



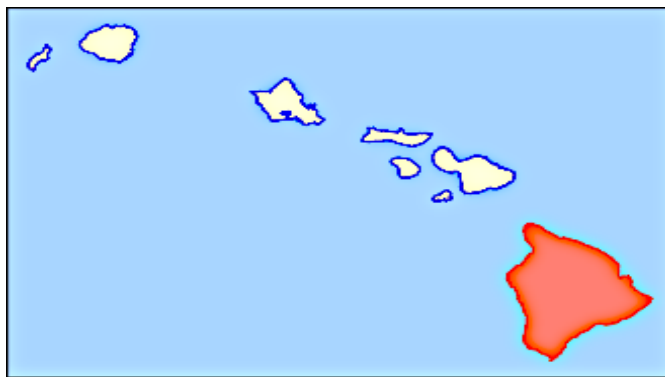
MALAMA KA'U FOUNDATION

A Native Hawaiian Organization

Pahala, Hawai'i • Established December 20, 2021

Overview

Malama Ka'u Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit Native Hawaiian Organization (NHO) established to serve the people of Ka'u — a remote district on the southeastern corner of Hawai'i's Big Island. One hundred percent of the Foundation's net profits, generated through its SBA 8(a) subsidiaries flow directly back to the Ka'u community. This structure, established by Congress in 1988, ensures the Foundation's mission cannot be overridden by shareholder pressure or short-term financial returns.



Ka'u Demographic

Ka'u is a rural, deeply rooted Native Hawaiian community on Hawai'i Island. While latest census data records roughly 8,679 residents, these figures significantly undercount the Native Hawaiian population — a legacy of 1900-era US colonialism and sugar plantation-era recordkeeping that deliberately classified mixed-heritage workers under other ethnic categories, to erase Native Hawaiian identity from official tallies. Ka'u's true Native Hawaiian presence runs far deeper than modern statistics reflect. Additionally, Ka'u boasts a US military veteran population of 10.5%, more than 1.5 times the national average and among the highest of any district in the State.

Community Context

Ka'u has absorbed decades of economic hardship following the collapse of its primary economic backbone – the sugar cane industry - in the late 1990s. The human cost is stark:

- Today, ~90% of Ka'u High School students are classified as totally economically disadvantaged
- Native Hawaiian population carry the highest rates of poverty and unemployment of any major ethnic group in Hawai'i

- Generations of skilled workers were left without an economic transition plan when the industry departed

These conditions are the downstream result of Western institutions that measured success in dollars alone — and excluded the Ka‘u’ people from the calculation.



Heritage & Identity

Ka‘u was historically known as home to the highest concentration of Native Hawaiian warriors in the islands — a culture defined by discipline, fierce protection of land, and a principled refusal to surrender Ka‘u’s identity to outside forces. That same ethos carried into the plantation era, where Ka‘u families built a century-long legacy of skilled, community-rooted labor.



In 2024, that warrior spirit was on full display: hundreds of residents mobilized against a proposed \$200 million development at Punālu‘u Black Sand Beach, raising concerns over the destruction of heiau, ancient burial grounds, and iwi kūpuna. The community organized rallies and caravans, and legal intervention remains ongoing.

Three Lines of Effort

1. Native Hawaiian Culture & Identity

Language, history, and cultural knowledge are not program add-ons — they are prerequisites. The Foundation treats culture as something living and daily, not preserved behind glass.



2. Workforce Development

Building on Ka'u's century-long legacy of skilled, hands-on labor, the Foundation is expanding career pathways across:

- Agriculture, manufacturing, and construction
- Cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems
- Healthcare and the trades

The goal is not just jobs — it is the freedom to live and work in the place you love, without having to choose between opportunity and home.

3. Community Resilience

True resilience means Ka'u is never again forced to compromise its values simply to survive. The Foundation's model builds local capability, local leadership, and local economic strength — so the community can say no when outside interests do not align with its own.

Our Pledge

- Malama Ka'u Foundation will mentor the next generation of Native Hawaiian-led organizations — sharing knowledge, opening doors, and ensuring a lack of resources is never the reason a good mission fails to launch.
- Every dollar generated through our 8(a) businesses serves a mission larger than profit.
- To the people of Ka'u: This foundation exists because of you, for you, and will always be accountable to you

“Ka'u has resisted outside exploitation for centuries. What is new is the sophistication and scale of the external forces it now faces. That is precisely why Malama Ka'u Foundation exists.” – Mel Yokoyama, NHO Chairman