

DHHL to get \$22.3 million in federal funds

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The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands is receiving \$22.3 million today to support the housing needs of low-income Native Hawaiian households.

The \$22.3 million is the highest amount the federal government has ever appropriated for Native Hawaiian housing and is \$20.3 million more than last year.

The Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant can be used for needs such as

housing construction, housing acquisition, infrastructure building and rental assistance.

The funding is not allocated to specific activities. However, there is a limit on the amount of funds that can be spent on administrative activities. DHHL submits a yearly plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that explains how the grant was used.

"The State of Hawaii has the highest median home prices in the nation, and too

often our Native Hawaiian communities are among the most negatively affected by the prohibitively high cost of housing," said HUD Regional Administrator Jason Pu in a written statement. "The NHHBG program enables HUD to get federal funds directly to Native Hawaiian communities for more affordable housing now and long-term investments that will benefit generations to come."

Over the past 20 years, the federal government has provided DHHL with more

than \$150 million in Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant funds which have been used to acquire, construct and rehabilitate over 700 homes, according to HUD.

However, there are still over 27,000 people on the DHHL waitlist for homestead lots, which would allow beneficiaries to receive a 99-year land lease for \$1 a year. Beneficiaries would then need to build their own homes.

DHHL Director William J. Aila Jr. said that the increase



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William
Aila Jr.

in federal funding the department received will

enhance its ability to provide additional housing services to beneficiaries.

"I would like to extend my gratitude to our congressional leaders for advocating on behalf of native Hawaiians and for this vote of confidence in the Department," Aila said in a written statement. "DHHL has worked diligently over the last few years to deploy all of our allocated federal funds into the beneficiary community with housing programs and services for native Hawaiians."