



The Stronger Together
Hawai'i Scholarship Report 2020

Stronger Together

Thanks to you ...



HAWAII COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Amplify the Power of Giving

The Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship

*Thanks to hundreds of donors like you and a generous lead gift from First Hawaiian Bank, more than \$2.4 million was raised in four short weeks to establish the *Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship Fund* at the Hawai'i Community Foundation. Through your generosity, 370 public high school graduates have the support they need to pursue their college and career goals.*



THE SITUATION

An Abrupt Pivot to a Final Year

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached Hawai'i's shores, schools were forced to close their doors early, which eliminated critical planning months for graduating high school seniors. Many students saw their ability to attend post-secondary education fade as the ensuing economic crisis created financial barriers to realize their next phase of life. As one student shared with us: "My father was laid

off from one of his jobs. With half his income gone, he only has \$2,500 per month for rent, groceries, and other necessities. He simply can't help me pay for college."

To address the inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship Fund was created to offer a new, out of the box approach to traditional scholarships. Students were offered the opportunity to pursue a wide range of continuing education options, with funding available for varying needs, such as school-related expenses that may hinder a person's enrollment.

The only requirement for this year's eligibility was participation in the Next Steps to Your Future Initiative – a virtual counseling and career exploration class provided by the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges and P-20 Partnerships for Education. The program connected 2020 high school graduates to postsecondary education, training, or employment through a combination of virtual advising and career exploration classes. Due to the success of the Next Steps to Your Future Initiative, P-20 will be offering this program to the 2021 public high school seniors.



"I have been weighed down in fear of how I will be paying for school, and what my future may look like..."

—Jessica, graduate of Kapolei High School

THE CHALLENGES

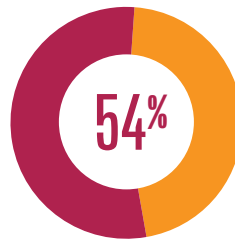
A Snapshot of Challenges Faced by the Class of 2020

Applicants to the *Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship Fund* shared how the pandemic has disrupted their ability to afford post-secondary education and increased their educational expenses.

Household Income

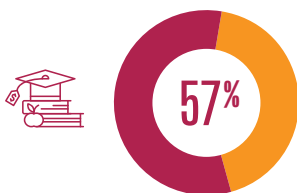
\$1.06M ↘

Applicants reported a total of \$1.06M in monthly income loss, which compounds each month the COVID pandemic continues to stifle our local economy.

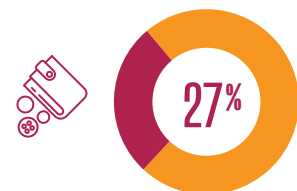


of applicants have either experienced a loss of household income, or an increase in educational expenses due to the pandemic.

College Expenses



can only afford to pay \$10,000 or less toward college expenses.



had no money that could be used for college expenses.



“

My father has been furloughed from his full-time job since March and his employer does not expect to re-open until the end of the year, hopefully. My mom manages a local store which was hit hard due to this pandemic. The PPP her company took out only lasted six weeks before it was gone. I was unable to secure a paying summer job. I was expecting to spend my summer working and using that income to live on while in college.”

—**Kaleo**, a graduate of Waimea High School on Kaua'i, was planning to attend Pacific University in the fall, until COVID-19 threw those plans into disarray.

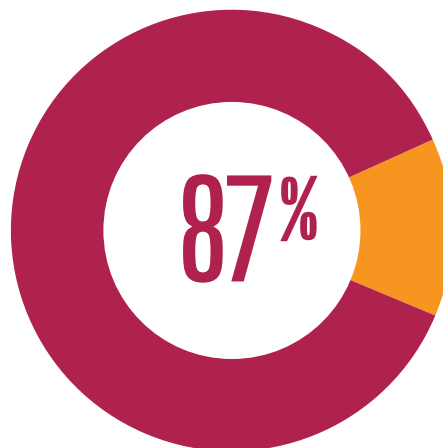
THE CHALLENGES *(Continued)*

Socioeconomic Factors

Research has identified socioeconomic factors that significantly decrease a student's enrollment, persistence, and completion. Using these factors, the Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship application asked applicants to identify with any of the following:

- First in their family to attend college,
- Has been in foster care,
- An underrepresented gender,
- On free-or-reduced lunch during the regular school year, and/or
- Experienced homelessness within the past two years

An overwhelming 87% of applicants identified him/herself in at least one category listed. Nearly half of the 87% associated him/herself in two or more categories. The impact of your gift cannot be understated: your generosity helped mitigate the inequalities that already existed in our society and were exacerbated by COVID-19. You changed the trajectory of these 2020 public high school seniors.



THE IMPACT

First Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarships Awards

In only three months, the community contributed \$2.4 million to help the class of 2020 pursue their academic dreams. Funding has been used towards the awardee's cost of attending the institution of choice, including tuition, fees, and school-related expenses.



526

students applied for the Stronger Together Hawai'i Scholarship Fund



370

students received an average award size of \$6,200



35%

of students that received the Stronger Together Hawai'i scholarships are based on the neighbor islands

100%

The most important statistic:

100% of applicants still wanted to pursue a higher education despite the many barriers that COVID-19 had placed in front of them. The resilience of our youth, coupled with your community support will have a positive impact on Hawai'i for years to come.



“

I would like to say thank you, I never would have expected to have this weight lifted from my shoulders. I plan on being a Special Education teacher. I have always known that I would not have a financially lucrative career. I have been weighed down in fear of how I will be paying for school, and what my future may look like. I will now be able to not only get my degree but also hopefully not be riddled with debt so I can provide the best possible education for my students and inspire growth and the hope of secondary education with them. You have drastically changed my life but also my parents' lives, my future students' lives, my siblings' lives, and... for that, I say thank you.”

—Jessica, graduate of Kapolei High School

Jessica contributed 10% of her monthly paycheck to her household's expenses until she lost her job due to the COVID pandemic.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about how your contribution makes a difference contact Eric La 'a at elaa@hcf-hawaii.org or call (808) 537-6333. For more information about the Hawai'i Community Foundation Scholarship program visit hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/scholarships.



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