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### **Executive Summary**

Roots Reborn is a 501(c)3 non-profit multicultural immigrant justice and disaster response organization dedicated to supporting migrant and immigrant communities on Maui. Founded in the immediate aftermath of the Maui Wildfires, we serve a critical demographic: Maui's foreign-born population. More specifically, we serve those with mixed status households or who lack status. Our bilingual, bicultural team brings deep community ties and unparalleled cultural competence to this essential mission.

### **Core Achievements**

*Our Financial Future - Financial Education and Aid Program for Migrant and Immigrant Survivors. UHERO Research*  
Our clients lost **over \$2.3 million** in cash that literally burned in the fire, savings they kept at home, and not in a bank. So we have launched this program to address the systemic and cultural barriers to banking and financial literacy. The program doubles as a robust research project in partnership with the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, led by Dr. Ruben Juarez.

- **Financial Inclusion:** In partnership with Valley Isle Community Federal Credit Union (VICFCU), "Our Financial Future" provides access to banking services for the unbanked, empowering individuals to manage their finances with greater security and stability.
- **Financial Education:** Roots Reborn, with support from VICFCU, will run workshops to equip participants with essential financial literacy skills to navigate their recovery and build a stronger financial foundation for the future.
- **Direct Financial Assistance:** Recognizing the urgent needs of those ineligible for FEMA assistance or insurance payouts, the program provides \$5,000 in direct financial aid to eligible survivors. This crucial support, more than twice the monthly household income for many of these families, offers a lifeline to those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.
- **Comprehensive Research Program:** In partnership with UHERO, this program doubles as a research project to quantify and analyze the impact of direct aid on our undocumented survivors' mental and emotional wellbeing, a first of its kind in the nation. Furthermore, it aims to quantify the immigrant experience, an unprecedented study in the state of Hawai'i.

### *Roots Reborn Immigration Legal Aid Program*

Established a dedicated immigration law division, the first ever Maui-based non-profit immigration legal aid program offering:

- **Pro Bono Legal Services:** complete immigration support to help navigate the complexities of immigration law, including: Removal Defense, Affirmative Asylum, Document Replacement, VAWA, U-Visas, DACA Renewals, Consular Processing with Waiver, Naturalization and Advance Parole.
- **Department of Justice Recognition in Progress:** our organization is pursuing Department of Justice (DOJ) accreditation to expand our capacity to directly handle immigration cases while creating professional pathways for young community leaders.
- **Know Your Rights Constitutional Training:** Empowers immigrants, legal professionals, and community leaders statewide by educating them on constitutional rights and legal protections, focused on safeguarding immigrant communities. Using a "Train-the-Trainer" model, it equips attorneys and trusted community members to share this knowledge within their networks.
- **El Pueblo en Accion Maui (The People in Action Maui):** coalition of grassroots organizations with a rapid-response model. Community members can report suspected ICE activity, which is vetted and disseminated into our community to promote safety and calm.
- **Family & Individual Preparedness Workshops:** Helps families and individuals create powers of attorney, ensuring children and assets are protected and managed by a designated agent with a legally valid document. Review of important documents, phone numbers and strategic planning should the unexpected happen.



- **Train the Trainer:** We provide trainings to organizations and advocates, who in turn train members of the community. These sessions have covered topics such as *Know Your Rights, Family Planning: Power of Attorney* and how to establish Rapid Response Networks and Tip Lines to report ICE activity.

#### Hyperlocal Policy Work

Hyperlocal policy changes have been possible due to our strong, healthy relationships within the community and between local organizations and leaders.

- Wrote U-Visa policy that Maui Police Department adopted.
- Consulted on state housing program that has housed 50+ households with no status.
- Continue to consult on large scale multi-million dollar housing projects to ensure equitable access.
- Coalition building to monitor the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant funds to ensure it reaches migrant and immigrant communities.
- Working with Prosecuting Attorney's Office and Maui Police Department on work exploitation and paths to relief.

#### Community Care Navigator Program

Our Community Care Navigators represents a uniquely transformative approach to survivor support, built on the understanding that true community healing comes from within.

- Mentors and trains young bilingual/bicultural women from immigrant communities, including Latino and COFA groups.
- Combines professional development with cultural wisdom.
- Centered on reciprocal trust between survivor and Navigator.
- Navigating access and eligibility to benefits and aid to mostly survivors but also includes non-directly impacted community members.
- Troubleshooting complex application and aid processes and systems, and advocating for the needs of survivors.
- Integral to the synergy between the legal aid program and wrap around services.

#### Kaiser Health Access Program (HHAP)

HHAP is a revolutionary free health insurance program providing comprehensive coverage to community members who would otherwise be unable to access or afford healthcare.

- Successfully enrolled 120 people in year one and almost 400 in year two, many accessing healthcare for the first time in their lives.
- Selected as primary community partner for year two of the expanded program, now serving 400 individuals who cannot afford or qualify for any other type of health insurance.
- Developing comprehensive healthcare education initiatives with special emphasis on mental health access.
- Leveraging enrollment and re-enrollment interactions to provide basic insurance education, establish care with PCPs, and facilitate mental health appointments.

#### University of Hawai'i - Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES)

This is a critical health research initiative investigating the environmental and health impacts of the Maui wildfires on affected communities.

- **Active Advisory Committee Member** shaping study design and implementation, optimizing participant intake processes to ensure cultural competency and accessibility.
- **Primary Community Liaison** successfully recruiting participants from traditionally hard-to-reach immigrant populations.
- **Coalition Builder** creating pathways for other immigrant-serving organizations to participate, expanding the study's reach.
- **Funding Advocate** securing resources to enable participation of children (keiki) and elderly (kupuna), ensuring comprehensive community representation.

Roots Reborn has established a unique high level of trust within the communities we serve. We are proud to be recognized in the broader community as an entity that can speak to the unique challenges and needs of immigrants and migrants. We continue to use this acknowledgment as a platform for raising the issues facing our community and advocating for the right resources to be directed toward them in the most efficient manner possible. Above all, our work remains people-centric—guided by robust data collection and analysis—to ensure our programs are responsive, effective, and truly aligned with the needs of those we serve.

