



April 15, 2026

Aloha Budget Chair Sugimura and Members of the Maui County Council,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Patty Copperfield, and I am the Transportation Director at Maui Economic Opportunity. I respectfully request your continued support of our Human Services Transportation programs.

In Fiscal Year 2024–2025, MEO provided over 182,000 rides to residents across Maui, Molokaʻi, and Lānaʻi. These rides connected people to work, medical care, food access, and essential daily needs. Now, just nine months into Fiscal Year 2025–2026, we have already provided more than 122,000 trips, demonstrating that demand for these services remains strong and consistent across our communities.

These numbers represent real people. They represent kūpuna getting to life-sustaining dialysis treatments, individuals with disabilities accessing daily programs that support their independence, residents in rural areas reaching groceries, pharmacies, and medical care, and working individuals getting to their jobs when they have no other transportation option.

Our largest programs reflect the greatest needs. Youth Transportation helps our keiki access after-school programs that support their safety and development. Dialysis and Day Health programs support our aging population and those with ongoing medical needs. Employment Transportation ensures people can get to work and remain financially stable. Rural and Expanded Rural Shuttles connect entire communities where no fixed-route service exists and often serve as the only link to essential services.

As fuel prices rise in our rural areas, we expect demand to grow as families turn to these services to make the most of each dollar and support their ohana.

Just as important are programs that support quality of life. Senior Nutrition brings kūpuna to Kaunoa for meals, social connection, and overall wellness. Senior Services allows them to stay engaged through community gatherings and cultural events such as

### **The Promise of Community Action**

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



the East Maui Taro Festival. Even our smaller programs fill critical gaps and ensure that no community is overlooked.

These services are essential to the daily lives of thousands of Maui County residents. Without them, many individuals would lose access to healthcare, employment, and basic necessities.

I respectfully ask for your continued investment to sustain these services for our community. Mahalo nui loa for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to keeping Maui Nui connected.

Sincerely,



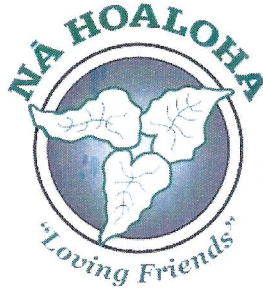
Patty Copperfield,  
Director, MEO Transportation

### **The Promise of Community Action**

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.







PO Box 3208 – 1962 E Vineyard Street - Wailuku, HI 96793  
Phone: (808) 249-2545 FAX: (808) 249-2547  
[www.nahoaloha.org](http://www.nahoaloha.org) [info@nahoaloha.org](mailto:info@nahoaloha.org)

April 6, 2026

County of Maui  
Office of the Mayor & Members of the Maui County Council

RE: Support for Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) Human Services Transportation Program Funding

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

On behalf of Nā Hoaloaha – Maui Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, I am writing in support of continued and increased funding for Maui Economic Opportunity's (MEO) Human Services Transportation Program in the County of Maui FY2027 budget.

Nā Hoaloaha serves older adults and people with disabilities across Maui County, many of whom are homebound, low-income, and without reliable transportation. Access to safe, dependable transportation is one of the most critical factors in maintaining health, independence, and dignity. MEO's transportation services are an essential component of this safety net.

We want to offer an honest perspective as a frontline partner. Like many high-demand systems, MEO's transportation program faces challenges, including long waitlists, limited capacity, and occasional service gaps. These issues can create real hardships for the vulnerable individuals we collectively serve. However, these challenges are not a reflection of lack of value—they are clear indicators of overwhelming need and insufficient resources.

Despite these constraints, MEO provides a vital lifeline for many in our community who would otherwise have no way to access medical care, groceries, and essential services. For many of our kupuna, MEO transportation is the difference between isolation and connection, between missed medical appointments and continuity of care.

Nā Hoaloaha frequently works to bridge service gaps—coordinating volunteer drivers, providing escort transportation, and helping clients navigate available options. Even with these efforts, we cannot meet the full scope of need without a strong, well-funded public transportation partner. MEO's program is foundational to the broader ecosystem of care.

In the wake of the 2023 wildfires and ongoing economic instability, the demand for transportation services has only intensified. As federal funding remains uncertain, it is critical that the County of Maui continues to invest in programs that directly impact on residents' daily lives. Strengthening MEO's capacity will improve reliability, reduce waiting times, and ensure that our most vulnerable residents are not left behind.

We respectfully urge the County to sustain and increase funding for MEO's Human Services Transportation Program. Doing so is an investment in health, equity, and community resilience.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to serving Maui County's most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,



King Van Nostrand  
Executive Director  
Nā Hoaloha – Maui Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers





*"Enhancing Lives Through Self-Reliance"*

April 1, 2026

To: Maui County Council Budget, Finance, Economic Development Committee.

Re: support of MEO transportation

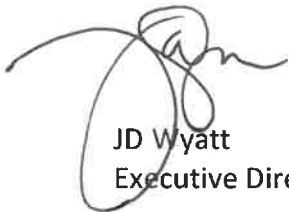
Aloha Council Members,

I know what a busy time of year this is for you all; mahalo for the important work you do in our community. I'm submitting this letter of testimony and support of the MEO transportation budget.

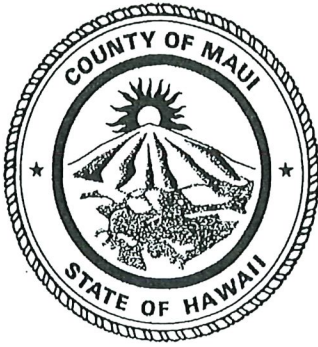
We have maintained a collaborative working relationship with Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) for over 40 years. Ka Lima O Maui's program focus is to provide employment and services necessary to support the training and employment needs of Maui's disabled and disadvantaged employees. Transportation has been identified as one of the most significant barriers to the attainment of employment for our clientele. MEO has developed an array of transportation services that have addressed many of the transportation needs of our clients. MEO's transportation services have enabled the employment of our clients, which in turn has assisted our workers towards becoming more independent and self-sufficient.

If not for the reliability and dependability of MEO transportation, most of our clientele likely would not be able to work, nor come to our adult day health program and receive the critical services we provide. I ask that you fully support the MEO transportation budget, so this vital community service can continue

With aloha.



JD Wyatt  
Executive Director



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF USE ONLY	NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Aspen Wallwork

Email Address: aspen@arcofmaui.org

Phone: 808.242.5181 x201

Mailing Address: 140 N. MARKET ST. SUITE 202B

City/Zip: Wailuku 96793

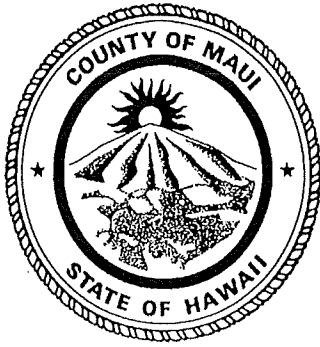
I Represent:  Myself

Organization Arc of Maui County

Request/Issue: On behalf of our organization, I respectfully submit a request for the upcoming budget to support continued funding for transportation services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Reliable bus services are essential for our participants to access our day program and the community services we provide. The bus serves a critical link between their homes and our day program, ensuring consistent participation in services and meaningful community engagement. Without this support, many individuals would face significant barriers to independence and inclusion.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**

FOR STAFF USE ONLY	NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Natalie N. Greenleaf

Email Address: nhealani.greenleaf@gmail.com Phone: (808) 357-5190

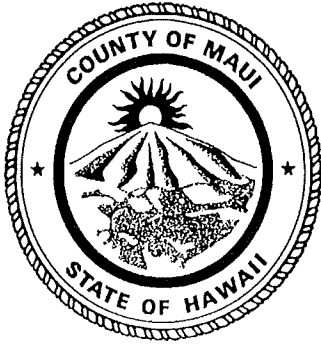
Mailing Address: 5220 Kohi St. City/Zip: Lahaina HI 96761

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Request/Issue: Paratransit is important for my well being. Having meo to transport me supports my daily life, insures I can attend my programs and work. Please continue funding.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: TRAVIS UTAYANZA

Email Address: travisutayanza@gmail.com Phone: 808 669-0026

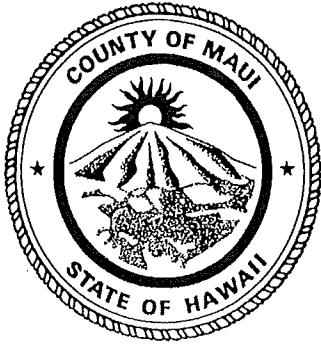
Mailing Address: 5225 Kahi St. Lahaina City/Zip: 96761

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Request/Issue: Med Services help with my transportation, To go to programs and work. Please continue to fund them.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF USE ONLY	NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Ian Carrero

Email Address: iancarrero91@gmail.com Phone: (808)419-1062

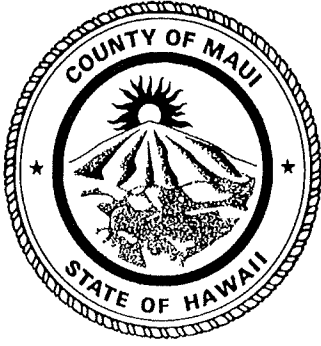
Mailing Address: 5220 Kahi St. City/Zip: 96761

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Request/Issue: Keep my MEO bus please  
I need it for program, work and to  
visit my family

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Veronica Baisa

Email Address: veronobaisa48@gmail.com Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

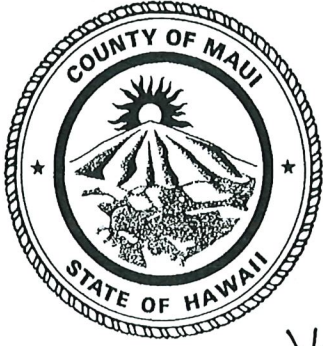
Mailing Address: 935-B Makani Road City/Zip: Makawao, HI 96768

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Request/Issue: Please continue to fund MED transportation services.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name:

Yolanda Patao  
GRANDY A. PATAO

Email Address:

Phone:

808 268 0956

Mailing Address:

805 Lono Ave Kah

City/Zip:

96732

I Represent:

Myself

Organization

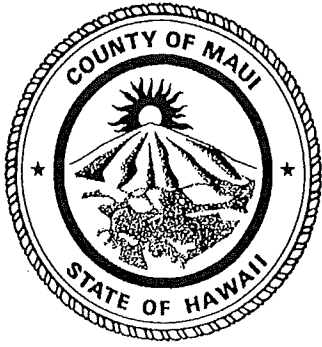
Request/Issue:

Please continue to fund  
MED transportation. Its very helpful  
to get my grandson with Developmental  
and Intellectual disabilities to his  
programs, appointments and supports  
his continued access to the community

Funding Request (if known): \$

Responsible County Department:

MED



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF USE ONLY	NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Anne Bare for Josie Ponce

Email Address: holmesanne24@gmail.com Phone: 808 280 5990

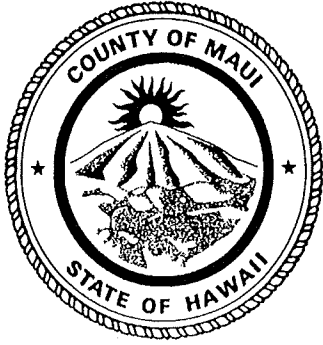
Mailing Address: 1200 Kōkomo Rd City/Zip: Haiku, HI 96708

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization

Request/Issue: Please continue to Support MED  
with funding so they can continue  
to transport my child with disabilities  
into her community and to her  
adult day health program

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF USE ONLY	NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Patricia Boettger for James Boettger

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 808-991-8122

Mailing Address: 341 Wainohia St, City/Zip: Kihei, HI 96753

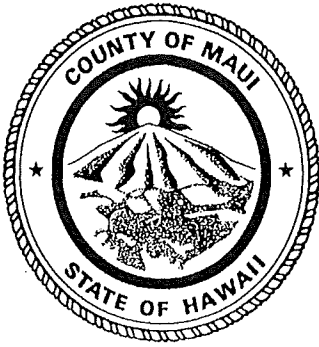
I Represent:  Myself

Organization Arc of Maui County

Request/Issue: My disabled son utilizes MEO for transportation in his community and to attend his adult day health program.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Zaria Fears

Email Address: zaria@arcofmaui.org

Phone: (808) 242-5781 ext. 208

Mailing Address: 140 N Market St

City/Zip: Wailuku, 96793

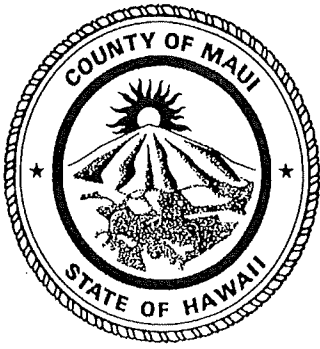
I Represent:  Myself

Organization Arc of Maui County

Request/Issue: I am requesting maintained and/or increased MEO Funding. As a non-profit organization, our programs and ability to reach potential clients depends greatly on MEO services.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: VALERIE SUY

Email Address: valerie@arc of maui.org

Phone: 808 242-5781

Mailing Address: 140 N. MARKETST # 202B

City/Zip: WAILUKO, HI 96793

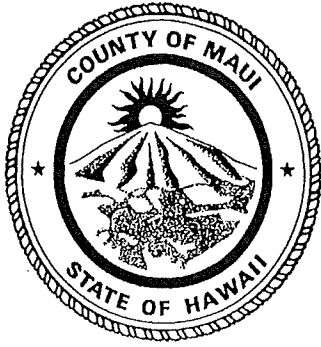
I Represent:  Myself

Organization ARC OF MAUI COUNTY

Request/Issue: ARC OF MAUI PARTICIPANTS WITH I/DD DEPEND ON MEO'S  
transportation for essential program services. MEO PLAYS A  
vital role in the lives of our participants. Any cut in funding  
would be extremely detrimental.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Stephanie Kealoha

Email Address: Stephanie@arcofmaui.org

Phone: 808-242-5781

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 602

City/Zip: Kihei, HI 96753

I Represent:  Myself

Organization Arc of Maui County

Request/Issue: Arc of Maui participants with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities depend on MEO transportation to access essential program services and many community events. MEO is vital in success and inclusion of persons with disabilities within our community. My request is for an increase in their funding so that they may even better support our community as a whole.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

I am writing to express my sincere support for the continued funding of MEO services. As a recent recipient of assistance, I can confidently say that the support provided has made a meaningful difference in my life and in the well-being of my family.

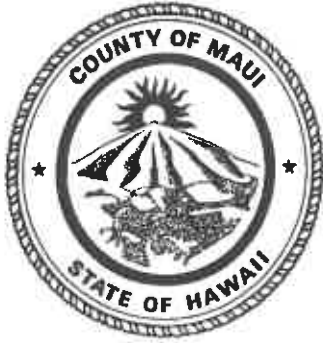
During a time when I have just welcomed a new addition to my family, MEO services have been especially important. As I am currently out of income, the support I received helped relieve financial stress and ensured that my family's basic needs were still met during this critical period. The resources, guidance, and care provided gave me stability and peace of mind while adjusting to these new responsibilities.

Programs like MEO are essential in strengthening our community by supporting families when they need it most. The impact of these services extends far beyond individual households—they contribute to healthier, more secure communities overall. Continued funding will ensure that other families have access to the same level of care, compassion, and support that I was fortunate to receive.

I strongly encourage you to continue supporting MEO services so they may carry on their vital work and help others in need in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Much Mahalo.



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**

DATE	NO.

**PLEASE PRINT**

**Name:** Steve / Kifin Judson

**Email Address:** lefty2you@yahoo.com

**Phone:** 740-607-8935

**Mailing Address:** 1772 Arbor Way, Turlock, CA

**City/Zip:** 95380

**I Represent:**  **Myself**  
 **Organization**

**Request/Issue:** RE: MEO Rental Assistance Program

Greetings Mayor Bissen and Maui County Leaders,

My wife and I own a condo at Molokai Shores in Kaunakaki. We fell in love with Molokai a number of years ago  
and ended up purchasing a small condo on the island. However, we have desired from the beginning  
to own on Molokai in a way that gave back and blessed this beautiful island. As a result, we chose to  
rent long-term to a resident of the island. We did not want to add to the housing challenges by creating one more  
short-term vacation rental. So we were grateful when our renter, Keli'i moved into the condo.  
Later last year, when Keli'i lost his job, the MEO Rental Assistance Program was able to come  
alongside him as he tried to find other work. Honestly, I don't know how long I could have allowed  
Keli'i to continue in the condo while seeking other employment without the MEO assistance.  
The MEO Rental Assistance Program is a very worthwhile program to walk with residents of the county  
during seasons of reduced income. My hope is that it will continue to serve the county's residents into the future.

**Funding Request (if known):** \$ For MEO Rent. Assist. Prog.

**Responsible County Department:** Office of the Mayor

April 16, 2026

MEO Kahului Head Start  
615 W Papa Ave  
Kahului, Maui Hawaii 96732

Aloha MEO,

As a mama to a student in your class this program has helped immensely for our family of (5) five.

We have seen exponential growth in Hāla'i in everything she does. Our family appreciates the time and effort it takes by her teachers and waders to be where she needs to be academically.

Aside from being able to utilize this special program our family is able to work the hours we need in order to provide for our family. We can't express how much this program has helped us financially with our daughter getting the educational training she needs to continue to grow without the stress of having to pay another bill, as we know this is a tough time to live in Hawaii financially.

This program I feel is essential to our entire community here!

Thank you MEO for all of the support and resources that you provide our community with.

Very Truly Yours,

*Kahili and Travis Odell*  
(Hāla'i O'Dell Mom + Dad)

Earleen Tianio  
2101 Makuhau Rd.  
Wailuku, HI 96733  
808-281-7288

April 16, 2026

Meo Kahului Head Start  
615 W. Papa Ave.  
Kahului, HI 96732

To Whom It may Concern,

I am writing as a proud grand-mother in support of my granddaughter's <sup>†</sup>Hālai Odell<sup>o</sup> enrollment in the MEO preschool program on Maui.

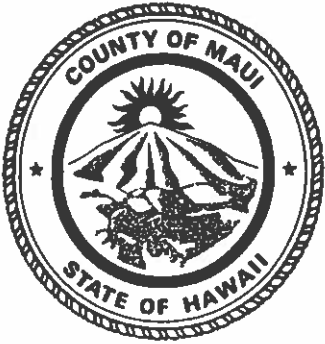
From what I have witnessed, meo preschool has been a true blessing to our/my family. My grand daughter has grown not only academically, but also emotionally and socially. Hālai is more confident, curious, and eager to learn every day. The structure, care, and encouragement she receives from her teachers have had a lasting impact on her development.

As her grandmother, it brings me great peace to know she is in a safe & nurturing environment

where she is valued and supported. The  
MCO program has also been tremendous  
help to my family, allowing her parents  
to work while knowing their child is  
receiving quality early education.

I strongly believe that this  
preschool is laying a firm foundation  
for her future success.

Thank you,  
Earl Davis  
Stilai D. dell Howard na ♡



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**

NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Melicia Orta

Email Address: meliamjorta@gmail.com Phone: 808-795-4029

Mailing Address: 211 Haulani St A<sup>unit</sup> City/Zip: 96768

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: Thank you for the county for funding  
Head start Program for our children's to continue  
To have education at a early age. We ask to  
continue funding fiscal year of 2027.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



Debbi Amaral <debbi.amaral@meoinc.org>

---

## Letter of support

---

Ekolu Ah Yee <ekolu@hawaii.edu>  
To: "ecs@meoinc.org" <ecs@meoinc.org>

Thu, Apr 9, 2026 at 7:51 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding of the MEO Head Start Program serving our Moloka'i community. As a working parent on Moloka'i, I am deeply grateful for the opportunities this program has provided my child and our 'ohana.

Through MEO Head Start, my child has made remarkable personal and academic progress—growth that I truly believe would not have been possible otherwise. The program has created a nurturing, structured, and culturally grounded environment that supports not only early learning, but also confidence, social development, and readiness for the next stage of education.

Today, my child feels excited and prepared to enter what she proudly calls "big school." This readiness is a direct reflection of the dedication, care, and professionalism of the Head Start staff, who consistently go above and beyond for our keiki and families.

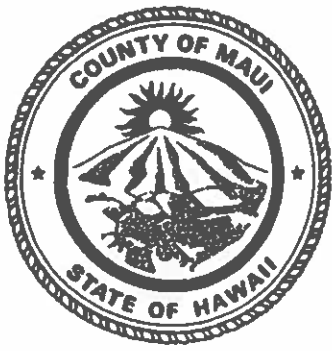
Programs like MEO Head Start are essential for working families like mine. They provide a strong foundation for our children's future success while supporting parents who are striving to provide for their households. I know firsthand that many other families across Moloka'i and Maui County benefit from this program, and it would be a tremendous loss if this vital support were not continued.

I respectfully urge you to continue funding the MEO Head Start Program so that it may keep serving our keiki, strengthening our families, and uplifting our communities for years to come.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A Grateful Moloka'i 'Ohana



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request



PLEASE PRINT

Name: Samantha Lonzaga

Email Address: malialonzaga2@gmail.com Phone: 808-269-2107

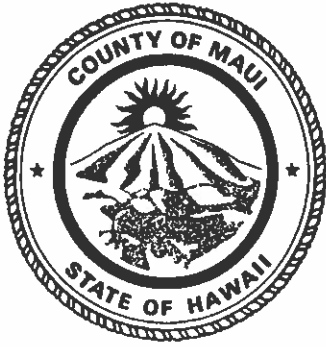
Mailing Address: 380 A Mokuahi St. City/Zip: 96768

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: To whom it may concern, I am a parent of a child currently enrolled in MEO Head Start and I would like to thank the County of Maui for continuing to dedicate funding to MEO Head Start. County funding for MEO Head Start provides essential local support that enhances federal investments, ensuring higher quality, greater accessibility, and tailored services for low income families. This funding strengthens local communities by supporting child development, improving school readiness, and increasing parental employment stability. Again, County-level funding acts as a critical supplement to federal dollars, helping to ensure that children/families in our community receive vital services. Please continue to support our children through funding for MEO Head Start. Thank you, Samantha Lonzaga.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**

FOR STAFF  
USE ONLY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Danielle Evans

Email Address: danimarie.kalili@gmail.com

Phone: 808-281-5602

Mailing Address: in makawao

City/Zip: 96768

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: On behalf of MEO Head Start, I respectfully submit this request for continued funding consideration and support

in the County of Maui Fiscal Year 2027 budget. Head Start ensures essential services like early learning, health care, and family support,

especially for those facing challenges like housing instability, low income and limited childcare access. This ongoing funding

would help uphold safe high - quality classrooms, recruit and retain qualified educators, and provide comprehensive family

support services including parent education, case management and enhanced health and nutrition programs.

Lastly I would like to request our County of Maui to consider looking into the nutritional quality of meals served to our keiki and

potentially looking into creating a program that can incorporate high quality, fresh and locally grown foods into daily meals and snacks.

This initiative would not only improve the nutritional quality of meals served, but also support Maui Farms, and strengthen

our local food system by keeping food dollars in the local economy, create healthy eating habits, and encourages connections

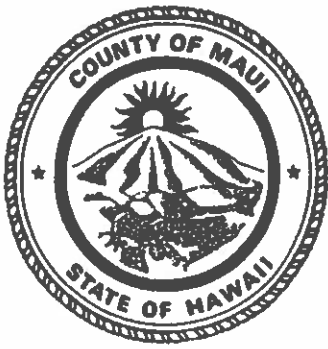
between school, farms, families and culture. The importance of improving nutrition in MEO Head Start programs ensuring the our

keiki receive Healthy, fresh and locally sourced meals that support their growth, learning and long term well being.

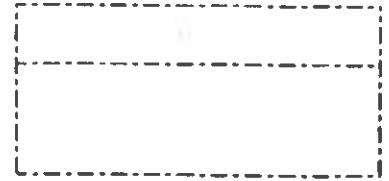
Overall our Counties investment in MEO Head Start is an investment in Maui's Future

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



PLEASE PRINT

Name: Donna Medice

Email Address: Bob.Mered@gmail.com

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

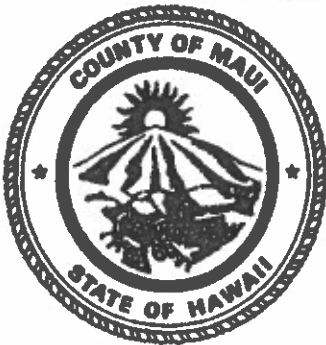
City/Zip: Pukalani

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: I am requesting that MEO Head Start gets continued funding. They have been one of the main resources for families and Keiki over 50 years. This resource is one that has always been loyal and trustworthy to both parents + Keiki's. Therefore, please continue its funding.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request



PLEASE PRINT

Name:

Chynna Helm

Email Address:

chynnahelm908@gmail.com

Phone:

808-298-9939

Mailing Address:

100 Kōi Alanui Way Apt 104  
Kihei, HI 96757

City/Zip:

Kihei, HI 96757

I Represent:

Myself

Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue:

I would like to request continued funding for the MEO Headstart program. My daughter is part of this school year's class. Without this program it would not have been possible for her to attend preschool. Throughout the year she has received so much support from her teachers and has progressed better than we could have hoped. I hope that future keiki will have the same opportunity that my family and I have had through MEO Headstart.

Maahalo!

Funding Request (if known): \$

Responsible County Department:

Human Concerns

*Aloha,*

*My name is Betty Jo Sellers. I am the mother of Ezekiel Sellers who attends MEO Head Start Kihei. The decision to send Ezekiel to school was tough. I endured so many emotions while making the decision. However, I am happy that I decided to apply for the MEO Head Start preschool program. Everything about it was a breeze. From the initial phone call of acceptance, to his enrollment, to his transition into school it was nothing short of easy. He will soon be an alumni of the MEO Head Start Kihei. He has made many friends, learned a lot and he loves it. The teaching staff, the social worker and every other person who played a role in his preschool experience is great. Although Ezekiel will be venturing off to kindergarten. I hope that the MEO Head Start program throughout Maui can continue being funded for the next school year and years to come. The program is beneficial for both parents and children.*

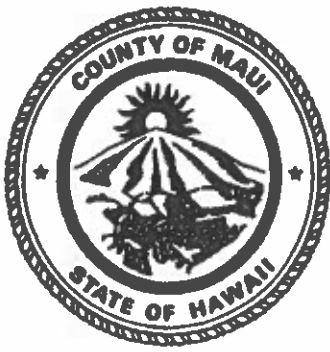
*Mahalo for your time!*

--

*BJ Sellers*

*[bj sellers0721@gmail.com](mailto:bj sellers0721@gmail.com)*

*(808)793-9735*



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

**Name:** Heather Roback-de Beest

**Email Address:** heatherman.c.roback@gmail.com **Phone:** 8087575792

**Mailing Address:** 396 Kaiolohia St. **City/Zip:** Kihei, HI

**I Represent:**  Myself  Organization MEO Head Start MEO

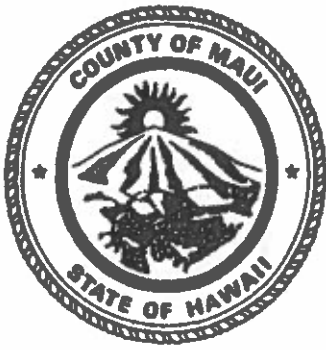
**Request/Issue:** -Investing in the future of our Keiki through Headstart-

I am writing to respectfully request for funding to support the continued operation of MEO Headstart for the upcoming 2026-2027 School year. MEO Headstart serves as a cornerstone of early childhood education and family support in our community. This request outlines our need for continued funding to ensure resources for our keiki and families who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford early childhood education. MEO Headstart is more than preschool services, the program provides social & emotional development for our keiki, feeds keiki over the weekends with the help of Aloha Backpack buddies, supplies keiki with supplies & materials to continue education and so much more. Please help fund our keiki's future. Mahalo!

**Funding Request (if known):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsible County Department:** Human Concerns





COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request



PLEASE PRINT

Name:

~~Kim~~ Kim

Email Address:

Phone:

Mailing Address:

City/Zip:

Kihei 96753

I Represent:

Myself

Organization

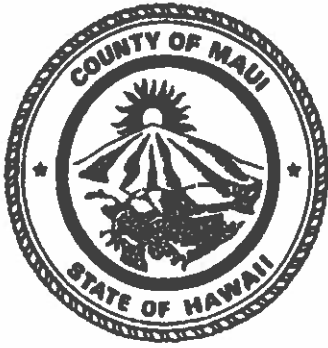
MEO Head Start

Request/Issue:

The Kihei Head start is the best program my kids (Jireh) has attended. He is always so happy to wake up & go to school to see his teachers. He comes home telling me what he loved about his day. It is always something good never bad. What this program my son wouldn't get the interaction w/ other kids before school nor would he have the pre k education w/ fun from his teachers. If it wasn't for this program I wouldn't be able to afford preschool or pre k program.

Funding Request (if known): \$

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

**Name:** Kymane Natividad

**Email Address:** KY.natividad@gmail.com

**Phone:** (808)344-2471

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/Zip:** KIHEI 96793

**I Represent:**  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

**Request/Issue:** MEO HEADSTART has been an amazing organization for my child and the other children who attend or will be attending. MEO has helped my child from when he was 3 years old til now, 5 years. He learned communication, learning how to manage emotion, learning social skills and more. ~~it~~ ~~is~~ it is helping my child get kindergarten-ready.

\_\_\_\_\_

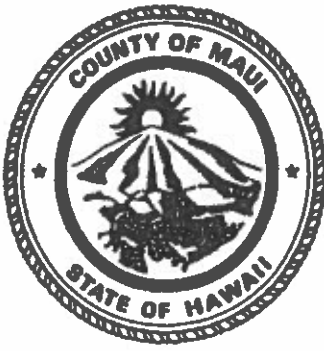
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Funding Request (if known):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsible County Department:** Human Concerns



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request



PLEASE PRINT

Name: Elenoa Leota

Email Address: Elenoa.Filikitong922@gmail.com Phone: 8082697168

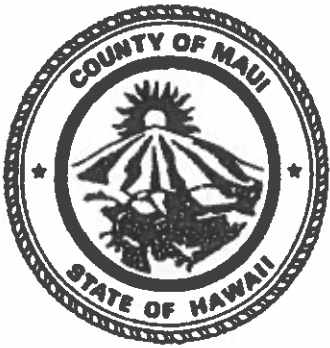
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

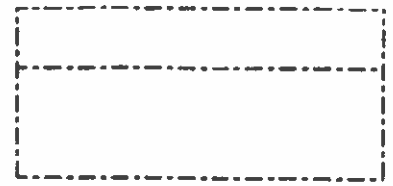
Request/Issue: MEO head start has been such a great program  
for not just my kids but also me as a parent.  
I have been able to benefit from this great program  
in the best ways. Without head start I feel like  
I would still feel lost when it comes to my kids  
being in school but also being able to go to work.  
I feel that MEO is a great program & they  
deserve everything they would need in order  
to stay afloat. We love this program & we  
wouldnt know what to do without it!

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



PLEASE PRINT

Name: Aliyah Swartz

Email Address: aliyahswartz168@gmail.com Phone: 808 766 6356

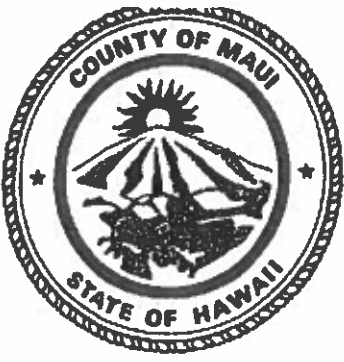
Mailing Address: 76 Waiakoa St City/Zip: 96753, Kihei

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

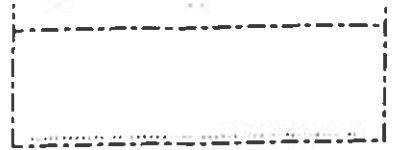
Request/Issue: I love head start for my daughter  
It changed her for the best where I would  
see her acting out had before she  
started here her attitude has  
changed for the best she has alot of  
teachers she loves and relies on we  
love head start

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

**Name:** Jenn Pupuki

**Email Address:** maukaehuamakai@gmail.com **Phone:** 298-7312

**Mailing Address:** P.O. BOX 1634 **City/Zip:** W. Kai 96748

**I Represent:**  Myself  
 Organization MEO HEAD START

**Request/Issue:** Alpha; to whom this may concern,

I would like to start by saying how much we appreciate  
MEO Head Start program ~~available~~ Both of our older  
sons attended this program and it really helped them  
get a "head start" on education. We didn't initially enroll  
our son here cause we lived Malama, all of the other  
schools were beyond full with a long waitlist. We ended  
up putting ourselves on every waitlist hoping our  
son would get accepted. MEO had a space available  
and our son was able to begin his learning journey  
in a structured environment with other Kiiki.  
I can't explain how much this has helped our son

**Funding Request (if known):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsible County Department:** HUMAN CONCERNS

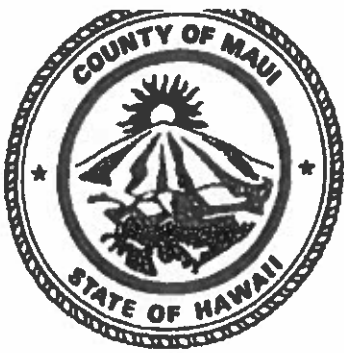
over

preparation for his kindergarten. In the past, we have seen so much improvement in his retention, his ability to work and play with others. His social skills are improving and he is learning so much. This school has also helped our ohana with being able to return to work. If the school closed at noon all week, it would really put a damper on our work schedule. I also see how the full days really fill his cup. He seems so excited every day to tell us about what he learned, how much fun he had playing and how much he loves school. Please help keep this center open to ensure our keiki's ability to learn and help build on their most important years.

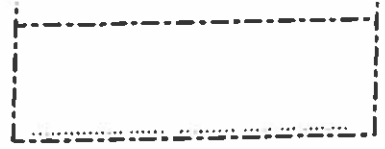
Mahalo nui loa i ke Kōkua

Jenifer Papuhi





**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



PLEASE PRINT

Name: Janelle Taneayo

Email Address: janellelani@yahoo.com

Phone: 808-646-1624

Mailing Address: PO Box 1493

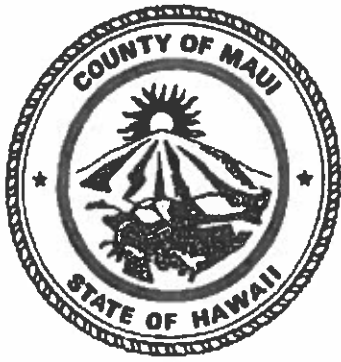
City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO HEAD START

Request/Issue: Funding is essential. A comprehensive budget act as a financial road map, ensuring the school can sustain a safe environment and provide high quality education. We need ongoing investment for age appropriate books, supplies, educational toys for our children. The funds are needed to provide free and healthy meals for our children. ~~Keeping~~ MEO provides a well structured program, and keeping it open till 3:00 helps out with parents who work a full time job.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: HUMAN CONCERNS



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY      REF: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Ava Morris

Email Address: avamolovai@gmail.com Phone: 9086986170

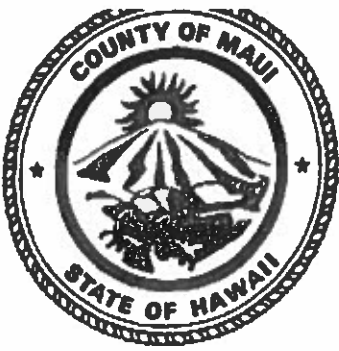
Mailing Address: PO BOX 129 HOOKEHUA HI 96729 City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO HEAD START

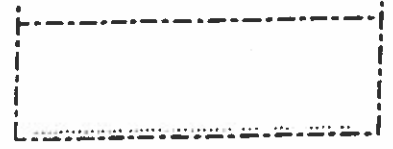
Request/Issue: I AM WRITING TO MAKE MY APPRECIATION FOR MEO HEADSTART  
and to express how meaningful it has been for my family. MEO has  
provided my child with access to free preschool, which has been  
incredibly valuable in supporting his early learning and development.  
the program has also supported us with essential supplies. We  
have received items such as books, color pencils, and other  
art materials. I am also deeply grateful for additional  
support provided to my family, including diapers for my  
infant. this kind of assistance goes beyond education  
and truly shows the programs commitment to  
supporting families as a whole. Overall MEO has made  
a positive and lasting impact on our lives, and I sincerely appreciate  
the opportunity.      Mehalo, Ava Morris

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: HUMAN CONCERNS



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

Name: Shanda Kaholoaa

Email Address: ShandalynKkaholoaa12@gmail.com Phone: 808-658-9233

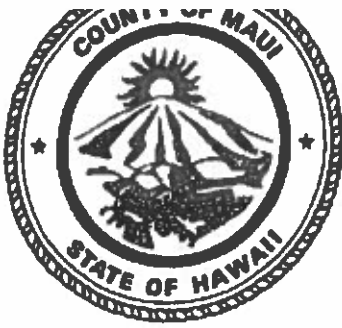
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 194 City/Zip: Hobokenua HI 96729

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO HEAD START

Request/Issue: MEO has been very resourceful and helpful to my children and I for multiple reasons. The First for being a free pre-school my children can attend with exceptional teaching and education. Second, for offering many free things for my children such as learning supplies for my children and also free food, snacks for my children at home. MEO has been very helpful for my family and I still plan on enrolling my next two children into MEO in these next two-three years.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: HUMAN CONCERNS



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request



PLEASE PRINT

Name:

Jennine Rojas

Email Address:

jennine.rojas93@gmail.com

Phone:

8082134055

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 11035

City/Zip:

KKai 96748

I Represent:

Myself

Organization

MEO HEAD START

Request/Issue:

I'm requesting funding for a full day of school because  
him being in school makes it a lot easier for me considering  
I work full time and have four kids. With the prices of  
living in Hawaii, its really hard to pay for child care  
also. And if its only half-day it'd make it harder to  
work.

Funding Request (if known): \$

Responsible County Department:

HUMAN CONCERNS

Aloha,

My name is Vanalouise Naehu, and I am writing in support of continued funding for MEO Head Start programs, especially the extended hours program, in the Maui County Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

I currently serve as a Parent Council President and am also a member of the community. My child is in his second year with Head Start, and our experience has been nothing but positive. As a single parent who is attending school full-time while also working full-time, this program has been a major support system for my family.

Head Start has given me peace of mind knowing that my child is in a safe, nurturing, and educational environment. The staff truly care about the keiki and their development. My child loves going to school, loves the people around him, and is excited to learn every day. Even during times when he has missed school, the support and care from the program have continued, which shows the level of commitment they have to each child and family.

The resources and services provided go beyond just education. They support the whole family, and for parents like me, that makes a real difference. It allows us to continue working, going to school, and building a better future while knowing our children are being well taken care of.

I respectfully ask that Maui County continue to support and fund MEO Head Start programs, including extended hours, so that families like mine can continue to benefit from these essential services.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Vanalouise Naehu

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vanalouise Naehu', written in a cursive style.



Aloha,

April 13,2026

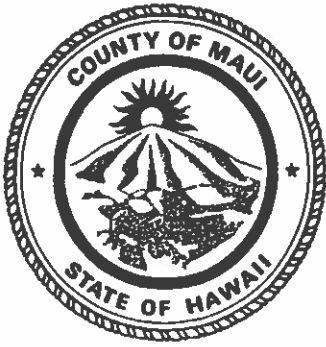
My name is Tessi Hoopii. My daughter attends MEO Headstart in Kahului and prior to that my son attended MEO Headstart in kihei almost 10yrs ago. I am incredibly grateful to have been provided these services from MEO Headstart as I am a single mother of 2. While my daughter is in school, I have the ability to work and have a steady income.

As a single mother it relieves a big burden and stress of not having an income due to not having stable schooling for my daughter.

The activities and knowledge that has been provided from Headstart has truly made my daughter thrive in her academics such as writing, counting, as well as reading. The staff at her location is amazing. I think it's especially important to have this program available to parent who need aid with Headstart education and have the means to provide an income for there family.

Mahalo,

Tessi Hoopii



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request



PLEASE PRINT

Name:

Liana Kanno

Email Address:

Lkanno055@gmail.com

Phone:

4158163074

Mailing Address:

P.O. BOX 3008

City/Zip:

Kahului, HI, 96733

I Represent:

Myself

Organization

MEO Head Start

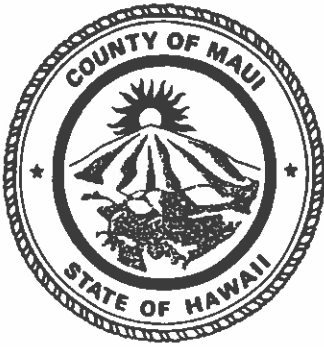
Request/Issue:

MEO Headstart has been a huge blessing in our lives. 3 of my children had the privilege of being able to attend Headstart. Their program has helped my children get ahead of all their milestones. My children are ahead when it comes to development all because of being in headstart from young ages. As a mother who has been going to school full time for the past 6 years, the program has helped me thrive in school and also contributed to my success in getting my college degrees. If I was not for headstart, my children would of never had the chance to go to preschool and I would of not been able to graduate from college with my associate and bachelors degree.

Funding Request (if known): \$

Responsible County Department:

Human Concerns



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

Form No. \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Jada McGuire

Email Address: jada.mcguire11@gmail.com Phone: 808-385-6812

Mailing Address: 3525 Burns Pl. City/Zip: Makawao, 96768

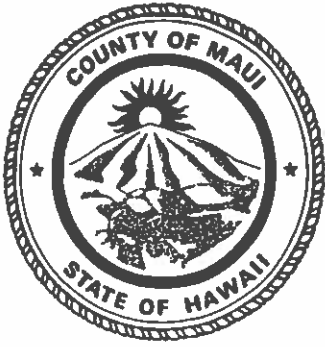
I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: I'd like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the county of Maui for funding MEO Headstart. Your investment has made a meaningful difference in the lives of many families like mine and I am truly grateful for the continued support in this program my child has been able to access essential services that she would not have. These services provided guidance and opportunities for growth, helping my child make important progress in development mentally & emotionally.

I respectfully ask that you continue funding this program in fiscal year 2027 so that families like mine can keep receiving the support we need. Your continued investment ensures that children have the resources they need to thrive and reach their full potential.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

Form No. 10

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Sunnie Zamora

Email Address: Sunnie.Zamora@gmail.com Phone: 8086332787

Mailing Address: 12 old place waikapu, HI City/Zip: waikapu 96713

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: I think meo should be kept open because  
it has really helped my daughter get early exposure to school  
that my son didnt get that I didnt have access to &  
was unaware of. I use to go to meo head start  
as well as my siblings and have good memories.  
I hope that more kids we continue to keep having  
the same opportunities to have free schooling as well  
as jobs for our teachers to be there for our up  
coming littles they matter in their up bringing &  
community driven back ground it being meo ran program  
makes it very awesome. Please keep program  
open ♡

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns

Budget Meeting Letter

Thursday, April 16, 2026

They say "Money is the root of all evil", until they have none. They say "Time will heal all things", until the day they leave this earth. Today's society teaches us that if you don't stay in school, graduate with a degree, you will not be successful in life. Well, today I'm here to tell you that is true, to a certain extent. I'm not here to beg you to continue to fund the MEO headstart programs, instead, I'm here to tell you my story & how the budget that greatly helps the MEO headstart families, affected me & my ohana.

It all started about 13 years ago; I recently broke up with my ex & wanted to make a difference in my life. I just started a new job at Hawaiian Airlines, as a ramp agent, & wasn't sure about the choices I was about to make. All I knew is that I wanted better. A better life, a better future, & a better today. With that in mind, I started surrounding myself with a circle of people that would lift me rather than break me, praise me rather than judge me. It was then, I found my future wife.

A family of 7, mom, dad, brother (& his 3 adult kids). Without making this story longer than it has to, my brother-in-law's oldest child has a total of 5 children, which my wife & I are guardians to the 3 oldest. Although the choices their birth mother made wasn't the greatest, it was with open arms that my wife & I decided to raise Keihdyn, Kheri-lyn, & Khalia, as our own. We knew it wasn't going to be easy, we knew we would struggle financially with just 1 income, but with the grace of God & a lot of patience, we are standing here today as a family grateful & appreciative of all the help we can get.

Money IS “the root of all evil”, but spending it wisely & buying the necessary food to keep our family fed, or even purchasing the right size clothes may seem easy to do, but not without a little work. It is important to make sure that we do our research to find the right pre-school program that best fits our budget or the best headstart program that will keep our young ones safe, eager to learn more, and willing to make new friends. So, writing this letter, attending important class meeting, or even making sure our children attend school as healthy as possible, is what we choose to do every day because we love them. I’m not saying our children are the greatest, well-behaved, loving human beings in the world, but in our eyes, they are exactly that.

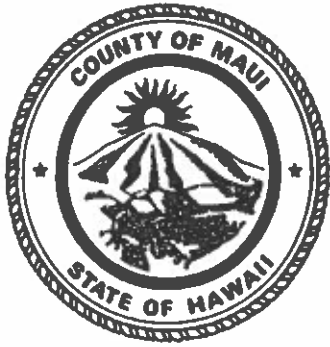
MEO headstart (Kahului) has open up a whole new world of schooling & the idea of what we thought pre-school would be for us. Other than attending a private school & having to pay out of pocket a ton of money, this headstart program has given us some financial freedom & not have to think whether we should keep our children out of school because we cannot afford it. Our children are not just getting free breakfast, lunch, & snack every day, but they get a free chance to make memories. Time spent at the playground with friends, learning to spell their names at the age of 5, & bringing home the very interesting stories of what their friends discussed today is something that money cannot buy.

In closing, the financial help that we receive is not only helpful, but appreciated. We have been able to find help, through MEO headstart, that opens our eyes to a world that is willing to help & not hurt. Giving us the freedom to not have to worry about our child’s first year of schooling is an experience all parents should be involved in. Although each family go through different experiences in life, we believe that if the funding to continue the MEO headstart

comes to a halt, our future generation may struggle with the concept of life & how they should live it.

Mahalo for listening to my story & letting me express my feelings of the funding that supports my child's future.

Sanoe M. Kekahuna



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



PLEASE PRINT

Name: Kristina Cammille Portugal

Email Address: babyface\_cammille@yahoo.com Phone: (808) 268-1015

Mailing Address: 8085 Laalo Pl, Lahaina, HI, 96761 City/Zip: Lahaina, 96761

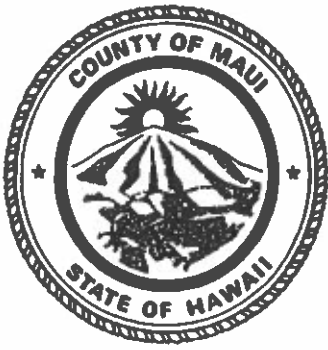
I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for  
having my son Kyler Chase be part of MEO headstart. ~~It~~  
Your generosity not only eases our financial burden but also  
opens the door for my child to learn, grow and thrive  
in a nurturing environment. In preparation for the school  
year, I would like to respectfully request consideration  
for continuous budget assistance. It helps a lot of  
families in so many ways. Thank you once again for  
your kindness & support.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



PLEASE PRINT

Name: MAY LENH CANETE

Email Address: CANETEMAYLENH@YAHOO.COM Phone: (808) 419-0811

Mailing Address: 148 IPUKULA WAY City/Zip: LAHAINA HI. 96761

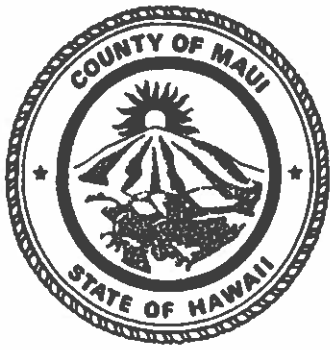
I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: I want to express my sincerest appreciation to the County of Maui for funding MEO Headstart. It has been a huge help to families like ours to be able to bring our keikis to preschool, especially for those who cannot afford it. My child Zach Spade has been attending MEO Headstart for two (2) years now. Our lives have become easier since then. Not only do we have a place we can trust to care for our children while we work, but they also learn so much. It is a big help in shaping our children's characters and minds before they enter elementary school.

I am humbly requesting that the County of Maui keep funding this organization in hopes of continuing full-day / full-year services for our enrolled Head Start families.

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

**Name:** Beverlee Wilson

**Email Address:** justinani96761@yahoo.com **Phone:** 808.868.6906

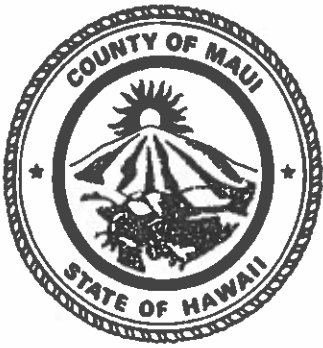
**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 12224 Lahaina Hi **City/Zip:** Lahaina 96761

**I Represent:**  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

**Request/Issue:** We love meo headstart the teachers are  
very attentive to our son Jerome. They are the  
best place to send your kids. He is learning  
everything for education and life. He has learned  
amazing social skills and so much more.

**Funding Request (if known):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsible County Department:** Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

Name: Amber-Marie Panis

Email Address: ambermariepanis4@gmail.com Phone: 808-793-9193

Mailing Address: 139 Kukuia St. unit 203 City/Zip: Lahaina 96761

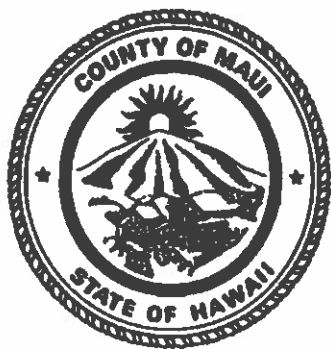
I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: Aloha my name is Amber and my child Bella-Kae goes to MEO head Start in Lahaina. I am so grateful that there is a program that helps parents and children in learning. We need help with funding so other parents and children will be able to have the same opportunity like my child has. Bella loves to learn and this program is a great place. The teachers are loving and they care so much about the children.

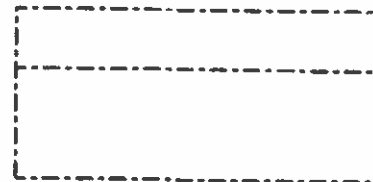
Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PS. please help fund MEO head Start program

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns



**COUNTY OF MAUI**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Fiscal Year 2027**  
**Community Budget Request**



**PLEASE PRINT**

**Name:**

Liana Freitas

**Email Address:**

freitaslianaK@icloud.com

**Phone:**

(808) 298-4424

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 396 Wailuku, HI

**City/Zip:**

Lahaina 96761

96793

**I Represent:**

Myself

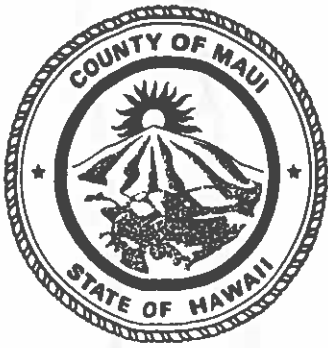
Organization MEO Head Start

**Request/Issue:**

Aloha & Mahalo for taking the time to read this testimony. I'd like to give the County of Maui a huge shoutout/appreciation thank you for continuing to fund MEO Head Start, because of this continued funding I as a parent am able to have an extra 3 hours caregiving for my father whether it's being able to take that last 2:15 apart or being stuck in traffic coming back from town having that extra time till 3:30pm really helps me. I hope to see the funding continue in the up coming school year as because I believe MEO Head Start is an amazing program for children & ohana's.

**Funding Request (if known):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsible County Department:** Human Concerns



COUNTY OF MAUI  
Office of the Mayor  
Fiscal Year 2027  
Community Budget Request

NO.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: Reyshell Magsayo Ricardo

Email Address: yakira0515@yahoo.com

Phone: (808) 269-0613

Mailing Address: 305A Makua St. Wailuku

City/Zip: Wailuku, HI, 96793

I Represent:  Myself  
 Organization MEO Head Start

Request/Issue: Aloha,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the County of Maui for funding the MEO Head Start program. Thanks to this support, my child has access to a stable and enriching preschool environment. The teachers and staff have been so supportive and understanding, making me feel at ease as I continue to work and provide for my family. We feel so blessed that they continue to support funding for MEO Head Start program, especially as we look ahead to the fiscal year 2027. This has been truly life-changing, and we are deeply appreciative. Thank you!

Funding Request (if known): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Responsible County Department: Human Concerns