

Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation: Capacity Building Funding Opportunity

Online Application Deadline:

- Thursday, January 15, 2026, 4:00 p.m. HST;
- Friday, May 15, 2026, 4:00 p.m. HST;
- Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 4:00 p.m. HST

OVERVIEW

The Foundation wishes to support foster children, their caregivers, and transitioning foster youth. The Foundation recognizes that the strength and capacity of the nonprofit organizations and programs serving foster children, their families, and youth are key to the healthy development of foster children and transitioning youth. The Foundation offers this funding opportunity to provide meaningful support that enables nonprofit organizations and programs to strengthen and grow their capacity to serve foster children, their caregivers, and transitioning foster youth.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Foundation seeks to support projects that will increase the capacity of the organization, the program, or the system in the community to deliver quality services to the clientele described under Eligibility Requirements. Capacity building efforts may address

- Governance and leadership;
- Strategic relationships;
- Evaluation and impact;
- Resource development;
- Internal operations and management;
- Program design, delivery, and evaluation;
- Executive and key staff transitions; and
- Staff training.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) public charity. Units of government and public schools are not eligible for this funding opportunity. Fiscal sponsorships are not permissible.
- The majority percentage of the organization's or program's clientele or project beneficiaries must be:
 - children in the foster custody of a Hawai'i state government agency; children placed by a Hawai'i state government agency in therapeutic foster placement or

- in kinship, foster, respite, guardianship, permanent custody, or adoptive families;
or
- their caregivers, or
- current foster youth or young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who have aged out of the state child welfare or mental health systems.

GRANT RANGE, DURATION AND EXCLUSIONS:

Grants generally range from \$5,000 to \$40,000 and may be multi-year commitments, based on submission of satisfactory progress reports. Grants will not be made for capital, endowments, re-granting activities, or operating costs.

Proposal Review Criteria:

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

Readiness to Build Capacity

- Organization demonstrates awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Planning and/or self-assessment have taken place prior to beginning the project.
- Project is based on a well-considered strategy.
- Project timing is relevant for the organization’s stage of development.
- Board supports and is engaged in the project. If the project is program-based, upper-level management supports and is engaged in the project.
- Organization demonstrates an ability to evolve, learn, and be responsive to change.

Integrity of Proposed Project

- Project is focused and well-defined.
- Project identifies clear outcomes and measures of success.
- Appropriate stakeholders are involved in the project.
- Project budget is adequate, relates to the project narrative, and costs are reasonable.
- If a consultant is involved in the project, that person is qualified to undertake the project.

Potential for Impact of the Project

- Project will build substantial new capacity within the organization, program, or system.
- Project positions the organization or system for greater impact in fulfilling its mission.
- Project must involve an evaluation/measurement component.

Programming Excellence & Impact

Organization’s programs demonstrate excellence and impact in serving the children, youth, and caregivers involved in the state’s child welfare or child and adolescent mental health systems.

Financial Condition

Organization's financial condition is stable, or the proposal explicitly addresses financial management.

APPLICATION PROCESS

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://hawaii.cf.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

<https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/file/2025/Applicant-User-Guide-update.pdf>.

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 annually. 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
- Financials – including, income statement (or profit/loss statement) and balance sheet for the most recently completed fiscal year, and annual operating budget for the current year
- 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>.
- **Program Information:**
 - **Organization Description:** Describe the organization or program. What is the organization's mission and history, geographic reach, and volunteer and/or paid staff size? What is the organization's experience implementing this program and staff capabilities to conduct the proposed work? Briefly describe the organization's place in the child welfare or mental health field and in this community. *(Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page)*
 - **Problem or Opportunity:** Describe the need or opportunity you are trying to address and why this is critical. Why have you chosen to do this project now? What have you done internally to prepare for this project? For example, discussions with the management team, involved the appropriate stakeholders, consulted with the board, etc. (Reference both internal and external factors.) *(Maximum 3,000 characters = ¾ page)*
 - **Program Activities:** Describe what you plan to do, including desired outcomes. Who will provide leadership for this project, and why? *(Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page)*
 - **Expected Results:** Describe what you hope to achieve and how you will measure the effectiveness of your program. When will you begin to see that impact? Beyond the project outputs, how will this project contribute to your organization's ability to accomplish its mission to benefit foster children, their caregivers, and transitioning foster youth? *(Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page)*
 - **Consultant:** For requests that include a consultant or other external contractor, please answer the following (Maximum 2,000 character count single-spaced): How did you select this individual/organization? What capacity (knowledge and skills) will your organization acquire as a result of their work?
Important note: While you may describe the role and work of the consultant/contractor in the proposal, do not integrate their work plan and statement of qualifications in the project description. The consultant/contractor's work plan and statement of qualifications must be uploaded as a separate document
- **Budget:** Provide your total program budget and the 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. In addition, to Geist grant resources, what other resources, both financial and non-financial, will you need for this project? For instance, how much staff time, what types of information, etc.
- **Support Documents & Certification:** Upload any additional required documents as listed in the application guidelines.
 - **Project Tracking Matrix:** Clearly articulate the impact and outputs expected from this project by using the Project Tracking Matrix to submit proposed results for the program year. Organizations selected for awards will use the same document

to track actual results and related measurement methods. See online application to download a template.

- **Optional:** If the project includes hiring new staff, upload the job description and discuss how the position will be sustained beyond the grant period.

DEADLINE

For applications to be considered, they must be submitted online by clicking the “Submit” button on the final page of the application. Applications submitted by 4:00 p.m. (HST) on these dates will be considered at the next Board of Trustees meeting in the following months:

January 15, 2026, for the March meeting

May 15, 2026, for the July meeting

September 15, 2026, for the November meeting

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this funding opportunity, please contact Jarissa Lum via e-mail at jlum@hcf-hawaii.org or call (808) 566-5522.

The Foundation does not accept incomplete applications or applications from organizations with overdue reports.

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