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HTA Release (24-23)

Hawai'i Tourism Authority Seeks Community Partners In Support Of Natural Resources, Culture, Festivals and Signature Events

Online applications open August 1 for projects January-June 2025

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is seeking community partnerships focused on supporting natural resources, culture, community festivals and signature events statewide through the Kahu 'Āina, Kūkulu Ola, Ho'okipa Malihini Initiative, Community Enrichment, and Signature Events programs. Applications for each program will be available online on HTA's digital portal, ['Umeke, Powered by Hawai'i Tourism Authority](#), starting Thursday, August 1.

"Regenerative tourism plays a crucial role in driving positive change within our communities and is essential to our wellbeing and a more diversified economy that uplifts our islands' people, culture and places," said Mufi Hannemann, HTA board chair. "These HTA programs strategically direct tourism's economic benefits back into community-based initiatives with a visitor nexus, thus strengthening our industry's contributions throughout the state."

HTA will engage with nonprofit organizations, community groups and practitioners to support projects and events occurring in Hawai'i from January 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025. Another solicitation will be held in early 2025 for projects and events occurring from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, bringing the programs into alignment with the state's fiscal year.

Kilohana is working with HTA to administer the following programs as part of its focus on destination stewardship:

- The **Kahu 'Āina** program supports responsible community-based entities with an emphasis on 'āina-kānaka (land-human) relationships and knowledge that manage, preserve and regenerate Hawai'i's natural resources and environment.
- The **Kūkulu Ola** program supports community-based awardees that enhance, strengthen and perpetuate Hawaiian culture through genuine experiences for residents and visitors.
- The **Ho'okipa Malihini Initiative** (formerly known as Resort Area Hawaiian Culture Initiative) provides support to cultural practitioners and musicians providing culturally appropriate greetings and experiences in resort areas.
- The **Community Enrichment** program supports unique, authentic and highly valued visitor-related experiences, and represents activities that are developed by the community, for the community. These are experiences that the community desires to share with visitors.
- The **Signature Events** program supports major festivals and events that attract attendees and participants from outside the state and have extensive opportunities for national and international marketing. They are typically high-profile events that are larger in scale than those in the Community Enrichment program and have opportunities for marketing globally.

In 2024, HTA awarded more than \$7.5 million in total funding through these programs supporting 163 partner nonprofit organizations, community groups, practitioners, projects and events across the islands.

“HTA’s multi-faceted approach to destination stewardship uplifts the community at all levels,” said Daniel Nāho’opi’i, HTA’s interim president and CEO. “In addition to providing funding support to qualified nonprofits and groups, we are also addressing the community’s needs through destination management, workforce development programs and scholarships, Foundational Technical Assistance training, and Community Tourism Collaboratives.”

HTA and Kilohana will be hosting two virtual webinars on Zoom to help interested applicants with their understanding of HTA’s programs, potential funding levels, the application process, tips on creating a strong application, and more.

- **Webinar #1:** Wednesday, July 31, 10 to 11 a.m.
- **Webinar #2:** Thursday, August 1, 5 to 6 p.m.

In-person informational sessions will also be held on all islands:

- **O’ahu:** Monday, August 12, 5 to 6 p.m. | Location: TBD
- **Maui:** Tuesday, August 13, 5 to 6 p.m. | Kāko’o Maui Resource Center, Maui Mall
- **Kaua’i:** Wednesday, August 14, Noon to 1 p.m. | Līhu’e Public Library
- **Island of Hawai’i (East Hawai’i):** Thursday, August 15, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. | Location: TBD
- **Moloka’i:** Friday, August 16, 5 to 6 p.m. | Lanikeha Community Center
- **Lāna’i:** Monday, August 19, 5 to 6 p.m. | Lāna’i Youth Center
- **Island of Hawai’i (West Hawai’i):** Tuesday, August 20, 5 to 6 p.m. | Location: TBD

The deadline to submit applications on ‘Umeke (umeke.kilohana.com) is Friday, September 20, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. HST. To register for a webinar or in-person session and for more information, visit www.kilohana.com.

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About the Hawai’i Tourism Authority

The Hawai’i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to Mālama Hawai’i – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit hawaii tourism authority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), and [X](#).

For more information, contact:

T. Ilihia Gionson
Public Affairs Officer
Hawai’i Tourism Authority
Ilihia.Gionson@gohta.net