

Fresh Water Initiative – Water Conservation, Recharge & Reuse Grants Funding Opportunity

Online Application Deadline: Monday, November 10, 2025, 4:00 p.m. HST

OVERVIEW

The Hawai'i Community Foundation's (HCF) Wai Maoli: Hawai'i Fresh Water Initiative (FWI) continues its efforts to increase Hawai'i's long-term potable water security through water conservation, recharge, and reuse across the state of Hawai'i. With this grant round, the Initiative is looking to fund water projects that directly support any aspect of the FWI goals.

Background

Fresh water is the foundation of economic and environmental sustainability for Hawai'i, but our supply is increasingly threatened by precipitating factors of climate change and a growing population. In recognition of the critical importance of long-term fresh water security for the Hawaiian Islands, the comprehensive "Fresh Water Initiative" is designed to pro-actively address and resolve water supply issues. The Initiative's ultimate goal is to create 100 million gallons per day (MGD) in additional, reliable fresh water capacity for our islands by 2030 to help adapt to declining rainfall and other climate challenges. The Initiative was designed by a diverse, knowledgeable blue-ribbon council via a two-year collaborative process resulting in a [Fresh Water Blueprint for Action](#) (Blueprint). The Blueprint set out ambitious goals to increase water conservation, recharge, and reuse across the state, and recommended over 30 discrete policy and practice changes to be implemented by 2030.



HCF aims to support the work of the Fresh Water Initiative's Blueprint for Action by funding projects that directly support the FWI's goals and priorities and contribute measurable benefits to the state of Hawai'i.

ELIGIBILITY

- Non-Profits (community organizations, homestead associations, homeowners' associations, etc.) – must be a 501(c)(3) or have a fiscal sponsor
- State and County Governments
- Water Agencies and Utilities

Eligible Projects

Any project that supports the Fresh Water Initiative goals – creating 100 million gallons per day (MGD) in additional, reliable fresh water capacity for our islands by 2030 through water conservation, recharge, and reuse (see Background). Examples of eligible projects include water efficiency improvements, water utility giveaways, rebate or conservation programs for homeowners, water management projects (planning, water audits, surveys), water security assessments, water sustainability projects, water master planning, water project feasibility studies, onsite water reuse systems, implementing or retrofitting green infrastructure, water conservation retrofits, etc.

If you have questions about your project's eligibility, please email us at Environment@hcf-hawaii.org. We will also be hosting a **virtual informational session on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 12:00 pm**, please register at this [link](#).

Criteria for Proposal Review

Proposals **must** meet one of the following criteria to be considered.

Project Criteria

1. Demonstrate measurable project impact. Narrative clearly describes how the project will help to achieve concrete water security benefits and how they will be measured.

AND/OR

2. Demonstrate potential benefits to the statewide FWI goals. Narrative describes clear connections between project activities and downstream benefits to fresh water sustainability.

The strongest proposals will be those that meet most or all of the following criteria.

- Project will be able to demonstrate direct gallons per day savings that will be achieved through water efficiencies, stormwater capture, or offset by water reuse.
- Proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the technical resources or partnerships that are critical to success.



- Proposal indicates added value such as improvements to groundwater recharge, energy savings, economic benefits or social equity improvements (like prioritizing benefits to underserved populations) that would also be achieved through the project.
- Proposal indicates plans to amplify the reach of the project such as involving partners, collaborations, neighbors, sharing successes, etc.
- Organization has strong staff support and organizational capacity for project implementation.
- Budget is realistic and reasonable with any indirect costs, matched or leveraged funds clearly defined.
- Timeline and work plan are realistic and reasonable and do not exceed 24 months.

This grant will NOT fund the following:

- Purchase of new heavy equipment (exclusive of added fixtures that improve efficiency)
- Research projects
- Project timelines of more than 24 months
- Existing operational or programmatic work or work that replaces existing or gap expenses for operations.

REQUIREMENTS

Grant Range: Grant requests for up to \$100,000 will be considered (up to a maximum of \$50,000 per year for project timelines between 12 to 24 months). **Funding decisions will be made in December 2025.**

Grant Terms: Grant requests for projects with a duration of 12-24 months (2 years maximum) will be considered.

Reporting: Grantee will be required to submit annual progress reports (for project periods greater than 12 months) and a final project and financial report to HCF.

Online Application

This application is available for online submission through the 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. Please reference our [Applicant User Guide](#) for further instructions.

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 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
- Board of Directors List
- If you are using a fiscal sponsor, please be sure that they complete their organization profile including the certification requirement prior to the Funding Opportunity Application Deadline.

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, 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 this is critical. Indicate how it is linked to the Fresh Water Initiatives goals of creating 100 million gallons per day (MGD) in additional, reliable fresh water capacity for our islands by 2030 through water conservation, recharge, and reuse. (*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 project timeline. Describe how your project aligns with the Fresh Water Initiative priorities and goals of creating 100 million gallons per day (MGD) in additional, reliable fresh water capacity for our islands by 2030 through water conservation, recharge, and reuse. (*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.
 - **Use the budget template provided** with the online application. A link to it can also be found at the [fresh water webpage](#) under Funding Opportunities.
- **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.
 - Workplan for proposed activities. **Use the workplan template provided** with the online application. A link to it can also be found at the [fresh water webpage](#) under Funding Opportunities.

FISCAL SPONSORS

Please reference our [External User Guide](#) for more information regarding fiscal sponsorship.

- Fiscal sponsors must have an account in the portal. Their profile must include their IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter and up-to-date financial documents.
- Required Documentation to be uploaded to the application:
 - 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>

- 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

[Fresh Water Initiative Blueprint for Action](#)

DEADLINE

Monday, November 10, 2025, 4:00 p.m. HST

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this funding opportunity, please email Environment@hcf-hawaii.org.

For technical assistance with the online application process, please submit a support ticket at <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/web/support-tickets>.