



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Hawaiian Electric and HEI employees, HEI Charitable Foundation donate over \$150,000 to United Way to support families in need during COVID-19 crisis**  
*Funds will support rent and utility assistance program*

**HONOLULU, May 13, 2020** – Hawaiian Electric and HEI employees, and the HEI Charitable Foundation partnered with Aloha United Way (AUW), Maui United Way and Hawai'i Island United Way to raise money for the Hawai'i COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Most of the funds raised will help provide financial relief to those at risk of losing their home or utility services through AUW's COVID-19 Rent & Utility Assistance Program.

In March, the HEI Charitable Foundation contributed \$75,000 to Hawai'i's United Way chapters, which inspired Hawaiian Electric and HEI employees to launch a month-long online giving campaign in April. Employees on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Lāna'i and Moloka'i raised \$37,516. The HEI Charitable Foundation matched every dollar donated by employees, raising the current contribution to \$75,032, and bringing the overall total donated to United Way chapters statewide to \$150,032 for COVID-19 relief.

"Because of COVID-19, our communities are experiencing severe economic crisis," said Connie Lau, HEI president and CEO. "Many families are struggling to pay for basic human needs, including rent and utilities. By supporting Aloha United Way's COVID-19 Rent & Utility Assistance Program, we can help keep people in their homes and relieve some financial stress. We hope our donation will inspire others to give if they are able."

Yesterday, Aloha United Way interim president and CEO Norm Baker, Maui United Way president and CPO Nicholas Winfrey, and Hawai'i Island United Way president and CPO Karen Davis participated in a virtual, multi-island check presentation with several employees from HEI and Hawaiian Electric via Webex.

"The initial donation from our charitable foundation generated awareness about the community need and inspired our employees to get involved to raise additional funds," said Scott Seu, Hawaiian Electric president and CEO. "Giving back is part of Hawaiian Electric's culture, and our employees are passionate about helping those most vulnerable in our communities. As a company we embrace this philosophy and are proud to have matched our employees' giving."

"We are grateful for our partnership with Hawaiian Electric and the HEI Charitable Foundation as they lead by example in their commitment to make Hawai'i stronger and more resilient," noted Norm Baker, AUW interim president and CEO. "Our 211 helpline continues to receive an overwhelming amount of calls requesting rent and utility assistance with demand continuing to rise. The \$150,032 donation will keep approximately 1,500 households from being evicted."



Community support is critical to meet the growing need. We hope the actions of HEI and Hawaiian Electric inspire other companies to help our community in these challenging and uncertain times.”

### **About Aloha United Way**

Founded in 1919, Aloha United Way brings resources, organizations and businesses together to advance the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. A member of United Way Worldwide. For more information visit [AUW.org](http://AUW.org).

### **About Maui United Way**

The mission of Maui United Way is to empower our Maui community through caring partnerships that enrich people’s lives. A member of United Way Worldwide. For more information visit [www.mauiunitedway.org](http://www.mauiunitedway.org).

### **About Hawai'i Island United Way**

The mission of Hawaii Island United Way is to unite people, organizations, and resources to build a healthier community. A member of United Way Worldwide. For more information visit [www.hiuw.org](http://www.hiuw.org).

### **About Hawaii COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund**

Aloha United Way’s Hawaii COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund was activated to swiftly raise and deploy flexible resources to local nonprofit agencies supporting those affected by the coronavirus outbreak. Through trusted partnerships, the Fund will provide support for local nonprofit organizations to address food insecurity, rent/utility access, housing/shelter issues, medical needs, childcare and eldercare, etc. Donation will ensure that—in collaboration with community partners, foundations, nonprofit agencies—we are able to meet the critical human services for our most vulnerable in Hawaii in this time of crisis. To donate visit [AUW.org/give](http://AUW.org/give).

### **About Aloha United Way 211**

Since early March, Aloha United Way 211 statewide helpline has been open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. to connect callers with resources needed as they struggle with the impact from COVID-19. The information and referral center works with 1,300 nonprofit agencies and more than 4,000 programs. To learn more about 211, visit [AUW.org/211](http://AUW.org/211).

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