

Holomua Marine Initiative Fund

Makai Watch Community Organizations

Funding Opportunity (Limited Eligibility)

[Online Application Deadline: Friday, June 19, 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 a pooled fund – 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.
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.

Focus: Support the nearshore marine management efforts of DLNR's officially designated Makai Watch Community Organizations.

Grant Range: Up to \$30,000.

Grant Period: Up to 24 months (two years). September 2026 – August 2028.

Estimated Total Funds

Available: \$500,000

Limited Eligibility: Eligibility is limited to DLNR's officially designated Makai Watch Community Organizations.



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.”¹

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.² 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.³ 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.⁴

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

A key component of effectively managing Hawai'i's nearshore waters is having an effective means of monitoring, educating and when needed enforcing the community's use of marine resources. The Makai Watch Program is a collaboration between communities and the State DLNR which recognizes effective marine management engages the community in helping to manage their resources. The community serves by monitoring uses, educating the public about the resources, and encouraging compliance with rules and regulations. The State DLNR helps to enforce the rules when education and community engagement is not enough. The Makai Watch Program has been in operation for two decades. The purpose of this funding opportunity (FO) is to support the success and sustainability of the Makai Watch Program and the implementation of strategies that achieve program objectives and respond effectively to community and partners' feedback regarding how Makai Watch can be strengthened and expanded to effectively embody the values and approach on which the Program was founded, which at its core recognizes that the people who use a resource ultimately are responsible for its long-term health. This FO is specifically intended to support the nearshore marine management efforts of DLNR's officially designated Makai Watch Community Organizations.

¹ (State of Hawaii, 2026)

² (Hawai'i Community Foundation, 2026)

³ (Hawaii Community Foundation, 2026)

⁴ (Hawaii Community Foundation, 2026)



Grant Focus

The activities that HCF will consider for funding in this proposal include:

1. Staff and volunteer recruitment and retention;
2. Organizational capacity building which can include training, peer learning exchanges, etc. (*note: limited travel may be considered*)
3. Program operations and supplies;
4. Supporting strategic planning, business planning, and sustainable finance planning;
5. Other priorities that will result in strengthening organizational capacity to effectively achieve the objectives of Makai Watch and Holomua Marine Initiative.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

Description	Date
Application Release	May 8, 2026
Virtual Information Session*	June 3, 2026
Application Deadline	June 19, 2026
Anticipated Notification Time Frame	August 28, 2026
Grant Start & End Date	September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2028

*To register for the virtual information session, please click this [link](#).

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

This is a competitive funding opportunity. Applicants must already be collaborating with DLNR on the Makai Watch Program as Official Makai Watch Community Organizations⁵ and be a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Official Makai Watch Organizations who do not have 501(c)(3) status may work with a fiscal sponsor to apply for this funding opportunity.

Grant Term: Grant requests for projects with a duration of up to 24 months (2 years maximum) will be considered. Funding decisions will be made in August 2026. Grant periods will begin September 1, 2026.

Funding: Grant requests for up to \$30,000 USD will be considered. Applicants will be asked to contribute a minimum 50% match funding request. Awards may be made for full or partial funding request, depending on application review and evaluation.

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

Requirement: Organizations must be currently collaborating with the DLNR's Makai Watch Program as an official Makai Watch Community Organization.

⁵ (State of Hawaii, 2026)



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 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. What is the organization's experience implementing this program and staff capabilities to conduct the proposed work? How many staff and volunteers? (*Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page*)
 - **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. (*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. Letter or email of support from DLNR DOCARE's Makai Watch Coordinator confirming designation of applicant organization as an Official Makai Watch Organization;
2. workplan for proposed activities *(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 Makai Watch program and the needs identified in your proposal *(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)*

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.

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](#).

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.hawaiicomunityfoundation.org/strengthening/holomua-marine-initiative>

Hawaii Community Foundation. (2026, January 27). *Natural Environment*. Retrieved from Hawaii Community Foundation: <https://www.hawaiicomunityfoundation.org/change/natural-resources>

Hawai'i Community Foundation. (2026, January 27). *The CHANGE Framework*. Retrieved from Hawai'i Community Foundation: <https://www.hawaiicomunityfoundation.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/>

State of Hawaii. (2026, May 1). *Makai Watch*. Retrieved from Department of Land and Natural Resources: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/makaiwatch/mw-sites/>