

The IRC Gazette

DR-4724-HI



FEMA

This Week in the IRC:

Economic RSF

SBA along with FEMA IA continues to support the Non-Congregate (NCS) teams providing intensive local community directed outreach at Red Cross staffed survivor distribution sites established at hotels housing survivors.

Health and Social Services RSF

Food and Nutrition Service approved Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS) request to extend the expiration date to waive the statutory definition of "food", limiting the approval to Maui County. This waiver approval allows Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) households Maui County to continue to purchase hot foods with SNAP benefits through 02/29, to increase access to food after power outages as a result of wildfires that began 08/08.

Infrastructure RSF

Identify Discussion with HQUSACE Planning and Policy on eligibility of Maui County for Sec 22 Planning Assistance to States waiver for economically disadvantaged communities allowing for 100% federal technical assistance.

Natural and Cultural Resources RSF

NCR RSF is meeting weekly with the NCR Leads who are examining potential NCR disaster recovery projects compiled by FEMA Community Assistance from a range of sources (HI State, Maui County, and public listening sessions) to identify priorities and develop project proposals. Two high priority NCR disaster recovery projects being developed are 1) Establishing local composting/mulching facilities and operations to restore soil health in Maui's burned areas and 2) Establishing a native plant nursery(ies) to enable transplanting of Maui burned areas and produce a local seed bank to supply continued restoration efforts. Additional top priority projects are 1) Restoration of Moku 'ula and Mokuhinia, invaluable Native Hawaiian Cultural/Historic sites in Lahaina that could include restoration of natural springs, wetlands, fish ponds, and a new Cultural Center to replace the one lost in the fires; and 2) Construction of the West Maui Greenway Beginning in January 2024, we are holding a larger NCR weekly meeting that will combine participants from the Maui Cultural Resources Check-in meetings and the Natural Resources weekly meeting, as well as other invited participants.

Volume 1, Issue 13 January 8, 2024

Who's Packing your Parachute?

"Lawrence Leahy my philanthropy colleague provided all the support for logistics and coordination for the funders event that led to a highly collaborative event and opportunities that we have all been hoping for to make connections. He took on much of the work and made everything go smoothly and on time! It was true interagency collaboration."

- Denise Gilliam

If you would like to recognize someone who has packed your parachute, send info to annie.sebastiani@fema.dhs.gov.

Cultural Protocol Task Force Advisor

CPTF initiated an ongoing, coordinated effort between FEMA EA, Maui Language Coalition Community Partners, and Maui Hotel & Lodging Association to make language access PSA videos, currently provided in five (5) different languages, more widely available across the 33 NCS hotels to assist with transition efforts and messaging to non-English proficient households.

Disability Integration Advisor

Continuing to identify individuals with AFNs that were reported as not receiving accommodations within ARC shelter program & SRT process. Supporting the housing mission by attending various housing working group meetings where we are continuing to offer support and provide subject matter expertise.

External Affairs Advisor

Produced a video highlighting the successful debris cleanup of Kula private property damaged by Maui wildfires. The challenge is finding a way to present this information in a way that encourages Lahaina's property owners to return their right-of-entry forms so that free debris cleanup can get under way in Lahaina burn areas.

IRC VISIT TO UP COUNTRY, KULA FIRE IMPACT AREA

The IRC visited the Up Country, Kula burn-zone area on Wednesday, December 6th, 2023. The visit encompassed a comprehensive exploration of hillside stabilization and debris removal sites in the aftermath of a destructive fire. The visit included a briefing and tour of fire-impacted areas, highlighting locations where homes were lost and areas with burned trees that had left vulnerable hillsides, posing risks of mudslides and streambed siltation, leading to diminished water quality downstream. FEMA briefed on the debris removal process and on-site visits to areas with remaining debris and those successfully cleared. Furthermore, the visit featured a briefing by the local non-profit organization, the Kula Community Watershed Alliance. They shed light on their project aimed at stabilizing burned hillside areas, removing invasive trees to produce wood chips for stabilization. The initiative also involved replanting native vegetation in both the affected and adjacent areas. Importantly, this project adhered to the guidelines set by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, offering added benefits such as supporting native wildlife and enhancing water quality downstream of the fire-affected region.



THE LAHAINA BURN SCAR TOUR

A tour of the Lahaina burn scar tour was hosted by FEMA interagency recovery coordination philanthropy and external affairs on Dec. 11, 2023. The funders are in the process of building a funders collaboration for the Maui long term recovery to coordinate their efforts and leverage federal resources. The Hawaii Community Foundation, United Way, American Red Cross, Nuestro Foundation, Henry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and Kaiser Permanente Foundation were present. Others present included the HUD Regional Administrator and National Coordinator, FEMA Cultural Protocol Advisor, Community Assistance, Federal Disaster Recovery Officer, the Hawaii Emergency Management Community Engagement liaison, the Local Disaster Recovery Manager from Maui County, and the University of Hawaii Maui College HuliHa program. The tour was intended to inform the funders of the recovery issues and allow for the continued partnership with FEMA and the other federal agencies.

TIP FROM DISABILITY INTEGRATION

Four important aspects of best practices for Virtual Accessibility:

1. Plan ahead and follow-up: provide method to request accommodation and include alternatives such as TTY, text, relay, sign language, etc. Follow up on requests and if unable to meet individual request, offer an alternative.
2. Make sure it is 508 compliant: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal agencies to ensure that their information and communication technology (ICT) is accessible to people with disabilities unless certain exceptions apply. An example for consideration would be to using Sans Serif fonts that are 14 points or larger.
3. Captions: Tell your audience captions are available and how to turn it on whichever online platform you are using.
4. Accommodations: Include the FEMA Section 504 Notice of Accommodation on meeting notifications and invitations. This gives participants an opportunity to request accommodations specific to their needs.