

Homeownership Possible for Qualified Rental Residents

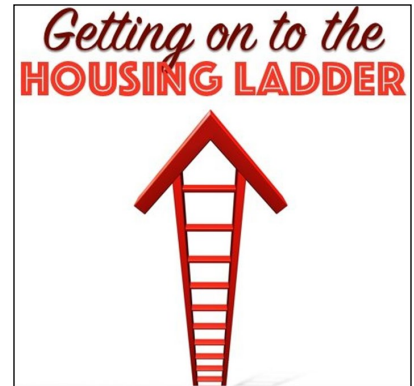
State Grant Offers Down Payment Match for Home Purchase

Homeownership that seemed impossible for rental residents is possible, with help from a new Komohale Services program and a government grant. Known as Housing Independence for Families, the new program will offer homeownership educational classes and financial counseling to eligible families to develop the skills needed to attain economic independence and homeownership.

A grant-in-aid from the State of Hawai'i will help qualified rental

residents who complete the year-long educational and savings program with a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$30,000 each for a down payment toward a first-time home. Homeownership classes will be conducted in partnership with the Hawaii HomeOwnership Center.

“By transitioning residents into first-time homeowners, this will in turn open up rental units for more economically vulnerable families who are waiting in transitional housing to have a more stable housing option,” said Pamela Witty-Oakland, Komohale Services Executive Director.



For more information on the educational classes, visit www.hihomeownership.org.

If you have questions, email info@komohale.org, or call us at (808) 548-1266.



Komohale backpacks and school supplies for keiki completing vision screening with Project Vision.

La'ilani Keiki Get Ready for School

A Back-to-School Bash was held at La'ilani Apartments in Kailua-Kona on July 14.

In partnership with Project Vision Hawaii, the event featured vision screenings for 43 children and youth in preparation for the new school year and also ten parents who participated.

Good eye health is closely related in success in school.

All keiki went home sporting a Komohale Services drawstring backpack filled with school supplies.

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Partner Profile: Project Vision Hawaii

Project Vision Hawaii (PVH) was one of the first entities to embrace Komohale Services' mission of providing resources for residents to achieve their personal best.

The nonprofit organization partners with Komohale Services, providing vision screenings and exams, hearing screenings, COVID vaccinations, and SNAP and Medicaid Assistance at no charge. So far, services have been provided at six properties on O'ahu and La'ilani Apartments in Kailua-Kona with the goal to service all properties.

At the La'ilani event, our Komohale Services staff were especially happy that the PVH staff were able to help two elementary-age siblings, who were having their eyes checked for the first time. With their vision previously unchecked, both had poor eyesight and needed prescription glasses, which PVH provided at no cost.

PVH started in 2007 with vision screenings in Title I schools that number 20,000-plus students statewide annually. It grew from one mobile screening unit to 10, serving O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Maui, Kaua'i, Molo-ka'i, and Lana'i, providing free medical screening services to seniors, children from low-income families, immigrants, and individuals with disabilities. Over time, programs have been added in response to community need.

Earlier this year, PVH opened the state's first medical respite kauhale, Pulama Ola. Staffed 24/7, it's a safe place for houseless individuals who



are recovering after being discharged from urban hospitals. Each resident has his/her own unit with access to hot showers, a community of friends and activities, and medical support they need, says Ryan Naka, PVH Director of Philanthropy and Marketing.

Then, in response to the Maui wildfires, PVH opened the Pu'uhonu o Nēnē shelter for the survivors who were homeless prior to the fire. Case management, social services, showers, three meals daily, a community garden, and more are available. When basic needs are met, PVH believes that people can focus on bettering themselves.

Led by Darrah Kauhane, CEO, since 2020, PVH's staffing quickly grew from 25 employees to nearly 100 employees and independent contractors statewide. "We're proud to hire from the community we serve so many of our staff members were former clients," Ryan says.

He adds that the organization's growth and success in serving vulnerable populations comes largely from two unique strategies: 1) Services are brought directly to access-challenged communities; and 2) Participants are never turned away because of their inability to pay.

Now Serving Residents of Maunakea Tower, Too!

Maunakea Tower, located in Chinatown, is the newest affordable living community added to the Komohale Services network. Komohale Services is tasked with finding community partners, including translators, to serve the residents, who are primarily over 70 years old and mainly speak Mandarin Chinese.

The property's U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) affordability contract was set to expire in 2028. Acquisition of the 32-story property by a public-private partnership was completed this summer, to preserve its affordability for an additional 61 years.

The entire property will undergo renovations including in-unit improvements; during that time, residents will be temporarily housed within another renovated unit until their own unit is completed. Maunakea Tower will be highlighted in a later issue following completion of renovations in 2024.

Notes from the Executive Director



I hope you have all had a chance to look at our new Komohale Services website, komohale.org, and like it as much as I do. We'll continue to update the website with new information to keep it fresh and up-to-date.

To all of the residents who have checked out the website and signed up in the special Resident Login section, Mahalo! The information that you provided will remain confidential and is crucial so we can add more programs that are appropriate to you and provide you with access to our county-wide network of providers. Our aim is to be your one-stop shop for all the resources you need to live your best life.

In other news, we're pleased to welcome the residents of Maunakea Tower and to add the Housing Independence for Families program. You can read about these developments and more in this issue.

If you have any questions or need to reach us, please email info@komohale.org or call us at 808-548-1266.

Aloha,

Pamela Witty-Oakland
Executive Director

Property Profile: La'ilani Apartments 74-984 Manawalea Street, Kailua-Kona

Just a short drive away from Kailua-Kona town on Hawai'i Island, La'ilani Apartments is an easy-going community that consists of four villages – 'Ekahi, 'Elua, 'Ekolu, and 'Ehā – nestled on 4.73 acres. It comprises 25 two-story buildings with a total of 200 one-, two- and three-bedroom units.

Built in 1988, the property underwent renovations that were completed in March of this year. All buildings boast a fresh appearance painted in various shades of taupe and earthy green, which is the owner's signature style of using three tones. Exterior improvements also included new roofing, solar water panels and vinyl fencing. In addition, the laundry room in each village was refreshed with paint and now has convenient coinless washers and dryers that work with a laundry credit card or using an app. Each unit's interior now features new laminate flooring that replaced old carpeting, new cabinet and sink in the kitchen, new vanity and toilet in the bathroom, and new flooring and ceiling fan in the bedrooms. All downstairs units have a patio while second-floor apartments include a lanai.

Surrounded by a grassy lawn, the central pavilion, available for picnics and community gatherings, was also painted, while the outdoor basketball court, sporting new baskets and resurfaced flooring, is always in use after school by the youth who live there.

Joey Kaeka, property resident manager for the past two years, oversaw all of the renovations. Prior to that, he was working in maintenance. In his

role as resident manager, his day-to-day responsibilities include maintaining a safe environment for the entire property, scheduling work orders as well as meeting the needs of the residents. Joey says he enjoys living and working at La'ilani Apartments, getting to know all the families. He especially likes when the children call him "Uncle Joey" and feel comfortable talking to him.

Born and raised on O'ahu, he graduated from Kamehameha Schools – Kapālama, where he played football.



Joey and his wife, Annie, moved to Hawai'i Island nine years ago to be closer to her family when their first child, Olin, was born. That son now plays wide receiver and safety on the Westside Eagles pop warner football team that Joey has been coaching in his spare time. What's exciting: the team is this year's Big Island Champion and representing Hawai'i in the Pop Warner Super Bowl Championship in Florida.

Schools, supermarkets, restaurants, theaters, and more are all within a ten-minute drive away.

Applications are being accepted to join the waitlist. For more information, call 808-329-2684.

Federal Programs Assist with Utility Bills

Congratulations to Komohale Services winners!

Congratulations to the winners of our monthly drawing of Foodland gift certificates:



September Winner
Carmael, Aissea, and
Adeline of Kamakee Vista



October Winner ~ Diane
of Halekauwila Place

You can be a future month's winner! Go to <https://komohale.org/residents/> enter the password (ourvillage), then sign up.

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Komohale Services is committed to helping rental residents live their best life and that includes reducing household expenses. Here are two federal programs that are available to help you save money and cut back on utility expenses.

Save On Your Internet Bill

The **Affordable Connectivity Program** offers eligible households at affordable rental housing properties a monthly discount of \$30 on internet service. Funds will be paid directly to the participating Internet provider, so check with your current internet company. You may also be eligible for a one-time discount of up to \$100 to buy a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers.

The **Affordable Connectivity Program** is administered by USAC with oversight from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

For more information on benefits, the list of participating providers and how to apply, go to affordableconnectivity.gov. If you're unable to apply online, call 1-877-384.2575 to have an application mailed to you.

Save On Your Electricity Bill – Mark Your Calendar to Apply June 1-30.

The **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** provides a one-time energy credit per year to households on their electricity bill. The program year runs from October 1 to September 30. However, applications for energy credit are only accepted between **June 1-30**.

Download the application packet, <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-LIHEAP-LIHWAP-Application-Packet.pdf>

Submit your completed application and supporting documents to the Honolulu Community Action Program, Maui Economic Opportunity or Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council location nearest you. Addresses and phone numbers are available in the packet.

LIHEAP is a federal program that is administered locally by the State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services.

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Address label