Central Valley Pacific Islander Emerging Leaders Conference Impact Report

CSU SACRAMENTO | JULY 17-19, 2026

The ocean remembers our roots across distance and our stories across time.

Introduction

The Central Valley Pacific Islander Emerging Leaders (CVPIEL) Conference is the only conference in California's Central Valley dedicated to Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) youth and young adults ages 14 - 20. Created by Pasifika youth in 2023, CVPIEL is youth-centered and rooted in culture, community, and leadership. CVPIEL intentionally brings together Central Valley and statewide Pasifika mentors from diverse fields and lived experiences to educate, inspire, and empower the next generation. This year's conference was grounded in the theme, "The Ocean Remembers Our Roots Across Distance and Our Stories Across Time," with every workshop, cultural experience, and conversation reinforcing that our shared stories, values, and resilience continue to connect and guide us across generations.



I've never felt more seen and valued as a Pasifika person in my life. Thank you CVPIA team. - CVPIEL Attendee

I didn't realize how much I was carrying until CVPIEL reminded me that it was okay to put it down and be present. I'm so grateful for CVPIA and being the safe space I needed. - CVPIEL Attendee

Once I came here, I found family. I found a community that I love to serve who guided me through my mental health and cultural journey. I'm so grateful. - CVPIEL Facilitator

You all made it possible for me to witness the joy of seeing two generations of my family finally discover the pride of who they are. When we came to the states, these are the spaces I wanted for my son, and now we all get to watch his son benefit from them. - Guiding Hands Elder/CVPIEL Chaperone

Key Highlights

- Fostered teamwork, joy, and connection through a full day of play during Mindset, Mission & Momentum Field Day.
- Supported identity, healing, and belonging by creating space for Pasifika youth to explore their experiences within the diaspora.
- Connected youth with Pasifika leaders, professionals, and changemakers from the Greater Sacramento region to build relationships and explore future pathways.
- Connected youth to Pasifika athletes and professionals across the sports industry.
- Empowered youth to move from apathy to action through advocacy, storytelling, and community leadership.
- Strengthened cultural identity through traditional dance and song workshops honoring Tonga, Guam, and Samoa.
- Provided a completely free conference experience to ensure equitable access and participation for all.

Space & Place

CVPIEL was intentionally held at CSU Sacramento, located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Nisenan peoples, to immerse youth within one of California's largest and deeply rooted Pasifika communities while exposing them to a college environment. Through campus experiences and workshops, participants strengthened their sense of belonging and envisioned pathways toward higher education, leadership, and community impact.

This was the first time I've felt the desire to go to college and actually believe I could do it. - CVPIEL Attendee

I can honestly say this weekend gave me more confidence in knowing what I want to do in the future and the kind of leader I want to become. - CVPIEL Volunteer

CVPIEL NUMBERS

62 Friday Participants

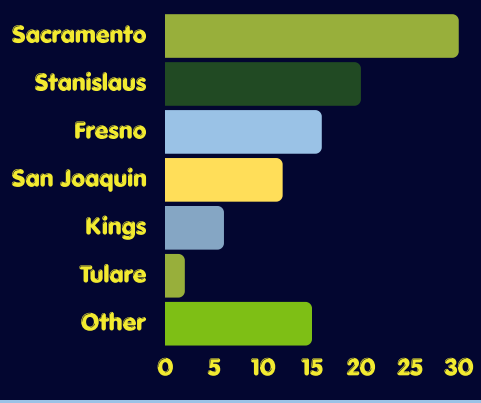
97 Saturday Participants

23 Volunteers

57%

39%

Central Valley Counties Represented



NH/PI Island Affliation

Sāmoan - 47%	Fijian - 4%	Kiribati - 1%
Tongan - 17%	Native Hawaiian - 3%	Chuukese - <1%
Marshallese 8%	Māori -2%	Kosraean -<1%
CHamoru -3%	Rotuman - 1%	Belauan - <1%

Participants were able to select multiple Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander affiliations; therefore, percentages reflect reported ethnic affiliations rather than individual participants.

Youth Ages

Ages 14 -16: 22%

Ages 17 -18: 25%

Ages 19 -20: 18%

CVPIEL Support

Ages 21 -25: 23%

Ages 26+: 12%