

RESEARCH BRIEF:

Bias Against Micronesians in Hawai'i

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SUMMARY

Diverse peoples from the geographic region of Micronesia represent one of the newest and fastest growing groups of newcomers in Hawai'i, but many people from Micronesia face significant hardships when they migrate. A recent study conducted by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, in partnership with the We Are Oceania (a project of Partners In Development Foundation), examined the relationship between experiencing bias or discrimination and the impact of those experiences on an individuals' ability to acculturate and adapt to their new home in Hawai'i.

The study found that overall, 1 in 4 Micronesians in the sample of 517 Micronesians in Hawai'i reported that they had experienced some type of biased behavior toward them because they are Micronesian. These experiences ranged from being targeted for crimes because of their ethnicity, to experiences of discrimination in the workplace, medical or social services, and in public accommodations (such as housing, transportation, and shopping).

These findings suggest that bias and discrimination against people from the geographic region of Micronesia who live in Hawai'i is prevalent and should be of concern to the larger community. The results of this project should encourage the people of Hawai'i to reject all forms of bias whenever and wherever it occurs in the Aloha State in an effort to better support our diverse communities. In addition, these results highlight the strong need for additional resources to educate many of our community service providers, such as medical professionals, social service providers, law enforcement, and others. The study's results speak to the need for additional resources and education for the all communities, including Micronesian community members, to understand their civil rights in regard to healthcare access, employment, and housing.

1 in 4

respondents experienced discrimination at work because they are Micronesian

1 in 10

reported having been victims of discrimination in medical/social services because they are Micronesian

1 in 13

Have experienced discrimination in public accommodation because they are Micronesian

1 in 20

people were victims of a bias crime because they are Micronesian

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Respondents were asked a series of questions related to the ways that they were targeted for discrimination for being Micronesian in Hawai'i, presented in the table below. These varied experiences reflect how wide-ranging and frequent the experiences of bias are among Micronesians in Hawai'i overall. The survey asked respondents, "Because you are Micronesian, have you ever..."

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|---|-------|
| Occupational Discrimination ... | |
| ...been treated poorly, e.g., made fun of, gossiped about, etc., by coworkers or a boss in Hawai'i? | 24.1% |
| ...been mistreated at a job in Hawai'i, such as not being given a promotion? | 9.4% |
| ...been denied a job in Hawai'i? | 8.9% |
| ...been fired from a job in Hawai'i? | 2.4% |
| Medical/Social Service Discrimination | |
| ...been treated poorly or harassed in health care settings in Hawai'i? | 7.2% |
| ...been treated poorly or harassed in a mental health care setting in Hawai'i? | 4.8% |
| ...been denied hospitalization in Hawai'i? | 2.7% |
| ...been denied healthcare from a general provider in the last 12 months in Hawai'i? | 4.3% |
| ...been denied mental health treatment in Hawai'i? | 2.7% |
| ...been denied prescription drugs in Hawai'i? | 2.7% |
| ...been denied a treatment for chronic condition that requires many treatments, such as dialysis treatment, chemotherapy, surgeries while in Hawai'i? | 1.6% |
| ...been denied a medical device you need such as wheelchairs or prosthetics in Hawai'i? | 1.2% |
| Public Accommodation Discrimination | |
| ...been denied service such as at a restaurant or store in Hawai'i? | 5.0% |
| ...been refused a home in Hawai'i that you wanted to rent or buy? | 4.8% |
| ...been evicted or kicked out of your home in Hawai'i? | 2.7% |
| ...been kicked off public transportation (e.g., bus, taxi)? | 2.1% |

STUDY DETAILS

From 2017 through 2018, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work in collaboration with We Are Oceania, PIDF, collected responses from 517 people from the geographic region of Micronesia who were at least 18 years old and who had resided in Hawai'i for at least one continuous year. Participants were recruited using [Respondent Driven Sampling](#) which is a type of chain referral methodology that better approximates a random sample than other chain referral sampling strategies. Participants were interviewed one-one-one and face-to-face in Honolulu and Hawai'i Counties. Participants were compensated for their participation in the study. The sample included people primarily from Pohnpei (38%), Chuuk (34%), and the Marshallese Islands (24%). This project was supported by Award No. 2016-VF-GX-0002, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

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