



November 20, 2024

Maui County Council  
200 South High Street  
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Honorable Members of the Maui County Council & DRIP Committee,

We, Veronica Mendoza of Roots Reborn and Chief John Pelletier of the Maui Police Department (MPD), are writing to inform you of significant progress made in our collaborative efforts to enhance community safety while addressing the unique challenges faced by our immigrant community.

For nearly a year, our organizations have engaged in productive discussions and actively worked on solutions that balance law enforcement needs with the concerns of migrants & immigrants who may be fearful of authority figures, particularly the police.

We are pleased to announce that as a result of our collaboration, the Maui Police Department has agreed to adopt policy language written by Aparna Patrie, Immigration Counsel at Roots Reborn, addressing U Visas and visas under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This new policy codifies MPD's role in ensuring our immigrant community can report crimes without fear of repercussions, which ultimately enhances community safety, and the benefits available to immigrants who cooperate with police investigations. This aligns with federal laws such as the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 and subsequent reauthorizations.

Furthermore, we are excited to share that MPD has agreed to allow Roots Reborn to create training material that MPD's Multicultural Advisory Counsel (MMAC) will lead and implement at the new cadet training program scheduled for the end of this year. This training is designed to enhance understanding of our diverse community which will improve MPD's community policing efforts. This initiative aligns with MPD's commitment to continuous improvement and community-oriented policing as outlined in its policies.

Importantly, we have also discussed MPD's approach to inquiring about an individual's immigration status. MPD has affirmed that their officers do not routinely ask about immigration status during interactions with the public. This practice helps to build trust within the immigrant community and ensures that all community members feel safe in approaching law enforcement for assistance or to report crimes, regardless of their immigration status.

While we view these developments as significant progress, we want to acknowledge that ongoing discussions regarding detainees remain of critical importance to us as immigrant advocates. We believe that our collaborative efforts are creating a path forward to ensure we can work effectively with MPD, which is crucial for the safety and well-being of our entire community.

This milestone demonstrates our shared commitment to working together for the safety and benefit of our entire community, ensuring that no one is left out and that safety does not come at the cost of any particular group. It also exemplifies the community-oriented policing approach advocated in MPD's policies.

Additionally, Chief Pelletier wishes to inform the Council that Bill 88 is currently not being presented for consideration. As such, Roots Reborn is not in a position to oppose it at this time. Should the bill be reintroduced in the future, Roots Reborn will review it for any changes. If no significant alterations are made, Roots Reborn does not intend to stand in opposition.

We remain committed to ongoing dialogue and collaboration to ensure the safety and well-being of all Maui County residents and visitors.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Mendoza  
Founding Executive Director  
Roots Reborn

Aparna Patrie  
Immigration Counsel  
Roots Reborn

John Pelletier  
Chief of Police  
Maui Police Department



## DRIP Committee

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**From:** Veronica Mendoza <vero@rootsreborn.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 20, 2024 2:43 PM  
**To:** DRIP Committee  
**Subject:** Letter Submission  
**Attachments:** RR & MPD Joint Statement (1).pdf

Aloha,

Attached please find a copy of a joint statement between Roots Reborn and MPD.

Best,  
Veronica

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Veronica Mendoza  
(she/her/ella)  
Executive Director



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