



# Annual Report 20

# 24



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# Opening Letter



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As Chairwoman of the Board of the Women's Fund of Hawai'i, I am both inspired and excited to share with you the incredible strides our organization has made over the past year. Together, we have deepened our impact, strengthened our community partnerships, and responded swiftly to urgent needs—especially in the wake of the devastating fires in Lahaina.

When tragedy struck Maui, our hearts broke for the people of Lahaina. But in that moment, we witnessed the power of our community coming together. I am incredibly proud of how Women's Fund of Hawai'i mobilized quickly to establish the Maui Response Fund, directing much-needed resources to support women and families most affected by the fires. With your generosity, we were able to provide emergency relief and ongoing support for rebuilding efforts. This initiative reminded us of the profound role Women's Fund of Hawai'i plays in times of crisis, and how we stand ready to act when our community needs us most.

Beyond our response to the fires, we've had a year of remarkable success across all areas of our work. From funding programs that uplift women and girls to advancing equity through grassroots initiatives, Women's Fund of Hawai'i has remained steadfast in our mission. Our grants continue to empower local organizations, and we are seeing the tangible results of our collective efforts.

This year also marked a period of leadership transition, and I could not be more proud of how we've navigated this pivotal moment. Transitions often bring both challenge and opportunity, and through it all, we have remained focused on our vision and purpose. I am deeply honored to have helped lead the organization through this important phase, ensuring that we continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of women and girls across our islands.

As we look ahead, I am filled with optimism for the future. Women's Fund of Hawai'i is stronger than ever, and together, we will continue to create lasting change for the women and girls who inspire us every day. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Your support makes all the difference.



**Karen Mukai**  
*Chairwoman of the Board,  
Women's Fund of Hawai'i*

# ALC Introduction

We are thrilled to announce that Ashley Lukens Consulting has joined forces with Women's Fund of Hawai'i as our executive director consulting firm. As we approach our 25th Anniversary, this partnership marks a significant step forward in our mission to support the health, well-being, and advancement of women and girls throughout Hawai'i. Ashley Lukens Consulting brings a wealth of experience and expertise in strategic planning, organizational development, and community engagement that will empower us to enhance our impact and reach new heights in fulfilling our vision for a more equitable and inclusive society.

With Ashley Lukens Consulting guiding our strategic direction and providing invaluable insights, we are confident that Women's Fund of Hawai'i will continue to be a catalyst for positive change in our communities. Together, we are committed to fostering opportunities, advocating for justice, and creating lasting solutions that uplift women and girls across the islands. Join us in celebrating this exciting collaboration as we embark on this transformative journey towards a brighter future for all women and girls in Hawai'i.



Maya Rogers  
Vice Chair

# Our Herstory

Women's Fund of Hawai'i's start came in the late 1980's, as Hawai'i Community Foundation's (HCF) first CEO, Jane Renfro Smith, raised concerns about the inequities in philanthropic support of women and girls at a business luncheon where she had been invited to speak. After attending Jane's address, Bud Smyser interviewed Jane and then wrote a short article that appeared in the Honolulu Star Bulletin. With Jane's guidance, a group of like-minded women (and one man) combined their resources to form Women's Fund of Hawai'i at the Hawai'i Community Foundation. Women's Fund of Hawai'i became a resource purely dedicated to supporting women and girls in overcoming barriers and reaching their potential. At the same time, it became a place where women's voices were heard and valued, as donors and as receivers. More than ten years later, with the support of HCF, Women's Fund of Hawai'i was established in its current form.



**WHY ALC + WFH?** – I'll start with the personal: I am a graduate of Vassar College, one of the first Seven Sister schools on the East Coast, with a double major in Women Studies and Economics. My PhD in Political Science from UH Manoa is rooted in feminist-indigenous theory. In other words, I've been thinking about the "why" of Women's Fund my entire adult life.

As a team of women with significantly different life experiences – different ages, races, ethnicities, nationalities, and personalities – we are building something through our work together and our choice of clients that demonstrates and enacts the change we seek for our entire planetary community.

We think ALC can amplify the impact and reach of Women's Fund, and this shared impact has never been more urgent.

A co-op of consultants, we provide Women's Fund of Hawai'i with the capacity of a 7-person team. By working together, we provide one another support, creativity, flexibility, joy, community – everything that WOMEN have been creating since time immemorial. Put differently, what if our dismantling of the 9-5 full time job model into co-operation and co-creation is the feminist transformation of work... and who better to model this than Women's Fund of Hawai'i? This past year has been one of growth and transformation for both of our teams and we can't wait for the years to come!



Ashley Lukens, PhD  
Founder of ALC

# Board Of *Directors*



Alexina Chai



Christine Chee



Courtney Wagner



Ellen Ng



Judy Bishop



Karen Mukai



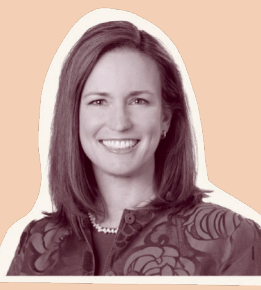
Makalika Naholowa'a



Maya Rogers



Sasha Simpson



Sharon Lovejoy



Stacey Katakura



Stephanie Shipton

## Supporting Team

Margie Welch, *Administrative Coordinator*  
Radhika Jit, *Community Engagement Manager*

# What Is Our *Mission* And *Vision?*

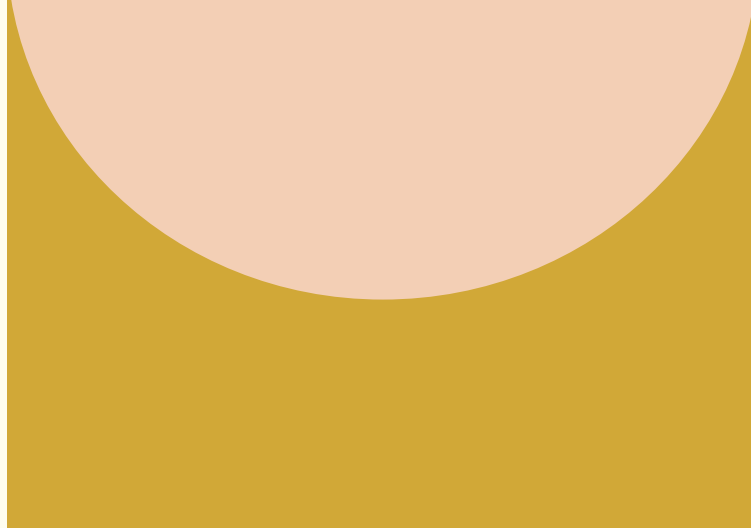
Women's Fund of Hawai'i is a participatory grantmaking organization dedicated to empowering women and girls across Hawai'i. As a fund, we prioritize moving money in ways that reflect the community's needs and voices, ensuring that resources go where they are most impactful. Our focus is on supporting the most vulnerable women and girls, promoting their financial security, leadership, and overall well-being.

Since 2005, we've distributed over \$1.6 million in grants to more than 200 local organizations, backing over 350 programs. Our mission is to help women and girls overcome social and economic barriers, promoting financial security, leadership, and overall well-being. We believe that when women thrive, so do their families and communities. By investing directly in the community, we ensure that women and girls are supported in achieving their fullest potential.





# Tea & Champagne



Our signature Tea & Champagne event has continued to be a powerful celebration of women supporting women across Hawai'i. This annual gathering brings together a diverse community of advocates who are dedicated to uplifting and empowering women and girls in our state.

Through generous contributions raised at the event, we have been able to fund critical programs that provide resources, mentorship, and opportunities for women to thrive. The impact of women uniting for this cause resonates deeply, creating lasting change and fostering a spirit of resilience. Together, we are building a brighter future for the women and girls of Hawai'i.

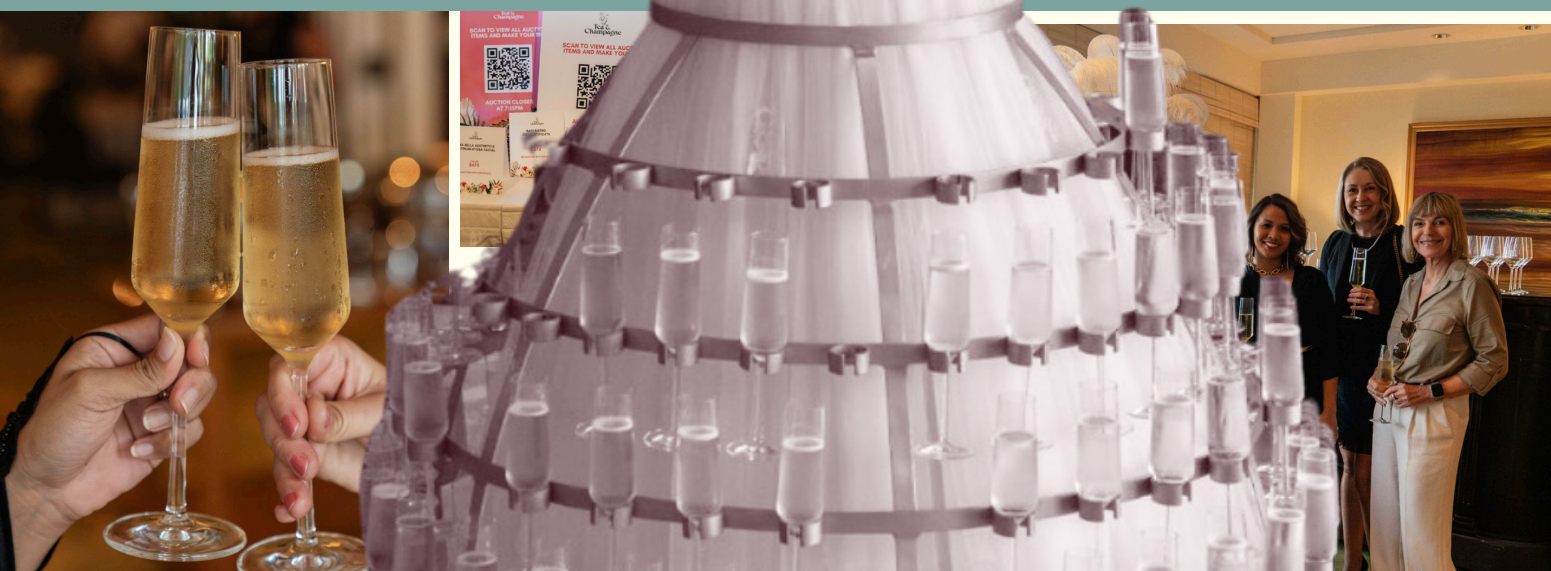



**183K+** raised to support women & girls in Ha-

**300** attendees

**100+** auction items

**1.8M+** raised since 2014



# Letter From *Our Donor*

*“I’m proud to be a part of this work.”*

I have been a proud donor to Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i for over a decade, and every year my commitment deepens. Living in Hawai‘i, I’ve seen firsthand how the unique challenges faced by women and girls in our islands can often go unnoticed. From economic inequities and limited access to education and healthcare to the lack of representation in leadership roles, women here face hurdles that require focused attention and support. Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i is one of the few organizations that prioritizes these needs with such care, and that’s why I continue to give.

What sets Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i apart is that it serves as an intermediary between donors like myself and the community-based organizations doing life-changing work. They understand the landscape, the people, and the cultural nuances that often get overlooked. By connecting funding with grassroots initiatives, they empower smaller organizations that might not have the capacity to apply for larger grants but are making a tangible difference in the lives of local women and girls. Philanthropic intermediaries like Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i have an intimate understanding of the community, allowing them to be strategic and ensure donations have maximum impact.

I’ve seen how this approach leads to real change. By supporting programs that focus on leadership development, financial literacy, domestic violence prevention, and more, Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i helps ensure that women and girls in our islands are not just surviving but thriving. I think about the young girl in Wai‘anae who, through a scholarship from a Women’s Fund grantee, is now the first in her family to attend college. Or the single mother in Hilo who found a path to economic independence thanks to a vocational training program. These are stories of transformation that might not have been possible without the targeted, strategic support of Women’s Fund Of Hawai‘i.

When I donate, I know my gift is being used wisely and thoughtfully, empowering our next generation of female leaders. Together, we are investing in a brighter future for women and girls across Hawai‘i.



**Chenoa Farnsworth**  
*Blue Startups*



**Aerial Arts Hawai'i LLC** conducts special programming for a twelve week circus program meeting twice weekly to teach circus arts to Nā Wāhine 'Ōiwi (18+) and Nā Kaikamāhine 'Ōiwi (13+) in an effort to increase access to and participation in circus arts, build community well being through social circus, and solve an issue of sports inequality within circus arts in the islands of Hawai'i.



**ALA Hawai'i Girls State Foundation** implements a civic engagement program where girls have the opportunity to learn about local government, engage in community service activities, and participate in mock legislative sessions to understand the democratic process.



**Dynamic Healing Center** successfully reintegrates women into the community through transitional housing and effective support services, with a specific project to empower women who are transitioning back to the community from incarceration with basic essentials to include new bedding, hygiene and an annual low-income bus pass for transportation and the purchase of 2 tower gardens for each shelter for food sustainability.



**Hula Preservation Society** is committed to preserving and sharing the life stories, knowledge, insights, and historical materials of our esteemed elders via digital technologies, and making that treasury available to the Hawai'ian people, hula practitioners, and students and teachers across the globe.



**Mana Wāhine Productions** is working on a single-day event crafted to empower and uplift young girls aged 12-18, especially those who have endured adversity such as abuse, neglect, and challenges to their self-esteem and health.



**Molokai Affordable Housing Alliance** is offering training & professional development for a cohort of youth and adult females who are either lessees or family members of lessees in the Naiwa Agricultural Subdivision Homestead on Molokai.

## Spring 2024 Grantees



**The Growing Ohana** is a holistic initiative dedicated to empowering women navigating life transitions (including self-care practices, personal development, economic self-sufficiency, and building resilience) through a combination of workshops, group discussions, and one-on-one coaching.



**Maui Farmer Network** is offering a special program of the Maui Farmer Network's MFN "Navigational Coaching Program", 44 women small family farmers in Maui County will be invited to a 2 hour webinar panel with 3 of Maui's women farm marketing experts, where 9 promising women to receive in person and zoom one-on-one and cohort guidance from the same 3 Maui womenpanelist entrepreneurs.



**Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin** is working to create a short film/documentary about significant Hawaiian Women Buddhists to include information related to their life stories, spiritual journeys, their activism and community development work, their take on Buddhism and Hawaiian Spirituality.



**Women Speaking Out** is working on a special program, the WSO Girls Court Empowerment Program with monthly in-person workshops, which cover topics such as: gaslighting, healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, self-defense, financial literacy, goal setting, and entrepreneurship.



**Wahine Freelance Alliance** will coordinate 6 workforce training sessions on various topics around digital freelancing and financial literacy for freelancers and women business owners. The professional development workshop will cover various topics including social media marketing, video editing, copywriting, blogging, email marketing, and website development and maintenance.



**Wisdom Circles Oceania** supports efforts in O'ahu to develop and refine a girls-only cohort within Story Quilt. This program, blending arts and aina, caters to foster youth and put at-risk individuals referred by school counselors, where youth will partake in therapeutic activities aimed at boosting mental health, self-esteem, and future goals, all while honing creative problem-solving skills and fostering stronger support systems and cultural identity.

## Participatory Grantmaking

Participatory grantmaking is an emerging best practice in philanthropy that shifts decision-making power to the communities most affected by the issues being addressed. By involving those with lived experience, it promotes more equitable and inclusive funding processes. This approach helps dismantle traditional power dynamics in philanthropy, ensuring that funding better reflects the needs and aspirations of marginalized groups. It also strengthens trust and accountability between funders and communities, fostering more sustainable solutions. Women's Fund of Hawai'i has been modeling this methodology for over two decades, demonstrating its commitment to equity and community empowerment.

# Letter From *Our Grantee*

On behalf of American Legion Auxiliary Hawai'i Girls State (ALAHGS), I am writing to express our gratitude for the opportunity to apply for a grant from the Women's Fund of Hawai'i. As a small grassroots organization dedicated to empowering young women through leadership development, we sought funding because of its commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by women and girls in our community.

Our experience working with Women's Fund of Hawai'i has been inspiring. From the initial application process to the ongoing support and guidance we received, the staff was approachable and knowledgeable, helping us refine our vision and articulate our goals clearly. The grant funding has significantly impacted our program, enabling us to expand our outreach efforts and provide essential resources to participants. With this support, we have been able to offer scholarships, develop training materials, and organize leadership workshops that empower young women to engage in civic activities and take on leadership roles in their communities.

Your funding has had a profound impact on ALAHGS. As a small, volunteer-led program, financial support is essential to continuing our mission. With the Women's Fund of Hawai'i grant, we were able to enhance our leadership program, providing young women with the tools and experiences necessary to shape Hawai'i's future. This support allowed us to serve more participants and expand the reach of our program.

As a grassroots organization, funding from Women's Fund of Hawai'i means more than just financial assistance—it represents a belief in our mission and a commitment to investing in the potential of young women in Hawai'i. We are deeply appreciative of the partnership and the impact it has had on our work. Together, we are helping to build a future where the women of Hawai'i can lead, serve, and inspire.

With Aloha,

Brister Thomas





# Art Of The Ask

Our impact is driven by our commitment to empowering women-led grassroots organizations and fostering sustainable growth for those dedicated to uplifting women and girls across Hawai'i. Our capacity-building programs provide specialized, strategic support designed to help organizations maximize their impact and broaden their reach, ensuring that their work can thrive and create lasting change in their communities.

This year, we've taken significant strides with initiatives like *The Art of the Ask*, a workshop centered around empowering women in negotiation and fundraising. This workshop focuses not only on raising money but also on honoring each individual's personal approach to advocacy, ensuring that women feel confident and authentic in their asks. It's not just about financial gain—it's about making meaningful connections and generating support that aligns with each participant's values.



# Letter From *Our Grantee*

In July 2021, our first grant from Women's Fund of Hawai'i enabled us to launch the Wāhine Wordpress and Digital Freelancers Academy (WVDA), a program that graduated 20 women and provided training in WordPress development, design, and content creation. This experience highlighted the value of self-employment opportunities for our participants and expanded our network through partnerships like CNHA, connecting wāhine with resources beyond our organization. Women's Fund of Hawai'i is a champion for innovative approaches that address barriers faced by women and girls.

Their support for our HQ initiative in the metaverse exemplifies their forward-thinking vision, allowing us to create a dynamic and experiential space for wāhine to connect, collaborate, and create. Through HQ, we are redefining the future of work for wāhine, fostering lifelong connections that we hope will lead to economic well-being in unprecedented ways. WFH's funding approach empowers us to experiment, test, and pilot groundbreaking solutions that break down barriers such as isolation and limited opportunities, enabling wāhine to thrive and succeed in a rapidly evolving world. We are grateful for their unwavering support and partnership in building a stronger, more empowered community for girls and women across the pae 'āina.

Aloha,  
Wāhine Freelance Alliance (WFA)

**Open Office Hours**  
*for Fundraising Support*

10A-11A

Join the WFH Team every **THIRD THURSDAY (10/17/24)** for online zoom session for group fundraising support.

Mahalo nui, Ashley, for helping me gain clarity on WFA's mission (our "why"). The mana'o you shared was incredibly insightful and will empower our team to more effectively articulate: 1) the problems we're addressing, 2) why we're uniquely equipped to solve them, and 3) how we can better evaluate and understand our impact. Your input is truly invaluable!

-Wahine Freelance Alliance (WFA)

# ‘O Haumea No Ia: *Status of Women’s Mental And Reproductive Health*

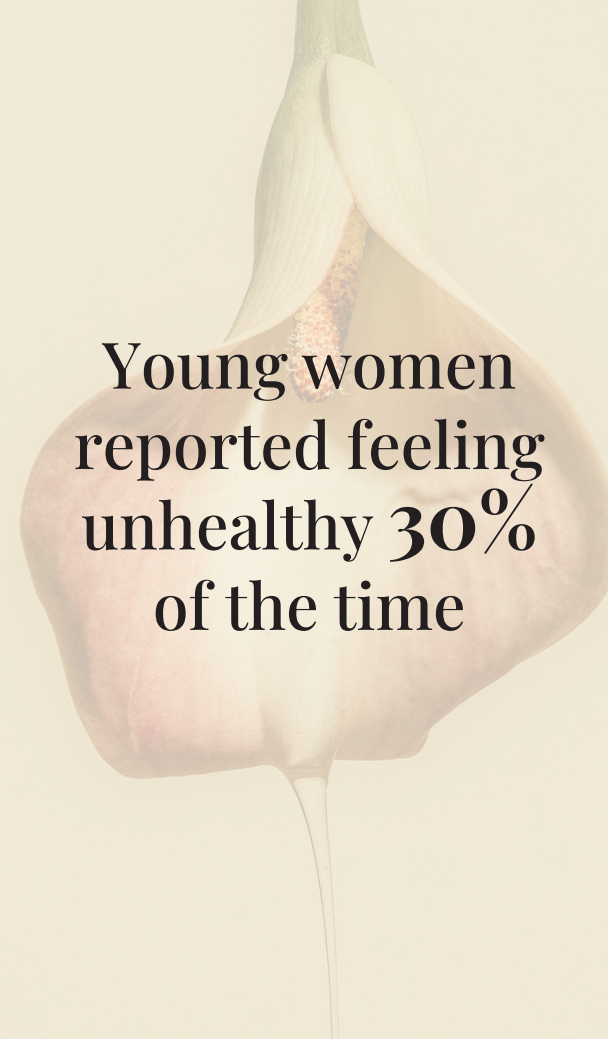
Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i has long championed the rights and well-being of women across our islands. In the wake of the 2022 Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision, which overturned Roe v. Wade, the need to understand and address women’s reproductive and mental health has never been more pressing. In 2023, Women’s Fund of Hawai‘i commissioned this research report to delve into these issues, seeking to understand the specific impacts on women in Hawai‘i

Women’s reproductive health is not just a personal matter but a critical issue that affects the overall health of families and communities. Access to safe, affordable reproductive healthcare, including contraception and abortion services, is essential for women to make informed decisions about their bodies and futures. In Hawai‘i, geographic isolation, healthcare access disparities, and cultural factors compound the challenges women face, making reproductive healthcare even more critical to their overall wellbeing.

The loss of federal protections has created an urgent need to understand how local policies, healthcare availability, and social dynamics are affecting women’s lives.

Equally important is the mental health of women, especially in times of societal upheaval and uncertainty. The stress and anxiety resulting from changing reproductive rights, combined with the unique mental health challenges faced by women in Hawai‘i, necessitate comprehensive research. Understanding these issues at the local level allows for targeted policy recommendations and the development of community resources that can directly support women.

This report aims to fill a crucial gap in data, offering insights into how the recent changes in reproductive rights are affecting the physical and mental health of women in Hawai‘i. By providing a detailed understanding of these challenges, this research serves as a foundation for creating a healthier and more equitable future for all women in our state.

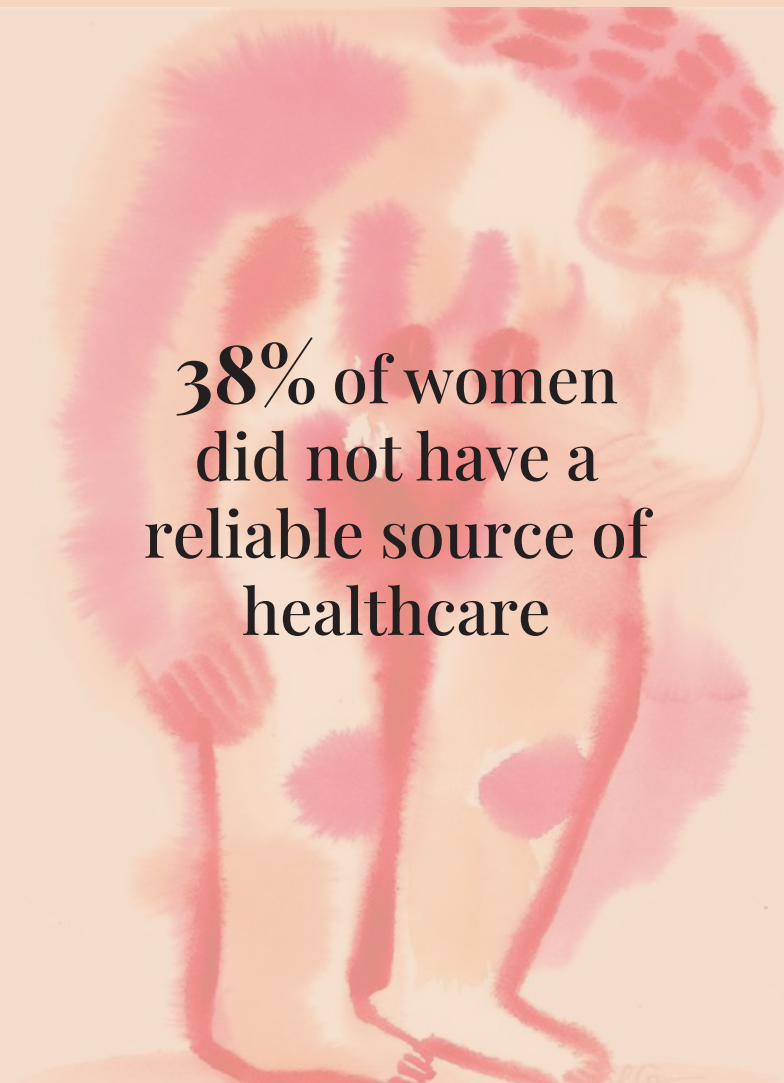


Young women reported feeling unhealthy **30%** of the time

**45%** of women seeking reproductive healthcare were likely to encounter at least one barrier when accessing care.

**42%** of women reported instances of emotional violence in their intimate relationships

**38%** of women did not have a reliable source of healthcare





# Koko Head x WFH Fundraising Event



**Did you Know?**  
Domestic Violence

1 in 7 women in Hawai'i will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.

**Did you Know?**  
Leadership

Women hold only 29% of board seats in Hawai'i's top 250 companies.

**Did you Know?**  
Poverty Rate

15% of women in Hawai'i live below the poverty line, with single mothers being disproportionately affected.

**Did you Know?**  
Higher Education

While more women than men in Hawai'i hold college degrees, women still earn less than men with the same level of education.

**Did you Know?**  
Wage Gap

Women in Hawai'i earn, on average, 84 cents for every dollar earned by men. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women face even wider disparities, earning only 61 cents on the dollar.

**Did you Know?**  
Political Representation

While Hawai'i has a relatively high number of women in elected office, women still make up only 31% of the state legislature, and leadership positions are overwhelmingly held by men.

**Did you Know?**  
Health Disparities

Native Hawaiian women are more likely to experience chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, at earlier ages compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

**Did you Know?**  
Native Hawaiian Women

Native Hawaiian women face a unique set of challenges, including higher rates of economic insecurity, health disparities, and limited access to quality education and employment opportunities.

**Did you Know?**  
Entrepreneurship

While women in Hawai'i are more likely to start businesses than men, only 18% of small businesses in Hawai'i are owned by women, and they face significant barriers in accessing capital.

**Did you Know?**  
Single Mothers

30% of children in Hawai'i live in single-parent households, and the majority of these households are led by women.

# Closing Letter From *Our Founders*

The more things change, the more they remain the same. This familiar adage speaks to the heart of Women's Fund of Hawai'i. After 35 years it's heartbreaking that we find ourselves as women having less protections and rights today than when we first launched Women's Fund of Hawai'i. We would never have thought that more than 35 years of collective work, fund raising, and advocacy would amount to a world in which women have to work even harder to achieve and flourish.

We remain in a system where women and girls require full support of their community just to have a chance at healthy lives. The original impetus of WFH was to imagine an island community where women and girls thrive. We determined it should be a place where women's voices were heard and valued, as donors, and as beneficiaries. We knew that our giving must be informed by community leaders, and we uphold that today.



Hawai'i's isolation, cultural diversity and economic disparities create a complex environment. Women face high rates of domestic violence, economic instability and barriers to healthcare and education. We continue to connect with our community as advocates for those whose voices are not always heard, amplifying the efforts of smaller nonprofits. This has allowed us to develop deep and meaningful connections with community catalysts and grass roots organizations to make a real impact.

We pride ourselves on our fund structure and connectivity so that those that support WFH can feel confident that their donations are going directly to the challenges as defined by our mission and our community. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported the mission of Women's Fund of Hawai'i over the years.

Together we're investing in the future of women and girls of Hawai'i. The work is not yet done.

With gratitude,

Mimi Beams, Gwen Pacarro, and Aileen Shin



## The Vision Ahead

The Board of Directors held a two-day strategic visioning retreat in September 2024, aimed at fostering reflection, celebrating creativity, and encouraging collaborative decision-making. The insights and ideas generated during these two days have created a clear pathway toward greater impact, with renewed focus on addressing the needs of the communities WFH serves. By fostering open dialogue among our members, the retreat has empowered the board to align around shared goals.

The retreat has sparked a deeper sense of commitment, motivating everyone involved to embrace change and innovation. As WFH moves forward, the organization is better equipped to not only navigate future challenges but also to seize emerging opportunities with confidence. This retreat has laid a strong foundation for the vision ahead, positioning WFH for a future filled with growth, transformation, and new possibilities. With this momentum, we are poised to expand our influence, strengthen our partnerships, and amplify our mission to support and uplift women and girls across Hawai'i and beyond.

# Join Us

