



MAUI WILDFIRES

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

► RESPONSE

On Aug. 8, 2023, unprecedented and devastating wildfires tore through Maui neighborhoods – creating a staggering loss of life and homes. **Over 2,000 structures were destroyed, and more than 7,000 people remain displaced** several months later. As Maui faced both an immediate emergency and a long road to recovery, food banks in Hawai'i and across the United States stepped up to make sure Maui Food Bank was not alone.

Hawai'i Foodbank's Call to Action

Hawai'i Foodbank immediately began working locally and nationally to source food and basic needs. As donations for Maui began flooding in from across the islands and continent, we secured an additional warehouse on O'ahu to manage the outpouring of support – **storing food and staging shipments to Maui Food Bank as supplies were needed.**

In the first few months, Hawai'i Foodbank coordinated and shipped nearly 40 containers of donated food and supplies from O'ahu to Maui. We also coordinated an additional 36 shipments directly from our partners across the U.S. **Combined, Hawai'i Foodbank's response efforts helped provide more than 2.3 million pounds of food and emergency supplies.**

As the needs spiked, Hawai'i Foodbank also provided Maui Food Bank with remote and on-the-ground staff support – sending 15 team members to supplement the immediate response efforts and then continuing to send several staff each week for the next six weeks. This additional support helped send more supplies to the affected communities; increase deliveries to Maui Food Bank's existing partners; provide Disaster SNAP outreach assistance; and manage the influx of donations, media requests and other support inquiries from the community. Altogether, **our team has dedicated more than 1,400 hours to Maui relief**, and we remain ready to support wherever needed.

At the same time, Hawai'i Foodbank also began working closely with new partners on Maui. Our team has provided food, warehouse and staff support, and technical assistance to the Council For Native Hawaiian Advancement and the County of Maui for their distribution sites in Kahana and Kahului – **servicing hundreds of affected people each week.**

From day one, our donors showed their characteristic generosity, **contributing food and more than \$3 million** to Hawai'i Foodbank to support Maui relief. This enabled us to quickly secure warehouse space, send staff support and shipments of food, as well as provide direct support to our partners at Maui Food Bank.



Hawai'i Foodbank's Response Efforts in the First Few Months



Distributed **over 2.3 million pounds of food and supplies** to Maui.



Dedicated **more than 1,400 hours** of staff support



Sourced **over 75 containers** of food and supplies



Raised **more than \$3 million** for Maui relief



MAUI WILDFIRES RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

▶ LONG-TERM RECOVERY

In disasters, necessity and a shared sense of service bring people together in new and creative ways. It is an honor for us to work alongside Maui Food Bank in their response efforts. In just months, **Maui Food Bank and its partners distributed as much food as they typically provide in a full year – including more than 250,000 pounds of fresh produce.** As Maui Food Bank continues to assess the evolving needs, Hawai'i Foodbank is committed to providing them support while continuing to meet the nutritional needs of families and individuals facing hunger across the state.

While we are embarking on a challenging journey towards recovery, the wildfire response has surfaced new partnerships that will bring long-term change that makes our network of food banks even stronger.

Strengthening Our Food Bank Hui

The wildfires taught us many lessons. The tragic losses brought much sadness to our islands, but the disaster also shines light on what is possible when we all come together to take care of each other.

Hawai'i Foodbank has been steadily and intentionally weaving disaster preparedness into our operations and community partnerships for the past few years. We have been **working with our affiliate food banks to strengthen our network in Hawai'i**, as well as **building connections with our Feeding America sister food banks across the country.** We believe that these accumulative efforts to work collaboratively and invest in one another will best strengthen food security across the entire state. The Maui response was perhaps the clearest view of what a connected network of food banks means for our islands. Hawai'i Foodbank helped Maui with staff, storage and distribution, and we were able to do this because we also had support from food banks up and down the west coast and beyond.

The reality of disasters is we can never plan exactly for what will hit. But listening, learning and building trusted relationships and strong communications with our network of community partners will ensure that we prepare together.

Future Implications for Hunger

Before the wildfires, **1 in 6 people in Hawai'i** were already struggling with hunger daily. Hawai'i has a higher cost of living than any other state, and groceries are estimated to be 50% more expensive than the national average. On top of this, **accelerating inflation has made it even harder for families to make ends meet.** Hawai'i's tourism-driven economy offers a disproportionate number of low-wage jobs, and the drastic decline in visitors post-fire created a secondary ripple effect on food insecurity. Median housing prices are among the highest in the nation, and the destruction of homes puts more pressure on an already limited housing supply. Amid these mounting economic pressures, **Hawai'i Foodbank is committed to finding solutions and working towards a future where everyone in Hawai'i has access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.**

