



Maui Strong Funding Opportunity

Request for Proposals: Economic Recovery & Resilience

Online Application Opens: May 8th, 2026

Online Application Deadline: June 5th, 4:00 p.m. HST

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to support the economic recovery and long-term resilience of Lahaina following the 2023 wildfires. This funding aims to restore livelihoods and catalyze community-driven economic development that reflects the Lahaina community's cultural values and future vision.

This RFP is designed to complement existing federal, state, and county programs, as well as prior philanthropic investments, including support for the interim marketplace.

The Foundation is particularly interested in opportunities that both address immediate recovery needs and lay the groundwork for a more resilient, locally rooted, and equitable economy, including advancing regenerative and ecotourism-based economic models that prioritize community benefit and environmental stewardship.

Preference will be given to projects or programs that are in alignment with recommendations made by the Maui Economic Recovery Commission, current studies or reports related to economic recovery on Maui, or the current County of Maui Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

2. Funding Overview

- Total Available Funding: Approximately \$2,000,000
- Grant Size: Flexible (anticipated range: \$25,000 – \$500,000)
- Grant Period: Up to 24–36 months
- Eligible Uses: Programmatic, operational, technical assistance, workforce development, and other project-related expenses
- Ineligible Use: Land acquisition; major capital improvement projects

Projects should be near implementation ready, with the ability to begin activities within a reasonable timeframe following award and to substantially complete implementation within three years. The Foundation reserves the right to fund proposals in full or in part.



3. Eligible Applicants

- Funding is limited to:
 - Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status; or
 - Organizations applying with a qualified 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor
- While funding is restricted to nonprofit entities, proposed projects may directly benefit:
 - For-profit businesses
 - Individual entrepreneurs
 - Workers and job seekers
- Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to effectively design and deliver economic recovery initiatives that benefit Lahaina and its wildfire-affected communities..

4. Core Funding Priorities

- Proposals may address one or more of the following priority areas:

4.1 Workforce Recovery & Economic Mobility (Workforce Track)

- Support residents in accessing employment, rebuilding livelihoods, and transitioning into new economic opportunities.
- Examples include:
 - Job training, reskilling, and certification programs
 - Internship & apprenticeship programs

4.2 Community-Led Economic Innovation (Innovation Track)

- Support nonprofit-led or fiscally sponsored initiatives that pilot new, community-driven economic models.
- This track is intended to fund bold, innovative, and early-stage ideas that contribute to a more resilient and locally controlled economy.
- Examples include:
 - Cooperative or community-owned enterprises
 - Regenerative or culturally grounded economic models
 - Ecotourism and regenerative tourism initiatives that prioritize environmental stewardship, cultural integrity, and local economic benefit
 - Circular economy or sustainability-focused enterprises
 - Community-designed economic hubs or districts
- Early-stage concepts and pilots are welcome; however, proposals must demonstrate a clear and credible pathway to implementation within the three-year grant period.



5. Priority Populations

- Preference will be given to proposals that:
 - Serve Lahaina residents directly impacted by the wildfires
 - Benefit low- to moderate-income households
 - Are led by or deeply partnered with community-based organizations

6. Coordination & Leveraging Resources

- Applicants are expected to:
 - Demonstrate awareness of and coordination with existing recovery efforts
 - Avoid duplication of services already funded through public or private sources
 - Leverage additional funding sources, including public funds, private investment, or other philanthropic resources
- Proposals that demonstrate strong leverage, partnerships, and alignment with broader recovery strategies will be viewed favorably.

7. Competitive proposals will:

- Address a clear gap not met by existing resources
- Demonstrate that the project is implementation-ready, or can reach readiness quickly
- Include a clear and achievable timeline for execution and completion within a three-year period
- Reflect meaningful community input and leadership
- Show potential for measurable economic impact (jobs, income, workforce outcomes)
- Contribute to long-term resilience and systems change
- Align with cultural values, environmental stewardship, and community priorities

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Community Impact & Alignment (Serves Impacted Populations, Cultural Relevance, Equity)	25%
Project Design & Feasibility (Clarity, Readiness, Realistic Timeline, Ability to Implement Within Three Years)	20%
Economic Outcomes (Job Creation, Income Generation, Workforce Impact)	20%
Innovation & Systems Impact (Including Regenerative and Ecotourism Models)	15%
Organizational Capacity & Partnerships (Experience, Leadership, Collaboration)	10%
Leverage & Coordination (Use of Other Funds, Alignment with Existing Efforts)	10%



9. Funding Process & Timeline

- The Foundation may award funding in multiple rounds, pending program readiness and internal approval timelines.
- Early or high-priority proposals may be fast-tracked
- The Foundation reserves the right to:
 - Request additional information
 - Fund partial components of a proposal

10. Additional Considerations

- This RFP does not provide direct grants to for-profit businesses or individuals.
- Nonprofits may deploy funds in ways that directly benefit businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers if the outcomes are charitable in nature and align to long-term recovery from the August 2023 fires.
- Collaborative and cross-sector proposals are strongly encouraged.
- Proposals should emphasize readiness, implementation, and timely impact.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

- Applicant must be a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Organizations that are not a 501(c)(3) public charity must apply with a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) public charity.
- A nonprofit may submit only one application for its organization.
- Organizations must be in good standing with HCF and have all report requirements up to date.
- Grant funds may not be used for: re-granting (i.e., redistribution of these funds to other organizations or individuals); endowments; for the benefit of specific individuals; major capital improvements including capital campaigns, construction or renovations (minor capital improvements required to implement programs are allowable); or activities that promote religious beliefs.
- While funding is restricted to nonprofit entities, proposed projects may directly benefit:
 - For-profit businesses
 - Individual entrepreneurs
 - Workers and job seekers
- Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to effectively design and deliver economic recovery initiatives that benefit Lahaina communities.

GRANT AWARD

- **Total Available Funding:** Approximately \$2,000,000
- **Grant Size:** Flexible (anticipated range: \$25,000 – \$500,000)



- **Grant Period:** Up to 24–36 months
- **Eligible Uses:** Programmatic, operational, technical assistance, workforce development, and other project-related expenses
- **Ineligible Use:** Land acquisition

Projects should be near implementation ready, with the ability to begin activities within a reasonable timeframe following award and to substantially complete implementation within three years. The Foundation reserves the right to fund proposals in full or in part.

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. *Organization operating budgets must be updated to the current year at the time of application. Financials should be updated and completed as soon as they come available.*

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 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** (*Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page*): Describe the mission of the organization/program. What is the organization's experience implementing this program or service? What staff capabilities does the organization have to conduct the proposed work? What geographic area (Lahaina/Kīhei/Kula) will the organization serve? (ex. # of people served; # of events held; types & amounts of resources provided; etc.)
 - **Program Summary (Executive Summary)** (*Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page*): Provide a brief and concise summary of the applicant's proposed program or service. This executive summary may be used for different purposes, including external communications, to describe the program should a grant be awarded.
 - **Problem or Opportunity** (*Maximum 3,000 characters = ¾ page*): Describe the need or opportunity the organization will address and why this is critical. Describe the target audience and how that community has informed the need for this program. Are similar programs operating at other organizations? If so, how might this program differ? Must include appropriate data, evidence, or strategies that strengthen these statements.
 - **Program Activities: :** (*Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page*) Describe the detailed activities and timeline that will be completed to address the need/opportunity. Explain why the organization chose this approach or strategy. Provide a program timeline. Please describe any partners or networks the organization is engaged within these efforts.
 - **Expected Results:** (*Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page*) Please describe the measurable and strategic impact and results that will be achieved. Describe what the organization hopes to achieve and the metrics to measure the effectiveness of the program. Results should be quantifiable and specific.
 - **Additional Grant Request:** If you were awarded a grant from the Maui Strong Fund in the past, please indicate the purpose of the previous grant, the outcomes/results achieved, and how this request differs or builds on the previous grant awarded. (*Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page*)
 - **Organizational Capacity:** (*Maximum 2,500 characters*): Relevant experience and past performance in this program/project area.
 - **Collaboration and Partnerships** (*Maximum 2,500 characters*): Existing and planned partnerships, MOUs, and community engagement. Specify any collaborative or cohort driven efforts and the roles of each participating organization. Letters from all implementation-related partners should be included as supplemental documentation.
 - **Areas of Disaster Approach** (check all that apply) – risk reduction and disaster readiness, rapid relief and response, recovery and stabilization, and rebuilding resilience.
 - **Population Served** (check all that apply) - Disabled Persons, Elders, Immigrants, Children/Youth, High-Risk, Underserved Populations, and Others.
- **Budget:** Provide the total program budget, amount requested through this application, and upload a copy of the program's budget, showing income and expenses, indicating



sources of income that are pending and secured, and other relevant budget details. A downloadable Program Budget Form template is available in the Resources section in the Grants Portal in the Maui Strong Fund folder. Please click the plus sign on the top right if you do not see the document listed.

- **Supporting Documents & Certification:** Upload the additional documents as applicable:
 - Partnership letters/MOUs (if applicable)
 - Maps of program locations (if applicable)
 - Reports or Summaries of Recent Programming
 - Biographies of key program staff and/or implementation partners
 - Fiscal Sponsor documents (if applicable) – see below for more information

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.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Application Close Date: June 5th, 2026

HCF staff will review applications through a tiered review process. Applicants who meet criteria for consideration of funding may be asked to present their proposals to a panel of HCF staff and subject matter experts. Decisions should be announced in September 2026.

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.



FUNDING PROCESS & TIMELINE

- The Foundation may award funding in multiple rounds
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TIMELINE/KEY DATES

Description	Date
Application Release	05/08/2026
Application Deadline	06/05/2026, 4:00pm
Anticipated Notification Time Frame	September 2026
Grant Start & End Date	Programs should start in September 2026. The end dates will be noted in the award letters. Some programs may have multi-year awards.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about this funding opportunity, please contact kmeyer@hcf-hawaii.org.

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