

Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services Initiative

It takes a village . . .

December, 2013

This report was prepared by the Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED) for . . .



. . . in fulfillment of the terms of Hawai'i County Contract C.003678.





Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services Initiative

It takes a village . . .

This has helped us see what’s going on outside of our own organization, see how we’re connected to other activities going on in the community. We all, now, are more focused on asset building and sharing what we’re doing with others across the State. People are impressed with and recognize what we’re doing here on the Big Island.

Brandee Menino, CEO, HOPE Services Inc.

I. Introduction

With support from the County of Hawai‘i, Department of Research & Development, this initiative worked to establish a network of *Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services* (HES) to increase the financial stability and genuine well being of Hawai‘i Island families while building and strengthening the communities in which they live and thrive. Its intent was to realize outcomes at three levels:

- Build Genuine Wealth & Financial Security at the *Individual & Family Level*;
- Improve Productivity & Viability at the *Private & Public Sector Level*; and
- Nurture Sustainability & Resilience at the *Community Level*.

It was envisioned that synergistic and mutually beneficial employer/employee relationships, entrepreneurial opportunities, and public/private partnerships would be generated by tapping a network of public, private, and community sector partners. This would help to nurture *layers of resiliency* to create a supportive environment for individuals and families as they pave their own pathway to social and economic resiliency.

The concept for the HES is loosely based on lessons learned from New York City’s municipal-based financial empowerment centers and the additional demonstrations of the model nationwide by the Cities for Financial Empowerment.¹ It builds on these models but ensures that the design is responsive and relevant to an island context and capitalizes on the unique assets and resources of Hawai‘i Island communities. The HES can be physical or virtual centers that provide families and communities easy access to a range of asset and genuine wealth building products and services through a continuum of support tools such as children savings accounts, Spendsafe.ly, Resources Match, free tax preparation services (VITA – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), and other educational, financial, entrepreneurial, social, and health services support.

¹ Department of Consumer Affairs, New York City. 2011. *Municipal Financial Empowerment: A Supavitamin for Public Programs*. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ofc/html/publications/research.shtml>

We want all Hawai'i Island residents to acquire the skills necessary to take control of their financial health and well-being. The ability to save, to invest in education, to obtain affordable housing or start a business – in short, investing in the success of island people – is what moves families ahead.

Mayor Billy Kenoi, County of Hawai'i, in *Ho'owaiwai Hawai'i Island: Building Genuine Wealth*, 2011

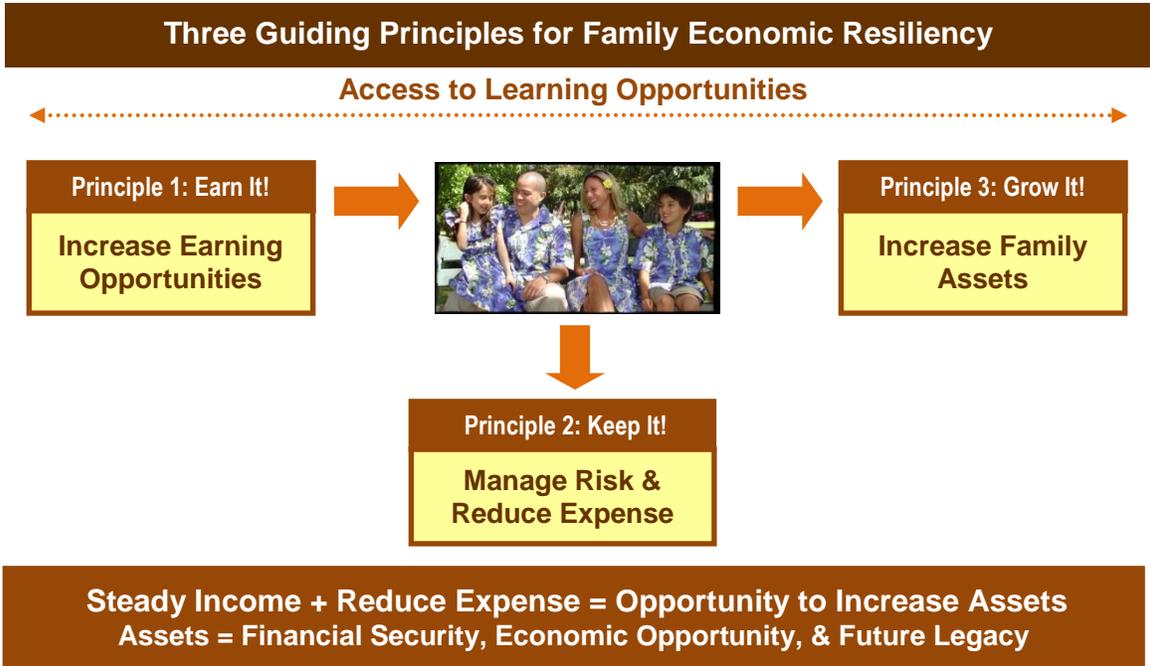
II. Underlying Framework & Guiding Principles

The underlying framework for the HES is rooted in the concept of 'ohana economics that focuses on the root word of *economics*, *oikonomia* (*οἰκονομία*), a Greek word meaning “management of household.”² The idea of “managing the household” is then integrated with Annie E. Casey Foundation’s *Earn It, Keep It, Grow It* frame that encourages strategies that help families to:

- *Earn It* – IF we increase earning opportunities through economic localization and development . . . THEN families will have a stable employment base for building assets.
- *Keep It* – IF we support families as they manage risk and reduce expenses . . . THEN families can better manage their household expenses and increase their options for building assets.
- *Grow It* – IF we help families increase their assets . . . THEN families will increase their self-sufficiency and have more choice and control in their lives to have financial security against difficult times; to create economic opportunities for themselves; and to leave a legacy by protecting our island community and environment for future generations’ quality of life.

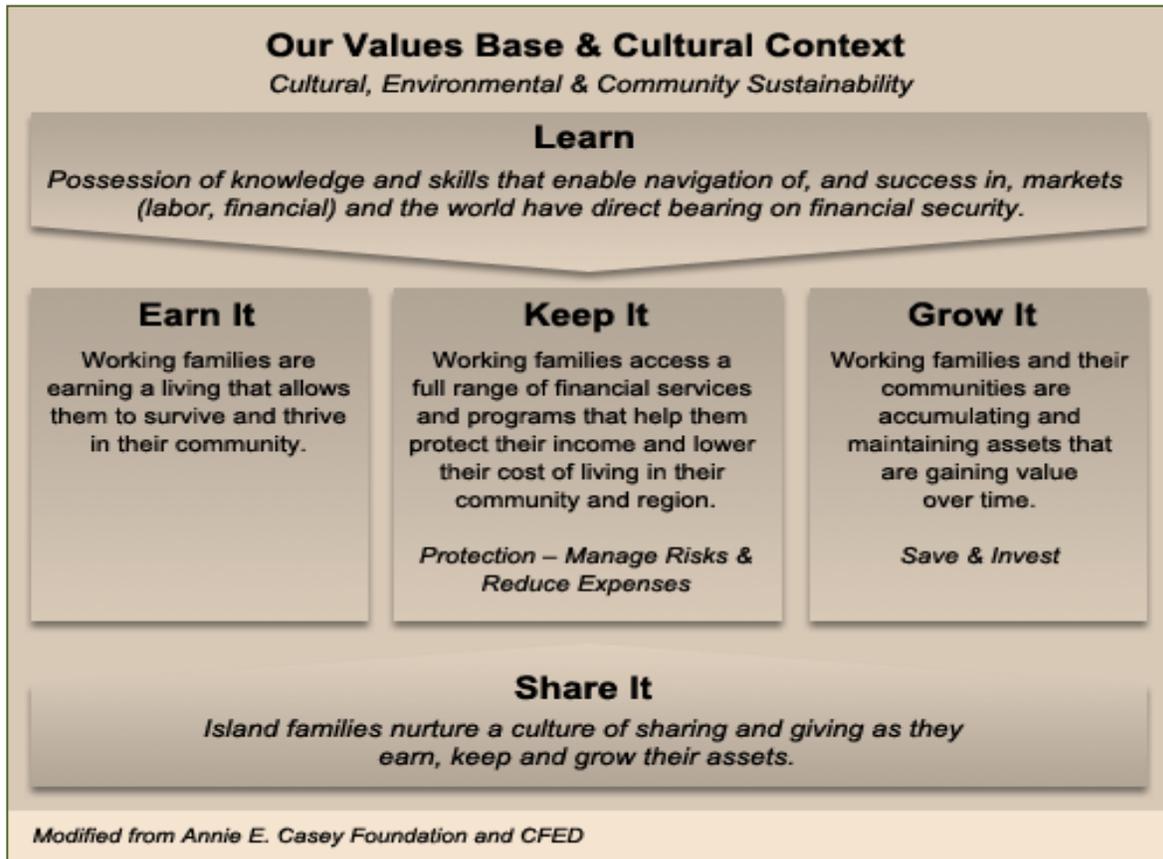
The graphic below captures the resulting framework for family economic resiliency:

² Wikipedia: *Oikonomia*. Retrieved 07/ 27/ 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oikonomia#cite_note-0



Beyond the *Earn It, Keep It, Grow It* frame, families and communities across Hawai‘i Island see wealth as being more than just about financial concerns – it is also about building assets from the perspective of island people, taking into account an island context, lifestyle, values, and culture. Within an island context, any wealth-building policies should focus on families and their extended ‘ohana. When faced with adversity, people survive and thrive by receiving support from family, non-profit organizations, and local community networks. The following graphic shows the *Earn It, Keep It, Grow It* framework within this island perspective – underpinned by Hawai‘i’s culture of sharing and giving.

Ho‘owaiwai Framework



The County of Hawai‘i’s asset policy roadmap, *Ho‘owaiwai Hawai‘i Island: Building Genuine Wealth*, established this underlying framework for asset building on Hawai‘i Island and offers a range of policy strategies and actions for implementation.³ The *Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services* is one of the recommended implementation strategies.

To summarize, the following are the guiding principles for the HES initiative:

- *Ho‘owaiwai Hawai‘i Island Framework.* The concept of ho‘owaiwai (to enrich) is rooted in the time tested indigenous wisdom of Native Hawaiians that to be, thrive, and prosper in these islands, we must hold sacred our interrelationship and interdependence with ‘āina – that which feeds us.

Thus, the County of Hawai‘i’s approach to family and community financial empowerment and genuine wealth building involves strategies to *Earn It, Keep It, Grow It, Share It* within the values base and context of cultural, environmental, and community sustainability and supported by on-going learning.

³ Hawai‘i Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai‘i. *Ho‘owaiwai Hawai‘i Island: Building Genuine Wealth*. June 2011, pg. 3.

Hawai'i Island Genuine Wealth & Resiliency



- *More Than Just Financial.* For Hawai'i Island families, wealth is more than the accumulation of money and goods, it relates to 'ohana, the quality of relationships, the resilience that comes through the support of community networks, and the ability to share and leave a legacy for future generations.

In addition to the above, the following principles provide further guidance for the establishment and development the HECs:

- *A Network & Embedding Approach.* Using a network and embedding approach to *ho'owaiwai empowerment* efforts will ensure their long term viability and contribute to building and strengthening the communities in which our families live, work, and play. This involves:
 - using a network strategy to weave relationships, assets, and local wisdom to advance family and community financial empowerment efforts.
 - embedding asset building strategies in existing public, private, and community sector programs and services.
- *Invest In Our Children & Youth.* Hawai'i Island's children and youth have a critical role to play and, thus, there is a need to make intentional and deliberate investments in building their assets and positive development, including intergenerational mentoring relationships that encourage the transfer of knowledge and help strengthen their capacity to become the future agents of positive change in their families and communities.

The rapidly emerging field of municipal financial empowerment has already produced compelling evidence that the innovative strategies being used nationwide to improve residents' financial stability have this "supervitamin" effect when inserted into traditional social services. Those receiving homeless prevention or workforce development services, for example, achieve better and quicker results when financial empowerment programming is woven into the delivery of the primary social service.

Jonathan Mintz, Commissioner,
Department of Consumer Affairs,
New York City

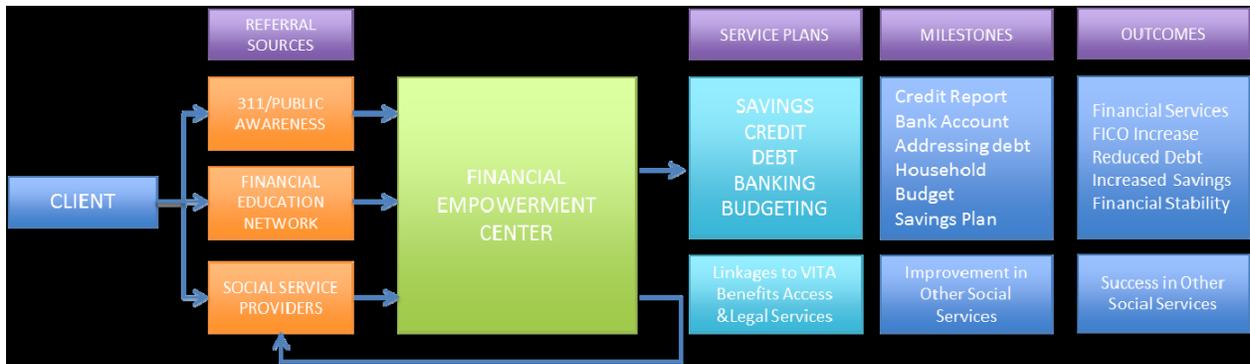
III. The Financial Empowerment Center Model

Bloomberg Philanthropies and Living Cities, through its newly established Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Fund, is currently testing how New York City's evidence-based Financial Empowerment Center model can achieve impact in various marketplaces around the country. Most financial education open to the public is offered in the form of classes, workshops, websites and seminars with general content and little tracking of the impact on participants. For most consumers in crisis, their financial situation is complex and not easily identifiable. Financial Empowerment Centers offer a new approach to financial education delivery: free, professional, one-on-one financial advice and guidance that is both targeted to the specific financial situation of the individual and delivered at scale across cities.

The Financial Empowerment Center model:

- conducts triage with consumers to determine the nature of their financial situation, set goals, and establish a specific plan of action with each client;
- delivers services at scale by locating within an existing multi-service organization to provide on-site opportunities for cross-referrals;
- systematically tracks data and outcomes for client management and evaluation;
- integrates counseling into a range of city and non-profit service delivery systems to make interventions and implementing programs more effective;
- leverages infrastructure, established relationships and resources from the city and non-profit lead entity;
- establishes an on-going coaching/mentoring relationship; and
- provides linkages to benefits access, legal assistance, and tax assistance (VITA).

Please see Appendix 1 for copies of the three CFE Supervitamin Reports and notes of materials presented to CFE members in February, June, and December.



The Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services initiative builds on the above Financial Empowerment Services model by providing a comprehensive set of services that bring to life the underlying principles and guiding framework described in Section II above. Some of these services include, among others:

Assessment During the Intake Process –

HES uses *Resources Match* to conduct a *basic assessment* during the intake process of a household’s financial situation and other factors interfering with self-sufficiency. HACBED works with community partners to integrate and implement this tool into their existing intake processes to conduct basic financial assessments, benefits screenings, and referrals for participating youth and families.

- *Resources Match* – is an online screening tool developed by the Mission Asset Fund that connects low-income clients with the services they need. It can quickly connect a community member to both the government and community-based services they're uniquely qualified for. That means participants can get access to Food Stamps, low-cost checking accounts, housing and employment assistance programs in their community – all at the same time. It is a powerful, user-friendly and intuitive tool with the capacity to revolutionize the resource and referral field by effectively matching clients to services, a critical step in fostering collaboration among industry partners and creating a smoother and more cohesive service delivery system.

Built on the Salesforce CRM platform, *Resources Match* is an online matching and referral application software that facilitates the intake, screening, and referral process to effectively and efficiently connect low-income people to an array of different government programs, community-level services, and financial products. The following provides additional information of RM features:

- *Match* – RM matches individual socio-economic profiles against eligibility criteria from an array of different government benefit programs, community programs, and financial products. At the heart of the RM application is a scoring engine that takes data from the client intake form and matches it with data from services in the system.
- *Sort* – the RM application produces an individually customized results page listing programs and services that the client may be eligible for and sorted based on a 5-star rating system.

- *Refer & Link* – the RM application allows for partner organizations to send, track and report on referrals of clients. Referrals are made with the client’s permission of sharing basic contact information that includes name, phone, and email address. The receiver of the referral then has the option of contacting the client directly. After three-weeks of receiving the initial email, a follow up email is sent to both partners asking for a status update on the referral.
- *Forms* – the RM application has the ability to complete application forms for a select number of services. Clients can elect to complete application forms after reviewing service descriptions in the results page which they can then print as a PDF document. The system is set up to prompt questions necessary to complete specific forms.
- *Tracking & Reports* – the RM application has the ability to create custom reports. HACBED, as the lead entity, has the ability to report on activity from its network of affiliated partner organizations. Partner organization will have the ability to report on their activity only. Lead and partner organizations sign a contract stating their relationship and granting permission to report on aggregate client information that provides data and information that can inform evaluation, program design and improvement, and policy development efforts.

Financial Education & Capability Services –

- *Spendsafe.ly* – is an SMS text message-based personal finance management tool developed by Asio Corporation in partnership with HACBED that helps families to track spending behavior. It empowers users to to be intimately and honestly connected with their spending and savings behaviors. Users interact with the Platform by texting simple commands to enter and categorize purchases, check balances, and save money. For instance, "BALANCE" returns the families latest balance. The Platform responds with texts that are personalized and locally appropriate. The system supports an unlimited database of phrases ensuring a fresh and chatty experience.

Additionally, gamification mechanics, social networking tools, and behavioral economic principles are employed to enhance usability and long-term engagement. For instance, users earn points as they take positive actions while competing against fellow users for prizes that are customized to further increase family monetary savings. As indicated by the result of the alpha testing of *Spendsafe.ly*, this unique platform can serve to augment traditional approaches to financial education to address the above lessons learned from the field.

- *Family to Family Support & Coaching* – as part of *Spendsafe.ly*’s co-learning process, users are organized into text communities to create a virtual support network that keeps users motivated and engaged with their finances. When a user reaches a specific goal, that action is celebrated by being “broadcast” within that user’s respective text community, motivating and empowering other users.

In addition, HACBED works with partners to establish family to family learning circles to enhance the co-learning process. This approach is based on lessons learned from FII-Hawai‘i. FII-Hawai‘i families talked about how they benefited from group support. Families shared their accomplishments, struggles, and disappointments while developing strong relationships with each other. Families felt accountable to each other which motivated some to take initiative so they could report something at the next meeting. These regular meetings gave families a chance

to develop a sense of community, exchange new ideas, contemplate goals, and share information with group members.⁴

- *Diverse Financial Education Offerings* – a range of financial education workshops, trainings, and one-on-one counseling opportunities is provided through partner organizations such as Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Hawai'i, Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, Hawaiian Community Assets, and Bank of Hawai'i. These offerings will be provided in response and tailored to the needs and demands of program participants. Additional partners provide financial capability workshops that use a range of entry points to engage families in dialogue around planning and management of household finances. Examples of entry points include homeownership, food, energy, among other topics of relevance to families.

Financial counseling certification is also offered to ensure that service providers have staff who are trained and certified to provide sound financial advice and guidance. Please see Appendix 2 for the Financial Education & Counselor Training session that was held on the Saturdays in April and May.

Incentivized Savings Programs –

- *Hawai'i Island Kids Savings Initiative* uses a simple model comprised of the following components:
 - *Schools* – an elementary school that provides [a] access to the children and their parents and family; [b] support to promote the program to parents and children; [c] the venue to allow in-school collection by the credit union of regular deposits made by the children on a monthly (sometimes bimonthly) basis; [d] assistance and a venue for parent/children gatherings around kids savings (i.e., orientations, updates, focus groups); and [d] coordination support with the credit union and the County of Hawai'i.
 - *Financial Institutions* – a federal credit union that provides [a] a range of services and products to encourage children savings and parent support and involvement; [b] staff support to coordinate and implement regular monthly/bi-monthly in-school deposits; [c] development and implementation of promotional materials and activities to encourage kids savings; and [d] support to collect savings data.
 - *Savings Incentive* – funding support to provide \$25.00 per child that would be used to [a] open the account (\$5.00/child provided to the credit union and deposited directly into the child's account) and [b] provide an incentive to every child that meets their savings goal by the end of the school year (\$20.00/child provided to the credit union and deposited directly into the child's account).
- *'Ohana Based Youth Savings Initiative* – provides support 6th to 10th grade students from low-income families in establishing a 3-in-1 account which is a single account that earmarks savings for short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. While this entails a greater degree of accounting, mechanisms already exist to establish such accounts. The savings in these accounts can be used for:

⁴ HACBED. 2006. Progress of the Families in the Family Independence Initiative – Hawai'i: 2006 Report.

- *short-term account* – available for discretionary spending but would not be interest-bearing and money deposited would not be matched or incentivized.
 - *intermediate account* – would encourage savings for intermediate goals such as school fees, books, supplemental tutoring, SAT/ACT preparation and/or fees associated with advanced coursework, and computers. A \$50 incentive will be awarded to students that meet their savings goal. Money deposited can only be withdrawn a limited number of designated times during the school year to be eligible for the incentive.
 - *long-term account* – matched and interest bearing account for longer term goals such as savings for college. Students meeting their savings goal will receive a dollar for dollar match up to \$2,000.
- *Family IDAs* – providing support to families as they strive to increase their financial stability is critical to children and youth savings efforts. Early experience and lessons learned with youth IDAs in Hawai'i have shown that one of the challenges for very low income families has been protecting youth IDAs when the family is in economic crisis. Providing savings products and complementary financial education support can help to address this concern while increasing the ability of parents to set aside investments in their child's future through savings.

In addition, the Family Independence Initiative – Hawai'i (FII-Hawai'i) found that many families saved, despite relatively low incomes, and demonstrated their commitment to long-term financial planning. The father of a young family of three who participated in the initiative shared that *We saved and now we have an emergency fund.*” The critical aspect to the FII-Hawai'i IDA effort was that the families had the flexibility to use the funds according to what they felt was critical to addressing and advancing their situation. At times, it was an expenditure that helped them stabilize and prevented them from “sliding backwards”. At other times, they were stable enough to invest in their future plans and goals through savings.⁵ The act of saving and having savings on hand has multiple positive effects on family well-being.⁶

Family IDAs are structured as a 50% match for every dollar saved up to \$2,000 per household. The savings can be used to establish a contingency fund equivalent to three months of expenses as verified during the intake process. Families accessing free tax preparation assistance (VITA) are encouraged to consider using the “split refund” option to establish a contingency fund IDA and/or make a deposit in their child's 3 in 1 savings account.

Free Tax Preparation Assistance –

- *Family & Individual Self-Sufficiency Program (FISSP)* – FISSP provides free tax preparation assistance (VITA – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) to working families through the following types of services:
 - *Outreach To Low-To-Moderate Income Taxpayers To Inform Them About EITC, Other Tax Credits, & Availability Of Free Tax Preparation Assistance.* Through outreach utilizing print media, radio, the internet, partnering community-based organizations, partnering financial institutions, and

⁵ HACBED. 2006. Progress of the Families in the Family Independence Initiative – Hawai'i: 2006 Report.

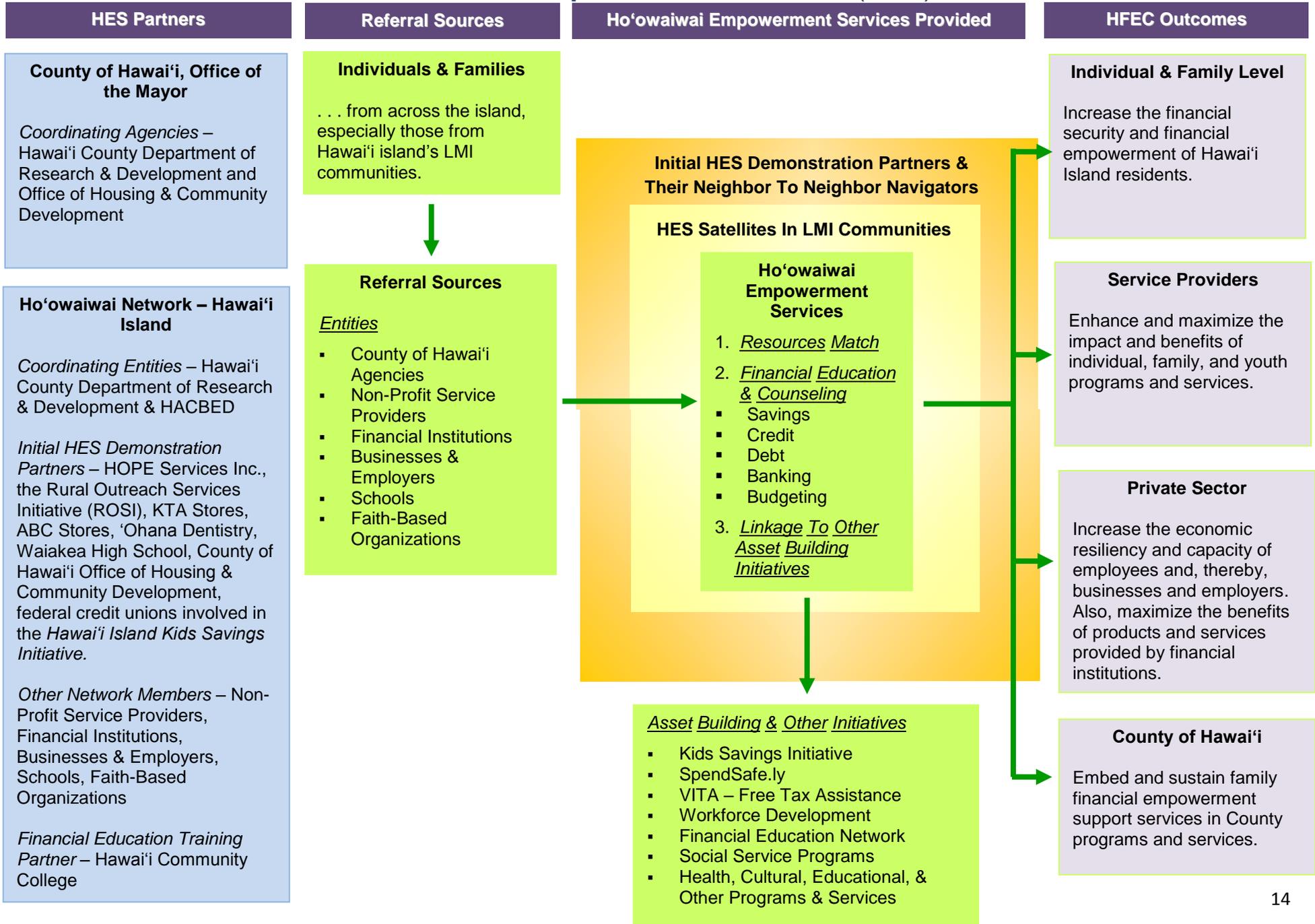
⁶ Sherraden, M., A. Moore-McBride, et al. (2005). Saving in low income households: Evidence from interviews with participants in the American dream demonstration. St. Louis, MO, Center for Social Development.

other community entities, Hawai'i Island families are informed about their possible eligibility to claim Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), other valuable tax credits, and receive free tax assistance preparation.

- *Free Tax Preparation Assistance.* At *Free Tax Assistance Sites* (VITA sites) sponsored by HES partners, financial institutions, and other entities as well as *VITA roving sites*, FISSP-trained tax preparation volunteers provide free tax assistance to low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, non-English speaking taxpayers, the elderly, and individuals who qualify for the earned income tax credit and other credits.
- *Outreach & Free Tax Assistance To Low-To-Moderate Income Self-Employed.* Through the same methods described above, 205 self-employed taxpayers are provided assistance in filing Schedule C-EZ returns. To encourage greater numbers of low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs to formalize and grow their businesses and better link them to additional business and asset building support services, FISSP is increasing free tax preparation services and support service linkages to the self-employed by: [1] providing tax workshops for the self-employed, including independent contractors; [2] promote and offer free tax assistance at VITA sites for Schedule C-EZ filers; and [3] promote and offer free tax assistance at non-VITA sites established to help low-income self-employed with their Schedule C filing.
- *Tax Preparation Volunteer Recruitment, Training, & Support.* The foundation for providing free tax assistance to low-to-moderate income taxpayers is having a cadre of well trained and experienced volunteers. As such, FISSP provides the following volunteer support services: [1] recruitment of volunteers through community-based partners and multi-media promotional efforts; [2] classroom and on-line training and mentoring/shadowing opportunities for tax return preparers, VITA site coordinators, electronic return originators, screeners, and interpreters; and [3] volunteer management, including coordination of volunteer support to provide services at VITA sites and conducting end-of-tax-season recognition events for volunteers.
- *Linkage To Asset Building.* Through information, materials, and referrals offered at VITA sites, low-to-moderate income taxpayers are linked to asset building programs and opportunities provided by community-based organizations and financial institutions.

The graphic on the following page provides an overview of the Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services model.

Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services (HES)



Being aware of my finances has helped me tremendously - I have not overdrawn on my account since I started with Spendsafe.ly

Family Self-Sufficiency Participant, County of Hawai'i

Piloting Resources Match started the conversation on the way we deliver our services and how we might do so in a more efficient way.

Sharon Hirota, Housing Specialist, County of Hawai'i Office of Housing & Community Development

IV. Results

A. Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services Demonstration

The primary objective of the initiative was to work with public, private, and community partners to test and demonstrate the potential viability and efficacy of the *Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services* concept to better support the asset building efforts of Hawai'i Island families and communities. The intent was to test the concept in three different settings – community-based, employer-based, and county government-based settings.

Initial partners targeted by the County of Hawai'i to test the model included HOPE Services, the Rural Outreach Services Initiative (ROSI), the County of Hawai'i – West Hawai'i Civic Center, and ABC Stores. In addition to these partners, subsequent community partners included Island 'Ohana Dentistry, KTA Stores, Waiakea High School, County of Hawai'i Office of Housing & Community Development, Hawai'i County Workforce Investment Board, and federal credit unions involved in the *Hawai'i Island Kids Savings Initiative*.

The following activities were carried out with potential HES partners to determine the viability and desirability of integrating financial empowerment services into their existing services and activities:

- conduct pre-feasibility assessment;
- provide technical assistance and training to establish and operate a range of types of financial empowerment services;
- provide technical support regarding the use of a network approach; embedding/integrating asset building and sustainability into existing services and activities; and strengthening capacity through communities of practice; and
- facilitate partnerships.

1. Pre-Feasibility Assessment & Technical Assistance

The following are some general “takeaways” based on feedback from initial HES partners during the pre-feasibility assessment phase of the initiative that should be taken into

consideration as HES is applied in various public, private, and community settings:

A More Accurate Assessment Can Be Facilitated by Using the Term “Services” Versus “Centers” –

- Partners indicated that the initial use of the term Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment “Centers” – to align Hawai‘i’s efforts with the *Cities for Financial Empowerment Coalition’s* demonstration of the Financial Empowerment Center model – created perceptual barriers since partners assumed that a separate large space to accommodate new programs and services was a prerequisite.
- Articulation of financial empowerment centers as “Services” rather than “Centers” allows partners to envision and better encapsulate a range of options and opportunities to use the network and embedding approach to deliver asset building support services to families.
- Identifying the initiative as the Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services Network better captures the end goal of this initiative.

A Co-Learning Process Provides an Opportunity to Share & Learn to Better Determine Feasibility –

- On-going discussions about the core competencies of the organizations as based on their status (service provider, employer, government partner, etc.), their needs, and their purpose for employing Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services are important to determine which services would be of most help for the organization.
- Incorporating time for staff members in the co-learning process to pilot the services, if possible, provides an opportunity for them to see the value in the service or tool and to learn more about the organization and draw out potential issues.

Embedding Approach to Meet Partners Where They Are At –

- Small pilots are essential to demonstrate the value of HES and to determine which specific services best fit the organization’s needs.
- It is important to determine what the partner’s needs and capacity are to better identify which financial empowerment services they are ready for and open to exploring.

Table 1. Protocol Templates for Ho‘owaiwai Empowerment Services in Different Settings

Setting	Resources Match	Spendsafe.ly	VITA	Children’s Savings Accounts	Financial Counseling Certification
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to provide overview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to provide overview. ▪ Form cohorts of approximately 20 individuals. ▪ Once a month in-person check-ins ▪ Ideal to tie with other educational curriculum or material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to provide overview. ▪ Recruiting on-island volunteers for service delivery is ideal. ▪ Works best if partner organization commits a staff member to be trained as a volunteer and serves as a site coordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to provide overview. ▪ Best to partner with a local credit union. ▪ Easiest to begin with elementary school students with a low match (\$25). ▪ Potential to follow the students as they get older to provide a more robust method of incentivized savings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to tie certification to existing nodes such as ROSI, OHCD, and Ulu Wini and the staff in these locations serve as weavers and trainers. ▪ Looking to collaborate with the curriculum developed by the Cities for Financial Empowerment. ▪ Exploring the opportunity to tie certification with evaluation of primary HES and providing training and technical support.
Community-Based Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ideal to include along with intake of clients to assist with benefits screening and connecting potential client to other services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to have program stability before introduction and roll-out. ▪ An active case manager/employee would also be helpful in following up with the user. ▪ Ideal to tie with other organizational programs and services or provide an on-going check-in with clients. ▪ Tool to be used to pull in different members of the family and could thus be tied with other HEC services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to provide overview. ▪ Recruiting on-island volunteers for service delivery is ideal. ▪ Works best if partner organization commits a staff member to be trained as a volunteer and serves as a site coordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to provide overview. ▪ Best to partner with a local credit union. ▪ Easiest to begin with elementary school students with a low match (\$25). ▪ Potential to follow the students as they get older to provide a more robust method of incentivized savings. 	

Setting	Resources Match	Spendsafe.ly	VITA	Children's Savings Accounts	Financial Counseling Certification
Business & Employer Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation should include human resource (HR) department as HR might be the best champion for the employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation should include human resource (HR) department as HR might be the best champion for the employees. ▪ Direct managers must set the example and actively use the tool and participate in the co-learning module. ▪ Once a month in-person check-ins ▪ Tie with other company events or opportunities to increase engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation should include human resource (HR) department as HR might be the best champion for the employees. ▪ If employer is not fully sold on the idea, good to pilot involvement by bringing VITA into a location of their business to determine fit. <p><i>Staff Assistance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scheduling time and finding space that is ideal for employees ✓ Advertising ✓ Signing up employees for appointments <p><i>Space Requirements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ secure internet access; ✓ some space for client privacy; ✓ printer and computers preferred; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If employer is onboard: <p><i>Staff Assistance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Plan lead-up events and educational workshops, if desired ✓ Scheduling time and finding space that is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductory presentation to management and human resource (HR) department to provide overview. 	

Setting	Resources Match	Spendsafe.ly	VITA	Children's Savings Accounts	Financial Counseling Certification
			<p>ideal for employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advertising – preferably before or concurrent with the release of W-2s ✓ Signing up employees for appointments ✓ Connecting to other opportunities <p><i>Space Requirements</i> (same as above)</p>		
<p>Local Government Partner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need specific employees who will serve as “champions,” or the direct managers of the organization’s Resource Match responsibilities. ▪ One-on-one or small focus group meeting with champion(s) to introduce the platform and understand concerns and frustrations. ▪ On-going technical assistance to address new issues. ▪ Periodic check-ins with upper management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct managers must set the example and actively use the tool and participate in the co-learning module. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to incorporate with other County events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to offer to County employees as part of value-add 	

Use of the Network Approach to Connect & Scale –

- To better fill gaps in services and scale the initiative, it is important to reach out to, connect, and strengthen relationships with new and existing partners.

In addition to these “general takeaways”, the “template protocols” in Table 1 above were identified during the assessment phase to determine the feasibility of particular services and how best to move forward with their integration into existing services. The following highlights some of the observations, questions, and concerns that emerged from the assessment and technical assistance phases.

Waiakea High School –

- *Spendsafe.ly* – potential fit. Business-oriented classes provides an entry point to financial literacy curricula. Need to work with teachers to determine existing courses and educational needs. *Spendsafe.ly* could provide the entry point to bridging issues surrounding budgeting and financial literacy.

ABC / KTA (larger businesses) –

- *Spendsafe.ly* – potential fit. Provided suggestions to simplify and streamline the text message responses and on a more logical process for the text messages that are sent over the course of the day.
- *VITA* – great fit. Suggested meeting in the summer to prepare for tax season, including at least one event prior to tax season to educate employees. Want to schedule employees either right before or concurrently with the mailing of W-2s.

Island ‘Ohana Dentistry (smaller business) –

- *Spendsafe.ly* -- difficult fit. Difficulty to sustain interest in *Spendsafe.ly*

Credit Unions –

- *VITA* – good fit. Some difficulties in organizing due to small staff and coordinating logistics on the day of. Need to target a champion.
- *CSAs* – great fit.

County of Hawai‘i Research & Development Department (R&D) & Office of Housing & Community Development (OHCD) –

- *Resources Match* – potential fit. Need to develop champions by working in close vicinity to determine challenges and opportunities.
- *Spendsafe.ly* – good fit. Need to develop champions by working in close vicinity to determine challenges and opportunities.
- *VITA* – potential fit. Need to find a location. Potential options could exist with partner organizations.

2. Initial Demonstration Sites

The following highlights some of the experiences of and services provided by the initial HES partners.

a. Hope Services

Hope Services has partnered with the County of Hawai'i Office of Housing & Community Development, Hawaiian Community Assets, and HACBED to pilot HES at Na Kahua Hale O Ulu Wini Housing Program, or the Homes at Ulu Wini in Kona. Hope Services focuses on the captured audience at Ulu Wini with the goal of transitioning them out of the Program ready to thrive and not just survive through a comprehensive delivery of financial education and tools coupled with in-person support as based on their credit score and its subsequent improvement.

Overview of Service Delivery –

- *Affordable Rental* – during the screening process ACR generates and shares a credit report showing credit scores and major financial obligations for the participant.
- *Initial Close Transitional Assistance* – Program Coordinator will acquire a credit report for the participant.
- *Comprehensive and Culturally Relevant Financial Curriculum* – Kahua Waiwai (see below)
- *Additional Tailored Financial Education Classes* – Financial topics relevant to populations needs and topics can be tailored to a group (those with a CS of -579) or a family (CS 680+) (see below).
- *Credit Score as Indicator* – financial interventions are directly linked to their credit score.
- *Regular Support to Track and Increase Accountability* – provide the household with a thirteen pocket expandable folder to store tracking sheets, budgets, and receipts and bring to monthly meetings, which promotes organization and accountability with positive support and reinforcement.

Incorporation of Hawaiian Community Assets' Kahua Waiwai Financial Education Curriculum –

- *Introduction - Managing Resources Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow*
- *Lesson 1 – Show Me the Money.* Steps it takes to get a job and the basics of a paycheck.
- *Lesson 2 – Savin' Up.* Basic strategies on managing and encourage saving.
- *Lesson 3 – Dat's my Bank!* How to open and maintain accounts with financial institutions.
- *Lesson 4 – Building Credit.* How to build and maintain good credit and the effects of such.
- *Lesson 5 – Credit Cards & Cars.* How to use and manage credit wisely.
- *Lesson 6 – Surviving a Financial Emergency.* How to survive a financial emergency and the benefits and costs of insurance.
- *Lesson 7 – Building a Career, Improving your Community.* Building a career and improving community through financial planning.
- *Lesson 8 – Planning for Our Future.* Costs and benefits of different housing options and how to pass on resources to future generations.

Service Delivery by Credit Score –

- *579 or less*
 - Individual will meet with HOPE within two weeks of entry to develop an Individual Financial Plan.
 - ✓ Develop a baseline budget (amount of income required to sustain housing) within two weeks of entry
 - ✓ Assess if current income meets household expenses and if it does not - work with families to identify opportunities to enhance income through increased employment, education and or job training.
 - Attend Kahua Waiwai Lessons 1-5
 - Establish an account with a financial institution
 - Review outstanding debts listed on the credit report, verify their validity, and assist the consumer in contacting debtors and settling, consolidating, prioritizing the debts in a repayment plan
 - Maintain (monthly) verification that payments are made to debtors based on the repayment plan
 - Maintain (monthly) verifications that household bills are paid on time
 - TRACK WEEKLY FOR COMPLIANCE UNTIL THE SCORE REACHES 619
- *620 to 679*
 - Individual will meet with HOPE within 30 days of entry to develop a baseline budget
 - ✓ Assess if current income meets household expenses and if it does not - work with families to identify opportunities to enhance income through increased employment, education and or job training.
 - Attend Kahua Waiwai Lessons 1-5
 - Establish an account with a financial institution
 - Review outstanding debts listed on the credit report, verify their validity, and assist consumer with contacting the debtors and settling, consolidating, prioritizing the debts in a repayment plan
 - Maintain (monthly) verification that payments are made to debtors based on the repayment plan
 - TRACK MONTHLY UNTIL THE SCORE REACHES 679
- *680 or above*
 - Develop a baseline budget within 30 days of entry
 - ✓ Assess if current income meets household expenses and if it does not - work with families to identify opportunities to enhance income through increased employment, education and or job training.
 - Attend Kahua Waiwai Lessons 6-7
 - Refer to a financial institution to initiate Individual Development Account
 - ✓ Identify the amount that can be deposited into savings on a monthly basis
 - Referral to partner organizations to explore homeownership opportunities (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, USDA Rural Development Homeownership Program or the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Home Ownership Program)
 - TRACK MONTHLY TO ENSURE THAT DEPOSITS ARE MADE

Tracking Progress Through Regular Credit Report/ Score Tracking –

- *Obtain Credit Report/ Scores Every Six Months* – provides verification that financial education and interventions lead to positive financial outcomes
- *Process*
 - Month 1: Program Coordinator and the participant pull the credit scores together.
 - Month 3: Participant should arrive with their credit report already printed

Outcomes –

- Reduction and Resolution Of Outstanding / Unresolved Debt
- Increased Income
- Increased Savings
- Improved Credit Score

Initial Observations –

- Transitional housing provides an opportunity to bring in HES to where working families are currently living.
- Work with staff to determine what general services and support are necessary for their clients.
- Resources Match could provide residents with instant access to benefits and services that could alleviate current financial and other stresses.
- Work with site managers to coordinate partners that provide needed and requested services.
- Use monthly meetings for initial service provider presentations and later for follow-up opportunities with families as well as site managers.

b. KTA Stores & ABC Stores

As larger businesses, KTA Stores and ABC Stores are piloting HES in different ways as based on their individual capacities. Generally, organizational champions, particularly in the human resources departments, have proven to be most effective in designing and piloting appropriate entry points for HES.

- Management initially focused on tangible service as an entry point, particularly VITA.
- Some interest in Spendsafe.ly but a pilot with interested HR staff may be the entry point for this service.
- Initial commitment by upper level management to pilot HES.
- Ongoing conversations with management who have the power to implement HES and interest in providing HES (i.e. human resources) to determine which HES best fits their employees and the current capacity of the organization.
- Dove tailing HES promotion and delivery with existing organizational events and low-commitment promotional opportunities:
 - Manned a table at the ABC Store Health Fair to promote VITA and Spendsafe.ly to employees
 - Proposed KTA coupon to encourage filing at Hawai'i Island VITA sites through a partnership with KTA Superstores, The Food Basket, and HACBED.
 - Advertising and scheduling VITA appointments before W-2s go out to employees and working with the appropriate management members to determine best fit in terms of space and location.

c. Island ‘Ohana Dentistry

As a smaller, local business, Island ‘Ohana Dentistry demonstrated the opportunities and challenges for a business with a staff of less than twenty-five employees.

- Spendsafe.ly may be the initial entry point as it meets employees where they are at and allows them to divulge whatever information they feel comfortable sharing.
- VITA and Resources Match could be tied in at a later date as employees feel comfortable sharing more about their personal finances.
- Initial commitment by upper level management to pilot HES.
- Employer may have to cut into business hours to offer HES and provide for paid compensation in order to ensure full employee participation.
- Employees are not as open to HES, especially in the initial months, as some do not feel they need such services so the co-learning processes require more of a soft touch in order to overcome initial resistance and build relationships.
- In the case of Spendsafe.ly, upper level management’s participation in piloting and participating in the co-learning process may be encouraging as long as there is a clear understanding of their role as a part of the process and not above it.

d. Credit Unions

Credit unions served as strong partners for HES, namely the Kids’ Savings Initiative and VITA, yet smaller staff sizes provide a key challenge to address moving forward.

- Kids’ Saving Initiative is a strong entry point due to the low resource commitment and high return in terms of new members and positive marketing.
- VITA could also be an entry point to attract members from groups who do not typically have access to credit union services.
- At a basic level, credit unions serve as the account manager in the Kids’ Saving Initiative in partnership with a school.
- Following a pilot over the course of one school year with one grade level in a school, many credit unions have incorporated a Kids’ Savings program into their budget but may require ongoing technical assistance to address logistical issues.
- As time progresses, credit unions that are thinking about ways to expand the Initiative to follow students who are now entering middle school may also require technical assistance to think through that process.
- In regards to VITA, limited staff and high perceived buy-in made initial roll out of VITA difficult and obtaining commitment from a credit union to train staff members may be the most effective route.

e. County of Hawai‘i Research & Development Department & Office of Housing & Community Development

Obtaining County support and designated a champion in each Department proved to be key in sustaining HES energy through on-island support, coordination, and weaving.

- An initial in-person training and periodic in-person follow-ups is key to facilitate the co-learning process to roll out HES.

- Individualized training may also be necessary to provide troubleshooting assistance in regards to technical issues and to facilitate employee buy-in as some employees view the embedding of HES as additional work.
- Employee co-learning sessions should address employee concerns related to the perception of added work or jeopardizing their job once inefficiencies are exposed.
- Need for a County champion and at least one additional staff member to be designated as a contact person and coordinator to ensure an ongoing commitment to HES.
- Resources Match is a strong entry point as it assists with benefits screening.
- Spendsafe.ly is also a strong entry point as it provides an opportunity for to interact with finances in an engaging way as well as opportunities for on-going conversations and data collection.

f. Schools

There is a lot of potential to build off of current pilots and integrate HES into existing school curricula, such as Kids' Savings, Spendsafe.ly, and other financial education opportunities, yet teachers are already burdened with numerous requirements to obtain certain Department of Education and other internal metrics.

- Potential to integrate Kids' Savings into elementary school curriculum.
- Potential to integrate Spendsafe.ly and other financial education opportunities (Kahua Waiwai) into middle and high school curriculum.

g. Rural Outreach Services Initiative (ROSI)

ROSI appeared to be primed to pilot HES but internal organizational challenges stalled the overall initiative and thus a true opportunity to pilot HES never fully materialized. As such, initial takeaways are as follows:

- Due to limited manpower, ROSI staff may need to take a more gradual approach to embedding HES.
- Easily editable calendar allows organizations to organically determine their service commitments and iterate based on revealed or growing demand.
- ROSI provides an opportunity to encourage natural weavers and provide ongoing support for HES.
 - Resources Match could be a good fit due to the rural setting of ROSI.

B. Results of Direct Services to Individuals & Families

1. Spendsafe.ly

Spendsafe.ly is currently being used by seven organizations across Hawai'i Island and has assisted a total of eighty users as documented by the following:

Organization	Number of Users
Hope Services	8
Hope Services, Ulu Wini Transitional Housing Program	8
County of Hawai'i, Office of Housing & Community Development	10
County of Hawai'i, Family & Self-Sufficiency Program	16
'Ohana Family Dentistry	14
Waiākea High School	15
University of Hawai'i at Hilo	9
TOTAL	80

Qualitative data and stories generally revealed that Spendsafe.ly helped users to raise their awareness of their daily expenditures and financial behavior, which provided them the opportunity to change their behavior and feel more in control and less stressed about their families' financial situation. Below are some representative comments:

- ✓ Being aware of my finances has helped me tremendously - I have not overdrawn on my account since I started with Spendsafe.ly.
- ✓ Spendsafe.ly also has helped being aware of spending because I have been bringing home lunch most of the days. I have been involved with Financial Literacy programs and training for almost 10 years and it hits closer to home when you are texting your spending. I try to save when possible although it's always hard as there never seems to be enough from the paycheck even if you're to save for yourself first. I have been over budget a few months so far.

Counselors for the Family-Self Sufficiency Program (FSSP) under the County of Hawai'i Office of Housing & Community Development have employed Spendsafe.ly with their clients and appreciate the regular data collection and sharing capabilities of the system. One counselor notes:

- ✓ I think the texting program is much easier and convenient than having to note on a tablet your daily spending, which is a requirement of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. I request of the participants either the Spendsafe.ly pie chart or copy of individual budget notebook for spending monthly.

2. Resources Match

Resources Match grew organically and is now being heavily piloted and promoted by members of the Big Island Workplace Connection (BIWC):

- 6 organizations and programs with at least one staff member were trained to utilize and manage Resources Match to provide benefits screening for their clients. These organizations were:
 - County of Hawai'i Office of Housing & Community Development,

- Department of Labor and Industrial Relationships Workforce Development Division Big Island Workplace Connection,
 - Hope Services,
 - County of Hawai'i Senior Training and Employment Program,
 - Hawai'i Community College Office of Continuing Education and Training, and
 - Waipahu Community School for Adults – Hilo Campus.
- A total of 252 Hawai'i Island programs were vetted and inputted into the Hawai'i Island Resources Match system.
 - A total of 121 Hawai'i Island organizations were vetted and inputted into the Hawai'i island Resources Match system.

3. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Sites & Clinics

Through the assistance of Ho'owaiwai Network partners, HACBED supported 221 families and brought in \$296,396 in Federal refunds and \$227,363 in tax credits as well as \$68,933 in state refunds. In the process, the families saved an estimated total of \$39,780⁷ in tax preparation fees. Below is a chart that summarizes the 2013 statistics for Hawai'i Island:

	Federal Returns	State Returns	Federal Refunds (\$)	State Refunds (\$)	EITC (\$)	CTC (\$)	Add'l CTC (\$)
Hilo Site 1	16	18	17,204	3,591	6,897	1,000	1,684
Hilo Site 2	12	18	20,537	3,443	12,353	1,000	1,554
Hilo Site 3	21	25	40,076	6,600	18,914	4,000	3,476
Hilo Site 4	111	174	136,012	38,635	59,943	24,109	19,668
Kona Site 1	58	64	72,940	15,557	39,540	14,059	8,576
Kona Site 2	3	4	9,600	1,207	3,590	1,746	2,254
Totals	221	303	296,369	68,933	141,237	45,914	37,212

C. Ho'owaiwai Network Weavers Community of Practice (NWCOP)

The Ho'owaiwai Network Weavers Community of Practice (NWCOP) was designed to engage HES demonstration partners and other network leaders in “learning circle” types of opportunities to learn key skills to grow their leadership capacity and form close, collaborative peer-to-peer relationships that can help grow and strengthen the Ho'owaiwai Network – Hawai'i Island. Its goal is to expand and support their individual and collective work—strengthening family financial security, building more resilient and innovative triple bottom line businesses and strengthening regional leadership capacity in service of building a local living economy on Hawai'i Island.

NWCOP members identified the following as the focus of their shared work:

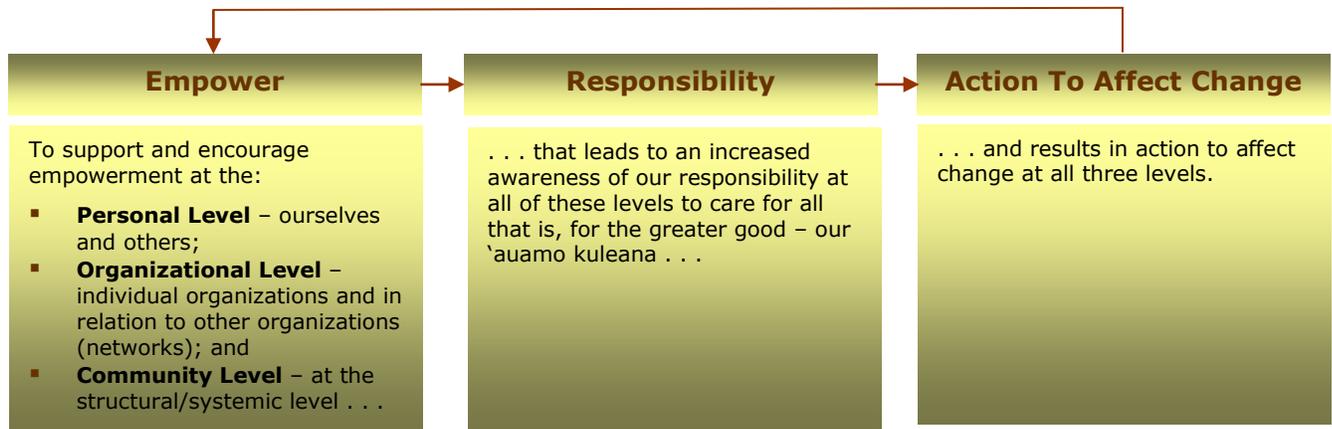
- creating *prosperity for all* of Hawai'i Island's people.

⁷ Calculated by multiplying 221 clients x \$180 average fee

By this, circle members seek to:

- strengthen family *financial security* while building the cultural, environmental, and human assets of families and communities;
- support communities in becoming more healthy and sustainable through re-localization of the local economy.

To advance the above, circle members see their big learning question as how best to affect the following process at the various levels identified below:



The Ho‘owaiwai NWCOP met on the following dates and conducted the following activities:

- “Network Weavers Community of Practice – He Alo Ahe Alo Orientation Gathering” on Wednesday, March 27:
 - Introduced to the intent and goals of NWCOP.
 - Mapped their work to find points of leverage.
 - Developed a shared value proposition.
 - Identified big learning questions.
 - Began thinking through the initial phase of the NWCOP process.
- “Network Weaver’s Learning Circle” on April 17, 2013:
 - Assisted members in thinking through their challenges to self-reflect on how they might better assist individuals and families through HES.
 - Received instructions on how to carry out peer coaching and filling out their individual learning journals.
- “Network Weavers Community of Practice Tell Me a Time When” on July 24, 2013:
 - Check-in on what’s working well for members and current challenges they face.
 - Reaffirmed commitment to the group
- “Ulu Wini Financial Curriculum” on September 24, 2013:
 - Check-in and update on collaborations to date, including the Financial Curriculum used by Hope Services in partnership with .
 - Preparation for collection of data and stories to be used in final report.

- “Network Weaver’s Community of Practice Reflections” carried out over the month of December:
 - Group provided final reflections and feedback of the collaborations to date.

Lessons learned and resulting implications and next steps are incorporated into the following two sections of this Report. Materials from the above NWCOP gatherings can be found in Appendix 3.

D. Data Collection and Evaluation System

A data collection and evaluation system for HES focuses on family stability and strengthening the genuine wealth of the family unit. Conversations were carried out with members from the Cities of Financial Empowerment to provide a baseline for evaluation of HES activities. This baseline was then iterated upon based on learnings from Ho‘owaiwai Network members and their collective activities as shared and discussed at NWCOP gatherings as well as feedback from Spendsafe.ly participants and the organizations piloting Resources Match.

1. Establishing a Baseline & Framework

A framework for data collection and evaluation of HES focuses both on the families being supported and the partners providing those services. As such, a relevant framework should start where families or partners are at and get a baseline understanding of their current context as related to the relevant HES.

a. Family & Individual Level

At the family and individual level it is critical to understand the dynamics of the family and their context to identify existing areas for support to build off of.

- *Demographics* – establish a basic picture of where the family is at and what HES the family may qualify for or which HES partners to potentially refer them to.
 - Number in household
 - Marital status
 - Household income
- *Psychographics* – establish a baseline of where the family is at emotionally and mentally and thus provide a glimpse at the urgency of their situation.
 - Level of family stress
 - Initial family financial awareness
- *Quantitative Measure of Progress and Targeted Outcomes as Based on Projected Service* – establish a quantitative baseline number that provides a clear measure that can be easily tracked to document family progress.
 - Discretionary balance
 - Credit scores
- *Existing Relationships Between Families* – provides a glimpse at potential existing support networks.
- *Existing Relationship Between Families and Partners* – provides a suggestion of potential partners and leverage points.

- *Youth Involvement in Family Decisions* – provides a glimpse at the communication channels within the family and household.

b. Partner & Community Level

At the partner and community level, it is critical to understand what programs and services exist and as such pinpoint opportunities for collaboration.

- *Inventory of Existing Programs and Services* – provides a clear understanding of assets, existing capacities of organizational partner and staff, and subsequent gaps and areas of need.
- *Opportunities for Embedding of HES* – targets those gaps and areas of need with HES and provides the baseline for initial collaborative conversations.

2. Methodology for Support, Reflection, & Data Collection

With either families or partner organizations the methodology for support, reflection, and ongoing data collection generally follows the same process:

- *Initial Talk Story Sessions and Follow-up* – a broad temperature check allows the individual and family / organization to talk freely about what is working well for them, what are the challenges they face, and their subsequent visions for the future, which serves as a baseline for support and collaboration. Follow-up can be done with further informal conversations or a survey to capture baseline quantitative and qualitative data points.
- *Periodic Check-ins* – these check-ins provide the individual and family / organization support and opportunities for self-reflection in a safe space as well as an opportunity to collect data.
 - In Person through Individual Consultations or Cohort Sharing
 - Electronic or Paper Surveys
- *Regular Tracking of a Quantitative Measure of Progress* – some sort of quantitative measure of progress provides a clear benchmark for progress for the individual and family / organization.
 - Individual and Family (i.e. discretionary balance, credit scores, etc.)
 - Organization (i.e. programmatic numbers, attendance, etc.)

3. System to Track & Monitor Progress Towards Outcomes

With either families or partner organizations an ongoing system to track and monitor progress towards outcomes generally follows the same process:

- *Mapping of Network* – provides a space for reflection for the individual or organization to discover their existing efforts and areas of need and thus potential leverage points. This exercise could be carried out multiple times over the course of engagement with the family or organization as their understanding of their networks develops and as their networks themselves develop.
 - Individual and family / organizational discovery of existing assets to help themselves and leverage for greater impact
 - Individual and family / organizational choice and control and involvement to redefine “empowerment”

- *Establish Regular Schedule to Follow-up and Check on Progress* – a clear and regular schedule that is adhered to provides support and intermediate goals for the individual and family / organization to work towards as well as a space to collect data and monitor progress towards outcomes.
 - In Person through Individual Consultations or Cohort Sharing
 - Electronic or Paper Surveys
 - Other Technological Tools (i.e. Spendsafe.ly)

This has been a really positive experience – especially from the standpoint of reflecting, standing back, and seeing how best to not only work on programs but on how to change the system. We have a model now that we can replicate to other areas on the island.

Blayne Hanagami, State DLIR
Hawai'i County Branch
Manager

V. Lessons Learned

The following are some of the key lessons learned from the Hawai'i Island demonstration of the Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services model. They help to inform the strategies needed to expand the reach and impact of asset building efforts to increase the economic empowerment and resiliency of Hawai'i Island families and communities.

A. An 'Ohana Based Approach to Youth Savings

Building off of lessons learned from the *Hawai'i Island Kids Savings Initiative*, the HES initiative points to the need to develop incentivized savings and financial capability opportunities for children and youth while using that as an opportunity to encourage parents to engage with their children around financial education and to access asset building products and services for themselves to strengthen their family's financial security. This builds on national and local research that indicate that parent engagement is critical for success.⁸

Just as another asset-based policy, the GI Bill, promoted human capital development – with enormous payoffs in educational attainment, increased productivity and incomes, and widespread home ownership – a children's savings policy would democratize educational opportunity, spread the distribution of wealth, build stronger households, and promote economic growth.⁹ Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between early savings and college enrollment and completion.¹⁰ Surprisingly, it has also shown that family income, household net worth, and parent savings for youth are not significant predictors of college attendance for youth. However, whether or not youth have accounts and whether or not they have savings set aside for school are important predictors. Students with savings accounts in their own names are seven times more likely to attend and complete college than peers with no savings accounts of their own.¹¹

Ensuring that Hawai'i Island youth have the chance to save for

⁸ Rist, Carl & Harger, Sarah. 2006. Learning to Save: Lessons on Financial Education. Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED).

⁹ Curley, Jamie; Sherraden, Michael. 1998. The History and Status of Children's Allowances: Policy Background for Children's Savings Accounts. Center for Social Development, Washington University.

¹⁰ Jappeli, Tullio; Padula, Mario. 2011. Investment in Financial Literacy and Savings Decisions. *Centre for Studies in Economics and Finance*, 272.

¹¹ Elliot III, William. 2012. Why Policy Makers Should Care about Children's Savings. New American Foundation.

education and training is critical given studies indicating that nearly 63% of all jobs will require a college education by 2018, thereby making a college degree increasingly important.¹² Other research shows that people with a bachelor's degree earn more than 80% more, on average, than those with only high school diplomas.¹³ Additionally, studies have shown that parental financial assets such as savings are positively associated with the cognitive development of school-age children. Overall, such family assets can positively promote children's well-being and educational achievements.¹⁴ Thus, establishing a continuum of youth savings products and services and capitalizing on that system to engage their parents and families in asset building actions will serve to address the near term issue of family economic security while helping to build a financially empowered future for Hawai'i Island children and youth now and for generations to come.

B. Financial Capability Versus Financial Literacy

The HES initiative has deepened the awareness and understanding of the need for interventions that help people move from financial education to financial capability – helping people to directly translate financial knowledge and guidance into better financial behavior in their everyday lives. The range of financial empowerment services provided through HES link financial products with financial education that are:

- *relevant* – addressing participants specific concerns and financial situations;
- *timely* – coinciding with key life events or moments of decision;
- *actionable* – enabling consumers to put newly gained knowledge into action right away; and
- *ongoing* – developing long-term relationships to provide support and accountability.¹⁵

The initiative demonstrates the need to employ the most effective interventions to achieve financial capability – the ability to act (knowledge, skills, confidence, and motivation) and the opportunity to act (through access to beneficial financial products and institutions). The use of a range of entry points to engage families in dialogue around planning and management of household finances – such as homeownership, food, energy, education – also contributes to building financial capability.

C. Champions at Multiple Levels

Reflective of research and experiences from elsewhere¹⁶, this demonstration initiative also pointed to the critical need to have committed leaders and/or champions within the community, service provider organizations, the business/private sector, and government to help sustain the effort. This requires on-going awareness raising, information sharing, and capacity building strategies to reach

¹² Carnevale, Anthony P.; Rose, Stephen J.; Cheah, Ban. 2011. The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings. Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University.

¹³ Brooks, Jennifer; Keeley, Kevin; Lambe, Will; Rist, Carl; Rosen, Barbara. 2009. Children's Development Accounts: A State Policy Sourcebook. Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED).

¹⁴ Yeung, W.J.; Conley, Dalton. 2008. Black-White Achievement Gap and Family Wealth. *Child Development* 79(2):303-324.

¹⁵ Sledge, Joshua, Sarah Gordon, & Matthew Knisley. 2011. Making the Shift from Financial Education to Financial Capability: Evidence from the Financial Capability Innovation Fund. Center for Financial Services Innovation.

¹⁶ CFED. 2012. Key Children's Savings Design Questions. 2012 Assets Learning Conference. Retrieved from www.assetsconference.org

out to and engage key stakeholders. It is also critical to understand that part of this effort is establishing systems, structures, and processes that recognize and prepare for the fact that shifts and transitions in leadership and champions will occur on an on-going basis.

A champion within the County is also critical to help play the role of facilitator, convener, and connector. To date, this role has been effectively addressed by key individuals within the County's Department of Research & Development and the Office of Housing & Community Development with support from the Office of the Mayor.

D. On-Going Capacity Strengthening Through Communities of Practice

The idea of using an embedding and network approach to building family and community economic resiliency is often challenging and sometimes counter intuitive. *Communities of Practice* (COP) provide a space for reflection, dialogue, information sharing, and relationship building that help practitioners to lift up best practices and lessons learned to inform and guide their work in the field. It provides the opportunity to more deeply understand the complex issues related to building networks and developing specific tools and strategies that work best in a range of contexts and situations.

Participating in “communities of practice” is essential to our learning. They are the basic building blocks of a social learning system because they are the social “containers” of the competences that make up such a system. They grow out of a convergent interplay of competence and experience and encourage the following modes of belonging:¹⁷

- *Engagement* – doing things together, talking, producing artifacts (i.e., helping a colleague with a problem or participating in a meeting) help us learn what we can do and how the world responds to our actions.
- *Imagination* – constructing an image of ourselves, of our communities, and of the world in order to orient ourselves to reflect on our situation, and to explore possibilities.
- *Alignment* – making sure that our local activities are sufficiently aligned with other processes so that they can be effective beyond our own engagement.

Communities of practice define competence by combining three elements:

- *joint enterprise* – members are bound together by their collectively developed understanding of what their community is about and they hold each other accountable to this sense of *joint enterprise*.
- *mutual engagement* – members build community through mutual engagement, interacting with one another, establishing norms and relationships of mutuality that reflect these interactions.
- *communal resources* – members produce a shared repertoire of communal resources – language, routines, sensibilities, artifacts, tools, stories, styles, etc.¹⁸

¹⁷ Wenger, Etienne. 2000. *Communities of Practice & Social Learning Systems*. SAGE Social Science Collections.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

The following are some representative comments shared by participants regarding their Network Weavers COP experience:

- ✓ Time to step back and work on the system and not in the system.
- ✓ Opportunity for middle managers to associate with upper management to understand how their work fits with the larger picture.
- ✓ Time to reflect outside of [our organization] and how our services are interconnected and how we set things up and leverage with our partners.
- ✓ Opportunity to listen and learn.
- ✓ It's easier to ask for something because they know where I'm coming from.

E. Addressing the Weaving, Convening, & On-Going Support Functions

Stakeholders identified the following supporting functions as being critical to the expansion, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services model:

- *Coordination & Guidance* – the need for an individual(s) and/or entity to provide on-going overall coordination and guidance to HES partners and the network.
- *Technical Assistance* – providing on-going technical assistance and support to existing and new partners as they apply and develop the model for their particular circumstances and to be responsive to the needs and demands of the families they serve.
- *Facilitation & Analysis* – providing facilitation, “listening and learning”, and synthesis and analysis support and expertise to effectively support asset building practitioners in the application of the HES model and its guiding principles.
- *Lessons Learned, Best Practices, & Standardization* – providing the technical expertise to track, monitor, identify, and formalize the learning from the initiative into asset building tools and strategies that are accessible to service providers, government, the private sector (employers and financial institutions) as well as individuals and families.

We need to apply this model to other housing sites. We all have established the partnerships. We have access to the individuals and families who need this. This help to bring together all the homeless and housing service providers and resource partners. This is the best opportunity to replicate the HES model.

Jeremy McComber, Director of Operations, HOPE Services Inc.

VI. Next Steps

The following are some immediate and long-term next steps taken from the key lessons learned from the Hawai'i Island demonstration of the Ho'owaiwai Empowerment Services model. They form the basis for strategies needed to expand the reach and impact of asset building efforts to increase the economic empowerment and resiliency of Hawai'i Island families and communities.

A. Sustain Existing Sites & Expand to New Sites

- *Existing Sites* – develop, sustain, and expand financial empowerment services being provided at existing HES sites. This includes development of ROSI HES at the Hāmākua Health Center and increased integration of the model into the range of programs offered by HOPE Services Inc.
- *Expansion* – expansion of HES services to other housing and homeless services and initiatives, especially with the support of the Office Housing & Community Development, and to employer initiatives, including those at KTA and ABC stores.

B. Resources Match

- *Further Develop & Sustain* – Resources Match is being supported by a .25 FTE staff member from the Office of Housing & Community Development as well as staff time from the member organizations of the Big Island Workforce Connection (BIWC). Mission Asset Fund is willing to collaborate on an ongoing basis to develop and maintain the system and sustained support is being sought out from Research & Development and the Mayor's Office.
- *Increase Number of Listed Organizations & Programs and Users* – Resources Match is currently expanding organically to other organizations through the efforts of BIWC partners is occurring as well as piloting Resource Match with BIWC clients to streamline the referral process.

C. Communication & Outreach Plan & Implementation

- *Develop a Communication & Outreach Plan* – create packet of consistent information to educate staff, other members, and partner government agencies.
- *Implementation of Communication & Outreach Plan* – develop opportunities to inform government agencies and recruit potential new partners.

D. On-Going Technical Support to the HES Network

- *Standardize and Formalize Technical Assistance* – Hawai‘i Island Ho‘owaiwai Network members recognized the need for an entity to convene local partners to support and weave their efforts.
- *Development of Rural Outreach Services Initiative (ROSI) Template* – the Kohala Health Center is launching a ROSI with a soft opening in December 2013 and a formal “Grand Opening” in January 2014 and ongoing documentation to create a ROSI template would allow for the quick expansion of a rural services delivery model.
- *Ongoing Efforts to Sustain HES* – a variety of HES are continued to be delivered with the support of leveraged resources and increased support from Hawai‘i Island sources would allow for a more rapid expansion of Hawai‘i Island-focused service delivery.
 - *Spendsafe.ly* is still being used by users at the seven Hawai‘i Island organizations with interest from additional organizations. Asio Corporation is willing to collaborate on an ongoing basis to develop and maintain the system. Resources are being leveraged from other sources to maintain the current level of service and there is initial development into the areas of energy use awareness building and food consumption and spending awareness building to expand the user base and assist a range of organizations, including Hawai‘i Island Ho‘owaiwai Network member Office for Social Ministry.
 - *VITA* services are planned for a minimum of four sites on both the Hilo and Kona sides of the island in partnership with Hawai‘i Island Ho‘owaiwai Network members for the 2014 tax season. Due to a rapid increase in service demand, a stronger emphasis is being placed on recruitment of volunteers and locking down additional tax preparation sites.

E. Maintaining and Sustaining Communities of Practice (COP)

- *Space for Continued Reflection & Collaboration* – continuation of COPs, which provided Hawai‘i Island Ho‘owaiwai Network Weavers a space to reflect on articulations of asset building more specific to Hawai‘i Island families, including family stability and a focus on assets instead of an emergency mindset, as well as discuss opportunities for specific collaboration.
- *Formalization of Project-Specific Working Groups* – moving forward the Hawai‘i Island Ho‘owaiwai Network Weavers will be looking to formalize their efforts into project-specific working groups to create a more formalized structure as tied to specific partner venues.

F. Impact Indicators Moving Forward

- *Family Stability* – viewing family and organizational well-being from an assets approach rather than an emergency mindset in order to ensure the stability and resiliency of a family or organization.
- *Increased Awareness* – self-awareness of a family or organization in regards to their assets, challenges, and overall context as a key factor in increasing family or organization well-being.
- *Network Mapping* – tool to identify areas of strengths and gaps as well as related relationships that could be leveraged to fill those gaps.

APPENDIX

1. CFE REPORTS

2. COUNSELING CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP FLIER

3. NETWORK WEAVER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MATERIAL

1. CFE REPORTS

- A. **Municipal Financial Empowerment: A Supervitamin for Public Programs**
Strategy #1: Integrating Professional Financial Counseling
- B. **Municipal Financial Empowerment: A Supervitamin for Public Programs**
Strategy #2: Professionalizing the Field of Financial Education and Counseling
- C. **Municipal Financial Empowerment: A Supervitamin for Public Programs**
Strategy #3: Integrating Safe and Affordable Bank Accounts
- D. **Cities for Financial Empowerment County of Hawai'i Update**
February 20-23, 2013 - Miami, Florida
- E. **Cities for Financial Empowerment County of Hawai'i Update**
June 17-19, 2013 - Providence, Rhode Island
- F. **Cities for Financial Empowerment County of Hawai'i Update**
December 9-11, 2013 - Louisville, Kentucky

2. COUNSELING CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP FLIER

3. NETWORK WEAVER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MATERIAL

A. He Alo Ahe Alo Orientation Gathering Notes

Wednesday, March 27, 2013

B. Learning Circle

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

C. Tell Me a Time When

July 24, 2013

D. Ulu Wini Financial Curriculum

September 24, 2013

E. Final Reflections

December 2013