



Richard Smart Fund Grants Program 2026 Funding Opportunity

**Online Application Deadline: Friday, May 1, 2026,
4:00 p.m. HST**

OVERVIEW

The Richard Smart Fund receives contributions each year from the Parker Ranch Foundation Trust to support healthcare, educational, and charitable purposes in the Waimea Area on Hawai'i Island. Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) has been administering grant programs for this fund since 2001 and has distributed \$8.65 million over the past 25 years.

Focus: to support healthcare, educational, and charitable purposes in the Waimea Area on Hawai'i Island.

Grant Range: generally grants will be \$5,000 to \$25,000, subject to available funding.

Grant Period: June 2026 – June 2027

Estimated Total Funds Available: \$500,000

Grants from the Richard Smart Fund will support nonprofit organizations based in Waimea (96743 ZIP code) that can describe their kuleana¹ for Waimea's future, how their work addresses critical opportunities, strengthens caring relationships, and effectively engages the community's diverse people, organizations, and 'āina².

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

Description	Date
Application Release	March 20, 2026
Virtual Information Session*	April 7, 2026 @ 1:00 pm
Application Deadline	May 1, 2026
Anticipated Notification Time Frame	June 15, 2026
Grant Start & End Date	June 2026 – June 2027

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

BACKGROUND

In 2023, HCF launched the Waimea Futures Initiative to update the Richard Smart Fund grant program, ensuring it addresses Waimea's evolving interests, challenges, and opportunities. This process began with a series of facilitated community conversations designed to elevate community voices and engage a diverse cross-section of Waimea residents.

These conversations explored possible futures for Waimea, guided by key questions:

¹ <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/wehe/> - kuleana is defined as responsibility, right

² <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/wehe/> - 'āina is defined as land, earth



- What about Waimea should be preserved and perpetuated for future generations?
- What is getting in the way, and why is this so?
- What are possible solutions to address these challenges and unmet needs?

The intention for these Waimea Futures conversations was to bring diverse residents together to develop a collective vision and drive innovative³ solutions grounded in shared values and mutual respect. Participants comprised a variety of age and ethnic groups, educational and work backgrounds, and years of residence. According to the *Waimea Community Report*⁴, one of the most frequently expressed challenges was the growing divide between long-time generational residents and newer residents. The sentiment was underpinned with current economic challenges such as lack of affordable housing, the high cost of living, and the outmigration of longtime residents, particularly those of Native Hawaiian ancestry. The conversations pointed to a hopeful future where resources, learning opportunities and experiences could be created to build a common foundation of shared mutual aloha and kuleana for Waimea and one another.

The Waimea Community Weaving Hui, a community advisory group, worked with HCF to apply community-driven insights into action, supporting residents in advancing the collective priorities outlined in the *Waimea Community Report* and shaping Waimea's desired future. Through this ongoing process, the Richard Smart Fund continues to be a catalyst for community-driven solutions, ensuring that funding aligns with the priorities and values of Waimea's residents. Applications to the Richard Smart Fund will be reviewed by both the Weaving Hui and HCF staff to ensure alignment with these priorities.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

This funding opportunity is for 501c3 nonprofit organizations, fiscally sponsored community-serving groups, church programs with a charitable purpose, and Hawai'i DOE school projects.

- Organizations may submit only one (1) application for this funding opportunity, with the exception for organizations serving as a fiscal sponsor for a community group.
- Organizations currently funded by HCF with overdue final reports are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants must be responsive to the priorities identified in the *Waimea Community Report* generated from the Waimea Futures community conversations described above.
- Organizations must be based in Waimea on Hawai'i Island (96743 zip code).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

³ Innovative as in new or ingenious approaches; may include expanding upon creative solutions that are showing positive outcomes.

⁴ [Waimea Community Report](#) - learn about the Waimea Futures process and priorities that emerged from the community conversations



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

- Organization's work supports the future desired by Waimea residents as described by the collective vision and guiding values described in the Waimea Community Report.
- Organization can describe their kuleana for Waimea's people and place.
- Organization serves or invites diverse community members to participate in their programs.
- Organization collaborates with or provides kōkua⁵ to other organizations.
- Program or project addresses the identified priority areas, challenges or emergent solutions raised in the Waimea Community Report.
- Programs or projects use a place-based approach⁶ to deliver services.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Online Application

Applications can be submitted online via the [Hawai'i Community Foundation's Grants Portal](#) 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.

The following additional documents will be required:

- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter (not required if previously applied to the Foundation or if applying through a fiscal sponsor)

APPLICATION

The application consists of four tabs: *Program Overview, Program Information, Budget, and Supporting Documents & Certification*. All required fields are marked with an asterisk.

⁵ <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/wehe/> - kōkua is defined as help, aid, assistance, support.

⁶ A place-based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections, relationships, and interactions with the natural and cultural resources of a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community.



- **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. Describe your organization's kuleana for Waimea's future. *(Maximum 2,500 characters = ¾ page)*
 - **Problem or Opportunity:** Describe the need or opportunity in Waimea you are trying to address and how you know this is critical. If available, please provide data used to understand the need or opportunity for Waimea. Include a description of how your project or program addresses challenges or emergent solutions impacting Waimea's future as described in the Waimea Community Report. *(Maximum 3,000 characters = ¾ page)*
 - **Program Activities:** Describe the activities you will implement using a place-based approach. Include a timeline and details on how you will engage diverse community members and/or 'āina, and how you will collaborate with other organizations for this project. *(Maximum 3,500 characters = 1 page)*
 - **Expected Results:** Describe what you hope to achieve and how you will measure the effectiveness of your program. Describe how your organization will share the messaging, opportunities and impact of the Richard Smart Fund's Waimea Futures initiative with your clients/customers/constituents. *(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.

- **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.*

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

- Learn about the Waimea Futures process and priorities that emerged from the community conversations in the [Waimea Community Report](#).
- [Frequently asked questions](#) about grantmaking.

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, please contact Michelle Pope at mpope@hcf-hawaii.org or phone at (808)792-3101. 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.