

**PARTICIPANT & PROGRAM INFORMATION
FALL 2016**

“Bridge to Hope was a life saver and I am forever grateful for the academic and personal support....”

INTRODUCTION:

Bridge to Hope (BTH) is a nationally recognized partnership between the University of Hawai'i (UH) and the Hawai'i State Department of Human Services' "First-To-Work" (FTW) program, providing a college education option for welfare participants as a means of securing economic self-sufficiency.

With their children as their motivation, Bridge to Hope alumni realize positive economic outcomes as well as the intangibles of increased opportunities (economic and personal), security, and self-confidence. With college degrees in hand, BTH alumni earn enough to “leave poverty, not just welfare,” and secure better lives for themselves and their children.

BTH students combine full-time coursework (min. 12 credits) and employment (20 hours/week) to fulfill FTW activity requirements. Cornerstones of the UH Bridge to Hope program are on-campus student employment to meet FTW welfare work requirements coupled with Student Support Services to assist students in achieving their educational goals.

Initiated in Fall 2000 as a “pilot project,” Bridge to Hope (BTH) has worked with 783 students between 9/2000 and 9/2016. Follow up with Bridge to Hope participants after leaving UH is challenging but provides important data (quantitative & qualitative) documenting the multi-faceted impact of a college education for low-income women and their families.

College access for welfare participants with UH Bridge to Hope benefits and strengthens these Hawai'i families and, by extension, strengthens our communities.

Photo: BTH Alumni join current KCC participants and BTH Campus Contact, Cathy Wehrman.



“To make a difference in my life, for my children, and my community”

This is the 3rd Overview & Survey of BTH participants. For the first time, BTH alumni (vs. currently enrolled participants) were a majority (63%) of survey respondents - suggesting a high engagement with the program, even for the 16% of respondents who had not completed their degrees. This Overview also includes, for the first time, data from the UH Institutional Research & Analysis Office (IRAO) and alumni earnings data and analysis from the Hawai'i Data Exchange Project (DXP).

BRIDGE TO HOPE STUDENTS:

“I will be able to provide a better future for my daughter and myself. Also, I’ll gain independence.”



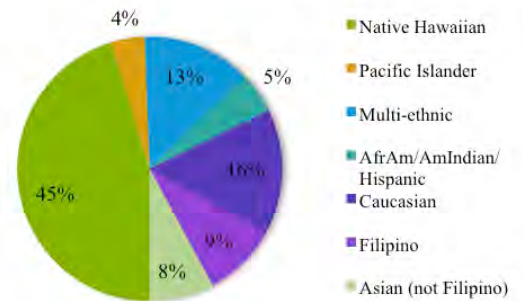
Each BTH student is an individual with a life story, with hopes and dreams for themselves and their families. They overwhelmingly (77%) report they were motivated to enroll in college “to set an example for my child(ren)” along with a high desire (73%) “to improve my earnings potential.”

BTH parents are diverse in all respects, but their median age is 30 and **they are overwhelmingly single mothers (92%) with 1 or 2 children. Fully 50% of BTH students attend college full time while raising a child under the age of two** (76% have a child under 6) with the accompanying childcare and health challenges. They are running and juggling family, school & welfare requirements (including work). They require and build strong support systems, including extended family and the Bridge to Hope program.

BTH participants reflect Hawai‘i’s ethnic diversity as well as educational disparities. Most BTH students are single mothers (92%) although 2-parent families and single fathers also participate.

While students may participate for their full five years of First-to-Work eligibility, on average BTH participants spent 1.8 years utilizing the UH BTH program to achieve their academic degree.

Ethnicity: BTH Participants



“At the ages of 6 and 9, I am proud that [my children] will see college as not only something that is attainable, but also expected.”

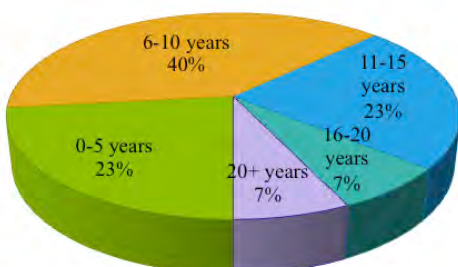
LIFTING GENERATIONS TOGETHER: BTH 2-Generation Impact

BTH provides women an opportunity to begin or complete a much-needed college degree. Seventy-nine percent (79%) are 1st-generation college attendees and **their experiences and education increases confidence, capacity and opportunities for themselves and their children.**

They are highly motivated to succeed. Fifty-six percent (56%) of BTH survey respondents had previously “stopped out” of college and were completing a degree with FTW and BTH.



Gap in Education



Focusing on education and modeling the hard work and sacrifices required, **BTH students are strong role models for their children who now say, “When I go to college. . .” not “if.”**



BTH EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:

UH Community Colleges Open Doors:

Bridge to Hope students overwhelmingly (73%) initiate their educational path at the community colleges. For many, their educational journeys continue as they transfer and complete Bachelor’s degrees, and even Professional degrees.

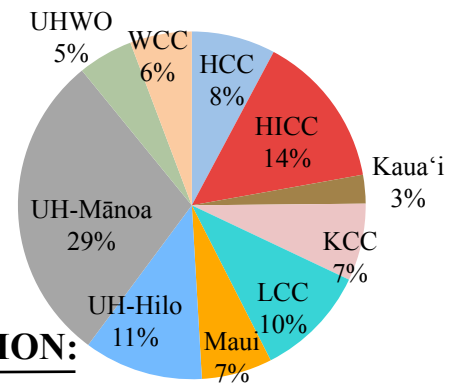
All 783 individual BTH participants (with 128 still enrolled in Fall 2016) earned a total of 522 degrees. This includes 78 students who earned an AA at the community college, transferred, and also earned a BA/BS degree.*

“An education is something [no one] can ever take away from you or diminish its value.”



Initial BTH Campus	Students
Honolulu CC	80
Hawai‘i CC	118
Kaua‘i CC	30
Kapi‘olani CC	93
Leeward CC	100
Maui CC	96
UH-Hilo	71
UH-Mānoa	122
UH-West O‘ahu	17
Windward CC	56
Total	783
Entry @ UH-CC (2 yr.)	573
Entry @ UH-BA (4 yr.)	210

BTH Degrees Earned By Campus



BTH SUPPORTS BA TRANSFER & DEGREE COMPLETION:

BTH offers all students a strong foundation for academic success, AA completion, support for CC transfer students, and an environment modeling BA degree completion.

BTH students far exceed UH degree completion rates with 85% of students starting at the 4-Yr campuses completing their BA/BS degree and 52% who start at the CCs achieving their AA/AS degree.

Women returning to complete BAs as well as BTH community college transfer students have increased over the years.

“BTH Degrees Earned by Campus” illustrates the successful degree completion as well as transfer of CC students to 4-Yr colleges, with UH Mānoa particularly successful in facilitating BA/BS and Professional degree completion.

Degree	Total
AA/AS	273
BA/BS	135+78=213*
MA/Prof.	66
Total Degrees	552
Still Enrolled	128
Total BTH Participants	783

**A College Degree For Lifelong Economic Self-Sufficiency:
BTH Earnings By Occupation & Education:**

*“I am a RN
now and the
main provider
for my
family.”*

Tracking the earnings of people after they “leave” welfare is not a priority for federal or state agencies, and such data is sparse, inconsistent, and out-of-date. For Bridge to Hope participants, increased earnings (as well as personal growth) undergird their sacrifices and motivation to enroll and persist in higher education.

With educational opportunities and skills, **Bridge to Hope alumni expect to earn more than other welfare “leavers” – and they do.** While part-time employment and occupational variations impact *median* wages, **data confirms that many BTH graduates are gaining better financial security for their family.**

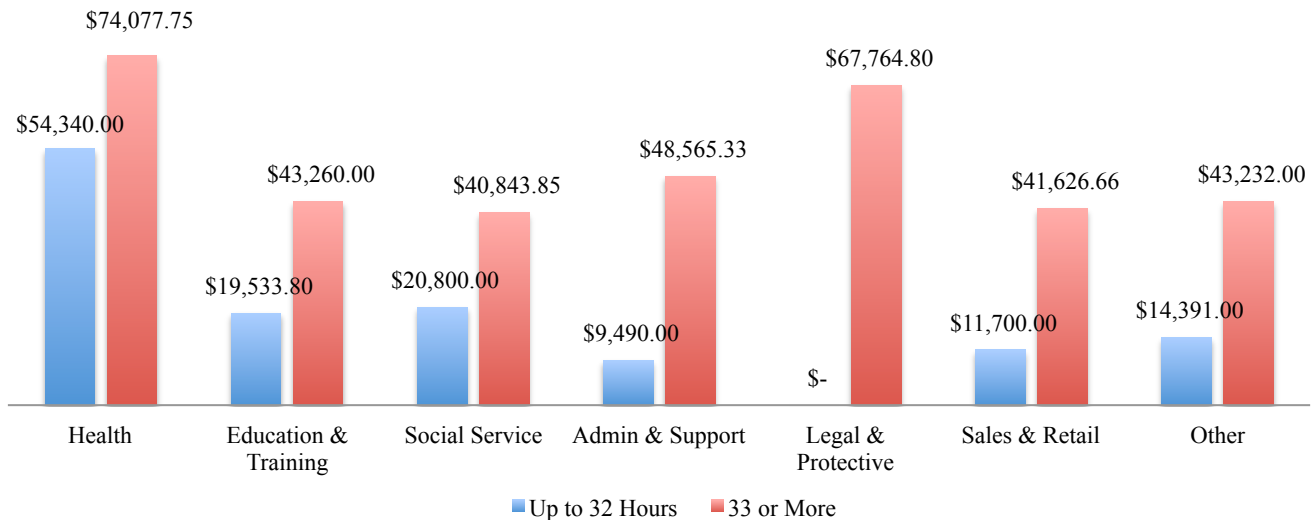
These findings substantiate our expectation that a college degree positively impacts women’s earnings, and can offer welfare “leavers” a path out of poverty. This is in stark contrast to the general experience nationwide of families leaving “welfare” to work low-wage jobs and remain in poverty.

This report uses earnings info from two different sources – the Fall 2016 BTH Participant Survey (self-reported) and data from 2010-2015 using a Hawai’i Dept. of Labor earnings proxy (unemployment insurance) analyzed by the Hawai’i Data Exchange Partnership (labeled: DLIR/DXP). These two sources do not measure earnings the same way, each with different limitations. However, together they offer the most complete picture available for BTH alumni earnings.



Median Annual Salary by Occupation (2016)

Source: BTH Survey Self-Reported



Full-time employed BTH alumni report median annual salaries exceeding \$40,000.

Not surprising, health careers (e.g. LPN, Technicians & Nurses) offer the highest salaries. Education and Social Service reflect job opportunities and the popularity of teaching and social work among BTH participants. The “Legal” occupation includes BTH graduates who continued their investment in education, eventually earning JD degrees.



A College Degree For Lifelong Economic Self-Sufficiency: BTH Earnings 1-5 Years After Graduation

Bridge to Hope alumni investment in education results in progressively higher wages. DLIR/DXP data indicates that degree earners across academic majors experienced a steady growth in earnings 1-5 years after last enrollment. This data also indicates strong correlations between major or occupation and earnings.

Earnings for those achieving Liberal Arts (AA) degrees remain low (median = \$24,575) although they are in a better position to meet job market expectations for college degrees and benefit from longer-term investments in higher education.

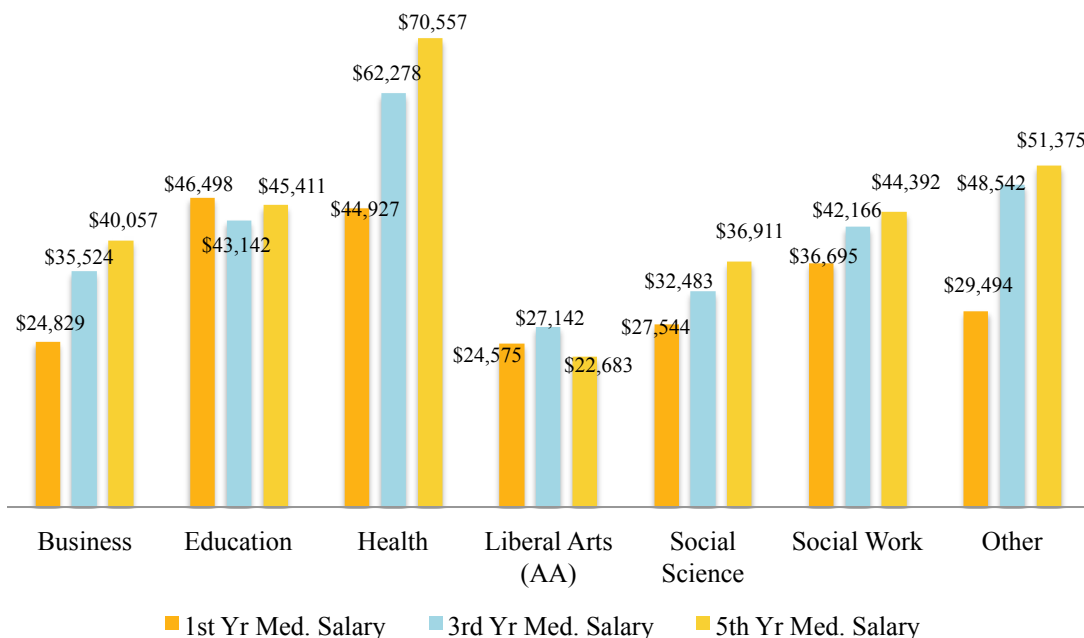
Conversely, a small sample of full-time employed BTH Survey respondents with a Liberal Arts AA degree report average earnings of \$39,600 (does not account for time since graduation). This highlights the need for additional longitudinal studies, varied data sets, and contextual analysis.

Note: DLIR/DXP “annual earnings” data includes part-time employees working all 4 quarters. It cannot differentiate between part-time and full-time employment. For comparison, 20% of BTH Survey respondents report working less than 32 hours per week.

“My education allowed me (a single parent with no child support) to earn enough money to raise and support my three boys.”

Median Earnings by Major - Working All 4 Qtrs

Source: DLIR/DXP



RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN GRADUATE EARNINGS:

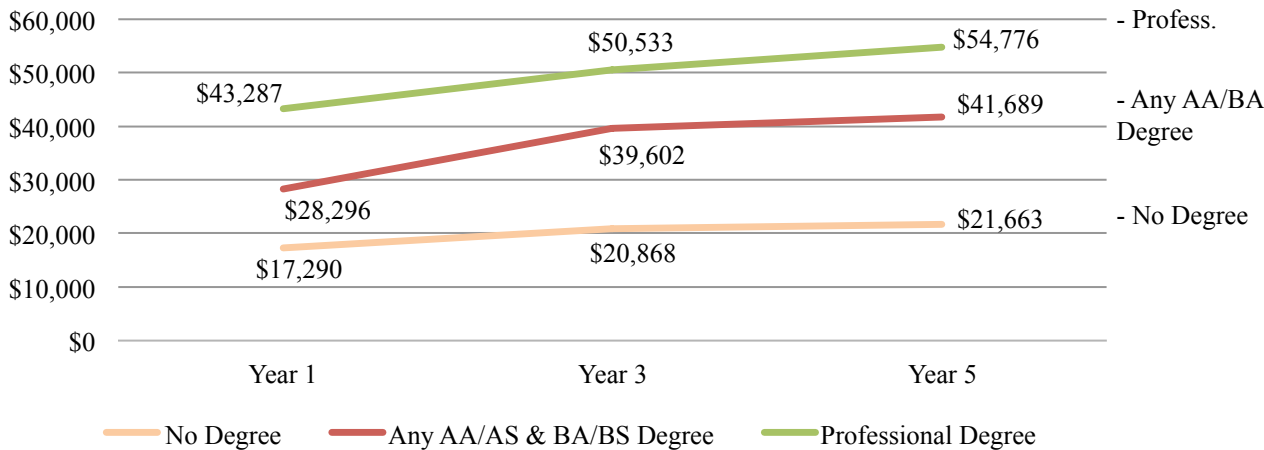
- Develop components that facilitate career exploration & classroom-to-career paths, with intent to provide info re: high-wage jobs and degree paths (e.g. STEAM).
- Develop avenues for paid internships in fields of study to facilitate transition from education to job-market.
- Explore additional ways to increase AA degree completion.

A College Degree For Lifelong Economic Self-Sufficiency: BTH Earnings 1-5 Yrs After Graduation

Bridge to Hope participants' expectations for increased earnings after degree completion are met with median earnings of \$41,689 five years after graduation (a benchmark for career stability). BTH graduates' earnings are comparable to other Univ. Hawai'i (CC & 4 Yr) graduates, with expected variations for degree, major, and field of employment – each impacting earnings potential. Similar to other college graduates, BTH alumni still struggle with Hawai'i's high cost of living, especially single parents. But earnings and job opportunities improve with degree completion.

Bridge to Hope participants' investment in education results in higher wages and better financial security, placing them in a stronger position to meet Hawai'i's high cost of living and realize the higher earnings that accrue to college graduates over time.

MEDIAN EARNINGS by Degree Achievement
Working All 4 Qtrs. Yr1-Yr5
Source: DLIR/DXP



“I was a high school drop out and I didn't want to be just a ‘statistic’ . . . I got my GED and enrolled at Leeward where I earned my AA in Liberal Arts.

I am currently working for the DOE.”

BTH Alumni Earnings (Survey – Fall 2016)

Average Wages/ Salary BTH Alumni Survey	Avg. Hourly (part-time)	Avg. Hourly (full-time)	Avg. Full-time Salary
Degree not completed	\$12.46	\$16.37	\$31,495
AA/AS (includes Health Careers)	N/A	\$27.07	\$56,110
BA/BS	\$17.87	\$23.36	\$45,657
Professional	\$16.77	\$24.96	\$49,700

Employment Benefits	% Receiving Benefits
Health Insurance	80%
Paid Vacation / Sick	75% / 72%
Retirement/Pension	70%

For Wage Comparison	Avg. Hourly (part-time)	Avg. Full-time Salary
Median Wage HI TANF/FTW Employed Avg. 28 hrs.	\$10.11	\$21,029 @ 40 hrs. \$14,270 @ 28 hrs.
Hawaii Minimum Wage	\$8.50	\$17,680
Federal Poverty Level – HI Family of 3	N/A	\$ 23,190
HI Self-Sufficiency Standard* Family of 2 (w/Preschooler) Note: 51% of these HI families earn below this threshold	N/A	\$56,157
Maryland Welfare Leavers 4 Yrs. Post-welfare (UI Earnings) **	N/A	~\$11,500

* “Self-Sufficiency Income Standard.” (2016) Hawai'i Dept. of Business & Economic Development. www.dbedt.hawaii.gov

** “Life After Welfare: 2016 Annual Update.” Univ. of Maryland School of Social Work. www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu



BTH PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:

The UH Bridge to Hope program has two key functions:

- 1) Provide on-campus employment for students to meet FTW work requirements in an environment supportive of academic success; and
 - 2) Provide referrals and assistance with academic support services on campus.
- Additionally, BTH Campus Contacts assist with understanding and fulfilling FTW requirements related to education activities.

Overall, 93% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with their experiences with the BTH program. Bridge to Hope met its primary objective, which is to assist students in getting what they need (from both UH and DHS) to be academically successful.

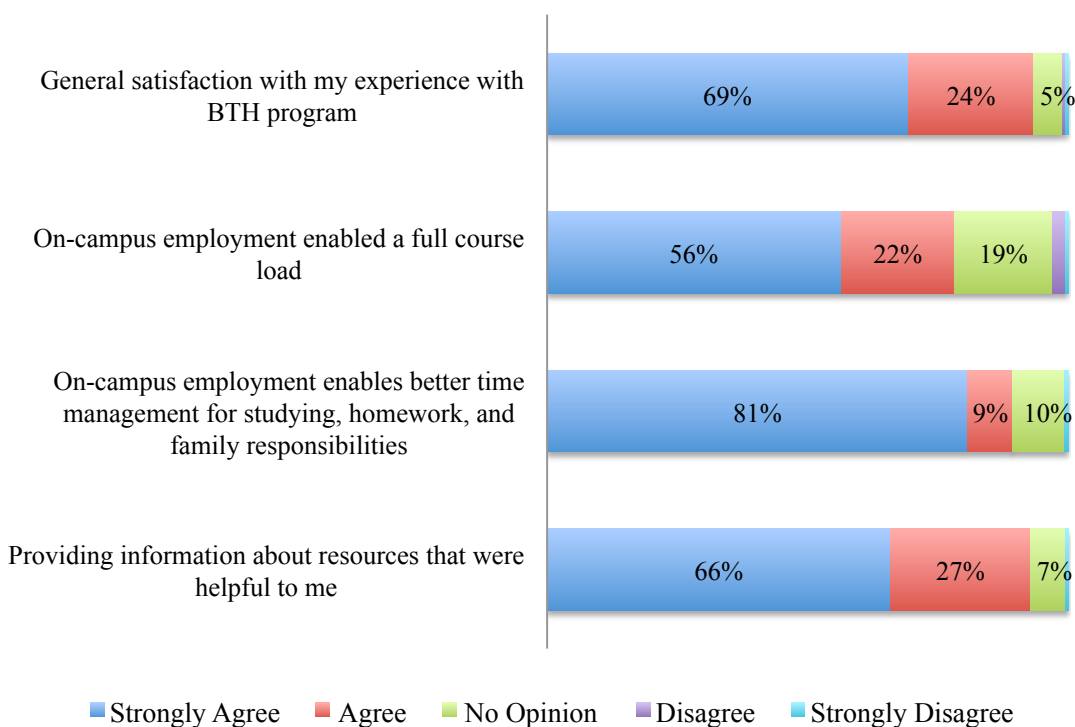
BTH Campus Contacts are engaged, approachable resources and 93% of BTH students indicated they received information and referrals that were helpful.

“BTH has been a resource place and a safe haven to just talk.”



“Bridge to Hope was a place of refuge for me and truly lived up to its name by offering this non-traditional student hope and treating me with dignity and respect having come back to school at age 40.”

Bridge to Hope Effectiveness



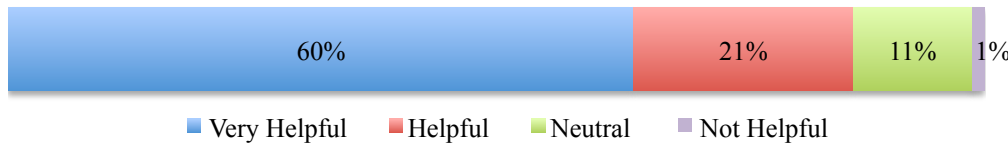
Bridge to Hope students are highly motivated but experience extreme financial and time pressures. BTH on-campus employment is intended to reduce the time-crunch of family, work, study, and commuting. Ninety-percent (90%) of respondents indicated that on-campus employment improved time-management for study and family responsibilities, and 78% considered on-campus employment a positive factor in maintaining their full-time course load.

WHAT BRIDGE TO HOPE DOES WELL:

Both DHS and UH present bureaucratic obstacles, particularly to 1st-generation college attendees. “BTH Campus Contacts” are an essential welcoming portal to campus offering referrals, advocacy and support for students’ academic and personal journeys. Their knowledge of FTW requirements is key, with 81% of survey respondents indicating that BTH staff was helpful with DHS/FTW and their UH campus.

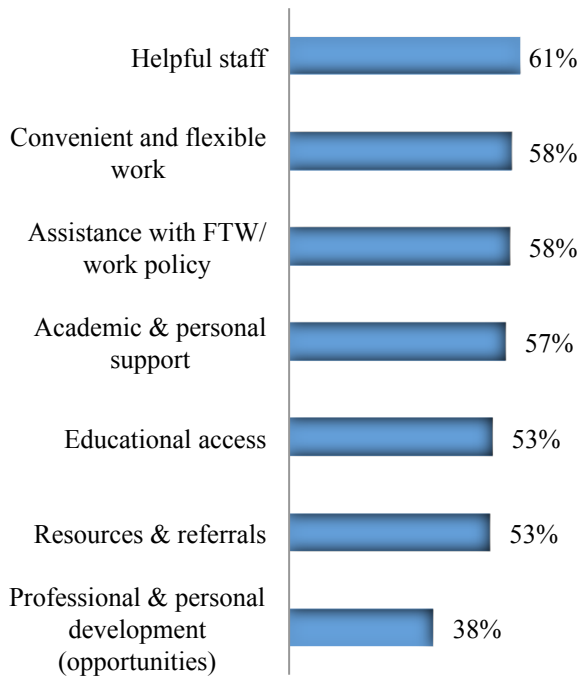
Convenient on-campus employment is only one element of Bridge to Hope. **BTH Campus Contacts’ assistance, advocacy and personal support are identified by BTH students as the “best parts of the BTH program.”**

How helpful was BTH with DHS/FTW?



“At the time they helped with everything. . . They have made this pursuit possible for me.”

What BTH Does Best



Mahalo Nui Loa to Previous BTH Campus Contacts 2000-2016:

Utilizing currently available student support services and UH staff, Bridge to Hope succeeds due to the dedication of volunteer “BTH Campus Contacts” who serve in this capacity in addition to their other UH duties.

UH Mānoa: Christine Quemuel

UHWO: Joyce Chinen (retired), Jeanne Iorio

Maui College: Winnie Chung (retired)

WCC: Sarah Hodell (retired), Kate Zane

Honolulu CC: Rona Wong, Maggie Templeton (retired)

Hawai‘i CC: Sheryl Lundberg Sprague, Melissa Ishibashi, Tiffani Amana, Chelsie Rapoza



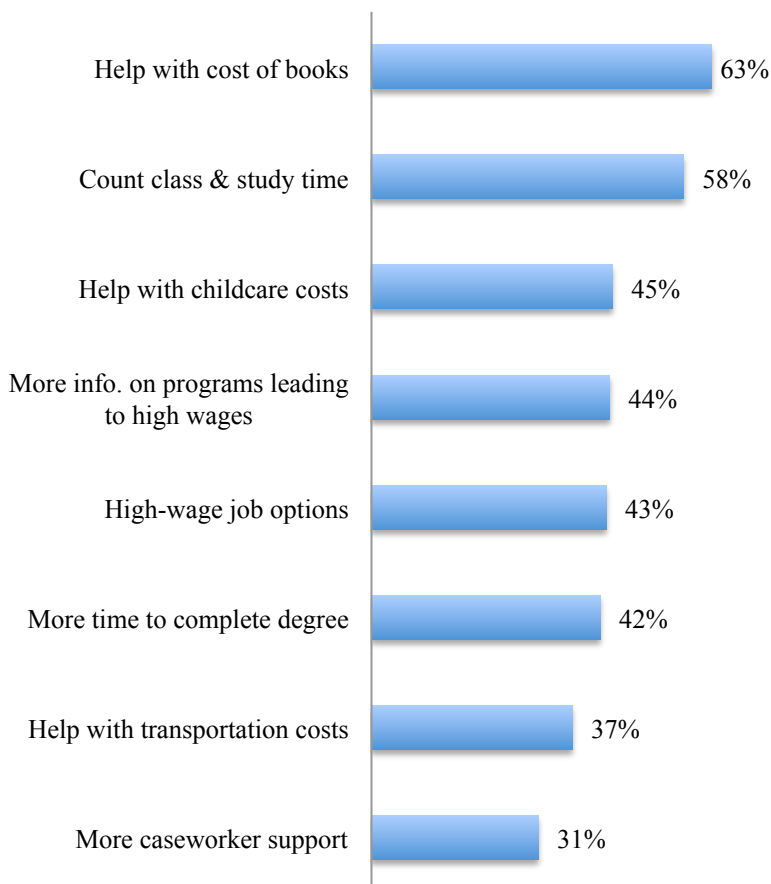
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS:

The BTH Survey offers current participants and alumni the opportunity to indicate changes for either UH or DHS/FTW to “help low-income *parents* access and complete higher education.” (Check all that apply – indicates % who selected item).

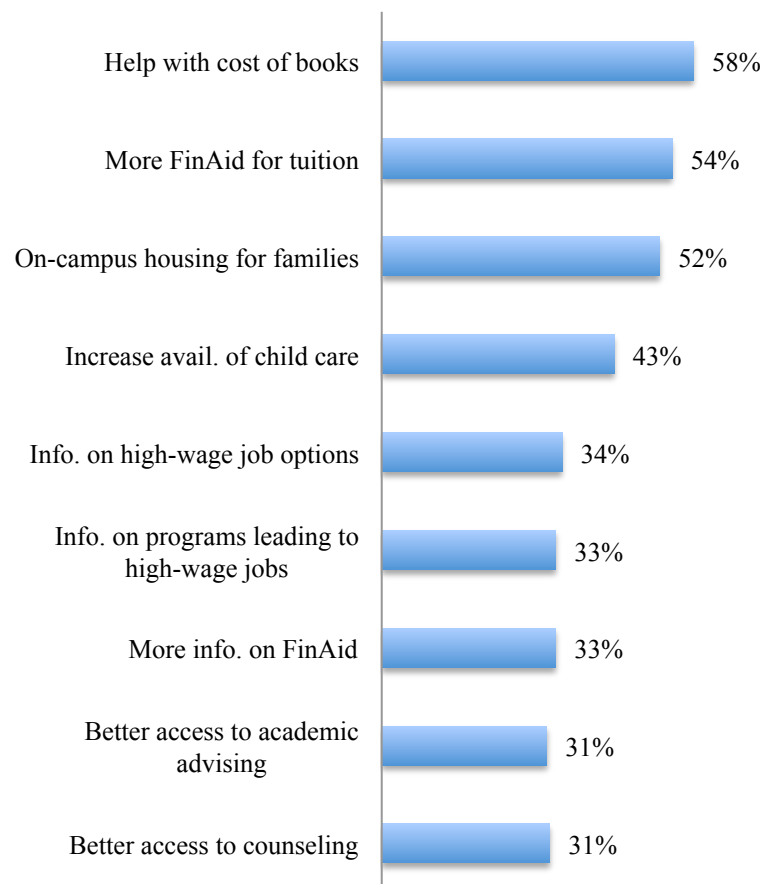
Some suggested changes include assistance currently offered, which may indicate a need for expanded eligibility or visibility. Additionally, the high cost of tuition and books are barriers to low-earning adults’ access to higher education, as well as the cost of and insufficient access to childcare.



Suggestions for DHS



Suggestions for UH



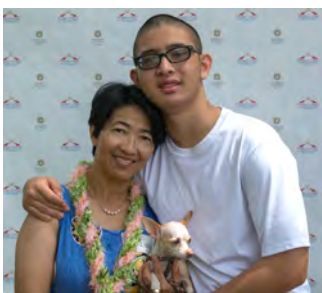
RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN BTH:

With FTW:

- Implement select part-time enrollment options for employment eligibility
- Acknowledge college success requires studying & re-instate options to count class & study time

With UH:

- Partner more intentionally with Native Hawaiian serving programs within UH and community
- Develop Career Exploration components
- Explore additional AA/AS degree completion supports specific to Adult Returning Students





AWARD WINNING & NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED:

Bridge to Hope is recognized as a successful and innovative program by national organizations advocating for women, low-income families and students.

- Model College Program, (2003). Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center, City University of New York (CUNY).
- Honorable Mention – Progress in Equity Award, (2006). American Association of University Women (AAUW).
- Outstanding Innovative Program, (2006). NASPA Western Region VI.
- Silver Award – Off-Campus, Commuter and Non-Traditional Programs, (2007). NASPA (National Student Affairs Professional Org).



THE DLIR / DXP EARNINGS DATA :

After many years seeking alumni earnings data, BTH partnered with the Hawaii Data Exchange Partnership (DXP) in Fall 2015 to query Hawai'i State Dept. of Labor (DLIR) unemployment insurance records (UI) as an earnings proxy. This method is increasingly used by researchers to track earnings growth over time. In 2015, data was available for years 2010-2015. With known limitations, this data in combination with BTH Alumni self-reports of wages & salaries offers the most complete view of BTH Alumni earnings. Mahalo to UH IRAO and DXP staff for their detailed assistance and initial analysis of this earnings data.

THE 2016 BTH SURVEY:

In Fall 2016, BTH contacted 578 (74%) of the 783 total individuals who had participated in the UH Bridge to Hope program from Fall 2000 - Sept. 2016. They were invited to complete an online survey about their experience with UH Bridge to Hope and their post-UH employment (when appropriate). In all, 171 individuals returned a completed survey offering an impressive 30% response rate. These 171 individuals reflect **22% of all BTH participants** over the years.

IN MEMORIAM:

While celebrating 15+ years of our successes, we wish to remember and honor both "friends" and students who have passed.

MaryBeth Aldosa	Sidney Kline	Sheryl Lundberg Sprague
Ah Quon McElrath	Nancy Narawa	Nicole Hookano-Elliott
Helen Hites	Jadelin Bennett	

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