

Maui Fires and Mutual Aid Resources

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Maui Fires

Last week, on August 8th, 2023, multiple fires ignited and spread on the island of Maui, devastating the historic town of Lahaina and capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Today, the number of casualties is recorded at 111, making this the 5th deadliest fire in modern US history ([ABC News](#)), with hundreds of people still missing and search and rescue efforts underway. Hawaii state officials estimate \$5.5 Billion is needed to rebuild [according to the University of Hawaii](#), with over 3,000 structures, historic landmarks, businesses and homes destroyed. Though the official cause of the fires is yet to be determined by an official investigation, high winds and complications with the power system are speculated to be contributing factors ([Wall Street Journal](#)).



The hall of historic Waiola Church in Lahaina and nearby Lahaina Hongwanji Mission were engulfed in flames Tuesday. (CNN News)

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the people of Maui and all those affected by the catastrophic fires that left Lahaina in devastation. As an agency committed to advocating for the welfare and empowerment of Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander communities, we are acutely aware of the importance of cultural heritage, connection to the land, and the unique bonds that tie individuals to their ancestral homes. We understand that these fires have touched the very heart of your community, and we stand ready to assist in any way possible to help you recover and restore what has been lost. CAPAA recognizes that these tragic events transcend mere news stories. Positioned as the nearest mainland state to Hawaii, Washington State is a cherished destination, and home to over 27,000 Native Hawaiian Washingtonians, who have been leading grass roots relief efforts to provide direct and immediate relief to families in need. Our heartfelt condolences are extended with the utmost sincerity. Our thoughts are with the families who have lost their loved ones, livelihood, homes and memories. We recognize the strength and unity that characterize your community, and we offer our unwavering support as you come together to rebuild, heal, and overcome the obstacles that lie ahead. During this challenging time of immense loss, displacement, and disruption, please know that you are not alone in this journey of recovery. We are here to listen, support, and amplify your voices as you work to rebuild your lives and your island.



This handout video grab courtesy of Richard Olsten taken on August 9, 2023 shows smoke billowing from destroyed buildings in Lahaina as wildfires burn across Maui, Hawaii. (Richard Olsten/AFP)

Resources to support Maui

Many community members in Washington State and partners of the state have reached out to lend their support. We encourage everyone to support the efforts to rebuild Maui and assist those affected. The following list has been vetted by CAPAA commissioners and you can contribute to provide immediate relief.

- [Maui Strong - Hawai'i Community Foundation](#)
- [Maui Fire Direct 'Ohana Relief List](#)
- [Council of Native Hawaiian Advancement, Alaka'aina and Kako'o Haleakala](#)
- [Hawai'i People's Fund](#)
- [The Hawaiian Alliance for Progressive Action \(HAPA\)](#) has put together a thorough and detailed site on petitions, aid resources, and local organizations that are accepting monetary donations.
- [The Red Cross](#)
- [The Maui Humane Society](#)
- [The Maui Food Bank](#)



This handout video grab courtesy of Richard Olsten taken Aug. 9, 2023 shows smoke billowing from destroyed buildings as wildfires burn across Maui, Hawaii.

Richard Olsten/AFP via Getty Images

CAPAA Commissioner in Maui during Fires

Commissioner Scott Lehrman was vacationing in Lahaina, Maui with his wife and four children when they realized they suddenly needed to evacuate. They were able to grab most of their belongings, jumped into their rental car and headed out of Lahaina towards Kihei, only to be caught in stand-still traffic among thousands of cars and thick smoke. The traffic finally let up and they thankfully made their way out of harms way to safety. They slept the night in their car and returned to the condominium to learn it was completely destroyed.

"What we lost doesn't compare to the devastation on people's lives, homes, and businesses," said Commissioner Lehrman. "We're counting all our blessings."

Washington sends search and rescue task force to Maui

Washington State sent 45 members of its Task Force-1 to assist with search and rescue efforts as hundreds of people are still missing. In a tweet on August 11th, Governor Inslee said, "[I salute] the bravery of the Washington State Task Force-1 Urban Search and Rescue team assisting with the search and rescue efforts in Maui. May your efforts lead to a swift and successful return. #MauiStrong." The task force is made up of firefighters from Pierce and King County. "My heart goes out to

those in Maui facing the devastating wildfires. Trudi and I are thinking of families, first responders, firefighters, and all affected by this unfolding crisis. WA is ready to assist in any way we can.” He tweeted on August 10th.

President Biden Approves Hawaii Disaster Declaration

President Biden ordered Federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by wildfires. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Federal funding also is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for debris removal and emergency protective measures in Maui County, and assistance for emergency protective measures for Hawaii County.

Lastly, Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. [Read the full press release here.](#)

Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs

CAPAA was established in 1974 to promote the wellbeing of Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) in Washington State. It advises the Governor, state agencies, and the legislature on changes to laws, policies, programs and services impacting APA's. It has a board of 12 gubernatorial appointees representing the geographic and cultural diversity of Washington State.

For More Information:

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