



## **NAGDCA 2025 Leadership Recognition Award - Holistic Financial Wellness**

### **The State of Hawai'i Deferred Compensation Plan**

#### **2024 Hybrid Benefits Fairs**

The State of Hawai'i Deferred Compensation Plan (aka the Island Savings Plan or I\$P) is a State 457(b) Retirement Plan with \$3.2 billion in assets as of March 2025. About 52% of the Plan's 27,000+ participants are current employees actively contributing to their retirement savings while the remaining percentage are retired or terminated employees who are keeping their investments in their I\$P accounts. Employees employed by the State of Hawai'i and the counties of Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i that are eligible for the State's Employee Retirement System are encouraged to participate in the I\$P to save for their future retirement.

The Island Savings Plan has promoted the holistic wellbeing – physical and financial health – of the State's employees through comprehensive Employee Benefits Fairs. The logistics of planning such events can prove challenging when participants are located across the State's multiple counties and islands. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Plan held two in-person Benefits Fairs a year. One on the island of O'ahu that most State employees could attend and the other on a county neighbor island. The neighbor island Fair would be determined based on a rotation. The arrival of COVID-19 in 2020 ushered in an era of safe and practical, yet less personal, Virtual Benefits Fairs. As the Fair was held virtually, the Plan scaled back to hosting only one Fair a year for all employees. In 2023, the Island Savings Plan held its first Hybrid Employee Benefits Fair. This hybrid Fair allowed for the personal touch of an in-person Fair for employees on O'ahu and the accessibility of a virtual Fair for employees on a neighboring island. For 2024, the Plan's Board of Trustees decided to restart the pre-COVID cycle of two Benefits Fairs a year, however, with the upgrade of both Fairs being hybrid. Board staff worked with Empower toward perfecting the Hybrid Benefits Fair experience, hosting two Hybrid Fairs on Hawai'i island in July 2024 and one Hybrid Fair on O'ahu in November 2024.

The goals for the three Hybrid Benefits Fairs in 2024 were:

- To restart the pre-COVID cycle of two Fairs a year, one on O'ahu and the other on a county neighbor island.
- The Fairs to be hybrid to allow employees the freedom to attend in-person or virtually.
- Provide in-person attendees with a one-stop-shop event where they can visit booths and meet with representatives from the various State sponsored benefits like individual health plan carriers as well as the Plan's Investment Managers and local Retirement Plan Advisors.
- Host educational retirement workshops that were live streamed to allow virtual attendance.
- Post a Benefits Fair Lookback page after the completion of the Fair that housed the digital materials from all the representatives that attended the Fair, recorded webinars of the workshops presented at the Fairs, and links to additional information that employees could take their time viewing online and revisit as needed.

*"Being that our members are separated by an ocean, it is imperative that the Plan provide multiple options for participant education. Having in-person Fairs spread across multiple islands accompanied by virtual options, we can reach more of our participants and provide direct support and real-time responses to questions." Island Savings Plan - Board Vice Chairperson Reiko Matsuyama.*

Securing a venue for the event is the first step in the planning process for the Fairs. Work began early in the year to scope out venues on Hawai'i Island, 2 locations over 2 days required due to the size of the island, and one on O'ahu. A ballroom with ample space was needed to support booths for the multiple vendors, another to host the live workshops for attendees, and a smaller room to accommodate meetings with a Retirement Plan Advisor (RPA). Once the locations were reserved and dates were in the books, the work of coordinating with vendors and communicating with employees could begin.

### Getting the word out – benefits providers and vendor event support

In the Spring of 2024, representatives were contacted to verify participation in the events to be held on the Hawai'i Island in July. These representatives included I\$P Investment Fund Managers and State Benefit Providers - which included representatives from the State's Employer Union Trust Fund (EUTF), Dental, Vision, 529 Plan, Life Insurance, and Employees' Retirement System (ERS), the State's Pension Plan.

Representatives who confirmed attendance were asked to provide digital copies of any handouts they would be sharing in advance so the handouts could be shared online through the Benefits Fair Lookback page for those who could not attend in person.

Additional vendors were brought in to provide audio / visual services for the live-streamed workshops while the facilities where events were being held provided light snacks and beverages for the attendees and lunches for the representatives.

### Getting the word out – employees

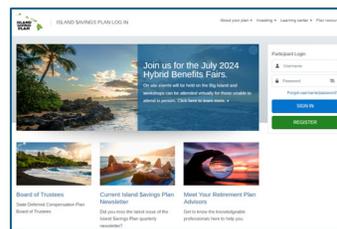
Announcements of the events were delivered via multiple channels. An article was placed in the Plan's Quarterly Newsletter, a web banner was placed on the Plan's custom website, customized flyers and posters were created for each county, and emails and postcards were delivered to participants. There were multiple versions of most of the campaign pieces, as different instructions were needed depending on which employer an employee worked for.

Details of the event such as dates, times, and locations were provided as well as information about the in-person workshops that were also live streamed (including links to register for the live stream workshops). Most employees were provided with some paid time away to attend the Fair and those details were included as well.

*Note: Many of the sample documents below can be viewed full screen by clicking on the document.*



**Quarterly Newsletter article**  
(delivered via email and made available on the Plan's custom website).



**Web Banner**



**Benefits Fair Poster and Flyer**



Benefits Fair Email



Benefits Fair Mailer



Workshop Flyer with Registration Links

The Big Day

The Island Savings Plan team arrived the evening before each event to set up, making sure each vendor's materials were at their table. On the morning of the events, the team arrived early to ensure the appropriate signage was in place to direct employees to the correct location for vendor booths and workshops.

As employees arrived, they were greeted at the sign-in table where they were given an Island Savings Plan tote bag and pen, the day's schedule of workshops, and a stamp-card to collect vendor stamps for which they could redeem a prize if they received stamps from all the vendors participating in the promotion. Employees filled out a registration card and these were used throughout the day for raffle drawings donated by the participating vendors. Light snacks and beverages were made available for attendees and between workshops the Audio / Visual team provided upbeat background music.



Vendor booths were represented with professionals ready and willing to speak with employees regarding various benefits offered. I\$P Retirement Plan Advisors made themselves available to meet with Island \$avings Plan attendees one-on-one to assist with enrolling in the Plan, modifying contribution amounts, or with general questions about the Plan and investing.



Drawings were held throughout the day and door prizes were given out to the lucky winners. Every hour on the hour a workshop was delivered with topics such as Island \$avings Plan Overview, Market Volatility, Pre-Retirement, Getting to Know Your Roth Options and HI 529 - Hawaii's College Savings Program. The workshops were delivered in-person and were also live-streamed so employees who were not able to attend in-person could benefit from the information.



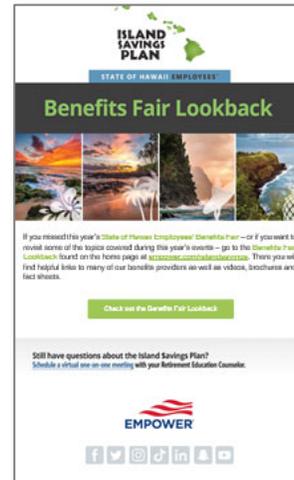
## Post Event Follow Up

Before leaving the event, attendees were asked to complete a survey to help the Plan improve future events. Paper surveys were available for in person attendees and electronically for virtual attendees. When completing the survey, attendees were given the option to request a meeting with an Island \$avings Plan Retirement Plan Advisor. Across the multiple events, there were 50 participants who requested and received a follow-up from an RPA.

A "Benefits Fair Lookback" website was created to electronically host the digital copies of handouts that were available at the events, additional vendor information and links, as well as recorded versions of the workshops. The Benefits Fair Lookback page was promoted on the Island Savings Plan website and through email. The link to the Lookback page was also sent to the State and counties Department Human Resources Officers or personnel for dissemination to employees.



## Benefits Fair Lookback Page



## Benefits Fair Lookback Email

In the payroll periods following the events, there were 160 newly enrolled participants in the Island Savings Plan.

In July, at the Hawai'i Island Fairs, there were 87 in-person Benefits Fair attendees in Hilo and 56 in-person attendees in Kona. Workshop attendees totaled 143 in-person and 354 virtual in July. In November on the island of Oahu there were 97 in-person workshop attendees and 401 virtual workshop attendees.

95% of survey respondents rated the Benefits Fair as "Good", "Very Good" or "Excellent"

94% who attended a Workshop (in-person or live streamed) rated their Workshop as "Good", "Very Good" or "Excellent". Survey responses included:

*"I very much appreciated the webinar option so we could attend from Maui!" – Virtual Webinar Attendee*

*"I wasn't able to attend the complete sessions due to work, will look forward to attending the prerecorded sessions." – Virtual Webinar Attendee*

*"The information provided was very helpful." – Benefits Fair Attendee*

For similar government entities with broad geographic reach, this type of hybrid event is not only possible, it is critical to help provide important benefit information to employees in all locations. Careful planning and coordination with benefits providers and a broad multi-channel communication plan for participants are key components in making the events a success.