

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Experienced and driven non-profit executive director and impact-litigation attorney advocating for the rights of Hawai'i's indigenous people. Employs an understanding of the needs of native communities and the historical and contemporary inequities that inform Native Hawaiian rights to sovereignty, land, water, and cultural resources. Provides compassionate, targeted, community-based legal services, education, and outreach to address the complex legal issues facing the Native Hawaiian community. Adept at navigating ideological and personal divides to achieve common goals. Excellent research, legal analysis, oral advocacy, and writing skills. Admitted to the State and Federal Bars in Hawai'i and New York.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation

Executive Director

Interim Executive Director

Honolulu, HI

November 2019-Present

August 2019-November 2019

The Executive Director is the chief administrator and executive officer selected by the Board of Directors to provide effective and accountable leadership, guidance, direction, and oversight of a public interest, non-profit law firm established in 1974 to provide direct legal services to Native Hawaiian individuals, communities, and organizations throughout the state of Hawai'i and continental U.S. Responsible for managing an estimated \$2 million operating budget and \$1 million investment portfolio. Supervises a legal staff of 15-17 individuals dedicated exclusively to perpetuating, through legal and other advocacy, the rights, customs, and practices that strengthen Native Hawaiian identity and culture. Guides complex litigation to preserve Native Hawaiian land trust entitlements, defend against quiet title/native land dispossession actions, protect cultural sites, preserve traditional and customary practices, enforce state and federal trust obligations under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, and secure natural resource protections mandated by the Hawai'i State Constitution. Cultivates strategic partnerships to enhance collaboration and transparency among stakeholder groups.

Key Initiatives and Accomplishments:

Assessed all programs, grants, and services for ongoing feasibility, growth, and leveraging to reverse a 10-year revenue deficit trend, restore financial health and stability to program operations, and expand legal services and outreach to meet the evolving needs of the Native Hawaiian community.

Initiated strategies to develop an effective and sustainable technology infrastructure (including comprehensive hardware and software upgrades) to shore up revenue, transition staff, operations, and program delivery to virtual work environments, and leverage innovations to better serve and connect with constituents.

Enhanced connectedness and engagement with the communities served as well as key stakeholders, private and public community partners, state and county agencies, and decision/policy-makers to further strategies consistent with NHLIC's mission to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians through legal and public policy advocacy.