

Anthropology Student Fund Final Report
Honolulu, HI Department of Human Services Internship

Kilala Hall

This summer, I was allowed to intern at Hawaii's Department of Human Services for some employees while also observing how government workers conceptualize how those they help view government aid. Initially, that was my intention going into the internship. However, due to the makeshift nature of my internship in general, I used anthropological frameworks, texts, and insights at the forefront of my internship work. My internship consisted of conference-style meetings where the two DHS employees would ask for my anthropological opinions on the topics and projects we wanted to work on. The two most significant projects were on multigeneration homes and analyzing the results of an event called Alternative Futures held during the summer of 2019.

My internship began with attending a two-day conference called Ascend 2Gen that focused on the importance of involving parents in government discussions on how to provide aid for two-generation homes. In this conference, the main takeaways were the importance of empowering single parents, getting them involved in discussions on what two-generation homes need to aid, and empowering parents to gain economic mobility. Once the conference was over, I was asked for my thoughts on the event and what I would change or add to within the context of Hawaii and its own unique sociocultural family structures. The most prominent additions included incorporating children into conversations that focus on their needs, not just by their parents, the need for the framework to be shifted from a two-generation framework to a multigenerational home, and lastly, the need to deconstruct this Americanized understanding of the nuclear family and its limitations to community connection which is so omnipresent within Hawaiian and local communities. Within this conversation, I used frameworks from *Children as Caregivers* by Jean Hunleth, *Unequal Childhoods* by Annette Lareau, and my cultural understanding of Hawaii. Through this, I used my anthropological toolkit to propose what I would include in the conference if Hawaii's DHS did a similar seminar and provide a social science perspective on the situation.

The most significant portion of my internship was the analysis and discussion on the 2019 Alternative Futures event results. I had participated in this even myself upon graduating from high school, so I already had opinions on the event itself, but the anthropological toolkit that I have built throughout my time at Reed allowed me to view the event's results more critically. Alternative Futures was held in collaboration with the Institute of Alternative Futures to create an event that asked participants what Hawaii would be like in 2035 with climate change and technology advancements and needs from the DHS. Four alternative futures were created, two of which had dark and bleak futures where little progress was made and the need for aid provided by the DHS was high. The other two were more optimistic with vast progress being developed and less need from the DHS because financial, medical, and social aid were provided through community aid. The items I mainly focused on were the recommendations made after the event and what the participants thought needed to be worked on depending on the alternative future they were assigned. I used much of the frameworks I have learned from school, my cultural understanding as a resident of Hawaii, and my own opinions to determine what I thought were the most valuable recommendations that the DHS should focus on achieving or developing.