Brandee Menino. "We are grateful to Hawai'i Community Foundation and the Hawaii Island United Way for stepping up to assist our island's most vulnerable residents."