



2025-2027 Supporting Healthy Development of Young Children Funding Opportunity

Online Application Deadline: Friday, February 28, 2025, 4:00 p.m. HST

OVERVIEW

The Rev. Takie Okumura Family Fund was established at the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) in 1990, by members of the Okumura family with the intent to continue the charitable works of Rev. Okumura in modern times. The Advisory Committee for the Okumura Family Fund explored the work of Rev. Okumura considering carefully what had guided his charitable activities and decided to focus on the healthy development of Hawai'i's young children and youth.

The Advisory Committee will review applications and make recommendations for grants for programs that are most consistent with the purpose and priorities of the fund.

THEORY OF CHANGE

This funding opportunity will support organizations that provide direct services to Hawai'i's most vulnerable young children (ages 0-5) and their families to ensure equitable access to nurturing environments and resources and promote healthy development, well-being, and long-term success for young children in Hawai'i.

BACKGROUND

The Native Hawaiian story "Bowl of Light" from *Tales from the Night Rainbow*¹ illustrates how every keiki is born with a bowl of light, symbolizing that each child innately possesses purity and potential. If the child tends to the light, the child will grow and accomplish outstanding feats. However, if the child experiences negative feelings, the child drops a stone in the bowl, dimming the light. The more stones dropped in, the less light is seen and soon the child will become a stone—not able to move or grow. But if the child ever tires of being a stone, with the guidance and encouragement of caring adults, the bowl can be turned upside down letting the stones fall away so the child's light can shine once more.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), a series of traumatic events such as growing up in a divorced household, witnessing or experiencing abuse, or feeling neglected, represent types of stone that can fill up a child's bowl. ACEs can cause toxic stress, which increases the risk of chronic mental and physical health conditions and can lead to a reduced overall quality of life.²

¹ Pali Jae Lee and Koko Willis, *Tales from the Night Rainbow*, 1986, Night Rainbow Publishing Co.

² [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) & Childhood Trauma \(clevelandclinic.org\)](https://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/conditions-and-treatments/12777/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces)

Fortunately, there are ways to prevent stones from dropping into the bowl in the first place by fostering [Protective Factors](#). According to the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), these protective factors are crucial for building resilience and preventing child abuse and neglect. The five key protective factors are:

1. **Parental resilience**
2. **Social connections**
3. **Knowledge of parenting and child development**
4. **Concrete supports**
5. **Social and emotional competence of children**

These protective factors help keep a child's bowl free of stones, allowing their light to continue shining brightly.

Just as stones can be removed to let the light shine again, Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) can mitigate the effects of ACEs and aid in restoring a child's well-being. The HOPE (Health Outcomes of Positive Experiences) framework "combines a public health approach to preventing child abuse with a broader understanding of how children grow to become strong, healthy, and resilient adults,"³ and emphasizes the importance of creating environments that promote health and resilience. HOPE focuses on four critical building blocks:

1. **Safe and nurturing relationships** with caregivers and peers.
2. **Supportive and equitable environments** where children feel physically and emotionally secure.
3. **Opportunities for engagement** in meaningful activities that foster a sense of purpose and belonging.
4. **Emotional growth** through experiences that help children develop self-regulation and mental health.

By integrating these protective factors and positive experiences, we can create conditions and environments that nurture our keiki's well-being and resilience, helping them not only heal but thrive. We understand that the task of preventing and removing the stones does not fall solely on the child, but also involves the support the child receives. The Okumura Fund is committed to building and protecting the light of our youngest keiki, and seeks nonprofit partners to help carry this vision forward together.

PROGRAM FOCUS

This funding opportunity invites proposals that focus on preventing the "stones" from falling into the bowl through family-strengthening efforts that emphasize prevention. Additionally, it seeks projects that help children "turn over the bowl" by fostering Positive Childhood Experiences, using the HOPE Framework or other proven, evidence-based strategies. Proposals can include mental health support as a key component for both preventing adversity and promoting recovery and resilience.

³ [History | Tufts Hope \(positiveexperience.org\)](https://www.positiveexperience.org/history)

Program Focus Areas

The primary focus of this program is to support the healthy development of young children (ages 0-5). Applications should align with one or more of the following focus areas:

1. Family Strengthening

- Build **parental resilience** and support parenting education.
- Promote **social connections** and create support networks for families.
- Strengthen **knowledge of parenting and child development**.
- Provide **concrete support in times of need**.
- Foster **social and emotional competence in children**.

2. Mental Health Support

- Provide mental health services aligned with infant early childhood mental and behavioral health, especially in areas with limited access.
- Engage mental health professionals in innovative ways to support young children and families to aid the healthy development of young children.

3. Combating ACEs with Positive Childhood Experiences

- Create environments that reduce the impact of ACEs and encourage positive interactions for young children.

Priority Populations

This program seeks to support Hawai'i's most vulnerable young children and their families. This includes young children and families who are

- experiencing housing insecurities such as homelessness/houselessness, high housing burdens, or severe housing problems (overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen, or lack of plumbing facilities)
- experiencing food insecurities
- living in rural or remote communities as identified through the provision of key data
- considered high-risk populations as identified through the provision of key data

Criteria for priority populations were informed by the following data sets:

- [Hawai'i Health Matters Trackers:](#)
 - High Housing Burden
 - Severe Housing Problems
 - Homelessness Rate
- [CDC Rural Health](#)
- [The State of Food Insecurity In Hawai'i 2023](#)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The strongest applications will be those that meet the following criteria:

- Organization and key personnel demonstrate the knowledge and experience working with the proposed community and have the ability to successfully carry out the program.

- The problem or opportunity description is supported by relevant data about the population served and the need the community is facing.
- The proposed population to be served aligns with the priority population listed in the Program Focus area.
- Data is provided showing the program's recent and relevant past performance and alignment with the goals of the funding opportunity.
- Proposed activities are evidence-based or best practices.
- Application aligns with the funding opportunity's program focus areas and the overall theory of change to support young children ages 0-5 and their families.
- Application articulates a clear and logical relationship between activities and results sought.
- Outcomes are clearly described and include key data that will be collected and used to effectively measure impact.
- The program budget is realistic and adequate to support the proposed program for a two-year period.
- Applicant's funding request is in alignment with its financial capacity.

GRANT RANGE

Grants will be up to \$40,000, \$20,000 per year for a two-year period. The grant period will be May 2025 to May 2027. The total funding pool is \$380,000 annually depending on the availability of funds.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

Hawai'i nonprofit organizations that are 501(c)(3) IRS tax-exempt organizations or programs with a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) status. Organizations currently funded by HCF with overdue final reports are not eligible to apply. Organizations can submit 1 application for this funding opportunity and must be providing services in Hawai'i.

Programs not likely to be funded:

- Major capital programs
- Funds for an endowment or for the benefit of specific individuals

APPLICATION PROCESS

Online Application

This application is available for online submission through Hawai'i Community Foundation's Grants Portal. New users may register for an account here https://hawaiicf.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp. Registered users may log in to their account to submit an application. Please give yourself adequate time before the submission deadline to access the system and familiarize yourself with the application process and requirements.

Instructions

- Only complete and timely applications will be accepted.

- The online application has fillable boxes with character limits. The character counts in MS Word may not match the character counts in the application. If you cut and paste your work into the application, please be sure your text fits the space provided.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

As part of the online application, your organization profile must be certified prior to submission of grant applications and must be certified every 6 months. Information needed to complete your organization's profile includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter (not required if previously applied to the Foundation or if applying through a fiscal sponsor)
- Number of full-time, part-time, or regular volunteer staff
- Organization Mission
- Service Location(s)
- Types of services provided (including age, gender, and target populations served)
- Financial Statements
 - Annual Operating budget for the current year
 - Income statement (or profit/loss statement) for the most recently completed fiscal year
 - Balance sheet for the most recently completed fiscal year
 - Audited financial statements are preferred but not required
 - Local units of national organizations must submit local unit financial information
- Current Board of Directors List

APPLICATION

The application consists of 4 tabs. Information needed to complete your application includes, but is not limited to the following:

- **Program Overview:**
 - Provide general information and characteristics about the program including program title, duration, area of interest, 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. What is the organization's experience implementing this program and staff capabilities to conduct the proposed work? (*Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page*)
 - **Problem or Opportunity:** Describe the need or opportunity you are trying to address and why it is critical. Describe why this is a critical area of need for the priority

population you serve, and how your organization is best fit to address it. (*Maximum 3,000 characters = ¾ page*)

- **Program Activities:** Describe the activities that will be completed to address the need/opportunity, including how the program fosters Protective Factors, Mental and Behavioral Health support, and/or Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) using the HOPE framework. Explain why you chose this approach and how your program will build the skills and knowledge of adults to foster nurturing relationships and environments for young children, particularly those prenatal to age five. If this is an ongoing program, share past program successes. Is this an evidence-based or promising practice approach? Was the strategy informed by the community? Provide a program timeline outlining activities over the two years. Describe how your program aligns with the focus area(s). (*Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page*)
- **Expected Results:** How many people do you expect to serve (Year 1, Year 2, Cumulative)? Describe what you hope to achieve and how you will measure the effectiveness of your program and the healthy development of children. (*Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page*)
- **Budget:** Provide your total program budget, the amount requested (for two years) through this application, and upload a copy of your program’s budget (for two years), showing income and expenses, including sources of income that are pending and secured.
 - Applicants are strongly recommended to use the Young Children Program Budget template available in the Grant Portal’s Resources section.
- **Support Documents & Certification:**
 - Optional: Upload a 5-minute or less audio or video recording to tell the story of your project. This recording may look like a staff member explaining the program/project and recording it on a video conference platform like Zoom, or a staff narrating the program while doing a brief virtual tour recorded with the built-in camera on your phone or device. We are not expecting edited, polished videos used for marketing or fundraising for your program. Acceptable formats are .wav, .mp4, .mov, .mp3, .wav, etc. Maximum file size is 2 GB per file.

FISCAL SPONSORS – Programs with fiscal sponsors must also upload the following as PDFs:

- Resolution by fiscal sponsor’s board of directors authorizing fiscal sponsorship
- Fiscal sponsor’s agreement form
- *Both forms can be found at:*
<http://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/grants/fiscal-sponsor-materials>
- Fiscal sponsor’s IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter

To support HCF’s validation and verification process, organizations less than one year old and/or first-time applicants to HCF, may be requested to submit references during the evaluation process.

KEY DATES

Description	Date
Application Release	January 13, 2025
Virtual Information Session 1	January 28, 2025, 12:00 – 1:00pm HST Register Here
Virtual Information Session 2	February 6, 2025, 12:00 – 1:00pm HST Register Here
Application Deadline	February 28, 2025, by 4:00pm HST
Grant Start Date	May 2025
Grant End Date	May 2027

RESOURCES

Please refer to our [Applicant User Guide](#) for help with our Grants Portal.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this funding opportunity, please contact Jarissa Lum at jlum@hcf-hawaii.org.

For technical assistance with the online application process, please submit a support ticket at <http://hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/ticket>.