

ENERGIZE KĀROU

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT | JUNE 2022



HAWAII
STATE
ENERGY
OFFICE

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Community Engagement Report

JUNE 2022



Prepared for

**HAWAI'I
STATE
ENERGY
OFFICE**

Prepared by



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Methodology + Approach	5
Timeline + Driving Questions	6
Targeted Communities	7
Engagement Process	8
Community Workshop Promotions	13
Community Perspectives	14
Community Perspectives + Takeaways	14
Phase 1 Perspectives + Takeaways	14
Phase 2 Perspectives + Takeaways	16
Phase 3 Perspectives + Takeaways	18
Online Perspectives + Takeaways	21
Energize Kākou Shareback	23
Final Recommendations	24

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Introduction

The bold clean energy agenda for Hawai'i – to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by the year 2045 – requires equally bold solutions.

The Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) sees community residents as an important stakeholder and an invaluable voice in the clean energy transformation that is underway.

Successful community engagement includes a return to traditional Hawaiian values. The ability to build connection to the past and bring 'āina (land) and kānaka (man) closer together is a valuable way to create a greater sense of ownership of energy as a shared resource.

To successfully attract the full participation of community, HSEO is committed to connecting with community to honor and empower community voices. When community feels connected, they are more inclined to get involved in the process. When community sees their input integrated in a timely fashion, they are more likely to help find solutions. And when challenges arise, community will be more willing to approach obstacles with greater openness and acceptance.

The following report was generated to summarize the Hawai'i State Energy Office's (HSEO) community engagement efforts over a nine-month period from September 2021 through June 2022. Coined Energize Kākou, the community engagement program was created to gather input from community and the energy industry to help guide the state's clean energy transformation.

The following Energize Kākou: Community Perspectives captures the methodology, approach, and perspectives that were gathered throughout the process.

Methodology + Approach

The approach for this program was to strike a balance between those who are currently engaged in the energy conversation and those who are disenfranchised, living in under-resourced communities, and are not participating in conversations in and around Hawai'i's clean energy.

To educate, inform, and gather feedback from target communities and stakeholders, a four-part methodology was deployed to ground stakeholders in the knowledge of Hawai'i's past, with an eye towards its future, and mindful of our shared kuleana (responsibility) to Hawai'i's kūpuna (ancestors) and mo'opuna (descendants).



A translation of each phase and its relationship to this work is as follows:

MO'OKŪ'AUHAU: The Lineage of Generations of Knowledge. Every project begins as close to its source as possible. Through the research and development around Hawai'i's energy history, the community can determine its relevance and make stronger connections with the place and people of the project. The work of the Mo'okū'auhau phase is captured in the Cultural Narrative.

MO'OLELO: The Lineage of Generations of Tales. Hawaiian culture is an oral culture, and we believe in the power of talking to people. By talking story with key community and industry thought leaders, we start to understand how best to design the community outreach and engagement program. The work of the Mo'olelo phase is guided by this Strategic Work Plan, and relevant mana'o will be reflected in the Playbook.

MO'OKA'I: The Lineage of Generations of Journeys. The design and approach for the community outreach and engagement program is finalized and implementation begins through a journey of discovery, fact finding, clarity, and compromise. The work of the Mo'oka'i phase is guided by this Strategic Work Plan and the Playbook.

MO'OWAIWAI: The Lineage of Generations of Valued Practices. Continued implementation of the community outreach and engagement program will be carried out by HSEO. This valued practice will be directly supported by the Playbook, which will enable HSEO, along with their partners and collaborators, to either initiate or sustain connections with energy-impacted communities and successfully hold workshops and meetings there.

OUTREACH TIMELINE + DRIVING QUESTIONS

1 Community leaders

MARCH

One-on-one conversations to understand the community and map the network

.....

"What do community residents want to know about energy?"

"What do we need to know about this community?"

2 Energy sector

APRIL

Roundtable discussions to identify what the energy sector needs from community

.....

"What information does the energy sector need from community residents to better shape the energy system?"

3 Community residents

MAY

Public workshops to share key findings from previous phases and understand the communities energy priorities

.....

"How can community and the energy sector collaborate to create more abundant and sustainable communities now and into the future?"

4 Reports

JUNE

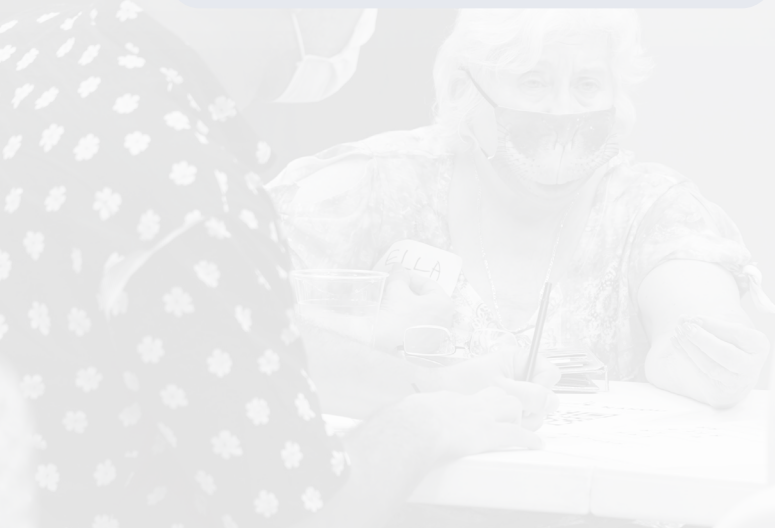
Playbook - Outreach best practices

Engagement Report - Share lessons learned and recommendations

Siting Report - Capture community feedback and demographics

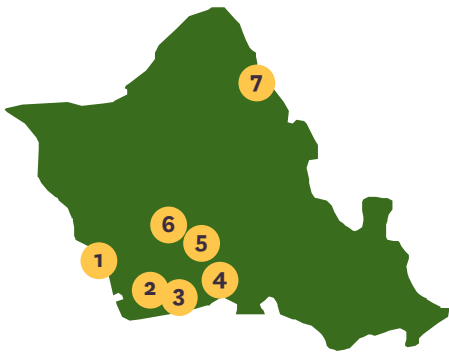
.....

"How can the relationships activated continue? How can we honor participants by putting their feedback to use?"



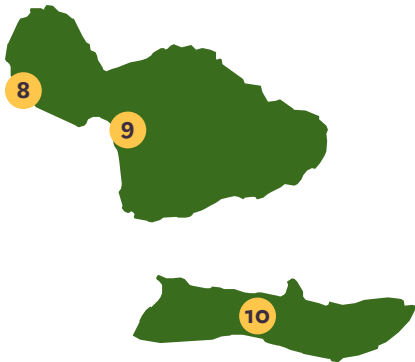
TARGET COMMUNITIES

The process to gather input from community was organized around eleven (11) regions on O‘ahu, Maui, Moloka‘i, and Hawai‘i Island. In consultation with the County's energy offices, these communities were chosen because they have current, or planned, utility-scale grid-scale renewable energy projects. The target communities included in this community outreach program include:



O‘AHU COUNTY

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Wai‘anae | 5) Waipi‘o Village & Kunia |
| 2) Kapolei & Kalaeloa | 6) Mililani |
| 3) ‘Ewa Beach | 7) Kahuku |
| 4) Pearl City | |



MAUI COUNTY

- 8) Lāhainā
- 9) Kīhei
- 10) Moloka‘i



HAWAI‘I COUNTY

- 11) Pāhoa

Engagement Process

A three-phased in-person and virtual outreach process was executed from March – June 2022 and reached a total of 173 Hawai'i residents. An additional 187 responses were collected via online survey. The objectives, target audiences, and promotional tactics for each phase varied slightly and summarized below.



Phase 1

One-on-One Community Conversations

A total of thirteen (13) one-on-one virtual interviews were conducted from March thru April with community leaders in each of the eleven (11) target communities. These one-on-one thought leader interviews were designed to give courtesy notice to trusted members of the community who are grounded in their community, know their community well, and have a network through which they communicate with their community.

The question-and-answer format provided insight into the goals, priorities, challenges, concerns, and general community sentiment. Questions were designed to understand the audience groups of each community, how networks are organized within the community, how information is best disseminated and from whom, and how energy fits into daily conversations. The information gathered in these conversations helped to uncover what community residents know about energy and how HSEO can best meet and support the community.

Invitations to participate were sent via email and followed up with phone calls. Making contact with new people for the first time proved to take more than originally anticipated. In fact, some stakeholders just didn't respond, others took a while, and some even forgot to call in after a meeting date was established. The only thought leader interview that was scheduled and wasn't completed was the one-on-one conversation for the Pearl City community.

Phase 2 Focus Group Discussions

A total of forty-three (43) individuals participated in six (6) focus group discussions – three virtually and three (3) in-person meetings – held on April 20, April 22, April 27, April 29, and May 10. These meetings were geared towards stakeholders who are invested in Hawai'i's clean energy future, conduct community engagement in matters related to energy, and are knowledgeable in the energy sector. In the case of Kahuku and Moloka'i, there were individuals who weren't necessary in the energy industry as a utility company, developer or landowner, but are actively engaged in these conversations to inform how the community and the energy sector can best work together to creating solutions for the future.

The driving question for this discussion was: How can the energy industry and community can best work together to move the state to 100% clean energy?

Through a series of five activities, the focus group format was organized around:

- 1 Community Conversations**
What do people say about energy?
- 2 Understanding Energy Roadblocks**
What are the major energy system roadblocks or problems you know to be true?
- 3 Prioritizing Energy Roadblocks**
In order for our state to reach our 100% renewable energy goals, what does the energy sector most need community input and feedback on?
- 4 Offering Energy Solutions**
What are some ideas on how to improve the identified energy systems and problems?
- 5 Brainstorming Community Collaboration**
How can communities work more effectively the energy industry? What is the best way for community to engage and when?

Invitations for this engagement were sent via MailChimp to a total of 95 individuals. If priority stakeholders could not attend, or perhaps a more suitable representative was suggested, a request was made for them to forward the invite to the person of their choice within their company. Follow-up emails were sent to unopened emails once, and a second email to those who opened and did not RSVP. Personal calls and text messages were helpful in making a final request to participate. Snacks and refreshments were provided during the in-person meetings.

Phase 3 Community Workshops

Phase 3 consisted of seven (7) community workshops – six (6) in-person community workshops and one (1) virtually for Central O‘ahu – during the month of May and June. A total of 117 people were recorded through sign-in sheets.

O‘AHU

MAY 17 ‘Ewa Meeting at Makakilo Community Park	▶ 15 participants
MAY 18 Kahuku Meeting at Hau‘ula Community Center	▶ 15 participants
MAY 26 Wai‘anae Meeting at KS Learning Center at Mā‘ili	▶ 21 participants
JUNE 7 Central O‘ahu Meeting via Zoom	▶ 2 participants

MAUI

MAY 9 Lāhainā Meeting at Lāhainā Civic Center	▶ 4 participants
MAY 10 Kihei Meeting at Kihei Community Center	▶ 15 participants

HAWAII‘I

MAY 24 Pāhoa Meeting at Pāhoa District Park	▶ 46 participants
---	-------------------

The purpose of this engagement was three-fold:

- 1 Highlight Hawai'i's energy ecosystem and energy efficiency measures
- 2 Understand energy project priorities and community values
- 3 Establish a list of community needs and vision for the future

Through a series of facilitated activities, participants were asked to provide feedback on the following questions and prompts:

► **Activity 1: What's one word to that comes to mind when you think of clean energy?**

► **Activity 2: What is your top priority for participating in this clean energy economy?**

- » Rooftop solar
- » Energy efficiency tools
- » Community based renewable energy
- » General information about renewable energy projects and benefits
- » Clean energy opportunities
- » More public EV charging stations
- » Green workforce training and employment opportunities

► **Activity 3: Identify the top 4 features you desire most in a future renewable energy project.**

- » On existing commercial/industrial land
- » On low quality agricultural land
- » On land with already contaminated soil that limits other allowable use
- » Located out of public viewshed
- » Enables multi land use opportunities
- » Built with design standards that protect the environment
- » Locally owned and operated
- » Trains and hires with/in the community to operate
- » Carries out community engagement early and often
- » Lowers monthly electric bills
- » do more PR
- » send email reminders prior to the meeting

What elements of grid scale projects do you want prioritized?
On existing commercial or industrial land
On low quality agricultural land
On land with already contaminated soil that limits other allowable use
Located out of public viewshed
Enables multi land use opportunities
Built with design standards that protect the environment
Locally owned and operated
Trains and hires with/in the community to operate
Pays workers a living wage
Carries out community engagement early and often
Lowers monthly electric bills
Other ideas?

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► **Activity 4: How would you like the energy industry to support your community?**

- » Community profit sharing
- » Contribution to community-directed fund
- » Community infrastructure
- » Education contributions
- » Educational programming
- » Workforce training and placement
- » Energy efficiency rebates

► **Activity 5: What do you want to be preserved in your community?**



Community Workshop Promotions

To promote the community meetings to the public, Eventbrite and Facebook event pages were established, a series of email blasts were distributed to Phase 1 and Phase 2 stakeholders, flyers were physically posted in target communities, emails and phone calls were made asking organizations to share the invitations within their networks, the invite was posted to social media, and each post boosted with a \$50 budget. To encourage survey participation, an Action of Aloha Gift Box valued at \$100 was offered to one winner for every island.

Each boosted post utilized targeted audiences by zip codes and interests around energy and community. A total of \$303 was spent to reach 32,280 people and engage with 229. Towards the tail end of the outreach, select posts were rejected for ads due to noncompliance with Meta's ad policies around ads affiliated with politics and social issues. It's fair to believe that some ads were rejected and some were accepted depending on the individual that reviewed it.

ENERGIZE KĀROU

Honoring & sustaining
the energy of 'āina has always
been in our nature

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Want to learn more about clean energy? If you're interested in participating in the transformation that is underway, the Hawai'i State Energy Office is seeking community input to guide policy makers and project developers in their decision making process.

Please join us for an evening of learning and sharing.

'Ewa, May 17th • Makakilo Community Park
Kahuku, May 18th • Hau'ula Community Association
Pāhoa, May 24th • Pāhoa Community Center
Wai'anae, May 26th • KS Community Learning Center, Mā'ili

6 – 8pm
Bentos will be provided.

To RSVP, visit www.energy.hawaii.gov

Questions? energizekakou@gmail.com

The Energize Kākou workshops are intended to provide community members with a better understanding of Hawai'i's energy ecosystems; provide industry stakeholders with a better understanding of community concerns, interests, and aspirations; and, report this collective mana'o in a manner that provides insight and guidance to communities, stakeholders, and policymakers.

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HAWAII STATE
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Let's build the right energy future for our community, together. Your mana'o will help guide the decision-making process to achieve 100% clean energy in 2045. The Hawai'i State Energy Office needs all Hawai'i voices to contribute.

Share your mana'o by June 5th, and be entered to win an Actions of Aloha Gift Box

TAKE THE SURVEY

HAWAII STATE
Energy Office

Community Perspectives

With every island, moku, and neighborhood, there were noticeable differences about each community. Whether from past trauma or socio-economic factors, community members responded to the engagement opportunities in different ways.

A summary of key perspectives and takeaways in each phase of outreach is described in the sections to follow.



PHASE 1 | PERSPECTIVES

Feedback received from most thought leader interviews indicated that energy is not top of mind for most community members. People are consumed with the daily challenges of making ends meet and residents don't have time to focus on systemic change because they're just trying to get by.

If pressed about energy, residents think of gas prices and utility bills and are interested in lower prices. However, without incentives or education, residents don't see the direct benefits and aren't as likely to engage. In Lāhainā, there's a desire from residents for more incentives to switch to solar, and more incentives to develop energy projects.

Kahuku and Moloka'i are uniquely different. They have been impacted by inequitable energy projects and have been highly active in shifting the relationship between developers and community. They are cognizant of new projects being built and stand ready to share their concerns. For Kahuku, in particular, the community feels that their voices have been neglected, and that other communities are prioritized over their longterm needs.

On Moloka'i, the price of electricity is on the mind of many residents. Yet, community outreach is a challenge as they attempt to figure out how to reach the entire island and not just certain areas.

For the island of Maui, community members expressed being in opposition with the first solar farm in South Maui. With all the power outages and the price of electricity rising, community frustrations have increased. Another concern is with the increase of electric vehicles, coupled a lack of charging stations.

In Pāhoa, geothermal is a huge trigger and there's deep trauma and broken trust with businesses and the community. However, there is an opportunity for education to increase transparency, and for trust to be rebuilt by engaging with community stakeholders more consistently.



PHASE 1 | TAKEAWAYS

1. *Community craves education.*

Communities need to be educated about projects that will affect their land and coastlines. They need to understand what their options are to make educated decisions. By highlighting the benefits and offering incentives, community residents might be more inclined to participate.

2. *Community needs tangible incentives.*

There were incentives for early adopters, but now those who couldn't afford it before are not able to invest now. With so many competing interests and daily distractions, especially financial, there needs to be more incentives for residents to switch to solar and invest in other solutions.

3. *Community wants transparency.*

Historically, trust has been broken between government and community. Not only is there trauma, but communities feel disenfranchised. The ability to listen and learn to community first, and then respond is critical to the success of creating a thriving energy ecosystem.





PHASE 2 | PERSPECTIVES

In addition to meeting with communities across the state, small meetings were held with energy experts who are knowledgeable in the energy conversation. These conversations helped to identify and prioritize key energy roadblocks. There was also an opportunity for energy professionals to share solutions and specifically address what information they need from communities to best work together and move the state to 100% clean energy.

For the Moloka'i and Kahuku workshops, community expressed feelings of distrust and lack of transparency with government agencies and utility companies. There's a sense of transientness in government and community feels disengaged when agencies try to do things quickly that cannot be done quick.

Feedback from these small group meetings emphasized the challenges in governmental procedures, prevalence of echo chambers, and a historical tension with community and government as biggest hurdles in moving forward. There is a desire for policies and processes to change, and decisions to be localized. Industry leaders recognize that the current procurement process requires developers to "have lots of money and stick it out forever." Currently, local developers feel excluded as the RFP process does not favor smaller projects. Although some would be willing to pay more for local energy, participants recognize the costs will be higher. One idea to encourage smaller developers to participate is to reverse the auction process for local developers to bid.





PHASE 2 | TAKEAWAYS

1. *Demonstrate a unified vision.*

Create a comprehensive, statewide energy plan and a brand-new RFP process. Currently, there are so many plans and reports, and the industry would desire an overarching energy plan to streamline policies and procedures. Although people view the Public Utilities Commission as the entity responsible for creating this plan, their role is regulatory. The State has a role in looking at how these communities can be sited. Look at big picture to facilitate a process with community to identify the State lands to pursue first. The community also has a desire to create community-driven plans that include “on the ground” details driven by those grassroots organizations that have to adhere to the plans. To avoid community burnout and redundancies, energy industry leaders recommend drawing from the Office of Planning’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that includes a snapshot of what’s happening in the community. The California’s Energy Commission was recommended as a reference point for examples of energy planning documents including rules, regulations, and standards to policies and procedures from which decision are made and regulated against.

2. *Simplify the message.*

Simplify the message and use graphics to get people’s attention. Bring messaging down to the communities level “think about the guy at the bus stop.” Governor Ige’s Coal Task Force has been helpful in showing the timeline of each project in process and when they will come online. This will help to create transparency in the process so the community knows when they can get involved. Right now, communities receive information with no sense of clarification on how they can contribute. Stakeholders suggest creating a baseline educational platform to make Zoom time more effective so communities can review content previously covered in prior sessions before coming to the table.

3. *Sit with the community.*

Don’t just check the box. Take time to put in the work. You cannot just ask someone a question, you must be with them long enough to hear their idea. Offer different outreach formats and education to build pilina (connection). Community engagement and pilina should be the same thing – a back-and-forth relationship. Once the community shares input, the energy industry should be prepared to act quickly. Otherwise, people wonder why they even bothered if action is not immediate.



PHASE 3 | PERSPECTIVES

The six (6) in-person community workshops attracted different stakeholders for different reasons. The first meeting in Lāhainā drew four (4) people with less than two weeks' notice, there were forty-seven (47) attendees in Pāhoa who came to protest PGV, and twenty-one (21) people who attended the last meeting in-person meeting in Wai'anae. The seventh meeting was held virtually for Central O'ahu, and only two (2) participants joined, both from other moku (region).

Whether it was a matter of notice, or a matter of the community, the community meetings attracted different stakeholders for different reasons. Either to share their opinions on energy, like in Pāhoa and Kahuku, or to learn more. Regardless, every community member attended with intention.

Some of the common themes that transpired from the various community conversations included a deep cultural appreciation for the vitality of land and ocean resources and a respect for any associated Native Hawaiian traditions, customs, and rights. When community members were asked what they wanted preserved in their community, the ocean, shoreline, land, water, natural and cultural resources, or the environment rose to the top.

Another common theme was the priority of grid scale projects and developers to **conduct community engagement early and often, hire and train locally, pay workers a living wage, and build with design standards that protect the environment.**

Finding ways for the energy industry to protect Hawai'i's beautiful people and culture were some of the biggest priorities for residents. Community members want the energy industry to support their neighborhood with community infrastructure, community project sharing, contribution to community-directed funds, and workforce training and placement. Keeping projects local and local people here in Hawai'i was of utmost concern.



PHASE 3 | TAKEAWAYS

1. *Assert expectations and clarify roles early and often.*

For some Kahuku residents who are heavily engaged with energy projects, it was important to over-communicate the outreach objectives and process and how it might differ from the work they are already doing. It's also important to continuously remind people of the timeline, including how their feedback will be implemented and when. Another idea to meaningfully engage community is to take time for proper introductions. Ask participants about their intentions in coming to the meeting. Ask them to share about their schooling, work, and volunteer experience. What's driving them to be here? During the community meetings, it was suggested that asking more specific questions could help to garner greater participation.

2. *Ensure meeting structure and venues cultivate safe spaces for listening.*

Feedback from workshop participants expressed their appreciation for the presentation and facilitated activities. However, in more cases than not, people just wanted to have someone's ear. If community members carved time out of their day, it was to deliver a specific message. Participants were there to express either their passion, curiosity, or dissatisfaction. They were interesting in talking to one person, not the group. In every meeting, people pulled the internal team aside to share their opinions and ideas. They wanted to know that their comments would be heard and someone could be trusted to carry their feedback forward. On several occasions, participants were glad to see people actually taking notes. The ability to provide additional resources or a point person to solely serve as this liaison before, during and after the meeting is strongly recommended.

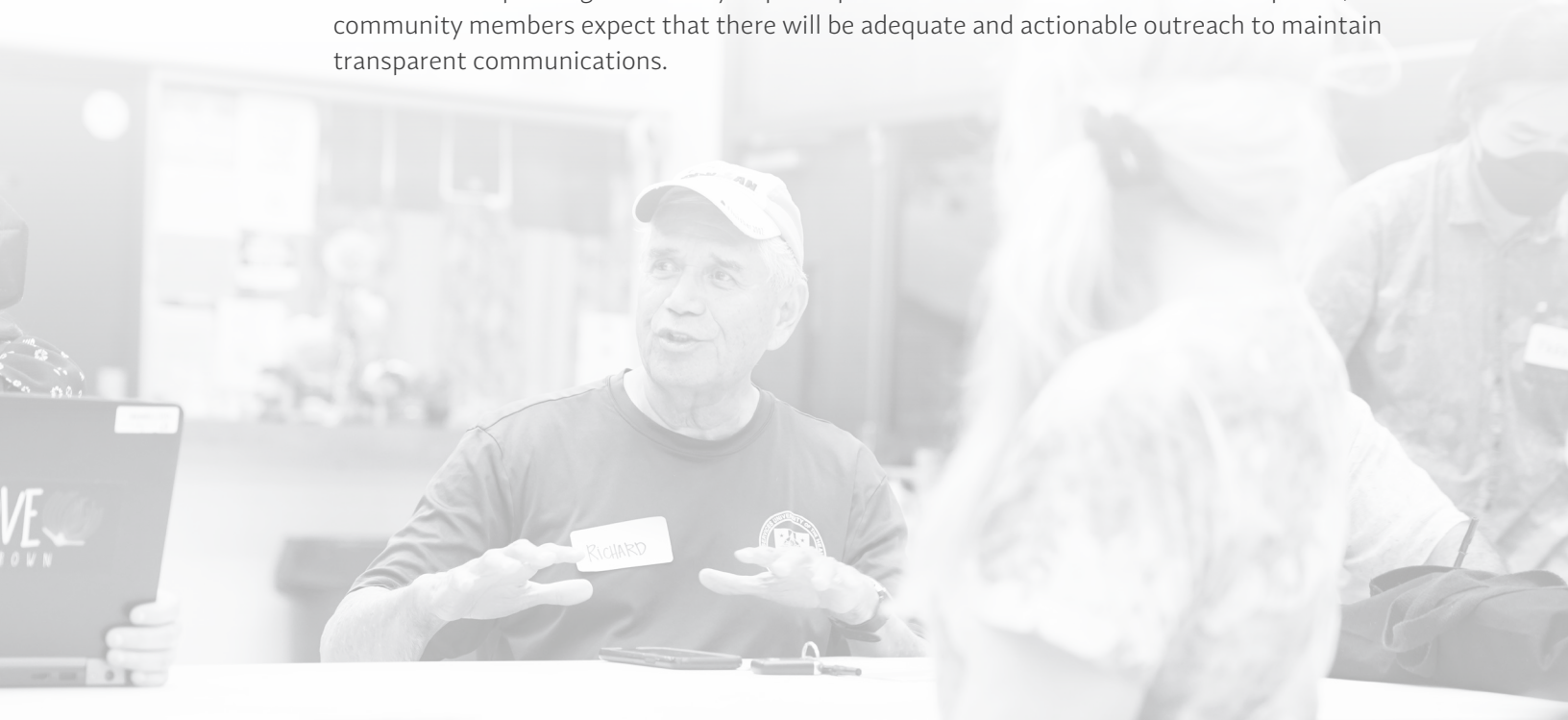


3. *Create a sense of urgency and accessibility for communities to participate.*

People believe clean energy is an important aspect of a sustainable future, but participating in energy programs or conversations is not always affordable or accessible. In general, participants know that transitioning to clean energy is good for the well-being of themselves and their community. But, with no specific project, or an immediate call to action, community members may be less likely to engage. To make outreach more accessible, open the meetings up to all Hawai'i residents, (not just targeted to the specific regions) and create educational opportunities well before energy projects come online.

4. *Equitable energy requires a balance of education, incentives, and ample lead time.*

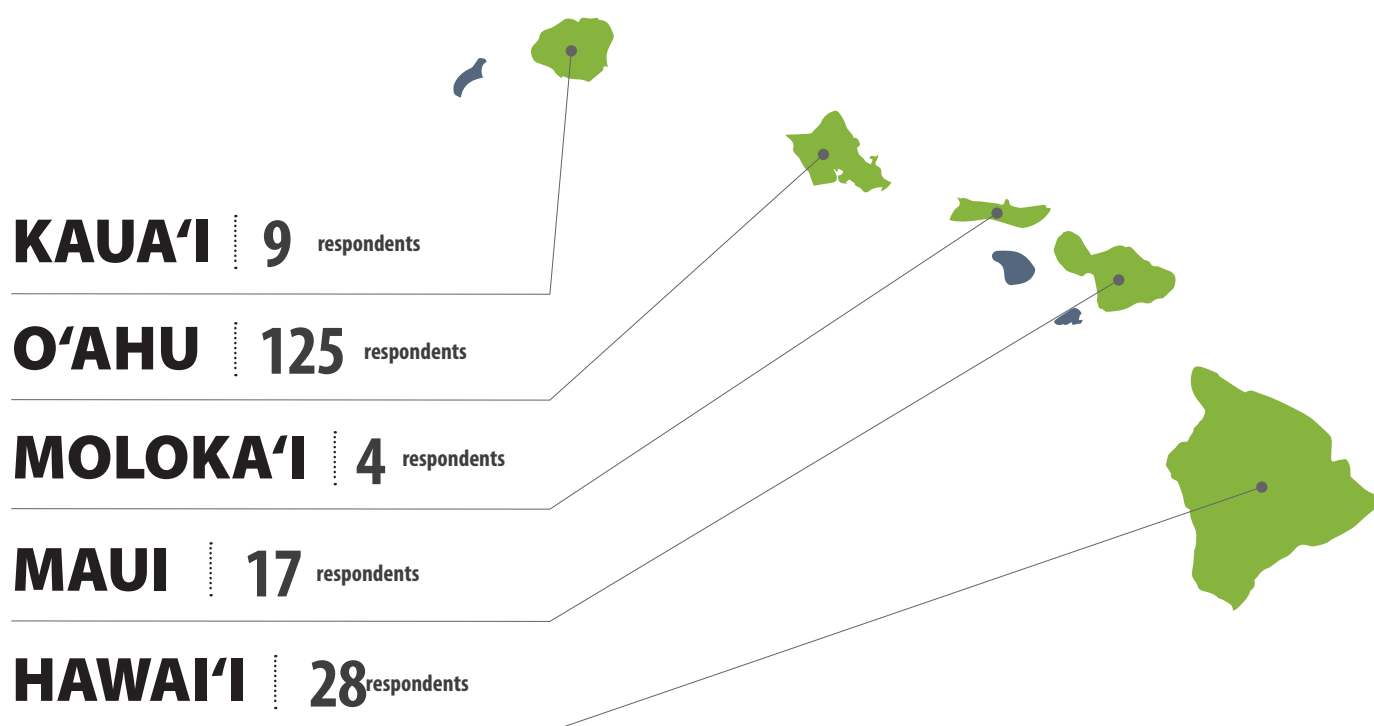
Of the 500 or more stakeholders who received the community workshop flyers, the turnout was low either due to engagement fatigue, lack of notice, or disconnect with how the topic relates to day-to-day lives. To ensure community engagement doesn't conflict with other priorities, communities expressed the value of providing incentives. On Moloka'i, community noted that even a little compensation helps offset costs like groceries. On Maui, employers are even offering incentives for employees who can give of their time, treasure, and talent. Incentives could also motivate a large percentage of Hawai'i residents who lack the tools or resources to meaningfully engage, or motivation to create systemic change for a clean energy future. Providing multiple avenues and times for people to participate will help to ensure greater attendance. Daytime outreach might interfere with work, and evening or weekend meetings may impact personal time for family and friends. Finally, the more time, notice, and flexibility for stakeholders to engage is important. Meaningful community engagement requires more than five months of outreach and more than two weeks of lead time before requesting community to participate. Once the outreach has been completed, community members expect that there will be adequate and actionable outreach to maintain transparent communications.





ONLINE SURVEY | PERSPECTIVES

In comparison to the 173 stakeholders who participated in Phase 1, 2, and 3, the survey yielded a slightly larger data set in a shorter period. There were a total of 187 online survey respondents - nine (9) from Kaua'i, 125 from O'ahu, seventeen (17) from Maui, four (4) from Moloka'i, and twenty-eight (28) from Hawai'i.



Due to the widespread availability of modern technology and general interest in the topic, online survey engagement proved to be more effective. Interestingly, we heard from Moloka'i residents that surveys aren't popular forms of outreach anymore which contradicted input from Kahuku who regularly distributes surveys through their monthly Kahuku Community Association meetings. Although people were less familiar with the State's clean energy goals at 56%, respondents ranked "how top of mind is energy on a scale of 1 to 100" with a score of 67 out of 100. However, when asked about the top priorities for their community, energy ranked fourth among a list of 11 choices. **Similar to phase 1 responses, housing, cost of living, and education were the most critical areas of interest.**



ONLINE SURVEY | TAKEAWAYS

1. Engagement can happen more often if done digitally.

Although it may seem one-sided, 79% of respondents shared that they prefer to stay engaged by email. 49% said social media is how they connect with issues they care about. In addition, 62 respondents are willing to engage 1-2 hours per week with enough time and notice. The creation of infographics shared via social media and website will assist with educational outreach.

2. Build awareness via paid and earned media.

Respondents currently get their information from traditional media outlets including newspaper, internet, television and radio. Consider investing in a paid media budget that includes digital advertisements with local news outlets and social media channels. Generating earned media and/or securing Public Service Announcements will ensure greater reach.

3. Focus on how the energy ecosystem can protect Hawai'i.

People might not be passionate about "energy," but people are passionate about Hawai'i. When asked what people want to preserve, the most common responses involved protecting Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. Community members expressed a strong desire to protect Hawai'i and all the qualities that make it so special. Preserving Open space, green space, clean water, beaches, land, and Hawaiian culture and traditions were held in the highest regard. Recognizing that energy is a land, water, sovereignty, and climate resiliency issue will help to change the narrative and move people to change.

Energize Kākou Shareback

On Wednesday, June 29 from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., a virtual meeting was held to share community outreach findings and key takeaways from the Energize Kākou engagement efforts. Sixty-one (61) community members and energy stakeholders RSVP'd for the event.

During the presentation, participants were asked to share any of their comments and questions in the chat. No comments or questions were provided. However, one participant asked why the chat between participants had been disabled.

In the future, it's advisable to send an email reminder to participants prior to the meeting and perhaps explore earned media opportunities.



Final Recommendations

Community engagement post-pandemic isn't like it was before. Learning to adapt to rising and falling COVID numbers and people's comfortability with face-to-face engagement presented new considerations for the development and execution of HSEO's community engagement program.

Over the course of our engagement, both virtually and in-person, there were some key community engagement takeaways gleaned from this process. We heard early on that "it's not community engagement if nobody shows up. That means you aren't doing it properly." How is this achieved, and what are the measures of success? Here are a few closing thoughts and recommendations as HSEO continues to strike a delicate balance between communities and energy ecosystems. The pandemic has also helped to legitimize online engagement as before, community engagement was only viewed trustworthy if conducted face-to-face.

Consider community advisory groups to create community ownership.

Create a community advisory group in each community, trained by the Wayfinders and potentially compensated, who will be responsible for community decision making. These groups would serve as the key entity to engage developers interested in siting a project in their neighborhood, determine how best to negotiate community benefits, play a role in shaping energy projects to meet community needs, and offer final consent. They would also carry out their own engagement with their community to best gauge community interest and concerns. HSEO can provide resources (tools, infrastructure, money) and support (guidance, professional advice, technical competence) to support the establishment of these groups and their ongoing work.

Raise the bar of expectation on quality community engagement.

The energy industry recognizes the need to establish better systems and incentives to encourage renewable energy projects and conservation. The industry also recognizes the critical bridge that their efforts can make to streamline the process with community and developers. Currently, proposals under consideration for award undergo vigorous scrutiny on financial and technical competence. Less rigor is demonstrated in assessing the quality of a project's community engagement. Meaningful community engagement offers greater chance for successful projects that are embraced by community. Consider creating a rubric to articulate and assess how community feedback was applied in actionable ways to improve quality of people's lives, and that effort was made in the engagement to be reciprocal in its approach. Ideally, this rubric would be adopted by Hawaiian Electric and the Public Utilities Commission to not only address the state's energy goals at hand, but also to address the real needs of people.

All that said, HSEO stands ready to engage community in new and refreshing ways that centers community voices and uplevels the skills of relationship building, empathy, and connection to generate more equity for community stakeholders. These are the skills of aloha that are the foundational root of equitable and pono decision making across the entire agency.

