

Seed Grants to Reduce Mental & Behavioral Health Stigma Funding Opportunity

Online Application Deadline: Friday, May 30th 4:00 p.m. HST

OVERVIEW

The Health and Wellness sector team at Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) plans to award up to \$250,000 in funds to organizations across Hawai'i with programs designed to reduce stigma surrounding mental illness, particularly among priority and underserved populations (see below). This funding opportunity builds on previous opportunities like the [CHANGE Grants Programs](#), [Health and Wellness Collaboration and Seed Grants](#), and the [Promising Minds initiative](#). It is part of the Mental & Behavioral Health Strategy designed to empower Hawai'i communities to reduce stigma, enhance access to mental & behavioral health (M&BH) services, and prioritize mental well-being for all.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Using the Hawai'i Community Foundation's [CHANGE Framework](#), we will support community-led efforts that use data to inform and identify inequities and build resilience across Hawai'i. HCF's Mental and Behavioral Health Strategy builds on the work of the [Promising Minds initiative](#) and other recent projects, as well as the trusted relationships with nonprofit and government leaders working on mental health reform. By the end of three years, we anticipate that stigma around mental illness will decrease in certain Hawai'i communities, and better inclusion of M&BH in health systems will begin to shift through demonstrations of improved education, screening, intervention, and treatment. Please refer to the [Health and Wellness Sector Summary of Findings](#) for more information about the full Health and Wellness vision statement, strategies, and how it was developed.

BACKGROUND

Stigma surrounding mental health causes discrimination at societal, institutional, and personal levels, and it often discourages individuals from seeking help for themselves or others, or accessing necessary treatment. While acknowledging the complex historical, structural, and culturally specific roots of M&BH stigmas, we believe that community-led, culturally relevant messaging can drive timely, respectful, and effective changes in both attitudes and behaviors around M&BH. We envision a Hawai'i where:

- Stigma around mental illness is reduced, encouraging individuals to seek help without fear or shame.
- M&BH is fully integrated into our health systems, leading to improved education, screening, and treatment for all.
- Outreach and education target underserved populations, ensuring no one is left behind.
- Public health policy is supportive of M&BH program and service expansion.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Health and Wellness sector at Hawai'i Community Foundation plans to award funds to programs that build organizational capacity for developing and disseminating messaging, specifically for messaging that reduces M&BH stigma within their communities. Programs must demonstrate the use of targeted, data-informed, and culturally appropriate messaging for their unique communities, including stigma prevention (education) and health promotion (awareness).

Awarded programs may use funds for purchasing creative software (e.g., graphic design or content creation platforms), staff time for strategic development, and other related costs. See below APPLICATION -> "Program Activities" for more information on what to include in your application.

A communications consultant, hired by HCF, will be available to provide technical assistance and support to awarded programs for message development and dissemination strategies across desired channels. Workshops will also be provided during grantee gatherings to encourage sharing as a cohort while supporting the learning and growth of communications endeavors.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

The grant awards will prioritize programs designed to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness among priority and underserved populations, including but not limited to Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, parents with young children, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, to address community-specific M&BH issues. Examples of other priority populations identified by the Hawaii State Department of Health can be referenced [here](#).

GRANT RANGE

Grants will range from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for a one-year period. The grant period will be July 2025 to June 2026. The total available funding is \$250,000.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

- Organization has experience in delivering M&BH services, and/or community-based health prevention, education, and outreach programs in Hawai'i.
- Organization and key personnel demonstrate knowledge and experience working with the proposed target community and can successfully carry out the program.
- Data is provided showing the organization's recent and relevant past performance and alignment with the goals of the funding opportunity.
- Proposed activities are clearly outlined in a structured timeline detailing key actions over the year.
 - The proposed population/community to be served aligns with a priority population listed in the Program Focus area.
 - Proposed strategy is evidence based; program effectively addresses M&BH stigma using relevant data about the target community.
 - Messaging strategy is culturally responsive and culturally relevant and includes clear methods for engaging and educating the target community.
 - Community input is reflected in the program design.
- Application aligns with the funding opportunity's program focus areas.
- 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 one-year period.
- Applicant's funding request is in alignment with its financial capacity.

ALL APPLICANT CRITERIA

- Organization's program(s) align with the Health and Wellness sector vision statement.
- Organization gathers data that tracks impact and progress toward its goals in the Health and Wellness sector.
- Organization utilizes data to improve its programs and collaborative efforts.
- HCF is committed to advancing equity in Hawai'i. HCF will support organizations that are focused on addressing the greatest disparities in our community.
- Organization collaborates to better fulfill their mission or leads/participates in a network with partners to foster systems change.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must be 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 one application for this funding opportunity and must be providing mental and behavioral health services, and/or community-based health prevention, education, and outreach programs in Hawai'i. Organizations that are awarded funding must participate in HCF related grantee gatherings or activities tied to this funding opportunity.

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 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 <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/file/2024/Applicant-User-Guide-8.8.24.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 every six 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

APPLICATION

The application consists of four tabs. Information needed to complete the 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. Detail the organization's experience in delivering M&BH services, and/or community-based health prevention, education, and outreach programs in Hawai'i. Include information on staff qualifications and capabilities to carry out 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. Provide relevant data as to 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:** Provide a program timeline outlining activities over the year and a description of how your program aligns with the focus area(s), including:
 - Your intended audience(s) for your campaign, including age range and key demographics
 - The sort of M&BH stigma(s) your program seeks to address, as well as the beliefs that challenge those stigma(s)
 - Your core messages and the basis of your educational model to reduce M&BH stigma in your community

- How this program will build capacity in your organization to develop and disseminate messaging that destigmatizes mental health in your community
- How you plan to field-test your messaging within your targeted communities
- Your timeline for message dissemination

Other questions to consider when describing your program activities and expected results:

- What is the desired action(s) that your communities will take upon engaging with your messaging?
- What are the beliefs that you hope to instill in your community?
- How do you plan to effectively connect to your target communities/audiences?
- How are you embedding the voices and experiences of your target audiences within your messaging?

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? *(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.

For requests that include a consultant or other external contractor, please answer the following: How did you select this individual/organization? What capacity (knowledge and skills) will your organization acquire because of their work? (Maximum 2,000 characters, single-spaced)

- **Supporting Documents & Certification:** Upload any additional required documents as listed in the application guidelines.

FISCAL SPONSORS

- 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

RESOURCES

- Please refer to HCF's [Applicant User Guide](#) for help with our Grants Portal.
- This funding opportunity builds on initiatives like [Promising Minds](#) to improve mental and behavioral health systems for children and families.

DEADLINE

Friday, May 30th, 2025, 4:00 p.m. HST

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this funding opportunity, please contact Gregg Kishaba at gkishaba@hcf-hawaii.org or (808) 566-5558.

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