



WEST O'AHU WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

SEPTEMBER 2023



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West O‘ahu, comprising Wai‘anae, Kapolei, and Ewa Beach, is unique in terms of its employment opportunities and challenges. While all of West O‘ahu can benefit from workforce development efforts, they are most needed in Wai‘anae, which has a significant Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander population and faces higher rates of homelessness and unemployment, along with lower levels of educational attainment compared with the rest of O‘ahu. Median worker earnings in Wai‘anae are approximately \$34,000 per year – below the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult in Hawai‘i. There is a clear need to ensure Wai‘anae residents can improve their job prospects and increase their earnings, ideally through training and employment opportunities located in their community.

INVEST IN PRIORITY TRAINING PROGRAMS

Regional employment data and job postings were analyzed to determine key workforce development opportunities in West O‘ahu. The region’s top industries in terms of employment volume are Accommodation & Food Services, Construction, Healthcare & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Administration & Support. Healthcare and Construction emerged as industries with high earning potential for West O‘ahu residents. Healthcare jobs are particularly prominent in Wai‘anae and Ewa Beach, while Construction is most prominent in Kapolei. Most jobs across industries require a high school diploma or GED at minimum, and many jobs in Healthcare and Construction/Skilled Trades prefer or require some form of industry certification.

IMPROVE LOCAL COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Although there are many education and training resources available for O‘ahu residents to upskill and become more competitive in the workforce, many West O‘ahu residents may not know where or how to access them. Moreover, not all resources are available *locally in West O‘ahu*, which creates barriers to access, especially for Wai‘anae residents.

INCREASE REGIONAL ACCESS TO TRAINING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

There is a need to expand the availability of training opportunities in West O‘ahu, particularly in Wai‘anae. Obtaining a high school diploma or GED and honing professional skills constitute the foundational steps for the unemployed or underemployed to enhance their employability. Given that Healthcare and Construction are key industries in the region that offer competitive wages, prioritizing vocational training in these areas is paramount. Furthermore, addressing common barriers such as transportation limitations, access to technology and internet, and childcare challenges, particularly among low-income individuals, those experiencing homelessness, and single parents, is essential to ensuring equitable access to these opportunities.

ENHANCE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PROVIDERS IN THE REGION

While numerous initiatives are already underway, they often operate in isolation. To maximize the impact of workforce development efforts, fostering enhanced collaboration among West O‘ahu service providers, educators, employers, and government entities is crucial. Such collaboration will streamline ongoing efforts, harness shared resources, and bridge service gaps, ultimately driving the region towards a brighter economic future.

In conclusion, West O'ahu stands at a crossroads, offering immense potential for its residents. By prioritizing workforce development efforts, expanding training opportunities, improving access to resources, and fostering collaboration, we can unlock the latent potential of this unique region and build a thriving, inclusive community where all residents can prosper.

INTRODUCTION

The west side of O‘ahu is one of the most beautiful areas in the State of Hawai‘i. From the mountainous oceanside landscape of Wai‘anae to O‘ahu's second city of Kapolei, thousands of Hawai‘i residents call this region home. However, this region is also home to some of the state's lowest-earning families and faces high rates of unsheltered homelessness.

This analysis was generated by the Westside Homeless Coalition, a team of service providers working to address the homelessness crisis in West O‘ahu, with funding from the Hawai‘i Community Foundation. The coalition includes Alternative Structures International, Catholic Charities Hawaii, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, SMS Research, and US Vets.

The coalition began its work in 2020, filling service gaps in the region and striving to prevent homeless households from falling through the cracks of the system by providing additional client management, financial resources, and housing placement support. Since its launch in 2020, the coalition has housed 254 homeless households and prevented homelessness for an additional 32 households. When the coalition noticed that most of their housed clients would not be able to afford their rental costs once their subsidies expired, they started investigating solutions to keep their clients housed. The coalition identified 3 main ways to close this income-to-rent gap:

- A. Finding different, more affordable units in their clients' budgets;
- B. Extending subsidies to continue bridging the gap between income and rent; or
- C. Supporting alternative strategies to increase their clients' income levels.

With a limited supply of more affordable units on the market and subsidies lacking long-term sustainability, the coalition focused its efforts on exploring option C and identifying workforce development opportunities in their westside community.

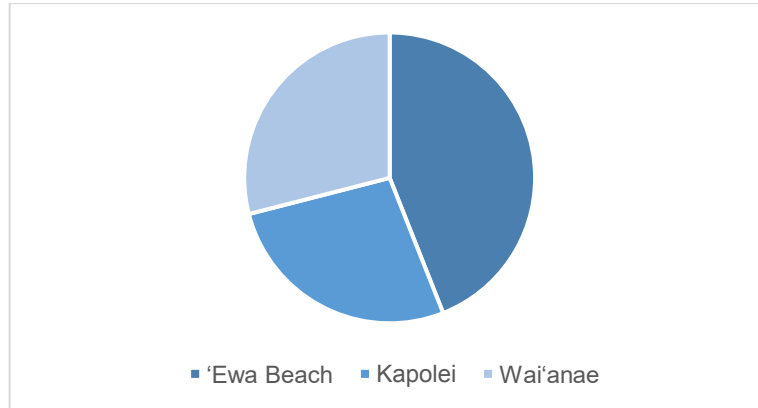
Through data collection and extensive community outreach with service providers, employers, and job seekers, this report aims to identify the barriers and potential opportunities for supporting workforce development efforts in West O‘ahu. This analysis seeks to provide the information necessary for service providers, community leaders, government, and keys funders to align regionally accessible training and workforce preparation programs to local business needs and employment opportunities that pay a living wage.

We hope this analysis can be a catalyst to improve regional access to information and resources and increase workforce opportunities for the West O‘ahu community.

WEST O'AHU POPULATION

The West O'ahu region includes 'Ewa Beach, Kapolei, and Wai'anae. West O'ahu is home to 184,390 residents, making up approximately 18% of Honolulu County's population. 'Ewa Beach accounts for nearly half (44%) of the region's population.

Figure 1: West O'ahu Population by Zip Code



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

Racial demographics vary within West O'ahu. Similar to Honolulu County overall, the majority of residents in Ewa Beach (68%) and Kapolei (55%) identify as Asian alone or in combination with one or more other races. In Wai'anae, most residents (72%) identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, much higher than in Honolulu County overall (25%).

Table 1: Race by West O'ahu Zip Code

Race alone or in combination with one or more other races	Honolulu County	'Ewa Beach 96706	Kapolei 96707	Wai'anae 96792
White	37.70%	36.30%	45.40%	30.60%
Black or African American	4.30%	6.40%	6.20%	4.50%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2.00%	3.30%	2.40%	2.90%
Asian	60.80%	67.80%	55.10%	32.50%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	24.80%	24.00%	34.40%	71.50%
Some other race	3.80%	5.00%	2.20%	3.50%

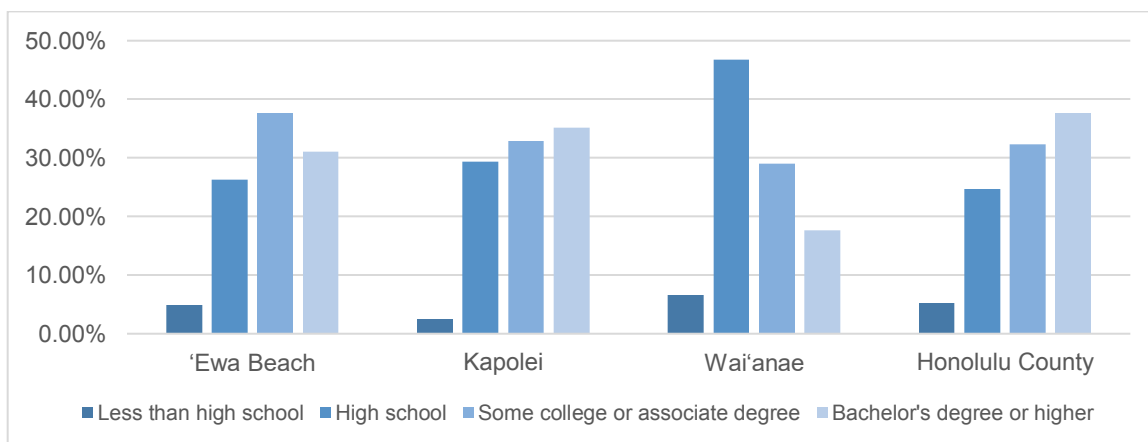
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In terms of educational attainment, Wai'anae has a slightly higher percentage of individuals over the age of 25 who are not high school graduates (7%) than the average individual in Honolulu County (5%). A high school diploma or equivalent is the most common level of educational attainment in Wai'anae (47%), while in 'Ewa Beach some college or an associate degree is most common (38%) and a bachelor's degree or higher is most common in Kapolei (35%).

Individuals in West O‘ahu are less likely to have a bachelor’s degree (28%) than the average individual in Honolulu County (38%). College enrollment rates the first fall after high school graduation were significantly lower than the statewide average among Wai‘anae high schools. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the graduating class of 2022 in the Wai‘anae-Nānākuli Complex Area did not enroll in college, compared to half (51%) of 2022 high school graduates statewide¹.

Figure 2: Educational Attainment by West O‘ahu Zip Code



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

EMPLOYMENT

West O‘ahu residents account for approximately 17% of Honolulu County’s workforce. However, jobs *in West O‘ahu* represent approximately 9% of jobs in Honolulu County. The majority of jobs in Honolulu County (72%) are in O‘ahu’s Primary Urban Center (Kāhala to Pearl City)², which means that many West O‘ahu residents commute to Honolulu’s urban center for work.

Most West O‘ahu residents are employed in Educational services, health care and social assistance (22%), Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (13%), Public administration (12%), Retail trade (11%), and Construction (10%). Compared to the average Honolulu resident, West O‘ahu residents are slightly more likely to be employed in Construction, Retail trade, and Public administration.

Table 2: West O‘ahu Resident Employment by Industry

Industry	West O‘ahu		Honolulu County	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	18,103	22.05%	108,635	23.00%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10,289	12.53%	63,900	13.50%
Public administration	9,607	11.70%	46,438	9.80%
Retail trade	9,308	11.34%	51,562	10.90%
Construction	7,908	9.63%	33,735	7.10%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6,923	8.43%	48,426	10.20%

¹ Hawai‘i P-20 College and Career Readiness Indicators (CCRI) Dashboard

² Growth Projections by DP Area, 2020. City & County of Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting.

Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6,087	7.41%	33,353	7.10%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4,412	5.37%	31,454	6.60%
Other services, except public administration	3,008	3.66%	19,261	4.10%
Manufacturing	2,861	3.48%	14,959	3.20%
Wholesale trade	1,961	2.39%	11,151	2.40%
Information	980	1.19%	7,173	1.50%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	652	0.79%	3,018	0.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

Residents' sectors of employment vary within West O'ahu. In Wai'anae, A higher percentage of residents work in Construction compared with 'Ewa Beach and Kapolei. Wai'anae residents are also more likely to work in Transportation and warehousing, and utilities. However, they are less likely to work in Finance and insurance, and real estate than Kapolei and 'Ewa Beach residents.

Kapolei residents are less likely to work in Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services than 'Ewa Beach and Wai'anae residents. They are more likely to work in Public administration.

'Ewa Beach residents are more likely to work in Educational services, and health care and social assistance than those in Wai'anae and Kapolei.

Additionally, 'Ewa Beach and Kapolei are estimated to have a greater portion of residents in the Armed Forces (5% each) compared with Wai'anae (1%).

Table 3: West O'ahu Resident Employment by Industry and Zip Code

Industry	'Ewa Beach 96706		Kapolei 96707		Wai'anae 96792	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	224	0.60%	154	0.70%	274	1.40%
Construction	3,590	9.20%	2,213	9.40%	2,105	10.70%
Manufacturing	1,482	3.80%	701	3.00%	678	3.50%
Wholesale trade	789	2.00%	599	2.50%	573	2.90%
Retail trade	4,700	12.10%	2,357	10.00%	2,251	11.50%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	2,374	6.10%	1,754	7.40%	1,959	10.00%
Information	494	1.30%	263	1.10%	223	1.10%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	2,255	5.80%	1,433	6.10%	724	3.70%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2,968	7.60%	2,164	9.20%	1,791	9.10%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	9,150	23.50%	4,876	20.70%	4,077	20.80%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5,297	13.60%	2,520	10.70%	2,472	12.60%
Other services, except public administration	1,218	3.10%	1,013	4.30%	777	4.00%

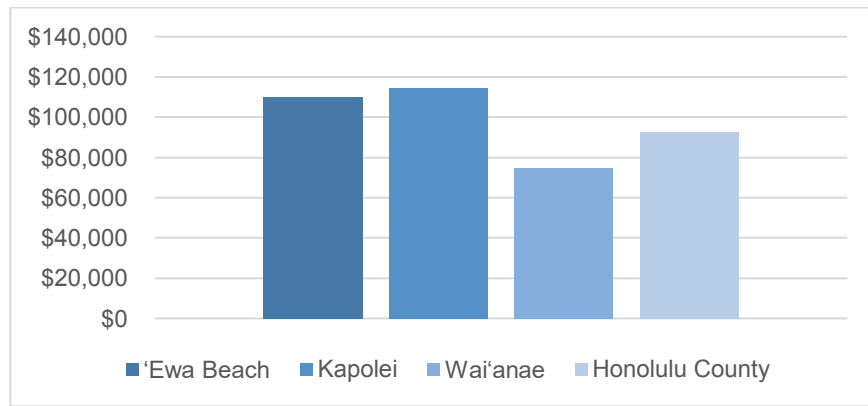
Public administration	4,371	11.20%	3,527	15.00%	1,709	8.70%
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

INCOME

The estimated median income of West O‘ahu households is \$99,822, slightly higher than the median income in Honolulu County (\$92,600). However, median household income varies within the region. Wai‘anae households have a significantly lower median income (\$74,914) compared with ‘Ewa Beach and Kapolei households.

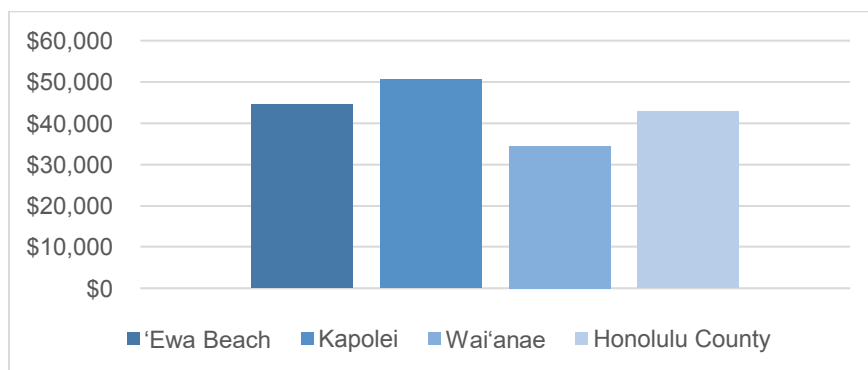
Figure 3: Median Household Income of West O‘ahu Residents by Zip Code



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

Similarly, in terms of worker median earnings for the population 16 and older, Kapolei has the highest earnings (\$50,674) while Wai‘anae has the lowest (\$34,442). Median worker earnings in Wai‘anae are below the ALICE annual Household Survival Budget of \$36,912 for a single adult in Hawai‘i³.

Figure 4: Median Worker Earnings of West O‘ahu Residents by Zip Code



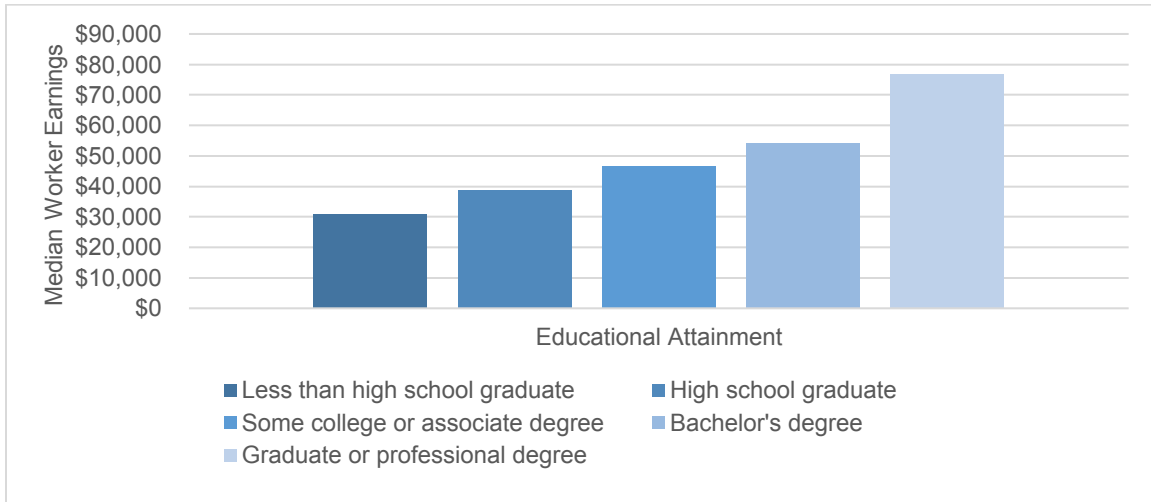
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

West O‘ahu worker earnings increase steadily with educational attainment. Workers with less than a high school diploma or equivalent have median earnings of \$30,737, below the ALICE

³ ALICE in the Crosscurrents: COVID and Financial Hardship in Hawai‘i, Aloha United Way, 2023

household survival budget for a single adult. With a high school diploma or equivalent, workers have a median income of \$38,495. With some college or an associate degree, median earnings go up to \$46,571, increasing to \$54,190 with a bachelor's degree and \$76,690 with a graduate or professional degree.

Figure 5: West O'ahu Median Worker Earnings by Educational Attainment

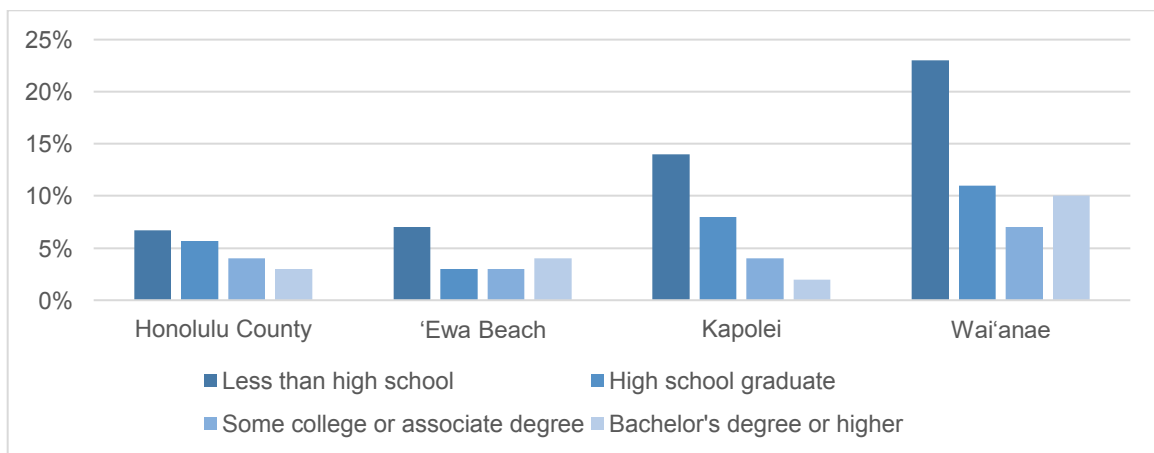


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

UNEMPLOYMENT

The West O'ahu region is estimated to have a higher unemployment rate (7%) than Honolulu County overall (5%). Within West O'ahu, Wai'anae has the highest estimated unemployment rate by far (12%), while 'Ewa Beach has the lowest (4%). Generally, those with a higher level of educational attainment are more likely to be employed. In West O'ahu, 15% of those with less than a high school diploma are estimated to be unemployed, compared to 5% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher. In Wai'anae, those who do not have a high school diploma are twice as likely to be unemployed than those with a high school diploma.

Figure 6: Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment in West O'ahu



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Approximately a third (34%) of West O‘ahu residents are renters, with Wai‘anae having the most renters (41%) and Kapolei having the least (28%). The average monthly rent for a 1 bedroom unit in West O‘ahu is \$1,939.48. Generally, the highest rental prices are found in Kapolei, while the lowest are in Wai‘anae. For a tenant to afford the average 1 bedroom unit at 30% of their monthly income, they would need to earn \$5,818 per month, or nearly \$70,000 annually.

Table 4: Average Monthly Rent in West O‘ahu by Zip Code and Unit Size

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms
‘Ewa Beach 96706	\$ 1,964.31	\$ 2,471.87	\$ 3,306.22	\$ 3,656.17
Kapolei 96707	\$ 2,019.74	\$ 2,596.48	\$ 3,288.33	\$ 4,069.06
Wai‘anae 96792	\$ 1,834.39	\$ 2,023.80	\$ 2,958.85	\$ 3,860.70
Honolulu County	\$ 1,908.73	\$ 2,443.78	\$ 3,394.51	\$ 4,269.78

Source: Hawaii Housing Planning Study Renter Survey, June 2022-23

Given the high costs of rent and other basic living expenses, homelessness is a prominent issue in West O‘ahu, particularly on the Wai‘anae Coast. According to the 2023 point-in-time count for O‘ahu⁴, the Wai‘anae Coast accounted for the greatest share of O‘ahu’s unsheltered homeless population (27%), with 630 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of January 22, 2023. The most common self-reported primary causes of homelessness were inability to pay rent and loss of money. More than half (52%) of those counted on the Wai‘anae Coast were Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander, compared to 33% of the total unsheltered homeless population on O‘ahu.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The different regions within West O‘ahu – Kapolei, ‘Ewa Beach, and Waia‘ane – vary greatly in terms of residents’ demographics and socioeconomic conditions. Wai‘anae has a much greater population of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander residents than ‘Ewa Beach and Kapolei. Wai‘anae residents also tend to have lower levels of educational attainment and lower earnings, along with higher rates of unemployment and unsheltered homelessness.

Compared to Honolulu overall, West O‘ahu residents are less likely to have a bachelor’s degree. Wai‘anae residents are slightly less likely to have a high school diploma or GED than the average Honolulu County resident. Moreover, Wai‘anae residents who do not have a high school diploma or GED are significantly more likely to be unemployed. Having at least a high school diploma or equivalent is essential to making ends meet; those without a high school diploma in West O‘ahu earn less on average than the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult in Hawai‘i.

Many West O‘ahu residents do not work in West O‘ahu, as the number of jobs in the region is significantly lower than the number of residents, and many commute to urban Honolulu for work. West O‘ahu residents most often work in the Educational services, health care and social assistance; Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services; Public administration; Retail trade; and Construction sectors. Construction and Transportation jobs are

⁴ Point-in-Time Count Report, 2023. Partners in Care. <https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/pit>

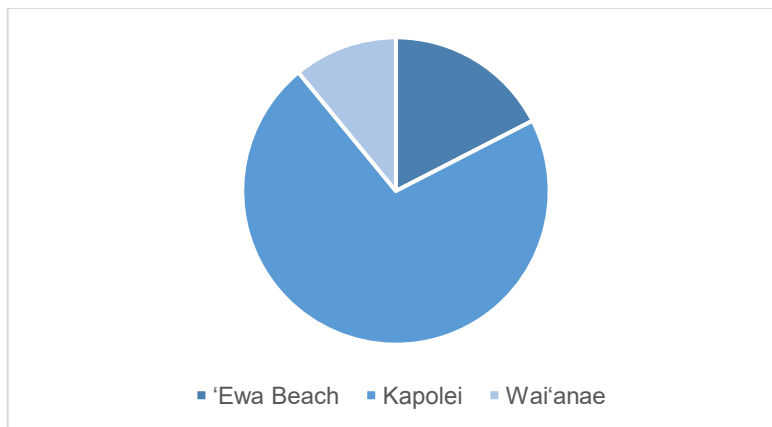
particularly prominent among Wai‘anae residents, while Public administration jobs are most common for Kapolei residents, and Education, healthcare, and social assistance jobs are most common for ‘Ewa Beach residents.

WEST O‘AHU WORKFORCE

The U.S. Census Bureau’s LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) were utilized to gauge the top sectors of employment for those employed in West O‘ahu⁵. Based on the most recent LODES data (2020), approximately 9% of workers in Honolulu County are employed in West O‘ahu.

Of workers employed in West O‘ahu, the majority are employed in Kapolei (72%), while the least are employed in Wai‘anae (11%). Kapolei is generally more urbanized than ‘Ewa Beach and Wai‘anae, and is known as O‘ahu’s secondary urban center.

Figure 7: West O‘ahu Workforce Distribution by Zip Code



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2020

TOP INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT

Those who work in West O‘ahu are most often employed in Accommodation & Food Services (21%), Construction (12%), Healthcare and Social Assistance (11%), Retail Trade (10%), and Administration & Support (9%). Compared to workers in Honolulu County overall, West O‘ahu has a greater portion of workers in Accommodation and food services and Construction.

It should be noted that the LODES data does not accurately capture public administration and education employment in the West O‘ahu region. Kapolei Hale, several state offices, and the FBI Honolulu Field Office should account for a significant number of public administration jobs in Kapolei. The 20+ HODOE schools in the region should also account for more educational jobs than are captured in the LODES data.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2020) [computer file]. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program [distributor], accessed on 8/4/2023 at <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov>. LODES 8.0 [version]

Table 5: West O’ahu Workforce Distribution by Industry

Industry	West O’ahu		Honolulu County	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Accommodation and Food Services	6,669	21%	53,416	14.7%
Construction	3,841	12%	28,274	7.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,403	11%	52,681	14.5%
Retail Trade	3,274	10%	44,097	12.2%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2,955	9%	26,713	7.4%
Wholesale Trade	1,720	5%	14,631	4.0%
Manufacturing	1,605	5%	10,264	2.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,250	4%	21,467	5.9%
Finance and Insurance	1,158	4%	13,897	3.8%
Utilities	1,083	3%	4,232	1.2%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	962	3%	18,478	5.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	749	2%	6,484	1.8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	716	2%	21,079	5.8%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	671	2%	8,508	2.3%
Educational Services	342	1%	8,885	2.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	319	1%	1,737	0.5%
Information	307	1%	8,527	2.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	161	1%	9,045	2.5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	123	0%	254	0.1%
Public Administration	8	0%	9,840	2.7%
Total	31,316		362,509	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2020

Top industries of employment vary within West O’ahu, as shown in Table 6 below. Most workers in ‘Ewa Beach are employed in Accommodation and Food Services (22%), Health Care and Social Assistance (21%), Retail Trade (18%), Construction (8%), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (7%).

In Kapolei, most workers are in Accommodation and Food Services (22%), Construction (14%), Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation (11%), Retail Trade (8%), and Wholesale Trade (7%). Many workers in Kapolei are likely in public administration, although this is not captured in the LODES data.

In Wai’anae, most workers are in Health Care and Social Assistance (30%), Accommodation and Food Services (16%), Retail Trade (15%), Construction (8%), and Other Services (Excluding Public Administration) (7%).

Table 6: West O’ahu Workforce Distribution by Zip Code and Industry

Industry	‘Ewa Beach 96706		Kapolei 96707		Wai’anae 96792	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	155	2.8%	10	0.0%	154	4.5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	114	0.5%	9	0.3%
Utilities	4	0.1%	1,079	4.8%	0	0.0%
Construction	425	7.8%	3,160	14.1%	256	7.5%

Manufacturing	165	3.0%	1,428	6.4%	12	0.3%
Wholesale Trade	33	0.6%	1,653	7.4%	34	1.0%
Retail Trade	975	17.9%	1,774	7.9%	525	15.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	39	0.7%	1,090	4.9%	121	3.5%
Information	40	0.7%	257	1.1%	10	0.3%
Finance and Insurance	111	2.0%	1,016	4.5%	31	0.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	114	2.1%	505	2.3%	52	1.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	157	2.9%	430	1.9%	129	3.8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	8	0.1%	114	0.5%	39	1.1%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	277	5.1%	2,482	11.1%	196	5.7%
Educational Services	16	0.3%	297	1.3%	29	0.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,119	20.5%	1,253	5.6%	1,031	30.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	364	6.7%	369	1.6%	16	0.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,195	21.9%	4,911	21.9%	563	16.4%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	264	4.8%	475	2.1%	223	6.5%
Public Administration	0	0.0%	8	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Jobs	5,461		22,425		3,430	

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

WORKER EARNINGS

In Honolulu County, most workers (44%) earn more than \$3,333 per month. This is also true for Kapolei, where nearly half (48%) of workers earn more than \$3,333 per month. In ‘Ewa Beach, 37% of workers earn \$1,250 per month or less, and in Wai‘anae, most workers (41%) earn between \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month.

Based on the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult in Hawai‘i⁶, a single working adult needs to earn \$3,076 per month just to get by in the state. More than a quarter (28%) of workers in West O‘ahu are earning \$1,250 per month or less. Many workers in the \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month range likely also fall below the survival budget.

Throughout West O‘ahu, workers earning \$1,250 per month or less are most often found in the Accommodation and Food Services or Retail Trade sectors. Workers earning more than \$3,333 per month are most often in Health care and social assistance and Construction.

Table 7: West O‘ahu Worker Monthly Earnings by Zip Code

Monthly Earnings Range	Honolulu County		‘Ewa Beach 96706		Kapolei 96707		Wai‘anae 96792	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	105,136	29.0%	1,999	36.6%	5,824	26.0%	945	27.6%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	96,922	26.7%	1,831	33.5%	5,960	26.6%	1,408	41.0%

⁶ ALICE in the Crosscurrents: COVID and Financial Hardship in Hawai‘i, Aloha United Way, 2023

More than \$3,333 per month	160,451	44.3%	1,631	29.9%	10,641	47.5%	1,077	31.4%
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2020

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Based on estimates of number of employees from HireNet Hawaii, the largest employers (having at least 50 employees) for the industries with the most workers in ‘Ewa Beach, Kapolei, and Wai‘anae are listed below. Kapolei generally has a greater number of large employers (100-249 employees) than ‘Ewa Beach and Wai‘anae.

‘Ewa Beach Employers

1. Accommodation & Food Services
 - a. Zippy’s (100-249 employees)
 - b. Buffalo Wild Wings (50-99 employees)
 - c. McDonald’s (50-99 employees)
2. Healthcare and Social Assistance
 - a. Sutter Health Kahi Mohala (100-249 employees)
 - b. Child & Family Service (100-249 employees)
 - c. Kulana Malama (50-99 employees)
 - d. The Queen’s Medical Center West O‘ahu (unknown)
3. Retail Trade
 - a. Longs Drugs (50-99 employees)
 - b. Ross Dress for Less (50-99 employees)
 - c. Foodland (50-99 employees)
 - d. Safeway (50-99 employees)

Kapolei Employers

1. Accommodation & Food Services
 - a. Ko Olina Resort (250-499 employees)
 - b. Embassy Suites by Hilton (100-249 employees)
 - c. Zippy’s Restaurants (100-249 employees)
 - d. Paradise Cove Luau (100-249 employees)
 - e. Cheesecake Factory (100-249 employees)
2. Construction
 - a. Grace Pacific LLC (250-499 employees)
 - b. Henkels & McCoy (100-249 employees)
 - c. Goodfellow Bros. (100-249 employees)

- d. GPRM Prestress (50-99 employees)
- e. Close Construction, Inc. (50-99 employees)
- 3. Retail Trade
 - a. Target (100-249 employees)
 - b. Safeway (100-249 employees)
 - c. Walmart (100-249 employees)
 - d. Longs Drugs (50-99 employees)
 - e. Ross Dress for Less (50-99 employees)
- 4. Wholesale Trade
 - a. C&S Wholesale Grocers (100-249 employees)
 - b. Costco Wholesale (100-249 employees)
 - c. Palama Meat Co (100-249 employees)
 - d. Commercial Metals Co (100-249 employees)
 - e. Island Recycling (100-249 employees)

Wai'anae Employers

- 1. Healthcare and Social Assistance
 - a. Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive (250-499 employees)
 - b. Leeward Integrated Health Services (100-249 employees)
 - c. Wai'anae Coast Community Mental Health Center (50-99 employees)
- 2. Accommodation and Food Services
 - a. McDonald's (50-99 employees)
 - b. Wendy's (20-49 employees)
 - c. Taco Bell (20-49 employees)
- 3. Retail Trade
 - a. Tamura Super Market (100-249 employees)
 - b. Longs Drugs (50-99 employees)
 - c. Sack N Save (50-99 employees)

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The number of employers and jobs in Kapolei are expected to increase in the coming years. One of the objectives of the current City & County of Honolulu O'ahu General Plan is to "develop a secondary urban center in 'Ewa with its nucleus in the Kapolei Area."⁷ To further this objective, the City plans to support public projects and various new developments, including commercial

⁷ O'ahu General Plan. City & County of Honolulu, Department of Planning & Permitting. 2021.

and residential growth, and an employment center in Kapolei. The plan also recommends continued industrial growth in Campbell Industrial Park, Kalaeloa Barbers Point Harbor, and West Kapolei. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce received \$500,000 in federal funding earlier this year to create a West O‘ahu Innovation and Entrepreneur Center, which is expected to foster the development of small businesses in the region⁸.

The City & County of Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting provides growth projections for residents and jobs according to O‘ahu Development Plan Areas⁹. The ‘Ewa Development Plan Area, which includes Kapolei and ‘Ewa Beach, is projected to account for 16% of O‘ahu’s resident population by 2030, up from 13% in 2020. Similarly, jobs in the ‘Ewa DP Area are projected to account for 8% of the total jobs on O‘ahu, up from 6% in 2020. However, in the Wai‘anae DP area, shares of O‘ahu’s resident population (5%) and jobs (1%) are not projected to increase from 2020 to 2030.

With the opening of the Honolulu rail system in 2023, there is potential for transit-oriented development in Kapolei, particularly surrounding the Ho‘opili, East Kapolei, and UH West O‘ahu stations. Mixed-use development surrounding the rail is expected to increase the number of residents that both live and work in the area¹⁰.

A significant development in the ‘Ewa DP Area is the Veterans Affairs Multi-Specialty Outpatient Clinic in Kalaeloa¹¹. This facility is projected to create 300 long-term health specialty jobs upon its completion in 2024. Other notable developments in the region include the AES West O‘ahu Solar + Storage facility, which began construction in 2022 and is nearing completion. This project was estimated to create 118 jobs, many of which are likely in construction and trades.¹²

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Kapolei accounts for the most jobs in West O‘ahu by far, and also has some of the largest employers in the region. Of those who work in West O‘ahu, most are employed in the Accommodation and food services; Construction; Healthcare and social assistance; Retail trade; and Administration and support sectors. Public administration and education jobs also likely represent significant employment opportunities in West O‘ahu, although they are not accurately represented in the data.

Compared to those who *reside* in West O‘ahu, those *employed* in West O‘ahu are more likely to work in Accommodation and food services; Construction; and Wholesale trade. They are less likely to work in Education, health care and social assistance.

In terms of earnings, at least a quarter of West O‘ahu workers are estimated to be earning \$1,250 per month or less. Workers in this earnings group are most likely to be in Accommodation and food services or Retail; many may be part-time employees. Based on the ALICE Household Survival Budget, a single adult working full-time needs to earn \$3,076 per month to make ends meet. In West O‘ahu, workers earning \$3,333 or more per month are most often employed in the Healthcare and Construction sectors.

⁸ <https://business.kapoleichamber.com/chamber-news/Details/kapolei-chamber-receives-500k-for-the-west-o-ahu-innovation-and-entrepreneur-center-144565>

⁹ https://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/dpp/pd/pd_docs/Analytics-2020-2045-Projections-by-DPA.pdf

¹⁰ East Kapolei Neighborhood TOD Plan. Department of Planning & Permitting, City & County of Honolulu. 2020.

¹¹ Hawai‘i Community Development Authority 2022 Annual Report

¹² <https://www.aes-hawaii.com/west-oahu-solar-storage-project>

The development of Kapolei into O‘ahu’s secondary urban center continues to be a priority for the City & County of Honolulu, and the number of residents and employment opportunities in the region are expected to increase in the coming years.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

JOB POSTINGS ANALYSIS

In order to better understand the prominent employment opportunities in West O‘ahu and their associated pay and qualifications, a snapshot analysis of job postings available in West O‘ahu (*n* = 1,292) was conducted in June 2023 using HireNet Hawaii’s online job postings search engine. Job postings were filtered by Zip Code and de-duplicated.

More than half of the job postings in West O‘ahu (64%) were located in Kapolei, while Wai‘anae had the least job postings in the region (15%).

Table 8: Job Postings by West O‘ahu Zip Code

Zip Code	Number of Postings	Percent of Total
‘Ewa Beach 96706	262	20%
Kapolei 96707	832	64%
Wai‘anae 96792	198	15%
Total	1,292	100%

A portion of the job postings were classified by HireNet Hawai‘i according to occupation type. Overall, most postings in West O‘ahu were for Management (18%), Office and Administrative Support (10%), Transportation and Material Moving (10%), Food Preparation and Serving (9%), and Healthcare (9%).

Table 9: Top 5 Occupation Types in West O‘ahu Job Postings

Occupation Type	West O‘ahu		Honolulu	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Management Occupations	153	18.19%	874	13.36%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	83	9.87%	775	11.85%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	80	9.51%	357	5.46%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	74	8.80%	546	8.35%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	72	8.56%	738	11.28%

Types of job postings varied within West O‘ahu. Nearly 30% of job postings in Wai‘anae were for Management Occupations. Healthcare job postings were most prominent in ‘Ewa Beach

(23%) and Wai‘anae (9%). Transportation job postings were most prominent in Kapolei (11%) and Wai‘anae (10%).

Table 10: Top 5 Occupation Types in West O‘ahu Job Postings by Zip Code

Occupation Type	‘Ewa Beach 96706		Kapolei 96707		Wai‘anae 96792	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Management Occupations	26	16.88%	94	16.49%	33	28.21%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	14	9.09%	55	9.65%	14	11.97%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	35	22.73%	27	4.74%	10	8.55%
Sales and Related Occupations	7	4.55%	58	10.18%	4	3.42%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	5	3.25%	63	11.05%	6	5.13%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	4	2.60%	64	11.23%	12	10.26%
Total classified job postings	108		262		81	

REQUIRED EDUCATION

More detailed data on required education and other job qualifications were collected on a subset of West O‘ahu job postings ($n = 60$) representing the occupation types in the region with the most postings. For each occupational category, only the highest-paying postings were sampled.

Nearly half (47%) of postings sampled did not have an education requirement and were counted as unspecified. When these postings are excluded, a high school diploma or equivalent is the most common education requirement across all occupation types considered.

The required level of education in job postings varied by occupation type. None of the Food Service job postings and the majority of Sales job postings sampled specified an education requirement; these opportunities are likely more accessible to candidates that do not have a high school diploma.

Postings were most likely to require a high school diploma or equivalent in Office and Administration (40%) and Installation and Maintenance (40%). Most Transportation (80%) and Healthcare (56%) jobs requested an industry certification or license.

Table 11: Required Education in West O’ahu Job Postings by Occupation Type

Occupation Type	Unspecified	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Some College or Industry Certification	Bachelor's degree or higher
Office and Administrative	40%	40%	20%	0%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	40%	40%	20%	0%
Management	43%	29%	0%	29%
Healthcare	22%	22%	56%	0%
Transportation	0%	20%	80%	0%
Sales and Related	70%	20%	0%	10%
Food Preparation & Serving	100%	0%	0%	0%

JOB OPPORTUNITIES BY OCCUPATION TYPE

For each of the top occupation types, sample job postings were identified that (1) paid enough for a single adult to survive in Hawai‘i, based on the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult in Hawai‘i (\$36,912 annual salary or \$18.64 per hour for a full-time worker)¹³ and (2) did not require a bachelor’s degree.

Due to the costs and time commitments associated with higher education, earning a bachelor’s degree may not be feasible for all West O’ahu residents. The sample job postings below require a high school diploma/GED or some postsecondary education, such as an industry certification; these educational requirements tend to be more affordable and are attainable through short-term training.

These sample postings are not intended to represent the most in-demand and/or best-paying jobs in West O’ahu. Rather, they are meant to provide examples of real job opportunities that were available in the region at the time of the analysis, which allows for observation of general trends in job qualifications across occupational categories.

Management

While 29% of Management occupations sampled required a bachelor’s degree or higher, most did not specify an educational requirement (43%) or required a high school diploma or GED (29%). In lieu of an education requirement, the qualifications for the management positions below were largely based on years of work experience.

Other Management positions advertised that did not require a bachelor’s degree include General Manager (\$55-65k) and Assistant Property Manager (\$47-88k).

Position	Warehouse Supervisor	Store Manager
Education	Unspecified	Unspecified

¹³ ALICE in the Crosscurrents: COVID and Financial Hardship in Hawai‘i, Aloha United Way, 2023

Experience	3-5 years of experience as warehouse lead or supervisor.	5 years of retail experience with 3 years of management experience. Computer competency.
Pay	\$65k	\$54k

Office and Administrative Support

Most Office and Administrative Support occupations sampled required a high school diploma or GED (40%). Both positions below requested work experience or skills related to computers. For the Payroll Administrator position, which had a higher pay range, the Certified Payroll Professional certification was preferred.

Other Office and Administrative Support positions advertised that did not require a bachelor's degree include Customer Service Associate (\$40-48k), and Payroll Specialist (\$52k).

Position	Front Desk Attendant	Payroll Administrator
Education	High school diploma or equivalent	Unspecified
Experience	Telephone and computer skills. Experience with a Point of Sales (POS) system preferred.	3+ years of payroll experience. High proficiency with spreadsheets.
Certifications	N/A	Certified Payroll Professional
Pay	\$28k-\$42k	\$43-60k

Transportation and Material Moving

Several Transportation positions were for Commercial Drivers. These positions required a Commercial Drivers License (CDL), which can be obtained by completing vocational training and passing the required written and driving exams. CDL was identified as a 2023 Promising Credential, meaning that it was associated with in-demand, living wage jobs, and was frequently requested in job postings statewide¹⁴.

There were also a number of driver positions sampled that only required a valid driver's license and experience, but they offered lower pay than the CDL positions.

Sample Positions	CDL A/B Driver	Delivery Driver
Education	Some college or certification	High school diploma or equivalent
Experience	2 years CDL Driving	2 years driving cube trucks or large vehicles
Certifications	CDL (Class A or B)	Valid driver's license
Pay	\$25-29/hr	\$16-19/hr

¹⁴ Promising Credentials in Hawai'i, 2023. <https://www.hawaiiip20.org/promisingcredentials/>

Food Preparation & Serving

None of the Food Preparation & Serving job postings sampled specified a required level of education. The cook positions were the only sample postings in this occupation category with a pay range that met the ALICE survival budget for a single adult. Both positions preferred, but did not require, a year of restaurant experience.

Sample Positions	Cook	Cook
Education	Unspecified	Unspecified
Experience	1 year of restaurant experience preferred	1 year of restaurant experience preferred
Pay	\$16-21/hr	\$15-19/hr

Healthcare

More than half of the Healthcare job postings sampled required some college and/or an industry certification. The Pharmacy Technician position below preferred candidates that were Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) certified but would also accept candidates that had relevant work experience. The Registered Nurse position required 5 years of experience and an unrestricted Registered Nurse License. To obtain an RN license in Hawai'i, at least an associate degree in Nursing is required. Both the PTCB Certification and Registered Nurse License were identified as 2023 Promising Credentials.

Other Healthcare positions advertised that did not require a bachelor's degree include Dialysis Patient Care Technician (\$22.02-\$36.05/hr) and MRI Tech (\$49.60/hr). The MRI Tech position required certification in Magnetic Resonance Imaging by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) within 1 year of hiring. ARRT certifications were also identified as Promising Credentials for 2023.

Position	Pharmacy Technician	Registered Nurse
Education	Unspecified	Some college or certification
Experience	Previous experience in pharmacy, retail, medical or customer service	Unrestricted Nurse License
Certifications	PTCB certification preferred	Minimum of 5 years recent clinical experience preferably in a hospital, home care or similar setting
Pay	\$17-29.70/hr	\$28.25-\$60.50/hr

Sales and Related Occupations

Most of the Sales job postings sampled required a high school diploma or equivalent or did not specify a required level of education. Both of the sample positions below requested some experience in retail, with the Assistant Store Manager position requiring retail management experience. The Assistant Store Manager position also required "soft skills," including leadership and communication, and basic computer skills.

Other Sales job postings sampled that did not require a bachelor’s degree include Full-Time Retail Associate (\$26-40k) and Department Supervisor (\$35-60k).

Position	Assistant Store Manager	Sales and Service Expert
Education	High school diploma or equivalent	Unspecified
Experience	2 years of retail management experience. Strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. Knowledge of basic computer skills, including Microsoft Office and point-of-sale systems.	1-2 years of retail sales or fitness sales experience.
Pay	\$16-19/hr	\$27-52k

Installation, Maintenance, and Repair

Although Installation, Maintenance, and Repair was not one of the top 5 occupation types in terms of number of job postings in West O’ahu overall, these occupations are worth highlighting due to their relatively high pay, and given that Construction is a prominent sector in West O’ahu.

Most Installation, Maintenance, and Repair positions sampled required a high school diploma or equivalent (40%). The Diesel Technician/Mechanic position below preferred a vehicle repair certification in addition to a high school diploma. Both positions below also preferred or required relevant work experience.

Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair postings that did not require a bachelor’s degree include Electronic Service Technician (\$16-20/hr) and Journeyman Diesel Mechanic (\$19.78-\$27.33/hr).

Sample Positions	Diesel Technician/Mechanic	Maintenance Coordinator
Education	High school diploma or equivalent	High school diploma or equivalent
Experience	1-2 years of automotive repair experience preferred	2 years in customer service and operations experience
Certifications	Vehicle repair certification preferred	N/A
Pay	\$25/hr	\$23/hr

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The snapshot analysis of West O’ahu job postings highlighted key qualifications for the top occupational categories in the region. Across occupational categories, a **high school diploma or GED** was the most common educational requirement. Food Preparation & Serving postings were least likely to have an education requirement; however, most postings in this category did not pay above the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult. A high school diploma or GED is also a common prerequisite for pursuing higher education, including community college and vocational/training programs.

Industry credentials were most often required for Healthcare and Transportation occupations. In Healthcare, credentials that appeared in the highest-paying job postings were Registered Nurse License, Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) Certification, and American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification. For Transportation, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) was the most requested credential. These Healthcare and Transportation credentials were identified as 2023 Promising Credentials, indicating they are valued by local employers for in-demand jobs throughout the state. Some education and training beyond a high school diploma or GED is required to attain these industry credentials, but they open doors to jobs with higher earning potential.

Having **relevant work experience** was another common qualification across occupational categories. Most postings required 1-2 years of work experience relevant to the job or industry. Retail sales or customer service experience were commonly required in both Sales and Management postings. Management occupations generally offered higher pay but required more extensive work experience.

Basic computer skills were commonly required and are applicable to various occupations. Postings in Management, Office and Administrative Support, and Sales required candidates to have basic computer skills.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

High school equivalency programs, postsecondary education and training programs, and wraparound support services are essential for West O'ahu residents to broaden their job prospects, pursue new career paths, and increase their earning potential.

SMS Research conducted interviews with representatives from the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE), University of Hawai'i System (UH), O'ahu Workforce Development Board, and various service providers to understand the education, training, and support services available in the region.

HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMS

Waipahu Community School for Adults

The HIDOE's Adult Education Program offers opportunities for West O'ahu residents to earn a high school diploma or equivalent (GED or HiSET). The Waipahu Community School for Adults (WCSA) is the closest main campus to West O'ahu, but also has several satellite sites, at Kapolei High School, Wai'anae High School, and Kalaniho'okahā Community Learning Center in Nanakuli. The WCSA has partnered with Leeward Community College's Wai'anae Moku Education Center to offer high school equivalency courses on their campus.

Course Format: WCSA courses are offered in 6-week terms, with classes held in-person twice a week and primarily at night to accommodate working students. Self-paced, online courses are also available. Students begin with a placement exam to determine the appropriate courses.

Course Offerings Include: High School Equivalency Courses, Adult Basic Education, Workforce Development Diploma, Substitute Teacher Certification, Teacher PRAXIS Prep, ParaPro Prep, Workplace Literacy

Enrollment Requirements and Costs: There is a \$20 enrollment fee each term, and a valid photo ID is required. A preparation book (\$40) is recommended for students preparing for the GED exam. Exam fees range from \$100 for the HiSET exams to approximately \$150 for the GED exams.

UH COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The nearest University of Hawai'i Community College campus to West O'ahu is Leeward Community College (LCC) in Pearl City. LCC also has a Wai'anae Moku Education Center, which is closer to home for many West O'ahu residents, but has more limited academic offerings in terms of degree programs and vocational training.

Wai'anae Moku Education Center

2-Year Degree Programs: Popular 2-year degree programs at Wai'anae Moku include liberal arts and Hawaiian studies. Many graduates transfer to UH West O'ahu or UH Mānoa to continue their education.

Through the ATE program, Wai'anae Moku works with foster youth, formerly incarcerated individuals, and individuals in recovery from substance abuse to provide wraparound services that help students access higher education and complete their associate degree.

Vocational Training: Wai'anae Moku has previously offered some vocational training courses, including landscaping, nursing, and phlebotomy. The campus has collaborated with Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive as an employer partner to determine the region's top healthcare training needs.

While there is interest in offering vocational training on a regular basis and expanding the types of training available, the campus has limited space and its facilities need renovation. For example, commercial driver training requires a simulator and/or commercial vehicles, plus adequate space for driving practice. Leeward Community College has the necessary space and equipment for commercial driver training, but Wai'anae Moku currently does not.

Enrollment Requirements and Costs: Prospective students must apply through Leeward Community College to enroll at UH Wai'anae Moku. Resident tuition is \$131.00 per credit as of Fall 2023.

Leeward Community College

Leeward Community College (LCC) offers a variety of 2-year degree programs and non-credit vocational training courses.

Associate Degree Programs Include: Liberal Arts, Accounting, Automotive Technology, Business Technology, Culinary Arts, Digital Media Production, Education, Hawaiian Studies, Health Information Technology, Human Services, History, Info and Computer Science, Integrated Industrial Technology, Management, Natural Sciences, and Sustainable Agriculture.

Workforce Development: Non-credit vocational training courses are available in Business, Commercial Driving, Computers & Technology, Healthcare Administration, Healthcare Services, and Trades. These trainings prepare students to attain an industry credential and/or meet minimum job qualifications for an entry-level position in their field. LCC can also work with employers to create customized training packages to meet their specific needs.

Many training courses are available in the evening hours to accommodate working students. Students also have the option to complete some courses online at their own pace, such as Microsoft Office training.

Enrollment Requirements and Costs:

- **Degree Programs:** To enroll at Leeward Community College as a new student, a high school diploma or GED is required. New students must also take a placement exam, complete a health clearance form, attend an online New Student Orientation, and participate in mandatory incoming student advising. Resident tuition is \$131.00 per credit as of Fall 2023.
- **Non-Credit Courses:** For non-credit courses, a valid photo ID is required. Many LCC Healthcare and Skilled Trades vocational training courses are already available for free to students through tuition subsidies from Good Jobs Hawai'i¹⁵. Below is a listing of courses available through Good Jobs Hawai'i at Leeward Community College as of August 2023.

Healthcare and Commercial Driving are some of the most popular offerings at LCC. Healthcare stakeholders emphasized that there is a huge demand for Certified Nurse Aides and Certified Medical Assistants in West O'ahu and throughout the state.

Industry	Subsidized Good Jobs Hawai'i Courses Available at Leeward CC
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Nurse Aide • Certified Nurse Aide: Acute Care • Certified Nurse Aide II: Patient Care Technician • Medical Assisting • Medical Receptionist and Patient Services • Pharmacy Technician
Skilled Trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Motor Vehicle Training Series – Class A • Commercial Motor Vehicle Training Series – Class B • Electrical Technology Program: Maintenance Electrician

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are earn-and-learn programs that provide pathways to high-paying careers in various sectors, including construction; installation, maintenance, and repair; manufacturing; and transportation. Given the prominence of the construction sector in West O'ahu, apprenticeship programs are great opportunities for West O'ahu residents.

The Hawai'i Carpenter's Apprenticeship & Training Fund has a training center in Kapolei, and many [apprenticeship programs](#) for other trades workers, such as Electricians, Plumbers, Welders, and more are available throughout O'ahu.

Enrollment Requirements and Costs: Prerequisites vary by apprenticeship program, but candidates are typically required to be at least 16 or 17 years old, have a high school diploma or GED, and pass an examination for basic math and/or industry knowledge. There may be costs associated with work attire and/or tools.

¹⁵ <https://uhcc.hawaii.edu/goodjobshawaii/>

Training Hours: Required on-the-job training hours vary by apprenticeship program. For carpentry, 8,000 hours of on-the-job training are required.

Pay: Apprenticeship pay typically starts at approximately \$20 per hour and increases with work hours completed.

FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu

West O'ahu residents can pursue certificates and bachelor's degrees at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu in Kapolei.

Bachelor's Degree Programs: UH West O'ahu offers degrees in Applied Science, Business Administration, Creative Media, Cybersecurity, Education, Humanities, Natural Science, Public Administration, and Social Sciences.

Certificates: Certificate programs at UH West O'ahu include Health Care Administration and Long-Term Care; these can be used as professional development opportunities for workers seeking to grow their knowledge and skills.

Enrollment Requirements and Costs: Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED, and SAT or ACT test scores are recommended. Applications are submitted online. The tuition rate for Hawai'i residents is \$306 per credit hour up to 11 credits as of Fall 2023, and financial aid is available.

Workforce Development: UH West O'ahu faculty work with local employers to help students find internship placements that may lead to full-time employment. The University also collaborates with the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce to connect students with their network of local employers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

To access education, training, and employment opportunities, many West O'ahu residents may need one-on-one guidance and support. The Hawai'i Department of Education, City & County of Honolulu, and select nonprofits in the region are just some of the entities in the state that provide these wraparound support services.

Hawai'i Department of Education

The HIDEOE provides wraparound support services for students and families who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk for homelessness throughout the state. Per the McKinney Vento Act, the [Education for Homeless Children & Youth program](#) has community liaisons in each HIDEOE complex area that help families access support services and ensure their children are not missing school. This program also manages the YES Project, which conducts mobile outreach in partnership with shelters, encampments, and other providers throughout the state.

WorkHawaii Division, City & County of Honolulu

The City & County of Honolulu's [WorkHawaii Division](#) offers a variety of workforce development programs, including Rent to Work, and also puts on hiring events with employer partners. WorkHawaii also leads the American Job Center Hawaii, which is overseen by the O'ahu Workforce Development Board. The American Job Center provides free services to underemployed and unemployed individuals, such as job search assistance, access to

computers, career counseling, and vocational training. In the City & County of Honolulu, the American Job Center is located in Dole Cannery in Honolulu.

Nonprofit Organizations

Some nonprofit organizations are already providing employment support services in West O'ahu, including Honolulu Community Action Program, Inc. (HCAP). Other nonprofit organizations offering employment services on O'ahu include ALU LIKE, Parents and Children Together, and Goodwill Hawaii.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Through conducting stakeholder outreach with West O'ahu service providers and job seekers, several key themes emerged in terms of barriers that low-income individuals and families may face in accessing education, training, and employment in the region.

Time Constraints: Many West O'ahu residents are already working full-time jobs and have family obligations to attend to, leaving little free time to attend classes. Although trainings and courses are often available at night to accommodate working students, getting there at the end of a long work day can still be challenging.

Financial Barriers: Tuition costs are a common barrier to pursuing postsecondary education. The Good Jobs Hawai'i initiative is addressing this barrier at the community college level by subsidizing tuition costs for many vocational training courses. State/city workforce development programs and some local nonprofit organizations are also providing tuition assistance for vocational training.

Childcare: Without reliable access to childcare, education and training is far less accessible to working parents. Lack of childcare can also make it more difficult to find and maintain stable employment.

Transportation: For those who rely on public transportation, just getting to class can be time consuming and challenging. The Wai'anāe Moku Education Center and UH West O'ahu campus are closest to home for many in West O'ahu, but Leeward Community College offers many more vocational training options, including for in-demand jobs in healthcare and commercial driving. Taking the bus to Pearl City from West O'ahu several times a week is not feasible for many individuals and families, especially if they rely on public transportation and are already working full-time jobs.

Internet & Technology: The ability to participate in remote or hybrid courses can eliminate some of the barriers associated with transportation and childcare, but many low-income individuals and families in West O'ahu do not have the stable home internet connection and/or devices needed to attend classes online.

Documentation: For course enrollment, some government documents are often required, such as a valid photo ID. Individuals experiencing homelessness often do not have these documents and may need assistance replacing them before they are able to pursue education and training.

Awareness: Some stakeholders have seen low enrollment levels in their programs and expressed that West O'ahu residents may not be aware of the education and training resources in their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority Trainings: Based on regional demographic and workforce data, as well as stakeholder feedback, the following trainings are recommended for those in the West O‘ahu region who are seeking to improve their job prospects and/or change careers.

- **High School Diploma or GED Courses:** West O‘ahu residents need at least a high school diploma or GED to make ends meet. Those without a high school diploma or GED are more likely to be unemployed, and their median earnings fall below the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a single adult in Hawai‘i.
- **General Workplace Trainings:** Professional skills and basic computer skills training can increase a candidate’s employability across various occupations and industries.
- **Healthcare Trainings:** Healthcare employment opportunities are prominent in West O‘ahu; they also offer competitive pay and opportunities for career advancement. Certified Nurse Aide and Certified Medical Assistant are among the most in-demand, entry-level healthcare certifications throughout the state.
- **Skilled Trades Trainings and Apprenticeships:** Skilled trades jobs are ideal opportunities for West O‘ahu residents, given that construction is one of the top sectors in West O‘ahu. Skilled trades jobs include commercial drivers and various apprenticeable occupations, such as carpenters and electricians.

Expand Local Training Availability: Bringing more vocational training opportunities to West O‘ahu, particularly Wai‘anae, will reduce barriers to access. Providers should consider partnering with local employers and training facilities to create new training opportunities at existing facilities, such as the Waianae Moku Education Center, or to establish new facilities and locations that can accommodate in-demand trainings with the necessary space and equipment.

Increase Financial Assistance for Education, Training, and Support Services: Financial assistance and wraparound support are key to making education and training access more equitable for West O‘ahu residents. Funding to cover low barrier supports that include onsite childcare, transportation, and counseling in addition to subsidizing vocational trainings is essential to ensuring programs are accessible to West O‘ahu residents.

Improve Awareness of Education and Training Opportunities: Coordinated outreach in the region is needed to ensure residents are aware of the range of free and affordable educational and training opportunities available. In particular, increasing awareness of GED and high school equivalency programs and promoting to importance and benefits to residents of having these qualifications would have significant impact in this region.

Grow Partnerships and Improve Coordination: Expanding trainings, increasing financial assistance, and improving awareness of opportunities in West O‘ahu will require partnership and coordination among West O‘ahu service providers, educators, employers, and state and city government entities involved in workforce development. With many ongoing partnerships in the region, there is significant opportunity to align ongoing efforts. A coordinated approach will help to identify service gaps, opportunities to leverage resources, and ultimately have a greater impact on the West O‘ahu community and its residents.

METHODOLOGY

JOB POSTINGS ANALYSIS

The snapshot analysis of job postings available in West O‘ahu ($n = 1,292$) was conducted in June 2023 using HireNet Hawaii’s jobs search tool. For each of the West O‘ahu zip codes (Ewa Beach: 96706, Kapolei: 96707, and Wai‘anae: 97692), the de-duplicated number of job postings was recorded. The occupation filter was used to identify and record the number of job postings in each occupational category by zip code.

In each zip code, for the 5 occupational categories with the most postings, the highest-paying postings were sampled ($n = 60$), and data on required education, experience, and pay were captured for analysis.

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

SMS Research conducted one-on-one interviews with representatives from the Hawai‘i Department of Education, University of Hawai‘i System, O‘ahu Workforce Development Board, WorkHawaii, and various service providers in West O‘ahu. Interviews focused on education and training services available in West O‘ahu and barriers for clients/residents to access them, as well as opportunities for enhanced partnership.

SMS also participated in a stakeholder meeting with West O‘ahu job seekers. The discussion centered on job seekers’ employment preferences, goals, and challenges they have faced in the workforce.

PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

U.S. Census Bureau data from the [American Community Survey](#) (5-Year Estimates, 2017-2021) were used to identify West O‘ahu population demographics and residents’ sectors of employment. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) via the [OnTheMap](#) application was used to identify the top sectors of employment for workers in West O‘ahu. Data was gathered for the following [Zip Code Tabulation Areas](#): Ewa Beach (96706), Kapolei (96707), and Wai‘anae (96792).

HIRENET HAWAII

[HireNet Hawaii](#) was used to identify major employers in each of the West O‘ahu Zip Codes based on estimated number of employees and to conduct a snapshot analysis of job postings in West O‘ahu.