



Impact on COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake in the Pacific Islander Community





TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
CORE SURVEY FINDINGS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
STUDY OVERVIEW	5
WAO’S REACH WITHIN THE PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY	6
SURVEY POPULATON	10
KEY FINDINGS FROM VACCINATION SURVEY	12
REASONS FOR GETTING VACCINATED	13
ABOUT THE EVALUATORS	16
SPONSORS	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are Oceania (WAO) is a **trusted** organization that serves and supports the Micronesian and Pacific Islander communities. From February to October 2021, WAO served over 18000 requests for services, with over 90% from Pacific Islanders (PIs), including over 55% Chuukese and 10% Marshallese. WAO provides a variety of services, including the helpline, support for health service providers, enrollment in medicare, case management among several others.

WAO advocates for the health of the people they serve, while emphasizing indigenous skills and values. The key is WAO's central hub, which provides services to recent Micronesian immigrants who arrive in Hawai'i. WAO accomplished their goal of a one-stop Micronesian center dedicated to growth, implementation of initiatives and self-sustainability with a focus on various Micronesian community needs.

Pacific Islander (PI) communities were among the hardest hit with COVID-19. In the first year of the pandemic, this population reached up to 27% of the diagnosed COVID-19 cases in the state of Hawaii, although they represent only 4% of the state population. With a need to control the spread of COVID-19 in the PI community, WAO assisted by creating services and supporting PIs in Hawaii. When vaccines became available, WAO, in collaboration with other community organizations such as Kalihi-Palama Health Center and Project Vision, created vaccination days. 824 individuals from Oahu were vaccinated at these clinics from February to July 2021, representing about 6% of all Pacific Is-

landers vaccinated in Oahu during that period. In addition, WAO supported Queens Medical Center, Project Vision, and Parents And Children Together to provide language and cultural support at Hawaii Public Housing Projects such as Kamehameha IV Housing, KPT, Palolo, and Mayer Wrights. WAO also provided Dignity Bags with PPE at these clinics.

Due in part to these efforts, Pacific Islanders now make up only 8% of COVID-19 cases, and they showed a significant downward trend. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HI'A and WAO worked together to develop a survey to understand the impact of WAO's services on their community. However, what arose as the top priority was to understand the community's perceptions of the vaccine. The shift in the survey was a response to community need, demonstrating the true collaborative nature of the project.

WAO leadership and staff pivoted to disseminating the surveys at vaccination sites, and during food drives. For those who did not speak English (or felt more comfortable taking the survey in their native language), the staff translated and completed the survey with the individual. In total, 373 surveys were completed with, 33% (n=124) Chuukese then 29% (n=109) Marshallese as the highest PIs respondents; average age of 45 years old, and 56% (n=185) were female and 43% (n=143) male respondents. Further, 41% completed the survey of 824 who received a vaccination at one of the dissemination sites (limitations due to a small percentage, as noted occurred at food drives).



CORE SURVEY FINDINGS

📌 Satisfaction with WAO

Over **95%** of participants were strongly satisfied or satisfied with the help WAO provided at the clinic or on the phone. In addition, over **95%** of participants would recommend a WAO-sponsored clinic to a friend or family.

📌 Knowledge about the vaccine

Over **90%** felt they knew enough about the vaccine they received today.

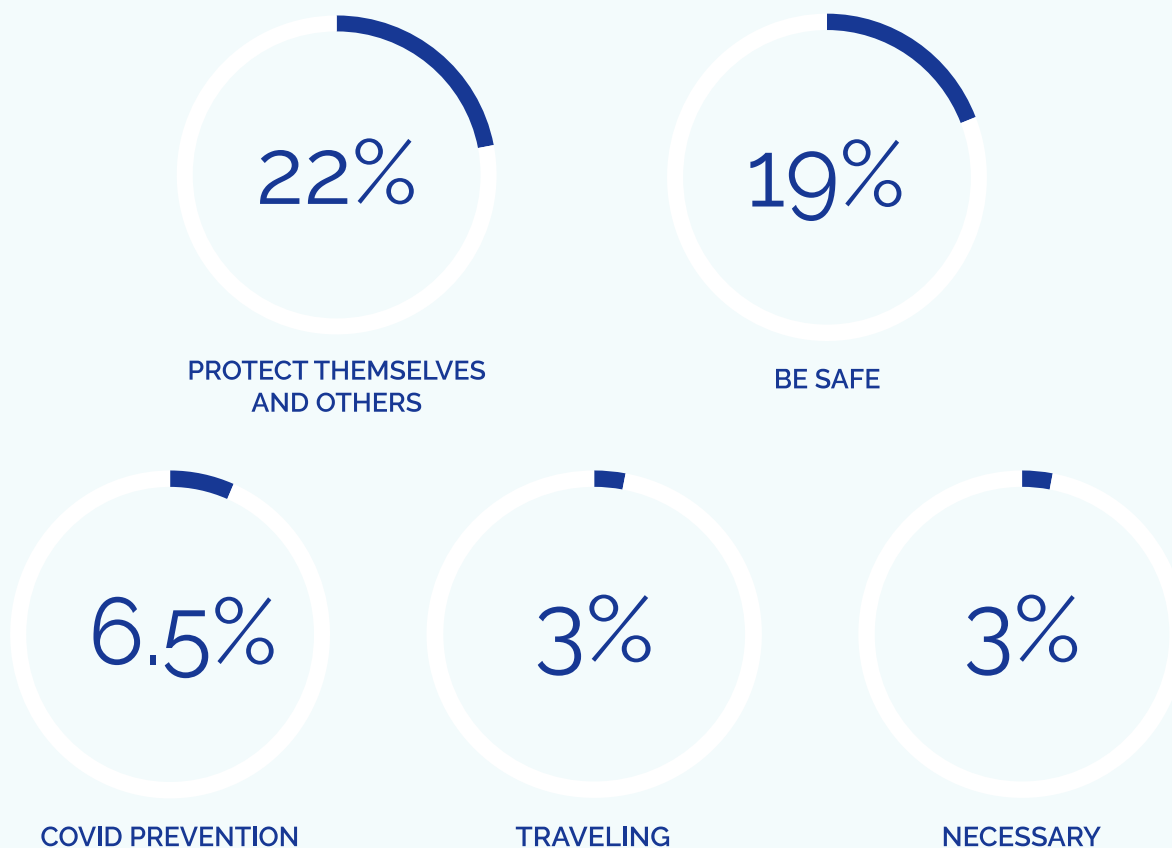
📌 Experience at the clinic

Over **83%** of participants agree or strongly agree that they were able to share concerns with the provider, over **94%** were comfortable with their healthcare provider, over **94%** felt safe at the clinic, and were informed about the vaccine they were receiving today.

📌 Preference for service

Less than **45%** of participants prefer a large clinic, and over **86%** of participants strongly prefer a small clinic. Providing opportunities to more effectively design services for the PI community.

In addition, participant open ended responses as to their decision to take the vaccine are as follows:



To date, WAO's survey and vaccination clinic partnerships resulted in Pacific Islanders outperforming on the number of vaccinations as its share of the population.

INTRODUCTION

We Are Oceania (WAO) is a **trusted organization** that serves and supports the Micronesian and Pacific Island communities. WAO's foundation stems from the "Micronesian Voices" conference in March 2008, that emphasized the importance to-connect the Micronesian people and families to services. They advocate for the health of their communities; while empowering indigenous skills and values; that links their new knowledge of living in the Hawaii community to thrive successfully. Key is WAO's central hub to provide services to recent Micronesian immigrants who arrive in Hawai'i. WAO accomplished their goal of a one-stop Micronesian center dedicated to growth, implementation of initiatives and self-sustainability with a focus on various Micronesian community needs. The services that WAO continues to provide the community are in the best interest of the community.

The importance of WAO for Hawaii's Pacific Islander communities became even more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Covid infection rates were low for the state overall (compared to other parts of the country), Micronesian and Pacific Islander populations were some of the most impacted with the disease. In fact, through the first year of the pandemic, Pacific Islanders made up 27% of the diagnosed cases, even though

they represent only 4% of the population. Since then, cases among this population have stabilized, now making up 8% of cases in Hawaii State. They showed a downward trend—to 3rd in case rate among all races in Hawaii in August 2021, after Native Hawaiians and Whites.

In early 2021, HI'A started working with WAO to create a survey to understand the impact that WAO was having on its community. Studying WAO's efforts would benefit their array of services that expand beyond the one-stop hub. Services include: continued education, job readiness training, civic engagement opportunities, leadership, and capacity development. In addition, when the COVID-19 vaccination became available, WAO's acted on yet another opportunity to help their communities. WAO, in collaboration with other community organizations such as Kalihi-Palama Health Center and Project Vision, began offering vaccination days.

While developing the survey, it became clear that—of all of WAO's services—the top priority was to understand the community's perceptions of the vaccine in order address lingering vaccine hesitancy. The shift in the survey demonstrated the importance of listening to the community and hearing its needs.



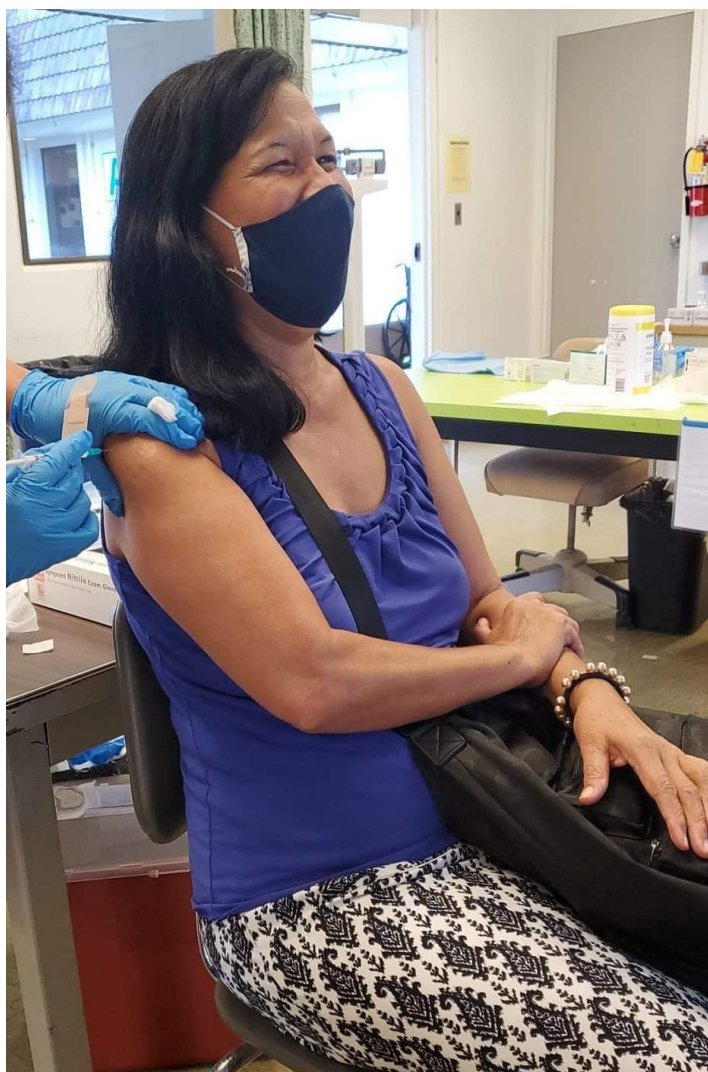
STUDY OVERVIEW

The purpose of the study was to evaluate WAO's impact on COVID-19 vaccination rates among Pacific Islanders in Hawaii. WAO and HI'A discussed and researched plausible factors as to low vaccination rates and high hesitancy to obtain a vaccine. Previous results by the Pacific Alliance Against Covid (PAAC.info) study of over 5000 individuals in Hawaii has uncovered a dual and opposing role of trust as modifiers and eventual motivation to acquire a vaccine. In that, individuals with a higher degree of trust in official sources of COVID-19 information had an increased probability of vaccination by 20.68%, versus those with higher trust in unofficial sources which showed decreased by 12.49%. Key to these findings is the determination of a trusting messenger to deliver information about COVID-19 to the NHPI community.

We Are Oceania, as a leading connector within the Pacific Islander community and with health service providers, wanted to reverse the trend of low vaccine rates and high vaccination hesitancy. WAO and HI'A created a ***hypothesis: WAO is a trusted***

source within the PI community whose impact on vaccination uptake needs to be quantified. Subsequently, new vaccination clinics were set up by WAO personnel to increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccine in the Pacific Islander community. HI'A supported WAO in measuring their impact on COVID-19 vaccination outcomes of Pacific Islanders and to learn more about how to effectively best support the Pacific Islander community.

WAO leadership and staff administered the surveys from March to June 2021 at vaccination sites and during food drives. There were three vaccination sites of Kalihi Palama Health Center, Project Vision and Queens Medical Center. The survey contained questions assessing participants' satisfaction with WAO, knowledge about the vaccine, experience at the clinic, preference for service, and obtained open-ended responses for the reasons why people took the vaccine. For those who do not speak English or felt more comfortable taking the survey in their native language, the staff translated and completed the survey with the individual.

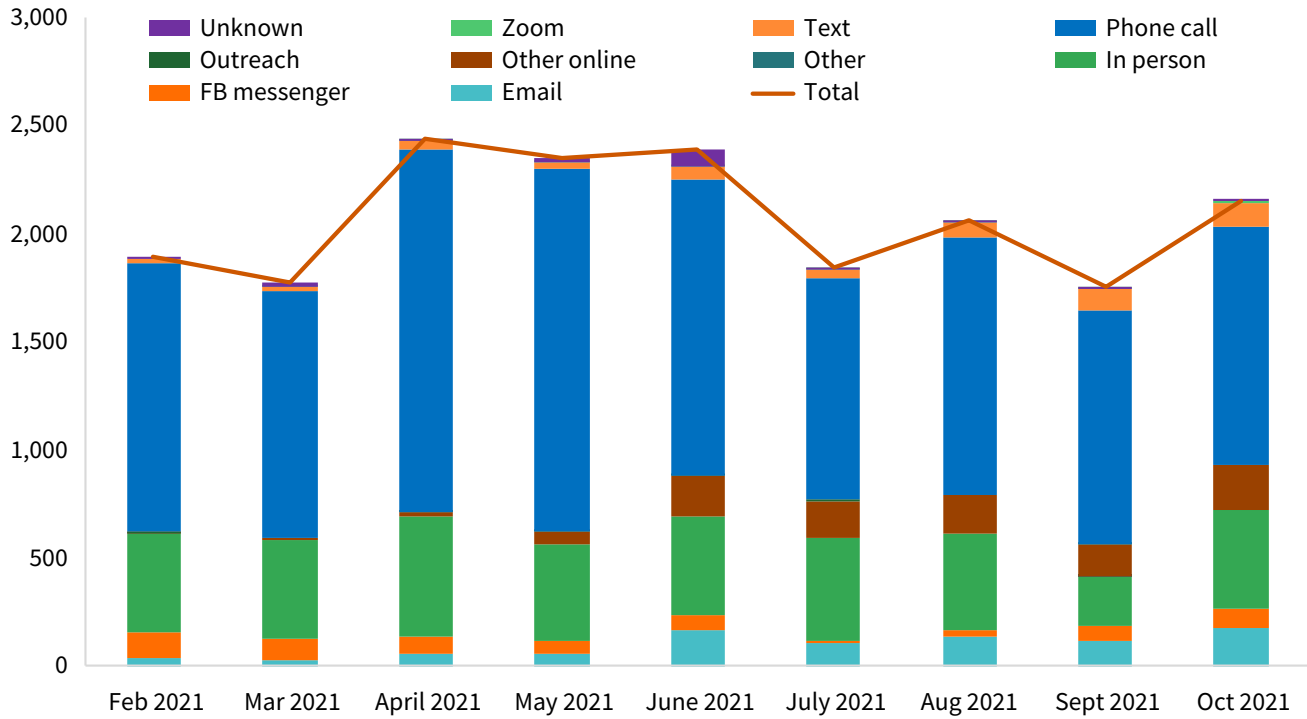


WAO'S REACH WITHIN THE PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY

From February to September 2021, WAO had 18,761 service requests, averaging over 2000 services per month.*

*Note that data in this report does not include services WAO provided in Wahiawa and Waia'anae, as those clinics were operated by Project Vision and Queens.

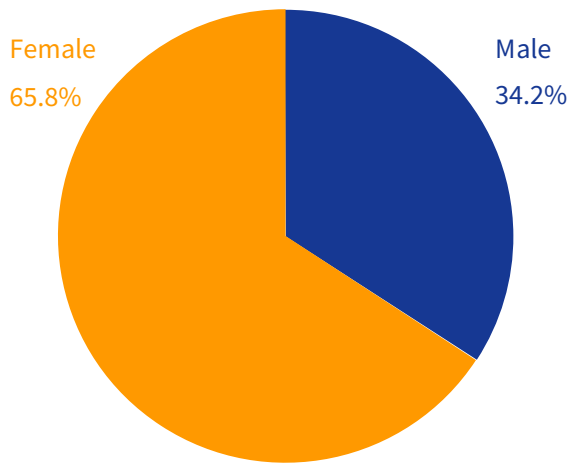
NUMBER OF SERVICES



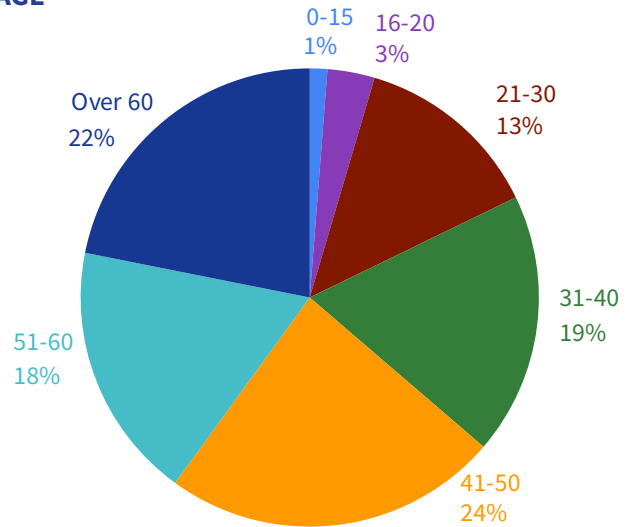
Population WAO serves

WAO provides services to populations of all ages, and 2 out of 3 services are provided to women. Over 90% of the services to Pacific Islanders, including 55% Chuukese and 20% Marshallese. Although over 70% of the population lives in Honolulu, service recipients come from all over Oahu.

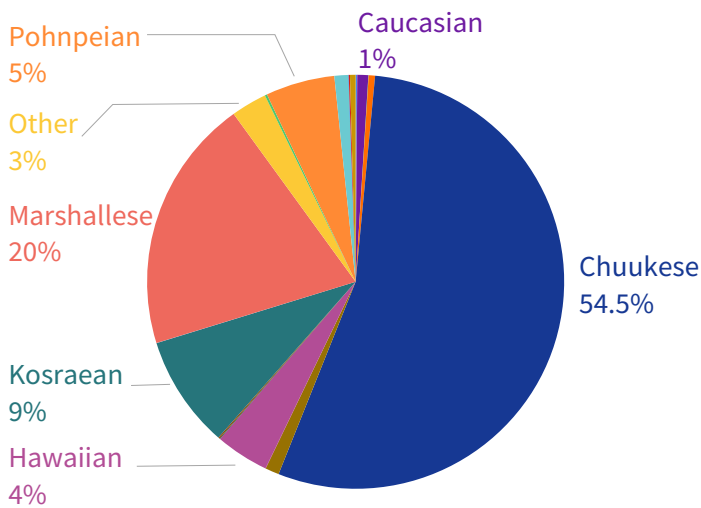
GENDER



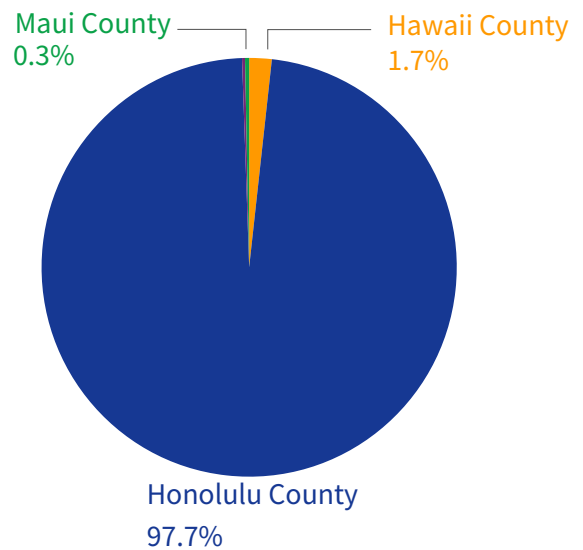
AGE



ETHNICITY



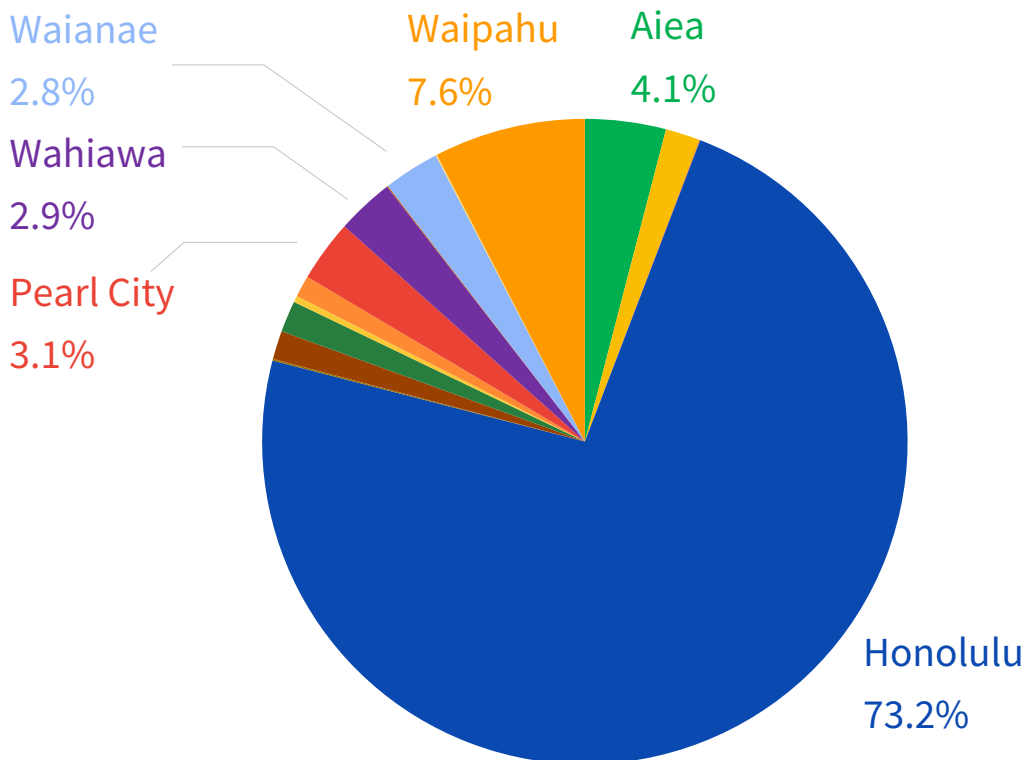
ISLAND SERVED



LOCATION OF PARTICIPANT (OAHU ONLY)



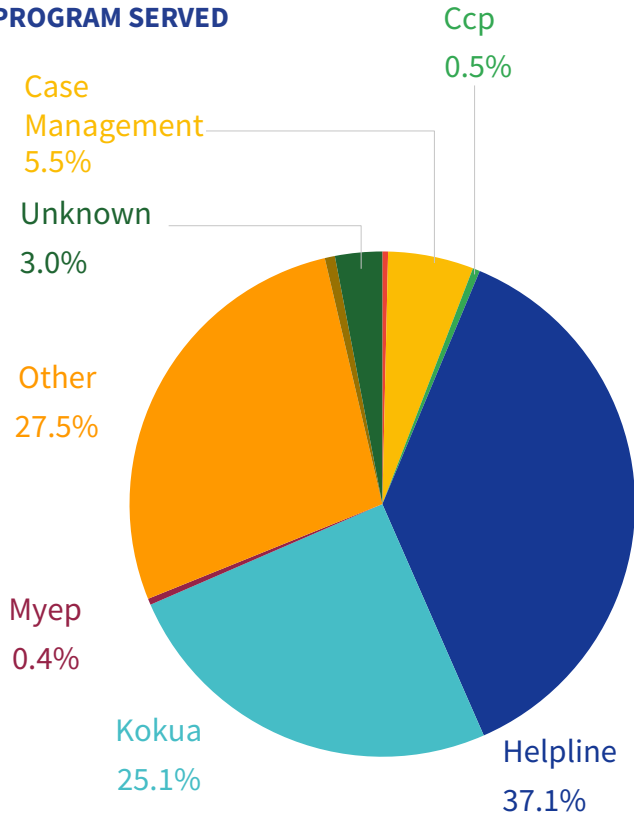
AREA SERVED IN OAHU



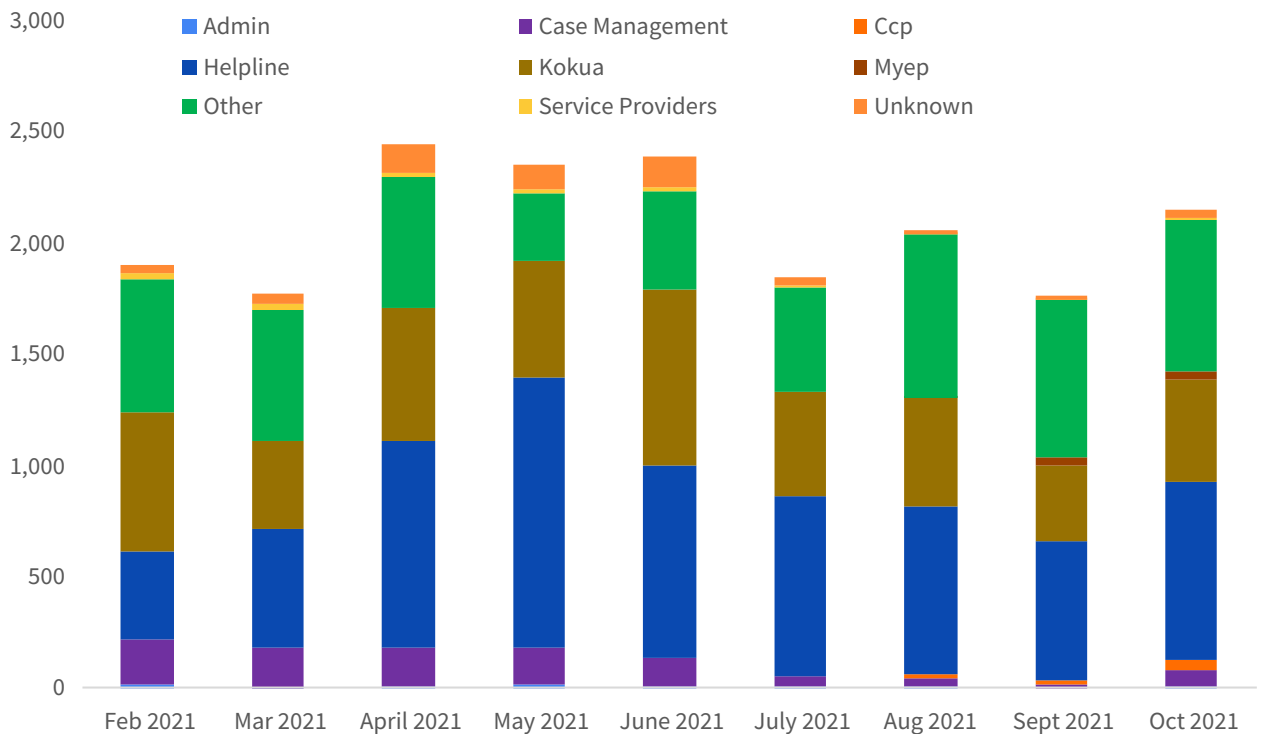
Services provided

37% of Services were provided on the healthline, 25% in Kokua, 5.5% case management, and 27.5% include a variety of other services.

PROGRAM SERVED



PROGRAM SERVED BY MONTH



SURVEY POPULATION

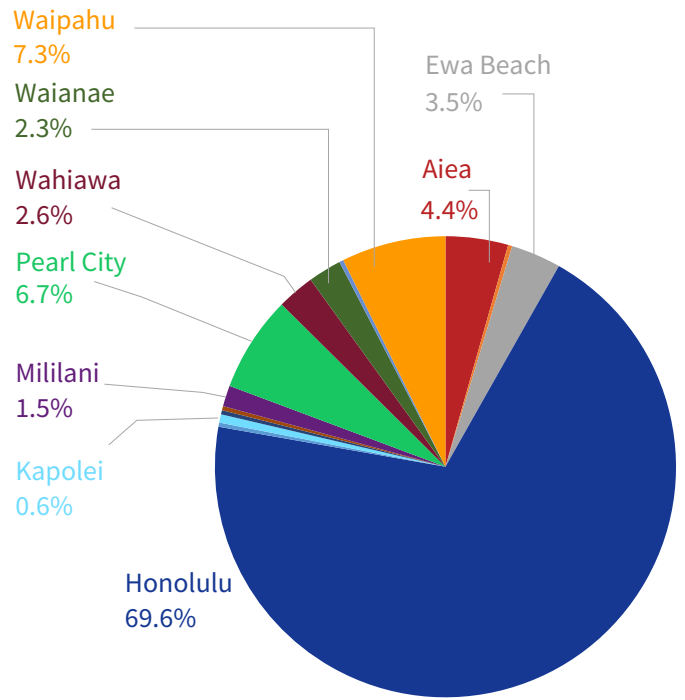
A total of 843 individuals were supported at WAO's vaccination clinics from February to July, 2021. This represents 6% of all Pacific Islanders vaccinated in Oahu in that time period.

A total of 373 surveys were disseminated to these individuals, representing a 44.25% uptake of the survey and providing a very well representative sample of the vaccination clinics.

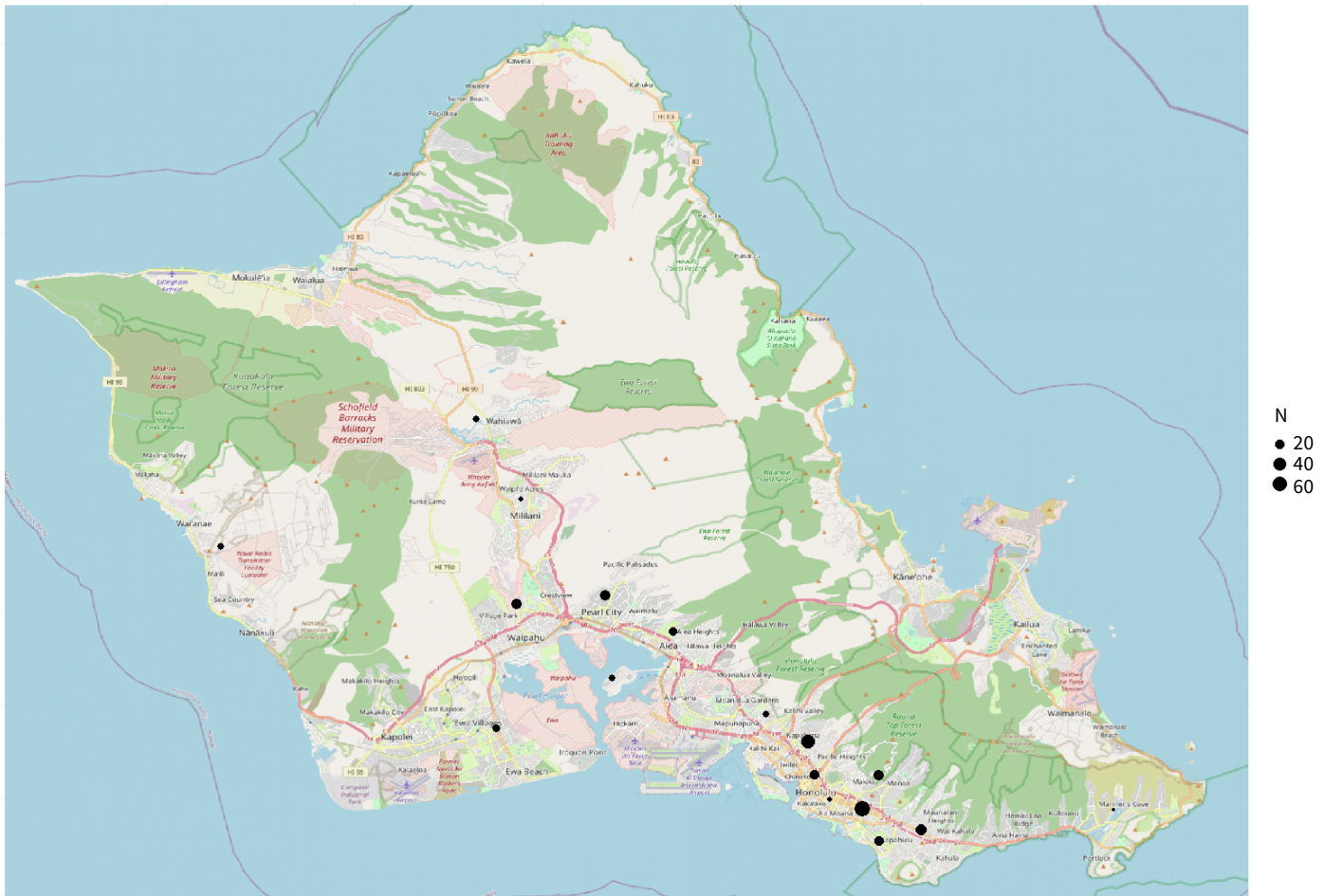
Geographic distribution

Despite WAO being located in downtown Honolulu, participants come from all over Oahu to their vaccination clinics, likely as a result of trust and connection of WAO.

Most respondents live in Honolulu (70%). In addition, 7.3% came from Wahiawa, and 6.7% from Waipahu, respectively. Other locations are presented in the figure below, but they span most of Central and West Oahu locations.



PARTICIPANT BY ZIPCODE (OAHU ONLY)



Demographics

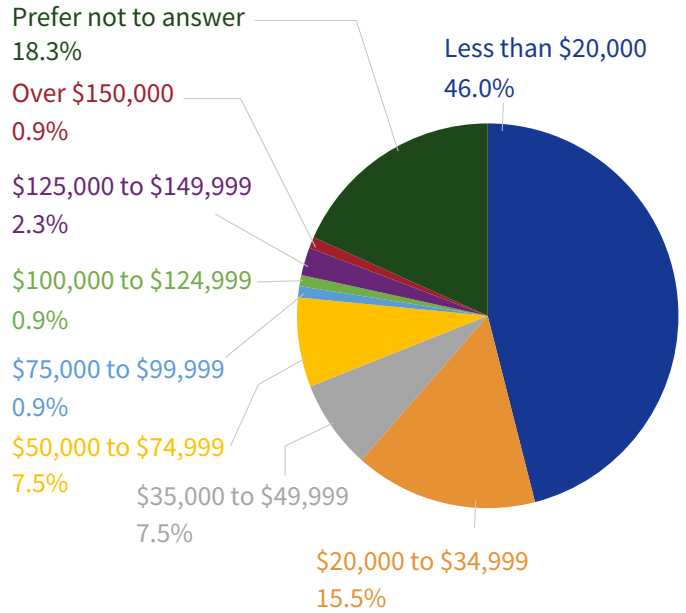
Although 91% percent of survey respondents were Pacific Islanders, the population at the clinics were more diverse than those receiving services from WAO. Indeed, Chuukeese make up 55% of WAO's population but only 33% of those in the vaccination clinics. In contrast, Marshallese and Pohnpeian individuals make up 20% and 5.4% of WAO's services, but make up 29% and 21% of individuals in the vaccination clinics.

Fifty-six percent of respondents were female and 43% were male.

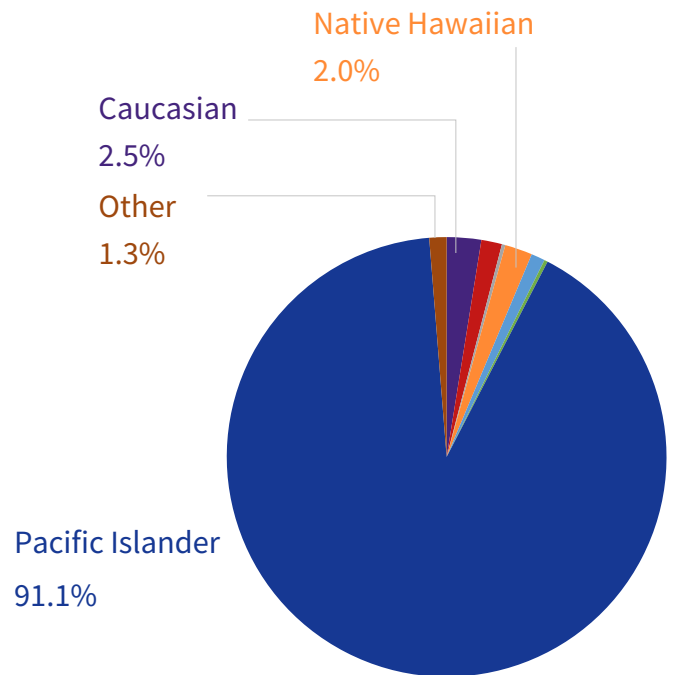
For the vaccination clinics, 3 out of 4 individuals are considered low income. From these, close to half of respondents (46%) earn less than \$20,000 per year. About 1 in 6 respondents (15%) earn between \$20,000 to \$34,999/year, and 7.5% earn between \$35,000 to \$49,999 per year, and 7.5% earn between \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year.



INCOME



RACE



KEY FINDINGS FROM VACCINATION SURVEY

Results from the survey indicate a **high degree of satisfaction and trust** in WAO’s services and staff. The majority of respondents agreed with the following statements:

96% OF RESPONDENTS
 “I WOULD RECOMMEND WAO-SPONSORED CLINIC TO A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER”

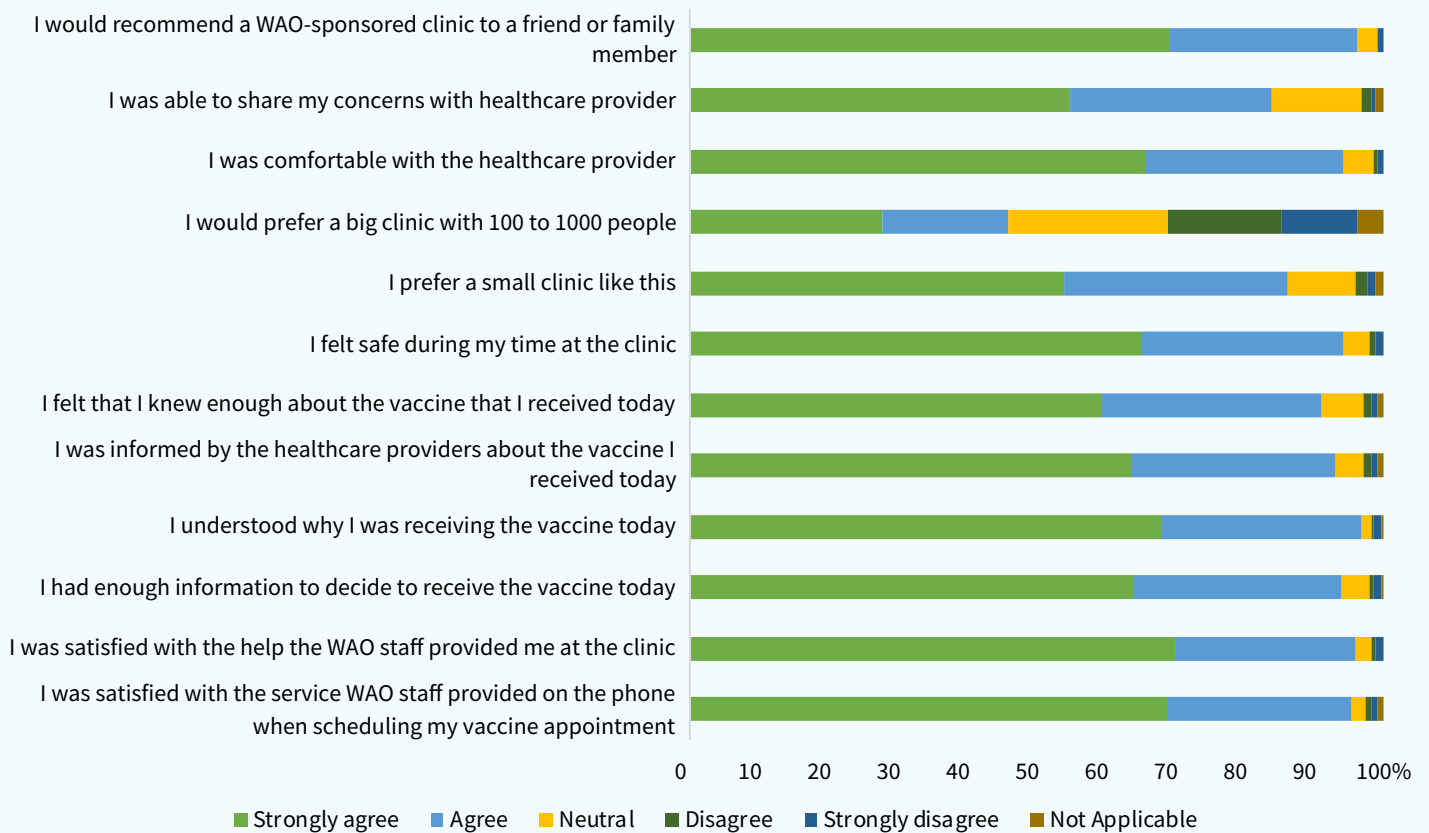
96% OF RESPONDENTS
 “I WAS SATISFIED WITH THE HELP WAO STAFF PROVIDED ME AT THE CLINIC”

97% OF RESPONDENTS
 “I UNDERSTOOD WHY I WAS RECEIVING THE VACCINE TODAY”

95% OF RESPONDENTS
 “I WAS SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICE WAO STAFF PROVIDED ON THE PHONE WHEN SCHEDULING MY VACCINE APPOINTMENT.”

94% OF RESPONDENTS
 “I FELT SAFE DURING MY TIME AT THE CLINIC.”

The majority of participants agreed with positive statements about the vaccination and vaccination clinic.



OPERATIONS (OF HOW CLINIC WAS RUN) 2.5%

“The WAO workers were awesome. Most of them were very friendly.”

“Staff was very professional, courteous and very knowledgeable! Job well done!!”

“Thank you for helping and ask if we wanted the vaccine for Covid-19 and explain about the vaccine shot. A big thanks to the workers at WAO staff and the military help.”

“Very helpful staff. Thank you!!”

“WAO really did a great job!! Keep up the great work!!”

“I received a wonderful service. Staff was very kind and well-informed. I want to stay healthy and prevent the spread of COVID.”

WORK 2.2%

“I work in the church who help the community and therefore I am expose to people in need. If I were to get Covid we would have to shut down and some of the people we in-need couldn't get by without our assistance, so I decided to get vaccinated.”

“For work.”

“I wanted to work, but I need to take the vaccine in order to start working.”

“I am traveler for my work.”

“I work at a restaurant and I deal with a lot of customers.”

COMMUNITY 2%

“Mainly for my kids and family. My parents are old and I work in the field. Also to help not spread covid.”

“It's a good thing to do and helps other not to spread the virus.”

“Family.”

“To stop the spread of the pandemic (Covid-19) and other things. It will be good for my loved ones that I am vaccinated.”

HEALTH 1.9%

“It is good for my health.”

“To stay strong and healthy and I don't want to get the covid.”

“I want to be healthy and spend good time with my family.”

“I am worried about the health of the family and mine. This pandemic is a life changing situation so if taking the vaccine helps in the coming days, I gladly take it.”



TAKEAWAYS

Since WAO began their vaccine clinic, the vaccination rate for Pacific Islanders has increased at a higher rate than other ethnic groups. While we are unable to say whether this is a direct impact of WAO's vaccine clinics, WAO did vaccinate a significant number of Oahu's Pacific Islander population. In fact, 6% of all vaccinated Pacific Islanders in Oahu during the period of February to July received the vaccine from one of WAO's clinics. Moreover, Pacific Islanders showed a downward trend in case rates—from first down to fourth among all races in Hawaii, after Native Hawaiians, Whites and Filipinos.

Survey responses provide strong evidence for WAO's impact on assuaging concerns over the vaccine and improving uptake. Most respondents indicate a strong degree of trust in WAO, their staff, and their services. The vast majority of those who received the vaccine understood why they were receiving the vaccine, and overall felt informed and knowledgeable about their decision. For those with concerns about the vaccine, 83% felt that they could share their concerns with the health care provider.

Respondents understood the importance of taking the vaccine for a variety of reasons, primarily for COVID prevention and to protect themselves and others. This is aligned with the cultural ideals of being community oriented and looking out for one another. Other reasons included for work and travel, which for many meant being able to return home. The participants saw that the vaccine was important in order to do things that they needed and wanted to do.

In the future, continued collaboration with community organizations allows for a greater outreach to the participants. Results also highlighted that a strong relationship with WAO and its staff members made participants comfortable with receiving the vaccination. These collective elements of community collaborations and WAO's cohesive staff provides a solid foundation to support study designs toward preventative campaigns and interventions. With an emphasis on the importance of cultural values, bonds - individual - families - their communities, serves as a model to obtain contributions for best outcomes.





The project team of We Are Oceania. Staff of the community and for the community.

ABOUT THE EVALUATORS

HI'A is a Hawaii-based company that helps non-profit companies, community-based organizations, and other clients measure the impact of their programs and other initiatives throughout the state of Hawaii. Our services include but are not limited to the design of protocols for the effective and unbiased measurement of client-specified impacts, the micro and macro data collection from individuals and communities, data storage and management, and data integration and analysis, providing an interpretation of results to clients and the broader community. We have an unmatched caliber of scientific expertise and experience in the State of Hawaii, evaluating community- and education- projects and interacting with dozens of community-based

organizations and programs, including several with an agriculture focus.

Our leadership team includes four PhD scientists and a public health MA with complementary multidisciplinary expertise, from Economics and Social Sciences to Public Health and Education. Our leadership team has over 13 years of experience providing evaluations of education and non-education projects, including programs in the intersection of agriculture and education for federal and local funding agencies.

For more information please visit www.HIA.llc or contact info@hia.llc

SPONSORS

This report was made possible by funding generously provided by HMSA Foundation and Atherton Family Foundation. The con-

tent is solely the responsibility of HI'A and may not represent the official view of the funders.