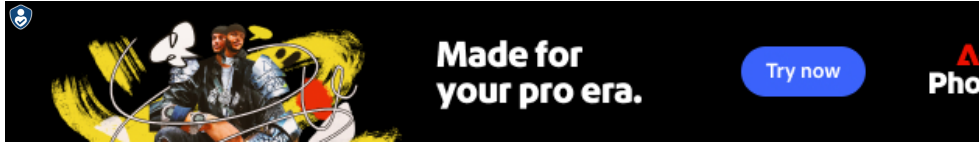


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Executive overseeing \$150M Maui Strong fund defends phased approach to disbursing aid



The foundation executive overseeing the \$150 million "Maui Strong" fund is defending its careful approach to releasing the money.

By [Daryl Huff](#)

Published: Nov. 14, 2023 at 7:51 PM PST | Updated: Nov. 14, 2023 at 8:52 PM PST



HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - The foundation executive overseeing the \$150 million "Maui Strong" fund is defending its careful approach to releasing the money. About 80% of its money is still in the bank, while some feel many people need more money now.

The Hawaii Community Foundation's "Maui Strong" fund is the largest philanthropic response to the Maui disaster, but it's still scrambling to fill the gaps in what Maui families need.



Special Section: Maui Wildfire Disaster

"150 million is a lot of money," Kane said. "But when you look at 15,000 people, you know, it's \$10,000 over the next three years for each person. That's not a lot of money."

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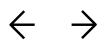
"Within weeks of the fire federal, Red Cross and state aid flowed into Maui — alongside millions of dollars from unofficial and celebrity gifts and fundraising.

But Maui Strong was the biggest of the philanthropic efforts, endorsed by leaders who trusted Hawaii Community Foundation with its long history of managing educational and charity programs.

In three months, it raised \$153 million from more than 300,000 donors in 50 countries.



Maui Wildfires Disaster



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Several Lahaina residents say not much has been don to mitigate fire



“What I realized was just how special Maui was to so many people around the world,” Kane said. “And it’s amazing that we’ve had the opportunity just to just feel that aloha here.”

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But there are concerns in the community that families have huge unmet financial needs now, and that Maui Strong has not released enough money to them.

Kane said Maui Strong is not giving large amounts to all survivors but is focused on needs underserved by government — like undocumented immigrant families and private child-care operators — and partnering with other non-profits to expand their missions.

“We’re just trying to be as agile as possible — things that normally would take weeks can take hours for us,” Kane said.

Kane explained the Maui Strong spending plan allows 20-25% to be spent in the first few months for emergency needs and holds back 70-85% for the recovering and stabilization period over the next couple of years, and after that only 3-5% for ongoing grants.

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The plan assumes government aid will phase out while the demand for assistance continues for three to five years.

“And that’s when our dollars are going ... to mean the most to the people of Maui,” Kane said.

Kane said donations to Maui Strong have peaked and he wants to be ready for unpredicted needs. “That issue is the issue that continues to surprise me is just the concentration and the depth and breadth of this disaster,” he said, adding that it’s worse than anyone thought.

Kane also said the biggest gaps are those that money can’t fix, like the trauma caused by a disaster no one will ever forget.

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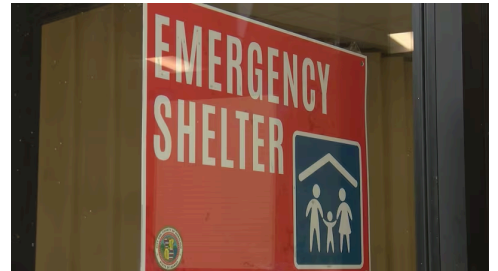
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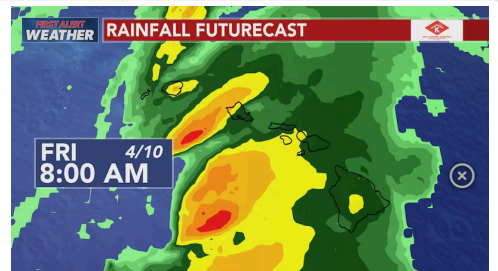
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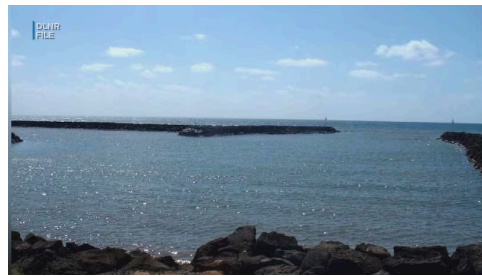


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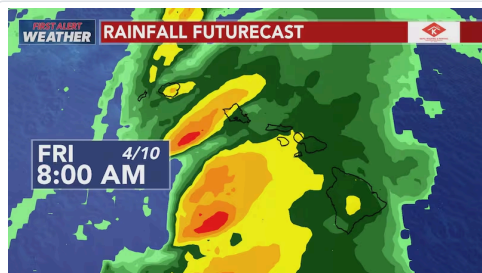
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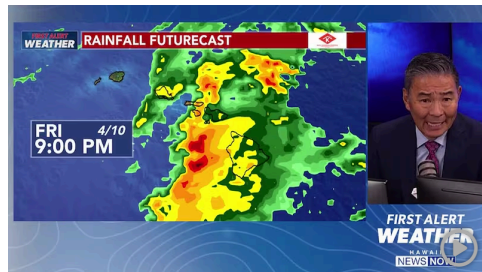
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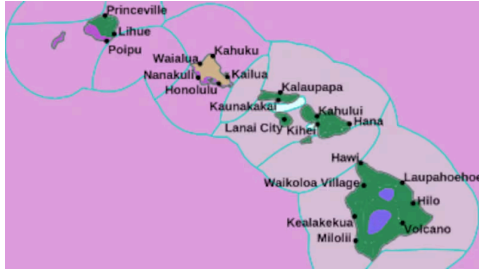
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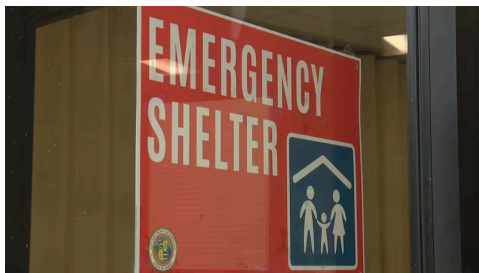
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