

2024

# Data Landscape Report


From Better  
Data to Better  
Outcomes for  
Households  
in Hawai'i

 Hawai'i Data  
Collaborative



[hawaiidata.org](http://hawaiidata.org)





It's important to emphasize and illustrate the value of implementing new systems and working with data—how it will make work easier for our stakeholders, or how it will better serve our community.”

**Amy Miller, President and CEO**  
Hawai'i Foodbank

# How can we use data to work together for better outcomes?

Too often it takes a crisis to bring into focus the gaps in resources, perspectives, and capacity necessary to meet the needs of our community. In the last few years we have faced acute, large-scale crises in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Maui wildfires, but the reality is that many households face individual-scale crises – which are often rooted in longstanding systemic inequities – on a regular basis.



**The intersection of these collective** and individual crises create the set of issues our team at Hawai'i Data Collaborative (HDC) have identified as “household need”: the challenges of food, housing, childcare, healthcare, and employment insecurity that too many in our community face.

Service providers, funders, and government organizations are all deeply invested in addressing household need, and there is an ongoing conversation driven by a central question, “How can we do better?”

As a committed partner in this conversation, HDC focuses on how data can support insights, connections, strategies, and ultimately decisions that best serve our community.

Over the last few years, HDC has moved from theory, to practice, to application when it comes to building data capacity and culture. Our first report focused on framing the data landscape and was a reflection of our process of theorizing and orienting to the dynamics of this ecosystem. Our second report zoomed in on opportunities and challenges, highlighting learnings gained through relationship-building and listening to stakeholders.

This report drills down even further into what it actually looks like to apply theory, and engage the opportunities and challenges at hand. The organizations highlighted in this report are actively working to transform not only internal data capacity and culture, but to illustrate the centrality of data-guided decision making in how we as a society may effectively respond to the needs of our most vulnerable. Based on conversations and collaborations with these key stakeholders, a vision for how data can support grounded, balanced, and sustainable change emerges.

The organizations highlighted in this report...illustrate the centrality of data-guided decision making in how we as a society may effectively respond to the needs of our most vulnerable.

### Humanizing Challenges, Efforts, and Outcomes

**When service providers**, funders, and government reflect on the why behind their data strategy, beyond fiscal reporting requirements, questions around how to better understand and ultimately serve their target communities often emerge. By asking questions and investing in the capacity to measure need, program impact, and outcomes, organizations can begin to collect data sets that reveal a more accurate landscape of household need in Hawai‘i that at once provides organizational and systemic insights while also taking unique lived human experiences into account. From this place of deeper understanding, more holistic and strategic decisions can be made.

### A Shared Language to Drive and Reflect Shared Goals

**Data holds the potential to align** service providers, funders, and government by providing a common language that – combined with context and meaning – identifies and measures shared goals. Making goals explicit by associating them with specific and measurable metrics creates a pathway to appropriately match resources to programs that are driven by actual community need rather than funding requirements that may or may not take into account evolving, on-the-ground circumstances. Accurate and timely information can make conversations and strategies both concrete and flexible, so everyone can move forward with a clear picture of what needs to happen next and how everyone involved can contribute and work together.

### Building an Interconnected Data Ecosystem

**Beyond the benefits** of cultivating internal data culture to support organizational outcomes, investing in meaningful data capacities allows organizations to better communicate and collaborate with peers within their sector and beyond. Hawai‘i’s household need challenges stem from a complex, interdependent web of factors, and require integrated solutions that go beyond a single organization, government agency, or even sector. When organizations begin to connect and develop consistent and intentional data capacities and cultures, cross-organizational and cross-sector conversations that go beyond good intentions to yield real opportunities to coordinate and collaborate in specific and actionable ways become possible. ■



# Mahalo!

We sincerely appreciate the visionary leadership exemplified in this report. Amy, Ryan and Michelle generously shared their perspectives and stories, illuminating the critical challenges and promising opportunities that data offers in guiding us toward a better future for Hawai'i's households and communities. We also extend our gratitude to our partners at the Department of Human Services for offering their invaluable insights during a time of transition. As we release this third report, we remain humbled and inspired by the tireless commitment of individuals across sectors - frontline, government and philanthropy - working to support those struggling the most.

## Contents

<b>Opening Insight</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Data Capacity &amp; Culture</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>The Journey Ahead</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Closing Insight</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>23</b>



# Leveraging Perspective to Turn Data into Insight

Data doesn't simply exist – it is collected, contextualized, and imbued with meaning by people and organizations. Numbers and figures aren't valuable in and of themselves, but they become valuable when combined with the perspective and framing of those who have direct experience and understanding of the real world situations the data reflects. Too often “data-informed decision making” is reduced down to extracting data or information from service receivers and providers without engaging them in a substantive way to gain the knowledge and wisdom they have earned through direct experience and engagement.



“**Data capacity and culture**” is a phrase that arises regularly in our work and in this report, but what we are speaking to goes beyond data. Developing data capacity refers to the processes and systems that enable meaningful collection and application of data that is timely and relevant to the work at hand. Developing data culture refers to cultivating both organizational and sector-wide values and environments that engage data in contextualized, meaningful ways to develop insights that guide decision making and accountability.

In this report, we feature four organizations that hold unique vantage points that allow for deep insight into the household need space. Each touches wide swaths of our population either directly or indirectly, and are in a position to leverage data to develop insight that could benefit their individual organizations, the sector, and Hawai'i as a whole.

HDC is honored to partner with these organizations; to support them in their development of data capacity and culture, and to learn from them. As partners, we view our role as “change enablers” – rather than working directly with the issues of household need, we are committed to working on the *conditions* that make change possible, or not. Our work, then, is to empower and amplify the work of our partners so they may demonstrate the impact that data-guided, insight-driven decision making can have within social services and beyond.

The collaboration we have called for in our previous reports is happening now, though there is still a long road ahead. By working

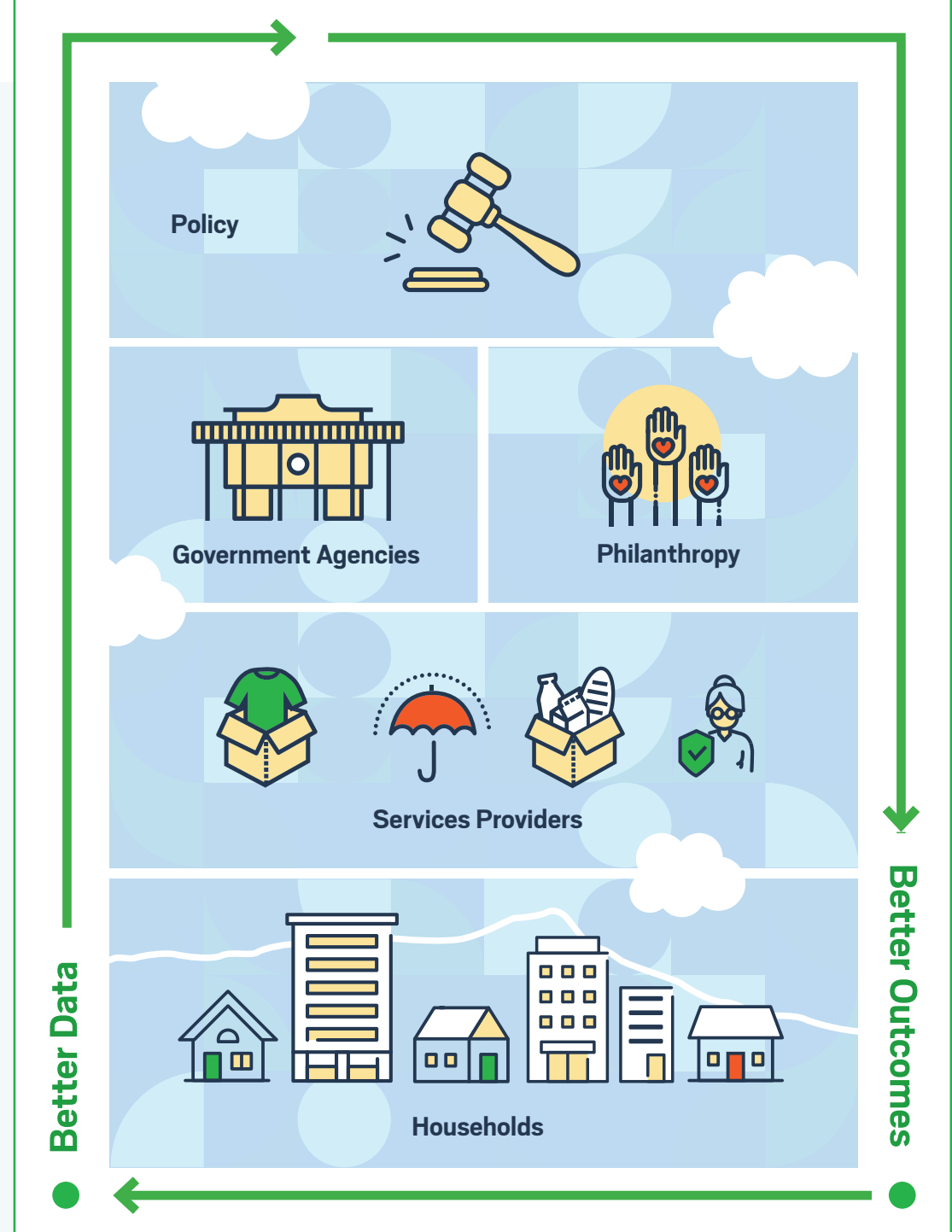


## Opening Insight

together, we expand each others' vantage points; create conduits for further information and insight sharing and collaboration; and, develop feedback loops to improve systems and outcomes. Ultimately, we believe that data – and the insight we gain from it – is a language and asset that is put to best use when co-developed, shared, and applied. ■

# Community Data Feedback Loops

Strong data connections across front-line service providers, government, and philanthropy can enable robust feedback loops between policy and executive decision making, and the households to which they are accountable.



# Building Data Capacity & Culture: Four Ongoing Journeys

The stories that follow feature four partner organizations who have embarked on their own journeys to build data capacity and develop a data culture within their organizations, while sharing an aspiration for a more connected and robust household need data ecosystem in Hawai'i.





# Data to Feed Insight and Action

## Hawai'i Foodbank

Following the data has inspired Hawai'i Foodbank to reframe their approach to hunger and ask how food might serve as a hub for reaching the most vulnerable members of our community.



**Hawai'i Foodbank (HFB) works to end hunger** through its active operations on O'ahu and Kaua'i, as well as its partnerships with Maui Food Bank and The Food Basket on Hawai'i Island. HFB sources food through donations, purchases, and USDA commodities, then distributes food to 200+ partner agencies who in turn distribute food in local communities. With over 17 million pounds of food distributed annually and nearly 160 thousand



individuals served monthly on O'ahu and Kaua'i alone and counting, Amy Miller, President and CEO of Hawai'i Foodbank sees firsthand the need for data insight to assess and respond to the growing need for food, as well as other social support services, in Hawai'i.



“It’s a continuous process to get people to trust and feel empowered to work with new systems and data.”

### Data Insight to Align Resources and Need

In the past, available data related to hunger in Hawai'i was limited to pounds of food distributed and the number of people served. When HFB mapped out where food was going through partner agencies, they realized there were significant inequities in how and where food was being distributed given that data set and the available food insecurity figures for Hawai'i. Getting food out was one piece, but understanding who was falling through the cracks, and whether people are getting equitable access or the right kinds of food, required a more sophisticated data strategy and capacities. Developing a set of relevant questions and the skills to access their data in meaningful ways enabled HFB to leverage their data system, NetSuite, more effectively, leading to the realization of how much information they actually had and how it could be applied to better serve the community. “We moved from a supply-driven organization pre-pandemic to a demand-driven model – ‘How much [food] needs to be distributed to meet actual need?’ That exposed the need for more information to better understand what and where the real demand is,” says Miller.



### Challenges and Solutions: Developing Data Capacity and Culture

To date, HFB’s distribution partners have not had a consistent way of collecting data about community members served. With some distributors using pen and paper and no uniform set of data points, it was difficult to gain insight into the demographics and situations of those receiving food. To address this issue, HFB





“...food is critical and a point of gravity that can bring people in to connect with other resources. Food alone will not fix the problem.”

and HDC are currently collaborating on implementing Service Insights, a data collection and reporting system sponsored by Feeding America, a national partner dedicated to addressing hunger. Service Insights will allow for uniform data collection and streamlined reporting, but implementation requires a significant investment of resources even if the system itself is free. HFB is investing in training and providing the hardware, as well as the culture shift needed to align all stakeholders to buy into the new system. “More technology doesn’t always make things easier, especially if people don’t trust the system. It’s a continuous process to get people to trust and feel empowered to work with new systems and data,” says Miller, “It’s important to emphasize and illustrate the value of implementing new systems and working with data – how it will make work easier for our stakeholders, or how it will better serve our community.”

### Data to Support Compelling, Relatable Storytelling

HFB is committed to putting the people they serve at the center of what they do, though challenges remain. “People can be ashamed to talk about what’s happening for them. People are busy and can be hard to access. Food is just part of the issue – if you’re experi-

encing food insecurity to the point of asking for help, you’ve already made a lot of hard compromises. Our clients may be skipping routine medical care, running up credit card debt, or paying rent late because putting food on the table is so fundamental,” says Miller. The data that Service Insights captures will help map communities and provide holistic insights that offer a window into the experience of the people HFB serves. By using data insight to tell the stories and illustrate the real hardship in our community, HFB hopes to identify other needed wraparound services from housing to healthcare support, then engage other service providers through compelling data-guided storytelling.

### Long-Term Vision and Impact of Data

As HFB implements Service Insights, they will develop a clearer picture of the communities they serve. This data will not only be valuable to better distribute resources to end hunger, but it will also provide insight into which complementary social services are needed in communities around the state. “Food brings people in and we reach an audience that can be difficult to connect with – people with no address, working multiple jobs, learning English as a second language. We want to keep barriers to access low and be inviting so people can get the food they need, and access other social services,” says Miller, adding that, “Currently only one third of the people we serve receive public benefits because they don’t know if they qualify or feel intimidated by the process, and yet almost half of Hawai’i households are below the ALICE threshold.” For Miller, the vision is clear, “The more we understand who we are serving and what their situations and needs are, the better we can provide support that gets at the systemic roots of hunger.”■



# Investing in Data Capacity to Find Common Ground

## Parents And Children Together

PACT serves not only as a key service provider in the household need ecosystem, but a key provider of insight based on the breadth and depth of their work in communities statewide.



**Parents And Children Together (PACT)** started in 1968 to serve residents at Kuhio Park Terrace, an affordable housing development in Kalihi, and has since expanded to provide community services statewide. PACT works across five main categories: early learning, domestic welfare, child welfare, behavioral health, and community building to address poverty.

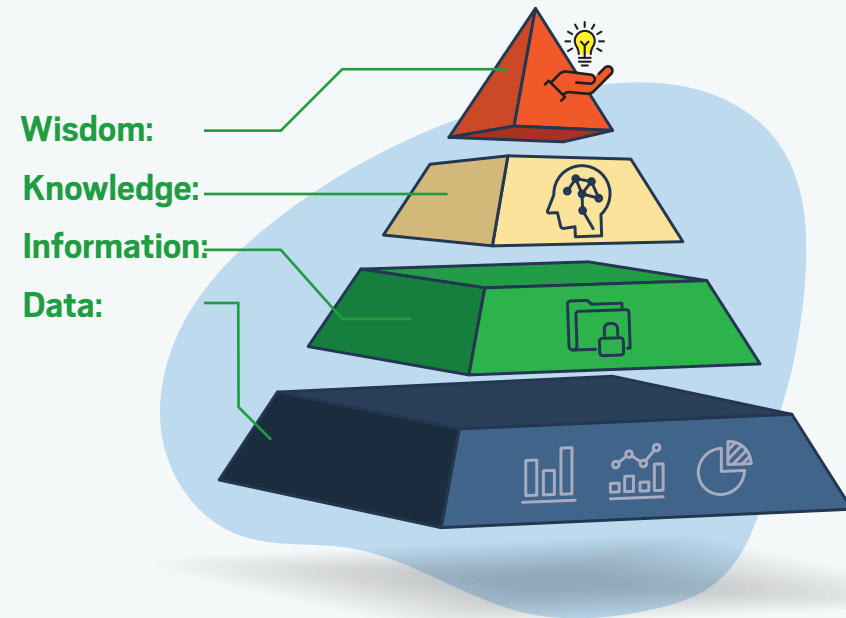


“We have data and it's our privilege and responsibility to do something with it because lives and the health of our community is at stake.”

With seventy locations across Hawai'i ranging from offices that provide on-site services to preschool classrooms, PACT has become an integral part of communities across the state. Inspired by his background in healthcare and restaurant management, President and CEO of PACT, Ryan Kusumoto, brings a data-oriented approach to addressing household need.

### Data Insight to Align Resources and Need

PACT needs to be responsive to community developments that shift or increase key areas of need. PACT is currently working with HDC to develop a real-time data insights dashboard that will not only allow PACT to respond faster, but to proactively anticipate potential need. “When we receive an inquiry regarding data from media, for example - we realize our data is lagging, or the inquiry is too specific for the data we have at hand...but if we're able to check up-to-date data regularly, we can lead with insights and get in front of community trends by using this information to structure contracts and run operations.” Kusumoto also believes that data drives performance, and that having regular visibility into impact-focused metrics will improve services. “It's like sports – people strive to improve the stats that people pay attention to. We need to recognize the factors



related to community health. Often we get measured against things like revenue generation, but this doesn't correlate to impact.” From the macro level, Hawai'i's economy may look like it's improving, but Kusumoto points out that for people in poverty, many of whom PACT serves, making ends meet is still a challenge because economic growth and prosperity aren't equally distributed across Hawai'i. Just as it would be ineffective to administer a statewide wildfire response plan that treated all areas the same despite different environmental factors, Kusumoto and HDC believe social services need to be tailored to community-level circumstances in order to respond effectively.

## Challenges and Solutions: Developing Data Capacity and Culture

Capacity and resourcing are the two biggest challenges PACT faces in upgrading its data systems. “No one at PACT says data isn’t important. People are excited and want to develop our data capacity and culture, but we don’t have the infrastructure in any of our funding streams to do it,” says Kusumoto. PACT is currently addressing this challenge by partnering with HDC, but Kusumoto is still looking for ways to sustain pulling and analyzing data. “About 10% of the funds we receive are earmarked for administrative costs (which data falls under), but the true cost is really 15-17%. It isn’t about making sure PACT survives, but ensuring our community thrives.” In addition, Kusumoto also cites the discrepancies between data systems and reporting requirements as a challenge. “Different agencies collect different data through different systems for the same services. We need someone at a high level to streamline this process so we can report data that is more meaningful with more efficiency.”

## Data to Support Compelling, Relatable Storytelling

Being a service provider isn’t just about providing services, it’s about being an advocate and a voice for the community. “Data [insight] makes advocacy powerful. The first question a funder or legislator asks is ‘How many people are dealing with this [issue]?’” says Kusumoto. “We need numbers, along with anecdotes, to drive policy that makes meeting the needs of our community sustainable.” Having information – data combined with context – about the specific populations PACT serves is important in providing a view into the state of our community. When information is accurate and time-

ly, when it is specific and reflects real lived experiences, it can be a powerful tool for humanizing and legitimizing community members and empowering their voices. Giving community voice through the application of data is at the core of data culture. “PACT is a holder of information. Sharing it and telling stories that are accurate acknowledges the lived realities of our community, and affirms the work and impact services providers make,” says Kusumoto.

## Long-Term Vision and Impact of Data

“[Service providers] have great kuleana to our community through our contracts as well as our missions. We have data and it’s our privilege and responsibility to do something with it because lives and the health of our community are at stake.” Kusumoto believes improving data capacity will allow PACT, and other organizations, to ask better questions, fine tune service delivery, align measurements of success with impact, and ultimately create a household need ecosystem that is more collaborative, efficient, and able to leverage each organization’s insights and learnings to better collectively serve people. “Everyone wants [solutions to community problems]. But when you dive into philosophies and values, there can be big differences between government, funders, and service providers – prioritizing breadth and numbers served versus going deep and local. The reality is we need to do both, and data is a way to unify and bridge approaches.” ■



# Driving Systems Change with Data

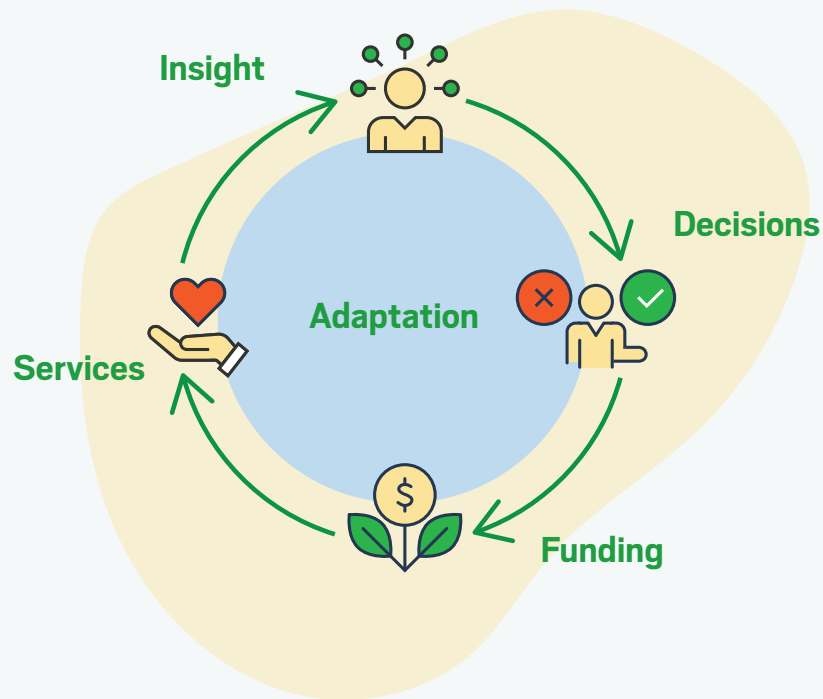
## Hawai'i Community Foundation

As a bridge between funders and service providers, Hawai'i Community Foundation uses its unique vantage point to identify ways to leverage service provider insight to inform philanthropy.



**Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF)** has worked towards building a better Hawai'i for over 100 years through philanthropy. In 2022, HCF managed the distribution of more than \$86 million in community investments that supported initiatives touching the full spectrum of social services ranging from health and wellness, to creating affordable housing, to providing scholarships to students, and beyond. As a connector of funders and service providers, HCF is instrumental in addressing household need in Hawai'i. Upon reflecting on the past and future of philanthropy,





HCF Senior Vice President and Chief Impact Officer Michelle Ka'uhane looks towards data insight to innovate and better align funding with community voice, and need, to increase impact.

### Data Insight to Align Resources and Need

HCF began their data culture journey from the realization that they were making decisions using old information to solve today's problems. "The necessity for timely information is critical. So how do we create an ecosystem that can provide more timely data?" asks Ka'uhane. One way that HCF addresses this prob-

"Data drove us to look at systems – to really understand why the big issues are the big issues and what needs to be aligned."

lem is the CHANGE framework. Focused on six key sectors, CHANGE uses a common data framework to create shared goals so community organizations can take collective action to tackle tough issues like homelessness, mental health, and environmental stewardship. "CHANGE is about systems and change management. Data drove us to look at systems – to really understand why the big issues are the big issues and what needs to be agitated. HCF was putting millions into these issues every year and seeing problems being exacerbated instead of solved. This initiative is about changing mindsets and attitudes, and giving the community – supported by data – a voice in funding."

### Challenges and Solutions: Developing Data Capacity and Culture

The biggest challenge that HCF works with – and the reason data is necessary to start collective action – is the fact that we are embedded in a broken system. Without placing blame on a particular stakeholder, the data shows that too many in our community are falling through the cracks. Ka'uhane believes that developing data capacity and culture requires a willingness to look at things differently and be open to change, and is necessary to get stake-





“The best strategies come from the community. They are the ones who have tested and figured things out on the ground. But we need data [insights] to get foundations and funders confident in the new way of doing things.”

holders to buy into new perspectives and processes. “CHANGE has changed over time. We have shifted how we organize data, recognized who’s missing and added them to subsequent rounds of funding, and we’re still figuring out how to get community teams, rather than funders, to drive strategy. In an ideal world, we want to fund good strategies rather than having service providers trying to fit into foundations’ RFPs. The best strategies come from the community. They are the ones who have tested and figured things out on the ground. But we need data [insights] to get foundations and funders confident in the new way of doing things,” says Ka’uhane.

### **Data to Support Compelling, Relatable Storytelling**

Data and storytelling are coming together as HCF is inspired by trust-based philanthropy. “Storytelling articulates and highlights what data alone doesn’t capture. We are embracing data and storytelling as things that belong together so we can give fair assessment and ease the burden of reporting on grantees,” says Ka’uhane. More broadly, Ka’uhane shares, “Data has the power to make [the household need] community more proactive and collaborative. People may not get excited about data initially, but they get excited about stories. And data helps tell a compelling story by showing the impact and progress made.” And yet, Ka’uhane sees that while individual

stakeholders are becoming more willing to share, there is much to be done at the network and ecosystem level to facilitate information sharing for broader insight.

### **Long-Term Vision and Impact of Data**

As a trusted convenor and connector, HCF has the opportunity to enable and accelerate partnerships and connections guided by data across business, nonprofit, government, and philanthropic stakeholders. “Improved data collection and analysis makes people, needs, and disparities visible. We hope that data will make us more proactive and collaborative,” says Ka’uhane. In her vision, service providers and community members are not just data sources to be mined by decision makers and funders. They are invaluable members of the ecosystem who can provide the most accurate information, knowledge, and wisdom regarding household need as they hold the context and understand the meaning of the data collected. “We want to invest in a community-developed vision, and have the data to show that when community is part of solution-building, problems get solved. We would love to see this kind of insight embedded into decision making processes in philanthropy, but also cross-sector in business and government in Hawai’i as well.”■



# Data to Humanize Systems and Need

## Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services illustrates how building organization-wide data capacity and culture is integral to securing resources to make services available and large-scale data systems improvements possible.



**Providing services to over 30% of Hawai'i's population**, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is the largest social safety net in the state that manages diverse programs including Med-QUEST, SNAP, childcare licensure, and more.

From procuring funding from the legislature and private philanthropy to providing direct services in the community, to contracting with nonprofit service providers, DHS serves a complex and vital role in the household need ecosystem. DHS faced increasing their programs exponentially overnight during the COVID-19





“Developing data capacity requires staff to step out of their comfort zones, and for the department to cultivate a data culture that goes beyond any one person.”

pandemic, and rose to the challenge. Through partnering with DHS over the past year and working with them through a time of leadership transition at the Director’s office, HDC has seen the data capacity and policy changes the department has made first hand, and the impact they’ve had.

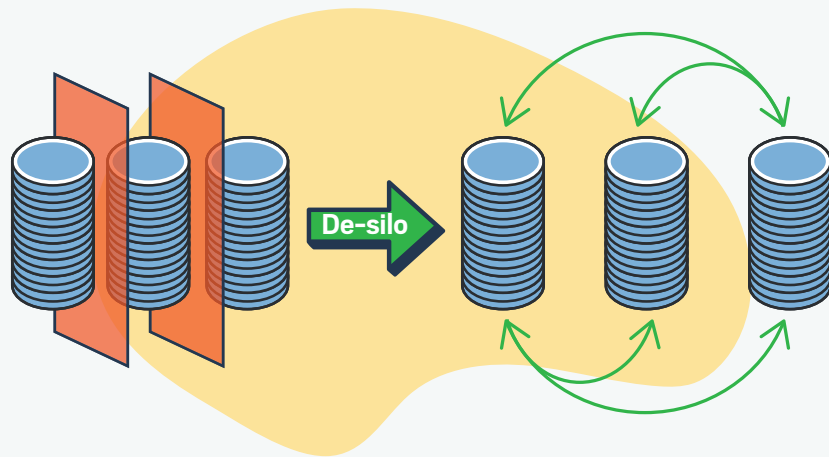
### Data Insights to Align Resources and Need

From preventing abuse to ensuring people are housed and fed, the services and benefits DHS provides are lifelines for the communities they serve. In recent years, the department has recognized that without good data and data sharing, creating policy, securing funding, and running programs becomes very difficult. DHS has shared that the department has a wealth of data, but hasn’t always had the resources in place to use it well. Modernizing systems has and continues to be a key initiative. Under a federal mandate, DHS is undertaking an agency-wide IT modernization initiative to update and integrate their three main data systems: the Kolea-Medquest Application System; the Benefit, Employment, and Social Services Division Benefit Eligibility System (e.g. SNAP, TANF, General Assistance); and the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System. Having all three systems talk

to each other will help determine cross-eligibility to better serve people by allowing staff to see a more complete picture of families rather than just a number within a siloed program.

### Challenges and Solutions: Developing Data Capacity and Culture

Developing data capacity requires staff to step out of their comfort zones, and for the department to cultivate a data culture that goes beyond any one person. With government officials and appointments changing regularly, DHS’s commitment to improving data capacity and culture is a long-term process that has spanned multiple directors. At the employee level, cultivating data capacity and culture is important for attracting and retaining the next generation of civil servants that want government to be useful and responsive. Even with a clear vision and internal motivation, DHS’s size and complexity presents challenges. Many staff create administrative rules and develop protocols that affect systems implementation, but these subject matter experts may not have the background or insight to understand the department’s larger data strategy. And yet, as DHS demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and again after the Maui wildfires, innovation is possible. Within the first few weeks after the wildfires, the department signed five data sharing agreements. They weighed the benefits and risks, made contingency plans for potential breeches, and moved forward quickly and effectively. The disaster showed how important flows of timely information are, and the potential for revolutionizing state government if data positions were funded as the critical positions they are.



### Data to Support Compelling, Relatable Storytelling

Presenting data in an accessible and humanizing context builds understanding and support for DHS programs, contractors, and the community members they serve. DHS collaborated with HDC to create an interactive version of their databook, revealing multiple dimensions to a static, multi-year report. The project was a significant step towards helping people understand the work of DHS. Acronyms may go over people’s heads, but information can land when it is used to paint a picture of the community, benefits received, and the impact DHS services have on people’s lives over

time. The interactive databook makes it easier to level set with stakeholders, and for people to ask questions that can lead to improving and innovating how we serve families in need. Data-based storytelling is also valuable to securing funding. DHS has expressed that budgets reflect values, and that showing the legislature and governor the true cost of the department’s work, as well as its value, is necessary to ensure they have the funding to pay a living wage to the people on the frontlines of social services.”

### Long-Term Vision and Impact of Data

DHS is committed to reducing the incidence of intergenerational poverty and by extension dependence on public benefits. Ultimately, DHS envisions a Hawai’i where families thrive, as expressed in the department’s ‘Ohana Nui framework. To do so, it is necessary to make work less cumbersome for DHS staff and social service providers to do their jobs well. HDC has heard from DHS, as well as many nonprofit service-providing partners, that current reporting requirements hinder service providers’ ability to operate, which impedes their ability to provide services to families. DHS is working towards streamlining reporting to support providers in doing their jobs by making data requests more accessible and understandable across the board. Beyond DHS, data sharing represents an opportunity to increase cross-sector collaboration across state government entities. HDC sees DHS making an investment in innovation fueled by the understanding that technology serves as a lifeline to community and collaborators, especially in times of crisis. Technology, along with data to inform its use, increases access to services, improves efficiency, helps meet increased demand, and ultimately keeps people safe.■



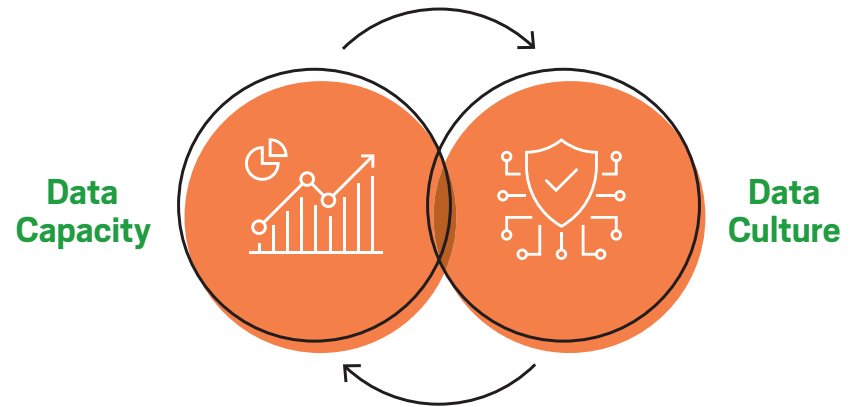


# The Journey Ahead

Building data capacity and culture requires intentional investments of time and resources, while keeping pace with daily operations and serving clients. Starting with small, incremental changes will lead to more significant changes over time.

# Incremental and Actionable Change Builds Data Capacity & Culture

The household need ecosystem consists of many service providers, funders, and government agencies that may be grappling with internal data and culture questions, and their role and connections within the broader network, while also needing to continue normal operations. Balancing all of this is difficult, but we believe that investing in data capacity and culture makes it easier to foster internal and external efficiency and alignment in service of better outcomes in the long run.



**Many stakeholders are currently**, or considering, evolving their use of data as a tool to communicate and collaborate, to bolster and streamline their work. In starting this process, growing pains are evident but not insurmountable. It is important to remember

that not long ago all data was held in paper files, and the idea of aggregating data to develop insights was impractical. The transition from analog to digital is not an evolution, but a revolution in terms of what digital systems – that are set up to make data accessible – make possible for developing insights that can guide decision making.

HDC envisions a future for Hawai'i's household need ecosystem where community-based stakeholders emerge as leaders, empowered to adapt and respond effectively to shifting economic and social conditions at the organizational, network, and ecosystem levels. This report provides a loose framework for organizations that wish to start internal data strategy work, regardless of where they are along the arc of developing data capacities, with the understanding that it takes an investment of time and resources to develop a data culture that can inform systemic change.■



# Data Culture to Support Insight, Agency, and Innovation

Cultivating data capacity and culture balances and democratizes conversations, organizations, and the household need ecosystem as a whole by creating feedback loops that connect and empower stakeholders at all levels. There is an underlying assumption that it is incumbent on “leaders” – funders, policymakers, and executives – to “fix” systems and address Hawai‘i’s household need issues. And yet, it is not possible to make truly informed and strategic decisions without the data, context, and insight of those directly receiving and providing services.



**Hawai‘i Data Collaborative** believes that the growth of data capacities and culture – in service of better understanding and serving our community – will ultimately lead to new narratives, increased agency, and innovative solutions that are evidence-based, community-centered, and ultimately better aligned with the values, needs, and perspectives of the people we seek to empower and serve. Data culture is more than sharing facts, figures, and metrics. It is developing horizontal relationships between peers as well as vertical relationships between employees and management, or organizations and funders, that enable everyone to make decisions and be held accountable to a shared understanding.

Investing in data culture, one organization at a time, will shift how our community views the challenges of household need, and by extension how we solve them. These shifts in data capacity can be incremental, implemented internally without outside capital or expertise, and can start with something as simple as taking the time to reflect on what questions really matter to an organization and the community members they serve. Fundamentally, data culture is not about data itself, but about re-examining the ways we make decisions, to what extent we leverage data-guided context, meaning, and insight, and how that enables change in the community at large. ■

2024  
Data Landscape  
Report

---

FROM BETTER DATA  
TO BETTER OUTCOMES FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS IN HAWAI'I



Hawai'i Data Collaborative is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.  
We partner with community for meaningful data  
that moves Hawai'i forward.

827 Fort Street Mall, 2nd Floor  
Honolulu, Hawai'i | 96813  
[hawaiiidata.org](http://hawaiiidata.org) | [info@hawaiiidata.org](mailto:info@hawaiiidata.org)