

Research and Development Impact Grants Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Award Summaries

Agriculture and Food Systems Program

Hāmākua Institute, *Hawai'i Island Agricultural Labor Pilot Project*, \$14,447.95

This project aims to strengthen Hawai'i Island's agricultural sector by addressing critical labor shortages and identifying labor-saving approaches. Building on existing research funded by a USDA Western SARE grant, the Hāmākua Institute will conduct an island-wide market assessment to quantify demand for aggregated labor services and labor-saving solutions, connect producers with interested service providers, and co-design a pilot initiative that tests a new commercial model for farm labor. The target beneficiaries include small to mid-size farmers, producer cooperatives, and emerging farm labor contractors who currently lack efficient, cost-effective labor options. By fostering collaboration among these stakeholders, the project will help reduce barriers to farm expansion, boost local food production, and stimulate economic growth in Hawai'i County's agricultural communities.

Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation, *Building an Ag Workforce Pipeline through AgTech Initiatives*, \$22,650.00

The Hawaii Agricultural Foundation (HAF) seeks funding to strengthen the agricultural workforce pipeline on Hawai'i Island through innovative AgTech initiatives, including Tower Power and the Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP). Additionally, responding to requests from elementary school teachers, HAF will bring in-person training on Where Would We Be Without Seeds (WWWBWS) and Veggie U (VU) to teachers on Hawai'i Island. The project will also incorporate In the Fields (ITF) program opportunities to connect students with hands-on learning experiences at local farms and agricultural enterprises.

Hawai'i Floriculture and Nursery Association, \$19,250.00

The purpose of the 2025 2026 program of the Hawai'i Floriculture and Nursery Association is to educate floral designers, florists, and others in the floral industry how to use Hawai'i grown tropical flowers and foliage, how to access them and to promote same through our 2025 Fresh Look Expo, Webinar and full-length video. This program will increase the popularity of Hawai'i floriculture products and requests for them, which leads to an increase in sales, an economic benefit to Hawai'i County in increased tax revenues, growth of Hawai'i County floral nurseries as well as visitors to the Island of Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Institute of Pacific Agriculture, *Kohala Agri-Leaders Initiative (KALI)*, \$24,999.00

HIP Agriculture's Kohala Agri-Leaders Initiative (KALI) is a transformative program designed to strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural workforce, expand local food accessibility, and cultivate the next generation of food system leaders. By integrating agricultural education, hands-on

training, and local food procurement initiatives, KALI directly addresses economic, social, and environmental challenges that impact North Kohala's food security and farming community. This project aims to train new and beginning farmers, increase access to fresh, locally grown food, and provide experiential farm-to-school learning opportunities.

Hawai'i Tropical Flower Council, *Import Replacement Program*, \$19,250.00

The Hawaii Tropical Flower Council's 2025 2026 Import Replacement Plants Distribution Program will educate Hawaii growers on how to grow import replacement plants through a Growers' Conference and site visits with recommendations and presentations by professional experts. HTFC will also purchase import replacement plantlets and distribute them to growers across the state that wish to grow them. HTFC will also continue its' promotion of the "Hawaii's Flowers" branding by supplying Hawai'i grown flowers and foliage for national floral events as well as cultural events across the State of Hawai'i. This program will enable Hawai'i floriculture growers to sustain and expand their product lines without depending upon imported plants that may bring in invasive pests and diseases that could adversely affect Hawai'i's delicate ecosystem. This will also bring expansion of available products for sale and tax revenues in Hawai'i County and around the state.

Kohala Food Hub, *Expanding Equitable Local Food Access: Kohala Online SNAP & DA BUX Outreach and Engagement Campaign*, \$13,000.00

This project aims to expand food access for low-income residents in North and South Kohala by implementing a comprehensive outreach and marketing campaign to promote Feed Hawai'i DBA Kohala Food Hub's (KFH) newly launched SNAP online processing and DA BUX discount programs. These programs allow SNAP recipients to purchase fresh, locally grown food online and receive a 50% discount on eligible items through DA BUX, increasing access to healthy, affordable food. The campaign will include a professional outreach video, flyer distribution, print and social media advertising, in-person community outreach and radio promotions to ensure widespread community awareness and participation. The target beneficiaries include low-income families, kūpuna, and residents with limited transportation options throughout North and South Kohala, collectively serving over 26,000 potential residents.

La'i 'Ōpua 2020, *'Ai Māla – Mala & Culinary Collaboration*, \$25,000.00

The project aims to teach local families sustainable agricultural practices over 8 weeks (rotating weekends, spanning 4 months). The program is divided into two main segments: Grow and Cook and is designed to help participants grow their own food, learn sustainable farming techniques, and cook with locally grown ingredients. The project will increase consumption of local agricultural products by educating local families on how to grow, harvest, and prepare locally grown ingredients. In addition, participants will be educated on weather patterns, soil and water management, and crop selection that will improve agricultural production, quality, and resilience of their agricultural crops. Participants will gain workforce skills and learn to reduce food waste through hands-on experience preparing meals that include locally produced food. Overall, the project seeks to promote environmental stewardship and improve

educational and health outcomes through educating participants to grow, harvest, and prepare fresh meals using locally grown produce.

Mala'ai, Hawai'i Island School Garden Workdays, \$13,894.00

Māla'ai's Hawai'i Island School Garden Network (HISGN) will co-host twelve School Garden Workdays in August 2025 to strengthen school garden programs through hands-on community engagement. These workdays will provide direct support to school gardens by offering site stipends, mobilizing at least 240 community volunteers, and hosting farm-to school workshops on topics such as agroforestry, composting, native and canoe plants, and local food preparation. The target beneficiaries include Hawai'i Island schools, educators, students, and community members seeking to improve access to fresh, culturally relevant foods and enhance agricultural literacy.

University of Hawai'i, Hampton 2025, \$14,805.00

University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (UH-CTAHR) Cooperative Extension will launch a Master Food Volunteer (MFV) program in Hawai'i County to meet the growing demand for food education and promote local food businesses. This volunteer certification program will train a cohort of 10 food system advocates to promote local food and agriculture through community education and outreach, driving increased consumption of local agricultural products. Similar to the long-running Master Gardener program in Hawai'i, trainees must complete an Extension-led training program and meet volunteer service requirements to obtain certification. Trainees will learn to deliver food education programs such as product and recipe tastings at stores, Eat Local campaigns, community workshops featuring local foods, and cooking demonstrations at schools, farmers' markets, or workplaces. Once established, target beneficiaries for the Master Food Volunteer program include families, adults, and youth in all 9 districts of Hawai'i County.

University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, GoFarm Hawai'i, \$25,000.00

The primary goal of the University of Hawai'i (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) GoFarm Hawai'i (GFH) Beginning Farmer Training Program on Hawai'i Island is to provide an educational and support pathway that cultivates the agricultural workforce for the Island. The project addresses the critical need for increased local food production and security by providing participants with the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience necessary to establish and sustain viable farm businesses or secure agricultural jobs.

Business and Industry Development Program

Cooper Center Council, \$3,000.00

This project seeks funding to expand the capacity and accessibility of the Cooper Center Community Kitchen, a county-owned facility managed by the Cooper Center Council, a non-profit organization. Located in Volcano, Hawaii, it serves the underserved Volcano community

on the island of Hawaii, the kitchen serves as an incubator for local food entrepreneurs, particularly those from underserved populations. This expansion will address the growing demand for kitchen time and equipment, empowering small businesses to scale their operations, create jobs, and increase access to locally sourced food. By providing affordable access to a certified commercial kitchen, the project will stimulate economic growth, promote food security, and foster community resilience in an area with limited resources.

Healthy Mothers Healty Babies Coalition of Hawai‘i, *Roots of Resilience Roadshow: Women Shaping Community Well-Being, \$15,000.00*

The Roots of Resilience Roadshow: Women Shaping Community Wel-Being is a community-driven initiative designed to empower women as leaders, facilitators, and mentors in promoting holistic community well-being. Building on the proven format of the Piko Pals New Parent Support Group—launched in 2017 to support families with babies aged 0 12 months and later expanded to include Expectant Families and Toddler Groups—this initiative integrates women-led approaches into its programming. The skills and expertise cultivated by Piko Pals facilitators have already contributed to the development of domestic violence support groups and parent reunification initiatives. This iteration focuses on elevating female leadership in areas such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, education, workforce development, and disaster preparedness. Monthly workshops will be held over the course of ten months island wide, with the first five sessions predetermined at project launch. The latter five sessions will feature workshop leaders and facilitators recruited from participants in the initial workshops, empowering individuals to identify their expertise and providing them with support and guidance to lead their own sessions. This approach fosters leadership development and ensures a dynamic, community-driven program. The program will include a Women-Centered Monthly Workshop Series covering subjects such as: Financial Literacy and Savings Guidance; Entrepreneurship and Vision-Building; Education and Workforce Development; Disaster and Emergency Preparedness; and Health and Social Services.

Hui ‘Oihana, *Kūkulu Nā ‘Oihana: Building Foundations for Native Hawaiian Businesses, \$15,000.00*

Hui ‘Oihana proposes "Kūkulu Nā ‘Oihana", a comprehensive workshop and pilina (relationship) building series aimed at empowering Native Hawaiian business owners and community organizations on Hawai‘i Island. This program will consist of monthly sessions over seven months, each focusing on a critical step in establishing and growing a successful business. The sessions will be delivered through a blend of virtual, hybrid, and in-person formats to ensure accessibility and engagement.

Project Kanu, *Ulu-I-Ka-Honua Dashboard – Empowering Businesses to Track, Communicate, and Elevate Regenerative Practices, \$10,000.00*

Project Kanu proposes the Ulu-I-Ka-Honua Dashboard, a digital program designed to help businesses and food producers track, communicate, and enhance the value of their regenerative practices. Through its three core components, Coaches Help Desk, Clearing Hale,

and Impact Forum—the program will empower businesses to demonstrate sustainability, differentiate their brands, and gain a competitive edge. AI-driven tracking will identify common needs and best practices, enabling businesses to collectively document their journeys, validate sustainability claims, expand financial opportunities, engage stakeholders, and influence market trends. The initiative will focus on key areas such as regenerative metrics, sustainability-driven brand differentiation, increasing market value, integrating regenerative practices into business models, and incorporating Hawaiian cultural values into sustainability strategies.

Purple Mai‘a Foundation, *Hawai‘i FoundHer, Hawai‘i Island Cohort, \$25,000.00*

FoundHer is a proven and successful accelerator program that has been empowering Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian American women entrepreneurs since 2021. Over three cohorts, the program has provided direct financial support, mentorship, and business education to women-led businesses across Hawai‘i, leading to significant revenue growth, job creation, and industry recognition. With Hawai‘i Island consistently producing a strong pool of applicants, we are now launching a dedicated Hawai‘i Island cohort to better serve the unique opportunities and challenges of businesses in this region. This six-month accelerator will provide five Hawai‘i Island-based women entrepreneurs with \$20,000 in non-dilutive grants, \$4,000 childcare stipends, tailored business education, and one-on-one mentorship. The program will focus on businesses in agriculture, food systems, and consumer goods—key industries that drive economic sustainability and resilience on the island.

Reuse Hawai‘i, *Reducing Landfill Waste and Cultivating the Circular Economy, \$7,000.00*

Reducing Landfill Waste and Cultivating the Circular Economy is a targeted initiative to address Hawai‘i Island’s escalating waste crisis while creating workforce development opportunities in the green jobs sector. Leveraging 18 years of expertise, Re-use Hawai‘i will implement sustainable deconstruction practices to divert waste from landfills and provide hands-on training for skilled workers. Over this 12-month program, we will provide: paid, on-the-job training for two deconstruction crew members, equipping them with specialized skills in sustainable demolition practices; provision of specialized tools necessary for safe and efficient deconstruction; transportation support to accommodate long-distance travel needs, particularly for federally contracted projects such as the Hawaiian Volcanoes Visitor Center deconstruction.

Community Well-Being Program

Community First, Inc., *Hawai‘i Health Connect by Community First, \$25,000.00*

To improve access to healthcare we must better understand the gaps, barriers and challenges that our communities across Hawai‘i Island face to access care. Community First (CF) will complete and implement two projects that we believe will positively increase access to healthcare across Hawai‘i Island. First, we will complete, promote, and implement Hawai‘i Health Connect (HHC), an online web-based tool with mobile viewing capabilities, that

provides pertinent information to those seeking healthcare and social services. Compiling the data of healthcare providers, their accepted insurance and patient acceptance, sets this project apart from other available search engines. Second, using data available through HHC, we will complete the Hawai'i Island Asset Map and Report , that identifies gaps and barriers to services, the type of services needed, and where these services are needed.

Hāmākua Health Center, Inc., *Hāmākua Health Center Connectivity Hub Development*, \$25,000.00

Hāmākua-Kohala Health (HKH) proposes the establishment of a connectivity hub in Waipi'o Valley to improve healthcare access, address social determinants of health, and enhance economic well-being for residents facing geographic isolation and systemic barriers to accessing care. The hub will be equipped with internet connectivity, telehealth technology, and health/social service navigation resources to provide virtual healthcare access, Community Navigator outreach, and direct support for health insurance enrollment and service referrals.

Hāmākua Youth Foundation, \$20,000.00

Hāmākua Youth Foundation (also known as Hāmākua Youth Center, or HYC) seeks to holistically broaden the personal, academic, and (eventual) professional horizons of youth through three out-of-school programs. Afterschool programs incorporate Hawaiian learning methods, offer social-emotional and academic support, and prioritize outdoor time for mental health. Cultural connection (intersession) programs highlight environmental kinship, offer hands-on practical and STEM learning experiences, and include excursions to places of cultural/environmental significance. Food assistance aims to offset barriers associated with food insecurity.

Humanity Hale, *Humanity Hale: Empowering Hawai'i Island Youth*, \$25,000.00

Humanity Hale proposes Ho'ōla Nā 'Ōpio ("Healing the Youth"), a comprehensive, trauma-informed initiative designed to support foster and underserved youth across West Hawai'i Island and East Hawai'i Island, including Kona and Hilo. This program integrates three core services, Art Therapy, Individual and Group Therapy, and Abuse Prevention and Diversity Training to address the emotional, physical, and mental hardships faced by at-risk youth. Ho'ōla Nā 'Ōpio primarily serves youth navigating trauma, homelessness, and systemic challenges by fostering emotional healing, behavioral support, and resilience-building. The program is offered in collaboration with schools to ensure accessible, school-based interventions, creating a safe and structured environment for mental health support and cultural healing. With a \$25,000 grant, Ho'ōla Nā 'Ōpio will provide group and individual therapy, creative arts interventions, and trauma-informed education, ensuring youth across Hawai'i Island receive the specialized support they need to heal and thrive.

PATH, *People for Active Transportation Hawai'i, Keiki Bike Education Program*, \$10,000.00

The Keiki Bike Education program serves Hawai'i Island 4th grade elementary school students (7-10 years old) teaching them about bicycle safety and handling skills. Taught by certified bike

instructors and trained assistant instructors, the curriculum focuses on four layers of bicycle safety: control, rules, avoidance and passive safety. The goal of the Keiki Bike Education program is to empower the next generation of Hawai'i Island keiki to lead sustainable, healthy lifestyles while also making a positive contribution to the preservation of our natural environment through bicycling.

The Food Basket, Inc., *Kōkua Harvest*, \$25,000.00

The Kōkua Harvest Project aims to strengthen community engagement, social connection, and chronic disease prevention for underserved populations on Hawai'i Island. Leveraging five years of established gleaning operations, the project will facilitate community harvest events, volunteer recognition gatherings, and resource distribution activities to foster deeper relationships, provide educational opportunities, and improve outcomes for marginalized groups, including low-income individuals, older adults (kūpuna), and Native Hawaiians. Key measurable impacts of the project will include: Social Impact: The creation of stronger social bonds and a sense of belonging, with at least 35 participants at each harvest event and a target of 300 meaningful interactions over the 12-month period. Economic Impact: Improved access to essential services, such as health care, financial literacy, and food assistance, with at least 100 participants engaging with resource tables and 80% utilizing food-related support services. Health Impact: Improved health outcomes for participants, particularly in chronic disease prevention, through access to fresh produce, health services, and educational resources.

Energy Program

No awards

Film and Creative Industries Program

Aria Children's Fund, *Eating Our Roots-Season 2*, \$25,000.00

"Eating Our Roots" with Chef Ippy Aiona is a culinary travel and cooking show that explores the rich, diverse food culture of Hawai'i. Hosted by Chef Ippy Aiona, a Native Hawaiian chef, the show takes viewers on a journey to discover the roots of Hawai'i's cuisine, focusing on local ingredients, traditional cooking methods, and the cultural significance of food in the islands. Chef Ippy connects with local farmers, fishers, and food producers, highlighting their sustainable practices and the deep connection between food, history, and community. After a successful first season in 2024, we are fundraising for "Eating Our Roots" Season 2, which will again feature farmers, ranchers, fishermen and food producers on Hawai'i Island. The show consists of eight 30-minute episodes that will be featured on Hawaii News Now, K5, AppleTV, Amazon Fire TV and Roku TV. Through vibrant storytelling and delicious cooking, Chef Ippy emphasizes sustainability, food sovereignty, and the importance of supporting local food systems. Eating Our Roots celebrates Hawai'i's unique culinary heritage while also promoting environmental stewardship and cultural preservation.

Hawai'i Songwriting Festival, *Hawai'i Songwriting Festival 2025*, \$25,000.00

The Hawai'i Songwriting Festival ("HSF") is a 501(c)(3) that has supported the local songwriting community for over 20 years. Our flagship event is an annual songwriting conference at the Westin Hapuna each summer. About 220 songwriters attend the conference, with numbers limited in order to keep the event small and intimate so attendees are able to connect with each other and music industry mentors in a meaningful way and build strong, long-lasting relationships. Most conference attendees are from Hawai'i, with others joining from the US continent and a few foreign countries. It's important for local songwriters to network horizontally with folks from abroad, and we welcome these attendees as they help our community grow and thrive. However, our priority is always our local songwriters.

Hua O Lahui, \$6,000.00

We will produce a 15-minute film documenting the process of making a Hawaiian adze, Ko'i. The film will be a verite style documentary, no narration. We will follow a Ko'i maker into the forest to gather/prep Hau, to make cordage. We will go to Mauna Kea Adze Quarry to select basalt pieces and shape the rock for the head of the Ko'i. We will go back to the forest to select Hau wood for the handle. And, we will show the Ko'i maker assembling the Ko'i. The film will also show the Ko'i being used to finish carve a canoe. This film will be an important piece for two separate projects. The first project, Healing Canoe, we will guide Native Hawaiian Veterans to carve a canoe from harvesting of a tree to a completed canoe. We will also make Ko'i and use this Ko'i for the finish-carve of the canoe. In the film we will see the Native Hawaiian Veterans using the Ko'i. The second project, Canoe + Paddle, is a feature-length (60 minute) documentary about two canoes in D.C. and England that were gifts from King Kalakaua and Queen Kapi'olani in 1887. The 15-minute Ko'i-making film will be used within the longer feature-length (60minute) documentary, and this 15-minute film will also be used as a "proof-of-concept" piece to go after film grants. The main impact for this film is to document the fading cultural practice of Ko'i making, as there is no one currently practicing and making Ko'i. A secondary impact is to support a "proof-of-concept" 15-minute piece, to be used as part of a film proposal for the feature-length (60min) documentary which will primarily be shot on Hawai'i Island. Another impact for the film is to support local film production, as we will be filming over the course of 9 months on Hawai'i Island. And, another impact is the hands-on learning of filmmaking, as the Native Hawaiian Veteran participants of the Healing Canoe project (and the canoe carver instructors) will have the opportunity to learn filmmaking from industry professionals

Friends of the Palace Theater, *Palace Theater Film Festivals – Growing the Economy through the Film Industry*, \$23,000.00

The Palace Theater is the proud home venue of two important festivals, enriching the culture and industry of filmmaking in Hawai'i. The Hawai'i International Film Festival (HIFF) is typically held at the Palace Theater in November. Each year, Big Island audiences look forward to seeing the diverse slate of international foreign films, American indies, and the best of Hawai'i-made cinema, which would otherwise not be available on island because of cost and availability. The

Made In Hawai'i Film Festival (MIHFF) its typically held at the Palace Theater in the spring. This festival exclusively spotlights films being made in the State of Hawai'i of both short and feature length films. MIHFF is proud to offer opportunities for young, up- and -coming filmmakers to directly engage with an audience in the form of moderated discussions, question and answer sessions following the films, and in person networking at the theater. In 2025, the Palace Theater will begin showing "Made in Hawai'i" films both at the festival and all year round, to further its focus on growing the film industry in Hawai'i. The 2024-2025 screenings on Hawai'i Island will focus on film as an art form with particular relevance to the creative economy that sustains social and economic development. Question and Answer sessions with actors and directors, and workshops for aspiring filmmakers highlight the many facets of this industry in Hawai'i and provides the filmmakers with new opportunities for audience engagement and career development within this creative industry.

Nā'ālehu Theatre, *Hawaiian Music Outreach Program*, \$7,500.00

This Hawaiian music master's outreach program is the result of ongoing programs presented by the Nā'ālehu Theatre (NT) that first began in our rural Ka'ū community in 1997. The program will provide hands-on in-school instruction (at least 18 1-hr sessions) held weekly at Holualoa school for 4th and 5th grade students (at least 150 students). Music instruction will be taught by some of Hawai'i's best performing artists, performing arts experiences and include a range of cultural learning experiences and music selections relevant to the particular area (Mele Wai Pana). Students in the program will perform in several community events including Holualoa School May Day program, 4th annual Aloha Shirt Festival held in Keahou-Kona in October and at the Hilo Hawaiian Music Festival in Hilo July, 2025. The program will also present music workshops open to the public and to Holualoa School students to attend as part of our Hilo Hawaiian Music Festival concert. The concert is open to the public and performers will provide workshops on the Friday before the concert on Saturday. Students in the program attend the performances on scholarship. Instruction and performances focus on Hawaiian music traditions, styling, and instruments, providing youth and their families in rural communities with an opportunity for hands-on performing arts experiences, up-close exposure to Hawaiian kiho'alu /slack key, ukulele and steel guitar music instruction, including related mo'olelo (stories) hula and other cultural traditions relevant to the area. Music is taught by some of Hawai'i's best performing artists. It also stimulates awareness and renewed interest in traditional Hawaiian music particularly with the youth who are exposed to a diversity of cultural music forms that have begun to radically alter Hawai'i's unique historic music style.

North Kohala Community Resource Center, *Kohala Oral History Project – Youth Filmmaking Program*, \$15,500.00

Serving as a mini-incubator for creative workforce development, the program will train 6 middle and high school students in oral history documentation and filmmaking techniques. The project will capture 30 oral history interviews centered on the 100-year history of Kohala Schools. The program will produce the following creative outputs: Up to 6 student "Story Keepers" trained in oral history documentation and filmmaking Filmed interviews of 30 North

Kohala kūpuna (elders) – alumni, former teachers, and community members recounting their memories of Kohala Schools An online exhibit comprised of 100 shorter oral history video clips accessible to the general public on www.kohalaoralhistoryproject.com A 26-minute documentary short film, *Thru the Cane Fields Ring*, commemorating the 100-year anniversary of Kohala Schools An oral history and filmmaking curriculum for educators and the public A public event featuring a film screening of the documentary

Regenerative Tourism Program

Aranya Solutions, *Hawai'i Ecovillage Tour*, \$10,000.00

Aranya Solutions proposes the Hawaii Ecovillage Tour, an immersive, educational, and regenerative travel experience showcasing sustainable living models across Hawaii Island. This eight-day guided tour (January 4–11, 2026) will connect participants with ecovillages, education centers, sustainability projects, and cultural initiatives, fostering deeper engagement with regenerative tourism while directly supporting local communities. Ecovillages, as defined by the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), integrate social, ecological, cultural, and economic sustainability into their design. Our broad definition includes intentional communities, permaculture farms, off-grid homesteads, and regenerative agriculture projects that serve as living examples of community-driven solutions to modern challenges. This project builds upon the success of our pilot Hawaii Ecovillage Tour (January 4–11, 2025), which demonstrated strong demand for immersive educational experiences centered on regenerative tourism. Based on participant feedback and host insights, we are refining and expanding the tour with a greater focus on research and development to meaningfully increase our economic contributions to local communities and enhanced sustainability efforts. The 2026 tour will include more scholarship opportunities for local participants, higher payments to hosting communities and guest teachers, and a stronger commitment to zero-waste practices

Destination Hilo Foundation, *Hilo Pier Greetings 2025*, \$25,000.00

Destination Hilo's flagship "Hawaiian Greetings Program" began in the 1990's to welcome visitors as they disembark at the Hilo Pier prior to spending their day in and around Hilo. The Hilo Pier Greetings Program provides Hawaiian entertainment and an information center in the pier terminal building for arriving cruise passengers and crew. A musician and one to two dancers provide a program of Hawaiian music and hula as passengers arrive in the Pier terminal building. Aloha Ambassadors (volunteers and a paid manager) provide a warm welcome, information, maps, and brochures. They assist the shuttle drivers who provide free transport to Downtown Hilo by coordinating reservations for passengers who wish to ride the free shuttles and go to the shops, museums, and Farmers Market. When asked, the ambassadors direct passengers to independent tour drivers, taxis, and the Hele-On Bus. They also assist with directions to drug stores, urgent care centers, and county offices when needed. The Pier Greetings Program helps direct visitors to our local businesses such as Hoppa-On, various independent tour drivers, car rentals, mom and pop stores, museums, art

galleries, coffee shops, restaurants, drug stores, the Farmers Market. This provides an economic benefit to our local economy and results in our visitors having wonderful memories of a day in Hilo that will be shared with family and friends back home. The Pier Greetings Program is run every day a ship is in port, all year. In 2025, we anticipate 135 cruise ships on 140 days, an increase from 112 ships in 2024. Five ships will stay overnight in 2025. The proposed amount requested covers expenses from March through June, 2025.

Destination Hilo Foundation, *Hilo Hula at the Bandstand*, \$3,800.00

Hilo Hula at the Bandstand began in the fall of 2014. This program provides cruise passengers, FIT visitors, and residents with a wonderful FREE hour of authentic Hawaiian hula, music and a cultural workshop of lei making. The Pride of America arrives in Hilo every Tuesday, so we reserve the Mo'ohau Park Bandstand from 11 a.m. to 1:30 on Tuesdays during the year. The actual event is from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m. so that visitors and residents can enjoy the hour during their lunch time. Because it is a recurring event, there is a local following made up of residents who enjoy Hawaiian music and hula. They bring their visitors or simply show up on a regular basis. Visitors coming off the Pride of America are advised of this event, and others who are visiting Hilo's Farmers Market hear the music and walk across the street to enjoy the free performance. Most of our audience is from the cruise ship. Twice a month, kupuna from Alu Like's Halau Ke Ola Pono No Na Kupuna provide a ti-leaf lei workshop ("make and take"). They instruct the visitors and help them make a bracelet, or headband, or lei to wear around their neck. This event brings many visitors to Downtown Hilo on Tuesdays.