



# Holomua Marine Initiative Fund

## Strengthening Community Advocacy 2026

### Funding Opportunity

**Online Application Deadline: Monday, October 5, 2026, 4:00 p.m. HST**

#### OVERVIEW

##### Background

In 2016, during a meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) hosted by Hawai'i State, the state responded to the call from the Pacific regional and international community to achieve effective management of nearshore marine and 'āina resources. The Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources serves as the lead State agency for achieving nearshore marine management goals of this effort. The Hawai'i Community Foundation contributes to the achievement of effective nearshore marine management goals by serving as a philanthropic funding mechanism to support strong collaboration, community engagement, and co-management through the Holomua Marine Initiative Fund.

*"The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) launched The Holomua Marine Initiative as a way to work with communities to effectively manage our nearshore marine resources around each main Hawaiian island so that our local resources are available and plentiful, today and for future generations. This is a new community-based planning approach to ensure local knowledge is guiding marine resource management planning at every step in the process.*

*Building on the rich and effective traditional management practices and knowledge of Hawai'i, along with guidance from fishers, cultural and scientific experts and community leaders, DAR has outlined a path built on four pillars:*

1. **Place-based planning** aims to identify and develop management strategies for improved marine management in partnership with communities and stakeholders at local to regional scales.
2. **Pono Practices** encourages responsible behavior guided by Hawaiian values and perspectives through education and outreach, statewide rules, strengthened enforcement, and local partnerships to encourage sustainable behaviors and practices in nearshore waters.

**Focus:** Strengthen capacity for effective advocacy in community organizations and programs in Hawai'i making meaningful contributions to effective nearshore marine management.

**Grant Range:** Up to \$10,000

**Grant Period:** November 1, 2026 – December 1, 2027

**Estimated Total Funds Available:** \$250,000



3. **Monitoring** measures and documents current conditions, tracks progress following implementation of new management approaches, and uses data to identify areas where management actions need to be further adapted.
4. **Protection and Restoration** builds on existing strategies to prevent damage to fragile nearshore ecosystems from invasive species, disease, and environmental damage events and expands efforts to restore and enhance impacted areas.”<sup>1</sup>

Created by the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF), the CHANGE Framework was developed to better understand and address the most critical, complex challenges facing our community.<sup>2</sup> For Hawai'i's natural environment to flourish, our people must maintain a reciprocal relationship with 'āina, honoring traditional knowledge and practices that long secured abundance. This shared kuleana can become a thriving and resilient root system interconnecting equitable cultural, spiritual, mental, social, physical, and economic well-being for all life.<sup>3</sup> HCF supports the efforts of the Holomua Marine Initiative through this lens of the CHANGE Framework, with the collaborative aim of working with communities to effectively manage our nearshore marine areas and resources.<sup>4</sup>

HCF sees the clear alignment between the vision set forth by the DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources for the Holomua Marine Initiative and HCF's vision for thriving communities, shared kuleana, and a reciprocal relationship with 'āina that honors the knowledge and practices that has long secured abundance.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to strengthen capacity for effective advocacy in community organizations and programs in Hawai'i that make meaningful contributions to achieving the collective goal of the Holomua Marine Initiative, which focuses on effectively managed nearshore marine resources in Hawai'i with strong community co-management.

## GRANT FOCUS

The primary focus of this opportunity is to provide capacity support and training for communities in Hawai'i on a range of topics that will help to further their abilities to advocate for policy goals that underpin effective management of marine resources and ecosystems. The types of training support to be provided may include but are not limited to:

- Exploring and identifying community and organizational advocacy goals;
- Understanding of the legislative process and opportunities therein to have positive impact on local and state decision-making;
- Strengthening advocacy knowledge and skills, including the preparation and delivery of testimony, understanding the rules related to advocacy and lobbying, etc.;
- Agreeing on advocacy pathways to support community-identified advocacy goals;

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<sup>1</sup> (State of Hawaii, 2026)

<sup>2</sup> (Hawai'i Community Foundation, 2026)

<sup>3</sup> (Hawaii Community Foundation, 2026)

<sup>4</sup> (Hawaii Community Foundation, 2026)



- Collaborating with partners to support community-identified site-specific and state-wide advocacy goals; and,
- Articulating how place-based advocacy priorities connect to collective efforts to achieve effective nearshore marine management.

## **ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must fall into one of three (3) following categories:

- a nonprofit organization in the State of Hawai'i with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status;
- a community group with a geographically delineated area of responsibility, i.e., residents of a community, lineal descendants of a moku or ahupua'a, concerned citizens of an area, etc. in the state of Hawai'i;
- or a community group with a marine use or activity focus, i.e., fishers group, limu hui, dive association, etc.
- existing and former HCF Holomua Marine Initiative grantees, partners, and applicants who are engaged with the Holomua Marine Initiative network will be prioritized for award. Additional consideration will be given to applicants whose participation would strengthen the overall geographic diversity and strategic impact of the cohort.

Current grantees/members of the 2025 Strengthening Community Advocacy Cohort are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity and membership to the 2026 Cohort, and will be considered Alaka'i, with adjusted agreed expectations for Cohort participation, in consultation with HCF and the Cohort Convenor.

Groups that are not an organization with 501(c)(3) status must have valid fiscal sponsors with 501(c)(3) status to submit the application and manage the grant funds on their behalf. Fiscal sponsors must be based in the state of Hawai'i.

1. Organizations with any past due HCF final reports are not eligible to apply. To ensure eligibility, submit any outstanding final reports to HCF, or request a no cost extension, no later than the submission deadline for this funding opportunity.
2. Matching resources of a minimum 50% are required and may consist of cash or other grants, in-kind services and/or volunteer time. Sources of match need to be identified in the proposal and in progress or final reports.

Applicants agree to the following requirements of this funding opportunity:

- Commit to working collaboratively with the HCF Marine Advocacy Cohort Convenor - on activities that contribute to strengthening organization and community capacity to advocate for decisions that supports the goal of effectively managed nearshore marine areas with strong community engagement;
- Commit to participating in a one-year program of gatherings, learning sessions and exchanges, and targeted capacity building activities as part of a cohort of communities collectively working toward strengthening advocacy. HCF anticipates cohort activities to include:



- bi-weekly virtual gathering sessions, including introductory & learnings sessions, from November 2026-April 2027;
- monthly virtual gathering sessions from June to December 2027;
- one-on-one coaching/mentoring office hours as needed or requested; and,
- at least one in-person activity, event, or gathering.
- Identify at least two participants from the applicant organization or community group who are in key positions of organization and program leadership to represent the group in cohort gatherings, events, and activities for the one-year period.

### **Funding**

Grant requests for up to 10% of current annual operating budgets or no more than \$10,000 USD will be considered. HCF anticipates awarding 20-25 grants. Awards will be used to support participation in a one-year Community Advocacy Cohort, November 2026 through November, 2027.

### **Grant Term**

Grant requests for a duration of 12 months (1 year) will be considered.

### **Reporting**

Grantees will be required to submit a final report and financial report to HCF.

### **TIMELINE/KEY DATES**

| Description                         | Date               |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Funding Opportunity (FO) Release    | August 24, 2026    |
| Virtual Information Session*        | September 11, 2026 |
| Application Deadline                | October 5, 2026    |
| Anticipated Notification Time Frame | October 30, 2026   |

*\*To register for the virtual information session, please click this link: <https://hcf-hawaii-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/HcNBaOO8QeurUKc9LZPTbQ>*

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

#### **Online Application**

Applications can be submitted online via the Hawai'i Community Foundation's Grants Portal: [https://hawaiicf.smartsimple.com/s\\_Login.jsp](https://hawaiicf.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp) using Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox.

Applicants must log in to their account to apply; new users must register for an account. We recommend that you do not wait until the last moment to submit your application as you may experience technical difficulties. Only complete applications submitted by the deadline will be accepted; this includes completion of Organization Profiles and associated fiscal sponsorship documents, if applicable.



## ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Both new and returning users must certify and submit the organization profile prior to submission of the application; re-certification is required every six months.

The Organizational Profile consists of five tabs: *Organization Information*, *Contact Information*, *Budget*, *Board and Certification*. To submit your organization profile, you must complete all required fields marked with an asterisk on each tab.

## APPLICATION

The application consists of four tabs: *Program Overview*, *Program Information*, *Budget*, and *Supporting Documents & Certification*. All required fields are marked with an asterisk.

- **Program Overview:**
  - Provide general information and characteristics about the program including program title, duration, program location(s), ages and genders served, and the CHANGE sector(s) your program most closely aligns with.
  - For more information about the CHANGE framework, please visit our website <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/change>.
  - If you have a fiscal sponsor, you will be asked to identify your fiscal sponsor. Please note, your fiscal sponsor must first be registered in the Grants Portal prior to submitting your application.
- **Program Information:**
  - **Organization Description:** Describe the history and mission of the organization/program. (Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page)
    - What is the organization's vision and aspirations?
    - How many staff and volunteers?
    - Summarize advocacy aims and indicate how they are linked to the organization's mission and impact on effective marine management with strong community engagement.
  - **Problem or Opportunity:** Describe the need or opportunity you are trying to address and why this is critical. (Maximum 3,000 characters = ¾ page)
  - **Program Activities:** Describe the activities that will be completed to address the need/opportunity. Explain why you chose this approach. Provide a program timeline. Describe how your project aligns with the priority of the fund you are applying. Describe the advocacy efforts, activities, and skills you are interested in exploring and learning about in support of your organization's mission and effective marine management with strong community engagement. (Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page)
  - **Expected Results:** Describe what you hope to achieve and how you will measure the effectiveness of your program. (Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page)
- **Budget:** Provide your total program budget, amount requested through this application, and upload a copy of your program's budget, showing income and expenses, indicating sources of income that are pending and secured. (Please Note: The HCF [program budget](#)



[template](#), which is provided in the “Resources” section of each applicant’s HCF Grants Portal account, may be used).

- **Supporting Documents & Certification:** Upload any additional required documents as listed in the application guidelines. If you are using a fiscal sponsor, please be sure that they certify your application prior to submission. *Not all funding opportunities require additional documents; review the tool tips in grey for details.*

## ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Please use this space to provide:

1. Letters or emails of support from collaborating partners, organizations, or agencies *(Please Note: These documents are not required, however, if your organization has these documents, they would strengthen the proposal);*
2. workplan for proposed activities *(Please Note: The HCF [workplan template](#), which is provided in the “Resources” section of each applicant’s HCF Grants Portal account, may be used);*
3. proposal budget narrative; and,
4. any strategies or plans that link your project or program and the needs identified in your proposal and the goal of effectively managed marine resources with strong community engagement. *(Please Note: These documents are not required, however, if your organization has these documents, they would be helpful).*

## FISCAL SPONSORS

Fiscal sponsors must have an account in the portal. Their profile must be certified and include their IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter and up-to-date financial documents. Fiscal Sponsor Agreement and Board Resolution templates can be found at this [link](#).

- Starting July 28, 2025, **fiscal sponsors will be required to certify the application before it can be submitted by the applicant.** To do so, the applicant must invite the fiscal sponsor to collaborate on the draft application. Please reference this [video](#) and our [External User Guide](#) on how to invite collaborators. The fiscal sponsor as a collaborator can then check the Fiscal Sponsor certification box under Supporting Documents & Certification.

## RESOURCES

1. HCF Program Budget Template *(available in HCF Grants Portal accounts in the “Resources” tab)*
2. HCF Workplan Template *(available in HCF Grants Portal accounts in the “Resources” tab)*

## EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Organization’s mission, capacity, and alignment with the goal of effective nearshore marine management with strong community engagement.
2. Urgency of problem or opportunity to be addressed if awarded.



3. Partnerships, particularly with the Holomua Marine network, communities and community-based organizations, in place to support and contribute to the organization's projects and programs.
4. Strategic impact of proposed activities and expected results.
5. Soundness of organizational capacity for fiscal management of funds and resources for its projects and programs.

### **INFORMATION SESSION**

A virtual information session about this funding opportunity, the HCF Grants Portal, and procedures for creating an account in the HCF system and submitting a proposal will be conducted on September 11, 2026 at 1:00PM. Those who intend to participate should register [HERE using this link](#).

### **NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

Decision notifications will be sent by email to the applicant, applicant's Chief Staff or Volunteer, and if applicable, the Fiscal Sponsor contact in the HCF Grants Portal. The decision letter will be attached to the email and available in the Grants Portal under My Application Tracker in the Active or Historical tabs.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions about this funding opportunity, these guidelines or the HCF Holomua Marine Initiative Fund you may contact:

Tiare Holm by phone at 808-566-5573 or via email at [tholm@hcf-hawaii.org](mailto:tholm@hcf-hawaii.org).

Neighbor Islands may call our toll-free number at 1-888-731-3863

For technical assistance with the Grants Portal, please submit a [support ticket](#).

For technical assistance with the Grants Portal, please submit a [support ticket](#).

### ***Tips for Applicants***

- How-to videos, the Applicant User Guide and support tickets can be found on our [website](#).
- Tool tips can be found throughout the portal. These boxes indicate exactly what information you should provide.
- Use Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox on a computer for the best user experience.
- The online application has fillable boxes with character limits that may not match character counts in MS word. If you cut and paste your work into the application, please be sure all text is complete.
- If you have an existing organization profile and fields are not editable, please click "Update Profile". This will move your org profile to draft and allow you to make edits. Click "Submit" to move it back to active status.



## REFERENCES

- Hawaii Community Foundation. (2026, January 27). *Holomua Marine Initiative*. Retrieved from Hawaii Community Foundation: <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/strengthening/holomua-marine-initiative>
- Hawaii Community Foundation. (2026, January 27). *Natural Environment*. Retrieved from Hawaii Community Foundation: <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/change/natural-resources>
- Hawai'i Community Foundation. (2026, January 27). *The CHANGE Framework*. Retrieved from Hawai'i Community Foundation: <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/CHANGE>
- State of Hawaii. (2026, January 27). *Holomua Marine Initiative*. Retrieved from Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/>