

## Low-Income Residents and People of Color in Hawaii Are Living Near Chemical Dangers

The Center for Effective Government graded states based on the relative dangers faced by people of color and residents with incomes below the poverty line living within one mile of dangerous facilities, compared to white and non-poor people in these areas. **Hawaii scored a “B” but still has room for improvement.**

Nationally, 7.5 percent of the population lives within one mile of a hazardous facility.

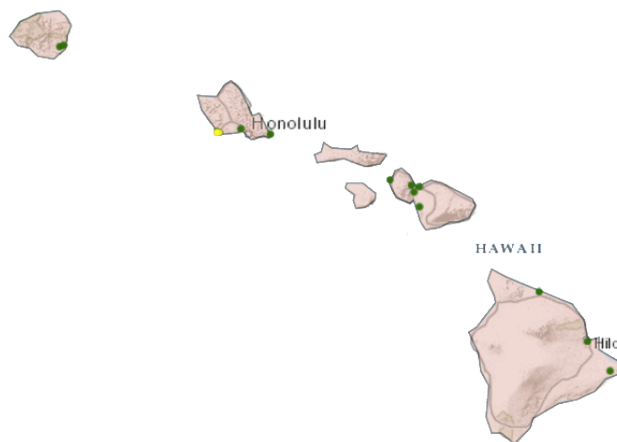
### Key Findings

- Over 41,000 Hawaiian residents (3.1 percent of the total population) live within one mile of a facility storing large amounts of extremely hazardous chemicals. **Over two-thirds of Hawaii residents living within these “fenceline communities” are people of color.**
- **Poor Latino residents are 1.7 times more likely to live near chemical hazards than white residents not in poverty.**
- Eleven Hawaii public schools are located within one mile of a hazardous facility, putting 8,200 students in danger.

### Chemical dangers are real, and incidents are happening in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Independent Energy refinery in Kapolei had two notable incidents in 2009 alone. One released 150 pounds of a flammable mixture that included propane and butane; the second released 900 pounds of a similar flammable mixture. Thankfully no one was injured, but such chemicals could easily ignite and cause a catastrophic incident.

Other hazardous facilities in Hawaii include chemical manufacturers and distributors, electrical generation facilities, and water treatment plants. Water treatment plants that use **chlorine gas** in purification are a particular threat to communities. This toxic gas can be fatal and travels quickly from its source – qualities that made it a deadly chemical weapon during World War I.



[Click here to open an interactive map of your neighborhood.](#)

Hawaii’s 17 high-risk facilities are dotted across the islands in both rural and urban areas. The facilities also receive **shipments of chemicals** that put additional communities in danger during transit.

### Are people of color and low-income residents of Hawaii safe from chemical hazards?

Compared to most states, Hawaii has a relatively small proportion of its total population living within one mile of a chemical facility (3.1 percent). The state also has a fairly small number of facilities and lacks significant clusters in dense urban areas. These factors helped contribute to Hawaii’s B grade.

Additionally, people of color are not significantly more likely to live near hazardous facilities than white residents. In fact, children of color under 12 are one and a half times *less* likely than white children in this age group. This is true for each racial category and sets Hawaii apart from most other states.

However, Hawaii does not score an A because people in poverty are slightly more likely to live near chemical hazards than those who are not in poverty. Poor residents have fewer housing options and may not be able to afford to move to safer neighborhoods.

### Inequities in Likelihood of Living in a Fenceline Community

Racial Inequities			Score	Grade	Income (Poverty) Inequities			Score	Grade
Percentage of People of Color Who Live in Fenceline			3%	A	Percentage of Poor People Who Live in Fenceline			3.5%	A
Likelihood of People of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to whites)			1.1 times less likely	A	Likelihood of Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to those not in poverty)			1.2 times more likely	B
Percentage of Children of Color Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline			3.3%	A	Percentage of Poor Children Under 12 Who Live in Fenceline			4.1%	A
Likelihood of Children of Color Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to white children under 12)			1.5 times less likely	A	Likelihood of Poor Children Under 12 to Live in Fenceline (compared to children under 12 not in poverty)			1.2 times more likely	B
Percentage of Children of Color Who Attend Public Schools in Fenceline			4.2%	A	Percentage of Children Receiving Free Lunch Who Attend Schools in Fenceline			3.9%	A
Likelihood of Children of Color to Attend Public Schools in Fenceline (compared to white children)			1.4 times less likely	A	Likelihood of Children Receiving Free Lunch to Attend Schools in Fenceline (compared to children not receiving free lunch)			1.3 times less likely	A
Percentage of Elderly of Color Who Live in Fenceline			2.8%	A	Percentage of Elderly Poor People Who Live in Fenceline			2.5%	A
Likelihood of Elderly of Color to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly whites)			1.1 times more likely	B	Likelihood of Elderly Poor People to Live in Fenceline (compared to elderly people not in poverty)			1.1 times less likely	A
<b>People of Color Grade</b>				<b>B</b>	<b>Poverty Grade</b>				<b>B</b>
<b>Overall Grade: B</b>									

### What you can do to protect your community from dangerous chemicals.

Hawaii residents like you can help. You can organize people in your community and educate others about these dangers. You can learn about your local zoning process (if your state gives local governments zoning authority) and whether it protects community members from nearby industrial plants that use hazardous chemicals – and share what you learn with your friends and neighbors. You can attend public meetings and planning hearings and urge decision makers to think carefully about the sites chosen for new industrial facilities, and you can write, call, and meet with other state, county, and city officials to send the message that *all* Hawaii residents deserve to be protected from chemical dangers.

You can also demand that the federal government require facilities to switch to safer chemicals and alternatives whenever feasible and urge the Hawaii Department of Health and the state-level OSHA to conduct more thorough and frequent inspections to spot problems before they cause disasters. And Hawaii residents can push local governments to require buffer zones around new and expanded chemical facilities to ensure homes and schools are not built nearby.

**Table 1: Percentage of Population Who Live in Fenceline Communities, by Age and Race**

	Black	Latino	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	White Not Hispanic	All Races
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
0-17	3.0%	3.5%	0.1%	3.1%	4.7%	3.4%
18-64	4.5%	3.2%	2.8%	2.9%	3.3%	3.0%
65+	4.2%	3.0%	10.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.8%
<b>Total # in fenceline</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>4,057</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>18,986</b>	<b>10,176</b>	<b>41,025</b>
<b>Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>Just as likely</b>	<b>1.1 times less likely</b>	<b>1.2 times less likely</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>---</b>

**Table 2: Percentage of Poor Population Who Live in Fenceline Communities, by Age and Race**

	Black	Latino	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	White Not Hispanic	All Races
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
0-17	2.7%	5.4%	0.0%	3.2%	5.9%	3.9%
18-64	1.7%	5.8%	0.6%	3.0%	3.4%	3.5%
65+	6.7%	6.1%	31.1%	1.9%	2.7%	2.5%
<b>Total # in fenceline</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1,195</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1,848</b>	<b>1,227</b>	<b>5,264</b>
<b>Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites in poverty</b>	<b>1.8 times less likely</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>---</b>
<b>Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to same race not in poverty</b>	<b>2.1 times less likely</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>Just as likely</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Likelihood of living in fenceline, compared to whites not in poverty</b>	<b>1.6 times less likely</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.1 times less likely</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>---</b>

**Table 3: Percentage of Children Who Attend Public School in Fenceline Communities, by Grade and Race**

	Black	Latino	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	White Not Hispanic	All Races
<b>All Grades</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
Pre-K - 2	5.3%	4.3%	1.9%	3.2%	4.6%	3.7%
3-7	7.3%	5.1%	4.3%	3.9%	6.7%	4.5%
8-12	4.9%	5.0%	4.2%	4.8%	5.7%	5.0%
<b>Total # in fenceline</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>4,946</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>8,216</b>
<b>Likelihood of attending schools in fenceline, compared to white students</b>	<b>Just as likely</b>	<b>1.2 times less likely</b>	<b>1.5 times less likely</b>	<b>1.4 times less likely</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>---</b>

**Find the Full Report at [ForEffectiveGov.org](http://ForEffectiveGov.org)**