

# KAWAIILOA

## A Transformative Indigenous Model to End Youth Incarceration

### Replacing youth incarceration with a Native Hawaiian restorative system that empowers communities

Kawailoa is an Indigenous alternative to incarceration that makes restorative justice a reality. **Kawailoa** means “the long waters” - representing the healing qualities of providing a safe sanctuary for our youth, and an ecosystem of life resources to counter the racist and inequitable justice systems that harm Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) from a young age.



Kawailoa provides youth with opportunities to learn and grow, in a sanctuary where they can heal and thrive

### THE PROBLEM

Hawai'i has recognized that youth incarceration does more harm than good and has made progress in reducing youth detention. But it is not enough, as racial disparities reveal the effects of a racist system: **Native Hawaiians comprise less than one-third of the state's total youth population but over half of the prison population.**

Similarly, Native Hawaiian children sustain the highest rates of involvement in foster care, child welfare, mental health services, special education, and family court. **These punitive systems trap marginalized youth in a maze of surveillance, fragmented social services, and repeat offenses—a reality shared by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) populations nationwide.**

### OUR APPROACH

To break that cycle, community and state partners joined forces to create an alternative to the state's youth incarceration system and to provide youth with the community support so many of them never had. To this end, the Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i (OYAH) collective was established, to offer wraparound services at the Kawailoa Youth and Family Wellness Center - the 500-acre campus that is home to collaborating youth-service providers. The growing group of partners that make up OYAH are dedicated to using Hawaiian knowledge and cultural practices to help youth heal and find their way forward.

Our project tackles the problem with urgency and impact. **The ultimate goal of Kawailoa is increased well-being for young people and reduced disparities among NHPI communities and others disparately impacted by the justice system.** Youth who come to Kawailoa will become healers of themselves, their families, and their communities, eliminating the need for punitive prison time.

Toward this end, **our primary objective is to end youth incarceration in Hawai'i by 2030 and replace it with Indigenous systems of support that prioritize Hawaiian knowledge and cultural healing practices, youth leadership, and community-driven programs.** The following outcomes and related subgoals support our key levers of change and will shape the work of Kawailoa over the next eight years.



For more information contact [Imeredith@pidfoundation.org](mailto:Imeredith@pidfoundation.org) and visit ["Kawailoa: A Transformative Indigenous Model to Replace Youth Incarceration"](https://www.kawailoa.org)

## LEVERS OF CHANGE & OUTCOMES



### 1 GROW PU'UHONUA (HEALING SANCTUARY)

- **Outcome: Improved youth well-being**, by establishing a healing sanctuary that is designed to wrap around, strengthen, and stabilize young peoples' spirit/mind/body/identity.
- **Outcome: Eliminated youth incarceration**, by replacing it with sustainable cultural alternatives, programs, and diversion strategies that empower a generation of youth healers and leaders.



### 2 STRENGTHEN PILINA OLA (HEALING PARTNERSHIPS)

- **Outcome: Improved partnerships**, by building a broad network of care that applies cultural practices across communities, organizations, agencies, and neighbor islands.
- **Outcome: Extended impact and adaptation**, by developing learning networks and knowledge exchanges with other BIPOC communities in the Pacific and beyond.



### 3 SHARE KAPU ALOHA (HEALING PRACTICES & POLICIES)

- **Outcome: Coordinated therapeutic services across systems**, by creating policies that support youth, enhance community safety, and reduce barriers for successful life choices and transitions.
- **Outcome: Shifted mindsets and behaviors toward youth**, by institutionalizing practices that favor healing over punishment and instill aloha, mālama, and kuleana (compassion, caring, and responsibility).

## WITH YOUR SUPPORT WE CAN END YOUTH INCARCERATION IN HAWAI'I BY 2030

- A Gift of \$1M will create and grow Pu'uhonua - our healing sanctuary, keeping youth at the center of all we do.
- A Gift of \$5M will advance and strengthen Pilina Ola - our community partnerships to sustain the ecosystem of life resources and customized initiatives that focus on youth education, growth and personal development.
- A Gift of \$10M will develop and expand indigenous youth programs and services, including cultural restorative training and mentoring that is vital for our youth to learn and grow in an environment where they can heal and thrive.

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