Rationale

Poverty is the single greatest threat to a child’s well-being (US Census Bureau, 2017). Children who live in poverty are at a greater risk for developmental delays, poor academic achievement, and health complications such as asthma, obesity, and diabetes (Children’s Defense Fund, 2015). Because of Hawai’i’s high cost of living, many families struggle to earn a livable income and to provide basic necessities for their children. With our community partners, Liliʻuokalani Trust is working to address the root causes of poverty, disrupt intergenerational poverty, and provide the best possible lives for Native Hawaiian children and their families.

Promising Practices

Ensuring that immediate and basic needs are met (e.g., food, safety, housing), then working to fulfill higher level needs (e.g., education, sports and recreation, and peer support) are practices that can have a sustainable impact on the lives and overall wellbeing of children and their families. To assist families overcome poverty, Liliʻuokalani Trust offers financial literacy programs, including one-on-one financial coaching to make changes toward financial self-sufficiency. Liliʻuokalani Trust also offers activities like sports, performing arts, and cultural groups that may counterbalance the negative effects of poverty as children reach to fulfill higher-level cognitive, social, and emotional needs. Because families are impacted by societal factors often beyond their control (e.g., laws), Liliʻuokalani Trust provides education through research briefs to inform public policies. Strategies to change public policies – such as laws to create livable wage jobs, strengthen families and communities, and provide high-quality early care and learning experiences for children (Center for American Progress, 2018) – are a promising practice to end the cycle of poverty.
**Hawai‘i Data**

**Federal Poverty Guideline for a family of 4 in Hawai‘i is income below $28,870.**
- 21.9% of Native Hawaiian young children 4 years and younger live below the federal poverty guideline; the number increases to 33.6% when children live in single-parent households.
  
  Source: Kamehameha Schools. (2014)

- 16.8% of Native Hawaiian children ages 5-17 live below the federal poverty guideline; the number increases to 26.9% when children live in single-parent households.
  
  Source: Kamehameha Schools. (2014)

- Native Hawaiian children are twice as likely to live in poverty than any other major ethnic group.
  
  Source: University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. (2018)

**National Data**

**Federal Poverty Guideline for a family of 4 in the United States is income below $25,100.**
- 21% of children in the United States live below the federal poverty guideline.
  

- Childhood poverty rates are highest among minorities and indigenous children in the United States.
  

- Childhood poverty costs an estimated $500 billion to $1 trillion a year to the U.S. economy, $34,000-$70,000 per child over the course of their lifetime.
  

---

**Resources**

**Local**
- Department of Human Service
  - Temporary Aid for Needy Families, Medical, Financial Assistance, and Employment and Training (866) 643-1643
  - Public Housing Application (808) 832-5960
- Parents and Children Together (PACT) – Economic Development Programs to Strengthen an Individual’s Ability (808) 842-7093
- Project Hawai‘i – Enhancing the Lives of Homeless and Poverty Stricken Keiki (Oahu and Hawai‘i Island) (808) 987-6018

**National**
- National Parent Helpline – Professional Development and other Parent Resources 1-855-427-2736

---

**References**


Recommended Citation:

---

**He lei poina ‘ole ke keiki.**

*A lei never forgotten is the beloved child.*