

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Navarrette, J. & Derrickson J.D. (2014). Hawai'i Renters Study 2013. Understanding the Housing Needs of Native Hawaiian and Non-Hawaiian Section 8 Households, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Honolulu HI, 96817.

INTRODUCTION. Despite recent improvements in the general economy, homelessness and a shortage of affordable housing units continue across the State of Hawai'i. In collaboration with County Housing Directors, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) conducted a survey of Hawai'i renters who were either receiving Section 8 housing assistance or were on a Section 8 Wait List (Wait List) as of December 2012. The aim of this study was to assist Section 8 program administrators and policy makers in better understanding the needs of Section 8 and Wait Listed participants particularly documenting the housing needs of low-income Native Hawaiian renters.

METHODOLOGY. A survey was mailed to a random 10% of Section 8 and Wait List households in each of the four counties during the spring of 2013. A total of 1,940 surveys were sent; 31% (n=603) were returned and analyzed. The survey included quantitative (i.e. how many in household, how long on waiting list) and qualitative (i.e. preferred location, reasons for being happy with housing situation) questions.

Hawai'i Renters Study 2013 Sample Sizes									
County	<u>Section 8</u>			<u>Wait List</u>			<u>Grand Totals</u>		
	Native Hawaiian	Non-Hawaiian	Total	Native Hawaiian	Non-Hawaiian	Total	Native Hawaiians	Non-Hawaiian	Total
Hawai'i	40	31	71	116	70	186	156	101	257
Kaua'i	3	14	17	19	22	41	22	36	58
Maui	25	21	46	54	39	93	79	60	139
Honolulu	55	74	129	13	7	20	68	81	149
State	123	140	263	202	138	340	325	278	603

KEY FINDINGS. Five key findings can be considered actionable and worthy of consideration by housing advocates, administrators, and planners.

Finding #1. Section 8 vouchers enhanced housing security.
Based on a proposed "Renter's Hierarchy of Housing Needs" qualitative findings indicated:

- 70% of the Wait Listed who were unhappy with housing shared responses classified as housing insecure, while only 16% of those with Section 8 gave responses classified as housing insecure.

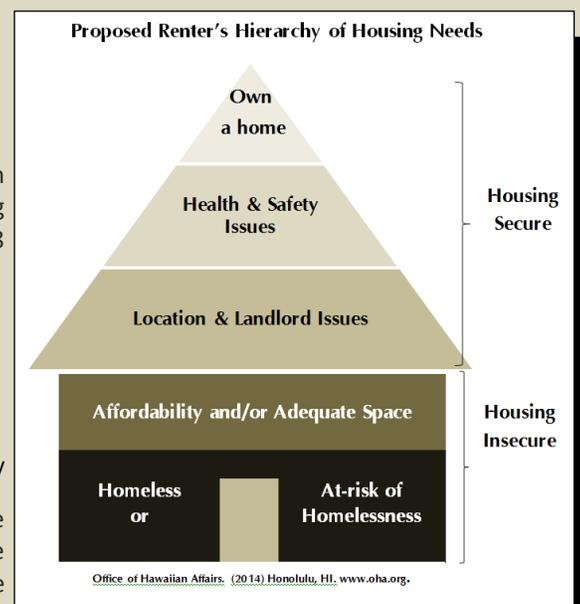
"There's not enough space for my children and I. The cost of rent is not worth it for a one bedroom unit, but I don't have the means to afford another place that has a room for my family. It's also far from everything I have to do."

-Native Hawaiian family of five in Hawai'i County

- Levels of housing security did not vary by Native Hawaiian household status although Native Hawaiians were more concerned about adequate space.

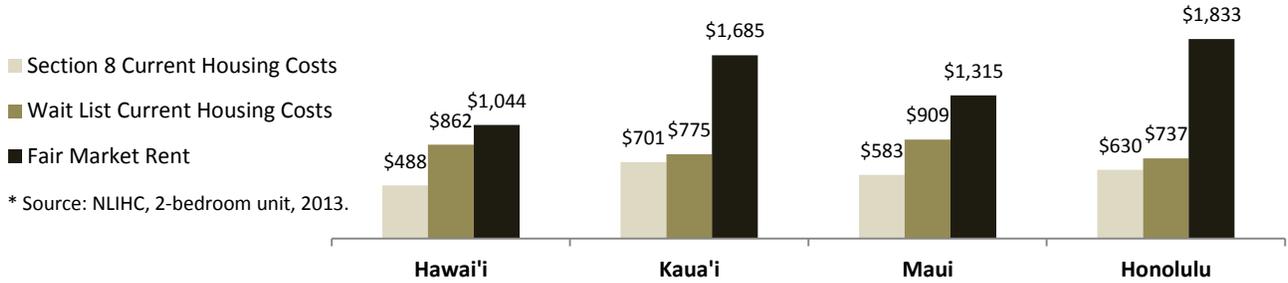
Finding #2. Disparities in Section 8 Wait List times were apparent.

- 70% of Native Hawaiians on Wait List reported waiting 3 or more years.
- 90% on the Wait List in the city and county of Honolulu reported having waited at least four years.



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Average County Housing Costs: Section 8 vs. Wait List vs. Fair Market Rent* (n=432)



Finding #3. The relative value of Section 8 assistance varied by county. Compared to the average housing costs of Wait Listed households, on average Section 8 vouchers reduced housing costs by 43% (\$488/\$864) in Hawai'i County, 36% in Maui County, 15% in the City & County of Honolulu, and 10% in Kaua'i County.

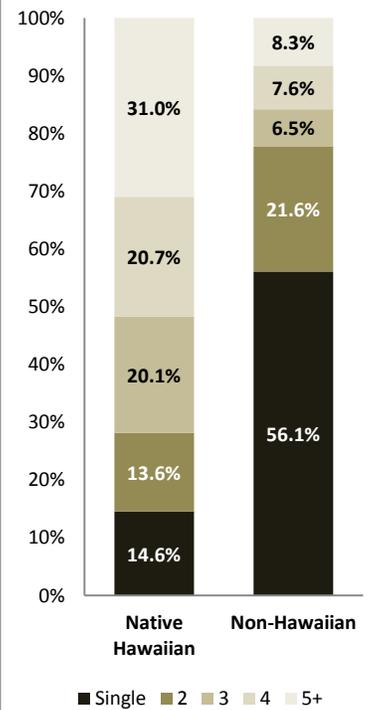
Finding #4. The dissimilarity in housing needs between Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians was linked to different household sizes and composition.

- 52% of Native Hawaiian households included four or more people; 48% of household members were under age 18; 9% were over age 55.
- 56% of non-Hawaiian households were singles; 28% of household members were under age 18; 31% had household members over age 55.

Finding #5. A comparison of key housing characteristics by the nine most preferred districts to live verifies that housing needs differ between Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians.

- Native Hawaiian households preferred to live in districts with a high density of Native Hawaiians (i.e. Puna or Leeward O'ahu), and typically needed at least a three-bedroom unit. In addition,
 - Fewer Hawaiians will benefit from Kūpuna (Senior) housing and/or microunits.
 - Housing for Native Hawaiians should consider the needs of growing children.
 - In the long-term, most Native Hawaiians desire homeownership.
- Non-Hawaiians reported greater interest in living in Kona, Honolulu, and Līhu'e districts; In the most preferred districts as much as 60% of non-Hawaiian households requested a studio or one bedroom unit.

Household Size: Native Hawaiians vs. Non-Hawaiians



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. The housing needs of low-income Native Hawaiians require unique, flexible solutions. Findings suggest the size, location and family needs of Native Hawaiians warrant affordable housing consideration.

Key Statistics	Section 8		Wait List	
	Native Hawaiian	Non-Hawaiian	Native Hawaiian	Non-Hawaiian
Time on Wait List	-	-	70% = ≥3 yrs.	52% = ≥3 yrs.
Average household size	3.9	1.8	3.6	2.2
Average number of needed bedrooms	3.1	1.8	2.8	2.0
% of households satisfied w/current unit	81%	81%	41%	46%
% of households who prefer to own home	74%	46%	71%	48%