



**Hawaiian  
Electric**



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Hawaiian Electric and Aloha United Way launch Hawai'i Utility Bill Assistance Program** *Fund established with \$2 million from company shareholders*

**HONOLULU, Feb. 4, 2021** – Hawaiian Electric is the founding sponsor of Aloha United Way's new statewide program to help qualifying families recover from the economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hawai'i Utility Bill Assistance Program will begin accepting applications through the Aloha United Way website on Feb. 8, 2021 at 8 a.m.

The Hawai'i Utility Bill Assistance Program aims to help Hawai'i residents who are financially affected by the pandemic and who have fallen behind on their electric, water, sewer and gas bills. Applicants will be qualified through a process administered by Aloha United Way on a first-come, first-served basis, until program funds are completely disbursed.

Residential customers who meet eligibility requirements can receive one-time assistance of funds up to \$750. That amount can be paid to one utility or split among several. Bills for telephone, cell phone, cable and internet service are not eligible for payment. Payments for approved applications will be disbursed directly to each utility company.

Hawaiian Electric has pledged \$2 million in shareholder money from its parent company, Hawaiian Electric Industries (HEI), to the program, which will be administered through Aloha United Way on O'ahu in partnership with local United Way chapters. Aloha United Way will accept applications through the online portal and the mail.

"Several of Hawai'i's assistance programs expired at the end of 2020, making this timely program all the more important for local families," said John Fink, president and CEO of Aloha United Way. "As the pandemic stretches into this new year, the Hawai'i Utility Bill Assistance Program will undoubtedly reduce some of the financial pressures for those whose incomes and personal situations have been affected."

In addition to funding the new utility bill assistance program, Hawaiian Electric, the HEI Charitable Foundation and company employees have made more than \$1 million in pandemic-recovery contributions. Hawaiian Electric is also offering customers options for spreading out payments on past-due bills, interest-free, across a longer period than ever before.

"We have to be here for each other, and we want to make unpaid bills for essential utility services one less thing for families to worry about," said Scott Seu, president and CEO of Hawaiian Electric.

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“The program will also help stretch the federal assistance dollars for rent and utility payments that are coming, helping tenants, landlords and our state’s economic recovery.”

About 4 percent, or 16,000, of Hawaiian Electric’s 412,000 residential customers are at least 90 days behind on their bills. The average balance owed by these customers is about \$1,500, the result of the prolonged nature of the pandemic.

“Many of the customers who are the furthest behind are people we have already been in touch with and we hope that this program, along with the newly committed federal funds for rent and utility bills that will soon be released, will relieve a lot of their financial stress,” Seu said.

The Hawai‘i Utility Bill Assistance Program is available to qualifying residential customers of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, Maui, Moloka‘i, Lāna‘i and Kaua‘i. Initially funded by Hawaiian Electric, the program is open to contributions from companies and individuals to help an even greater number of residents.

Hawaiian Electric has suspended its service disconnections for nonpayment through March 31, 2021. By offering assistance and working with customers to set up payment plans, the company’s goal is to keep everyone connected.

The Hawai‘i Utility Bill Assistance Program will launch at 8 a.m. on Feb. 8, 2021 at [AUW.org/utilityhelp](http://AUW.org/utilityhelp).

To contribute, please visit [AUW.org/utilityhelp](http://AUW.org/utilityhelp) or contact Emmaly Calibraro, Vice President of Fundraising and Major Gifts at Aloha United Way at [ecalibraro@auw.org](mailto:ecalibraro@auw.org).

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### **About Hawaiian Electric**

For 129 years, Hawaiian Electric has provided the energy that has helped drive the islands' development from a kingdom to a modern state. Hawaiian Electric serves 95 percent of the state's 1.4 million residents on the islands of O‘ahu, Maui, Hawai‘i Island, Lāna‘i and Moloka‘i.

### **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, AUW supports non-profits and communities on O‘ahu. For more information, visit [AUW.org](http://AUW.org).

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