

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

March 16 - 17, 2026

TO: Chairperson and Members, Hawaiian Homes Commission
THRU: Lilliane K. Makaila, Acting Planning Program Manager
FROM: Gigi O. Cairel, Grants Specialist
SUBJECT: Approval of Recommendations for Various Grant Awards

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

- (1) That the Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC) approves \$9 million from the State General Fund to fund the following organizations for the following grants (statewide).
 - a. RFP-26-HHL-002 Grant for improvements to facilities located in existing homesteads (Statewide)
 - b. RFP-26-HHL-003 Grant for program implementation on existing homesteads (Statewide)
 - c. RFP-26-HHL-004 Grant for community capacity building (Statewide)
 - d. RFP-26-HHL-005 Grant for Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation (Statewide)

- (2) That the Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC) approves \$1 million from the State General Fund, contingent on compliance with Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 37 and State's release of funds, to supplement the recommended grant awards to (1) Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation for RFP-26-HHL-005 and (2) Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders Association, Inc. for RFP-26-HHL-002.

Grant for improvements to facilities located in existing homesteads (Statewide) (RFP-26-HHL-002)

\$1,000,000 to Five Mountains Hawai'i, Inc., dba, Kipuka o ke Ola, To begin construction on a new health clinic facility in Waimea on Hawaiian Home Lands. This project is in partnership with the beneficiary-controlled Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation.

\$1,000,000 to Homestead Community Development Corporation, dba Homestead Housing Authority, serving as fiscal sponsor for the Keaukaha-

Panaewa Farmers Association(KPFA). Funds will be used to complete construction of KPFA's Panaewa Agriculture Hub.

\$1,000,000 to Kula No Na Po'e for the Papakolea Hawaiian Homestead Kupuna Living Center on Puowaina. Specifically, funds will be used (1) to complete due diligence, including master plan, business plan and relevant environmental compliance; (2) community engagement; and (3) to support a community-defined and led economic development strategy to increase knowledge, confidence, and capacity to participate as equal partners in future Community-Based Participatory Research Initiatives.

\$1,000,000 to O Maku'u Ke Kahua to construct a new community center, including infrastructure, on an existing parcel where Maku'u currently operates the busy Farmers Market and programs.

\$500,000 to Molokai Homestead Farmers Alliance to add additional renewable energy to Lanikeha Center for future installation of central air.

\$344,000 to Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation for planning and design for projects on their 161-acre parcel: cemetery, recreation center, and Mauna Kea access road.

\$219,750 to Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association, Inc. to expand the current certified commercial kitchen, add a new Resiliency Hub, and add 50 new parking stalls.

\$100,000 to Ho'ola for pre-development and entitlement phase to responsibly plan for any future use of the 'Upolu Point site on Hawaii island.

Grant for program implementation on existing homesteads (Statewide) (RFP-26-HHL-003)

\$300,000 to Na Kupa'a o Kuhio, dba, Na Kupa'a o Kuhio for a feasibility study and report on a reforestation and sustainable timber harvesting on Hawaiian Home Lands on Hawaii island.

\$298,800 to Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association Inc., dba Waimea Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association, Inc. to expand and strengthen Aloha Festivals Island of Hawaii (AFOH) as a beneficiary-driven, islandwide cultural, education, and engagement program through coordinated outreach, hands-on workshops, and community festivals.

\$298,380 to Kula No Na Po'e to implement a Homestead Health Survey and a Research 101 capacity building series to generate specific health

data and strengthen research readiness within homestead. Additionally, the proposed project will deliver a four-part training series to build foundational skills among homesteaders.

\$282,200 to La'i 'Opua 2020, dba, Laiopua 2020 to implement a Grow and COok program for food security. The proposed project includes: (1) Community Ku'i Kalo (kalo harvesting and poi making); (2) Roots and recipes program to bridge 'aina and kitchen, cultivate environmental stewardship, and nutritional resilience; and (3) Mohala Youth Culinary program for hands-on learning for youth in basic kitchen skills, entrepreneurship readiness, financial literacy, marketing, and product development.

\$273,870 to Hui Aloha Pu'ukapu for a roads improvement project and coordination with DHHL, including an assessment to identify and suggest priority areas to be improved in Pu'ukapu.

\$256,000 to Five Mountains Hawai'i, Inc., dba, Kipuka o ke Ola, to expand traditional healing services (Lomi Lomi/Massage therapy) and to purchase and dispense essential vaccines.

\$170,000 to Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders Inc., dba, Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders, Inc. to implement a Market Agriculture and Kitchen Advancement Initiative, a value-added product center and marketing readiness project. This proposed project is in partnership with the Maui Food Technology Center.

Grant for Community Capacity Building (RFP-26-HHL-004)

\$20,000 to Hui Aloha Pu'ukapu for a comprehensive Strategic Planning process to lay a foundation for long-term planning, role clarity, leadership succession planning, and performance measurement.

\$20,000 to La'i 'Opua 2020, dba, Laiopua 2020 to plan and conduct Project Hui Mana, which is the sustainability and growth of Laiopua 2020's communication endeavor with community.

\$20,000 to Molokai Homestead Farmers Alliance, serving as fiscal sponsor for the Molokai Homestead Association of Veterans in its start up phase and to obtain federal IRS Section 501c3 status.

\$20,000 to Waiehu Chinese Cemetery Association, serving as fiscal sponsor for Waiehu Kou 3 Association (WK3) to engage in planning and a design charrette to develop a gathering facility and storage space at WK3's property under DHHL License No. 891.

\$20,000 to Waimea Nui Agriculture Inc. to update the organization's technology and communication strategies among Waimea Nui's various departments and divisions.

\$20,000 to Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders Inc., dba, Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders, Inc. for a Homestead Opportunities for Mobilization, Uplift, and Action program, specifically board training and updating Waiohuli's strategic plan.

\$5,000 to Waianae Coast Community Foundation to plan and conduct the eighth annual legacy Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole festival on the Waianae Coast.

Grant for Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation (Statewide) (RFP-26-HHL-005)

\$500,000 to Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization to fund a Firewise Homestead Program statewide, specifically for homestead community outreach, education, awareness, organizing and leadership development, and to become certified homestead Firewise communities.

\$345,000 to Hui Aloha Pu'ukapu to implement a fire mitigation and emergency water access program through installation of strategically-placed water catchment systems.

\$300,000 to Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation for mitigation planning for the inevitable wildfire event, including reducing a wide variety of hazardous fuels, maintain fire dip tanks, and community education and preparedness.

\$300,000 to Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders' Association, Inc., dba, Waiohuli Hawaiian Homesteaders Association, Inc. for infrastructure for a resiliency hub, including community communications system.

\$175,000 to La'i 'Opua 2020, dba, Laiopua 2020 for a Food Preservation Disaster Resiliency program, to teach food preservation techniques.

- (3) That the HHC approves carrying over to the 2026 - 2027 fiscal year, any of the approved allocated funds that cannot be encumbered by contract by June 30, 2026.

BACKGROUND

As part of the Native Hawaiian Development Program Plan (NHDPP), Hawaiian Home Land Trust Grants are made available to nonprofit organizations provided the purpose of the assistance is to benefit native Hawaiians. Over the years, grants have been offered in several program areas – including COVID relief projects, Capacity Building, Project Implementation, Regional Plan Priority Projects, Community Economic Development, and Agriculture Peer-to-Peer – as a means of implementing the community development component of the NHDPP. Grant offerings reflect DHHL priorities and community interests.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC) at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 16 - 17, 2025, approved the department’s agency budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY). Ten million¹ dollars in State General Funds was made available to the DHHL Native Hawaiian Development Program Plan (NHDPP). These funds are to be used as a funding source for the DHHL Community Development Grants program to provide “services to existing homesteads.”

These funds were administratively allocated as follows in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
FY 2026 Grants Budget Amounts

Request for Proposal (RFP)	Budget amount	Source of Funds
RFP-26-HHL-002 Improvements to facilities located in existing homesteads	\$5,000,000	State General Funds
RFP-26-HHL-003 Program Implementation on existing homesteads	\$1,800,000	State General Funds
RFP-26-HHL-004 Community Capacity building	\$200,000	State General Funds
RFP-26-HHL-005 Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation	\$2,000,000	STATE General Funds
TOTAL FY 2026 Grants Budget	\$9,000,000	STATE General Funds

The implementing action to deploy the funds is through the DHHL Community Grants program. Solicitation Notices for these grants follow the State Procurement rules using the Competitive Sealed process or “Request for Proposal.” Notices were posted on October 29, 2025, with a January 12, 2026 deadline. Notices were posted on the State Procurement Website and the DHHL Website; email notifications were sent to beneficiary organizations; and grant

¹ Per State Budget policies, \$1 million is held back, leaving \$9 million in available State General Funds for DHHL Grants.

information meetings (virtual) were held on November 7, 12, and 14, 2025. Meetings were recorded and available on the DHHL website - <https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/grants/>. Grant eligibility was open to nonprofits designated by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3); or, nonprofits incorporated under HRS 414D Nonprofit corporation act; or, associations incorporated under HRS 421J Planned Community (DCCR homesteads).

Table 2 below shows the timeline and process as published in all the RFP grant application packets.

Table 2
Deadline, Processing Time, and Project Timeframes
Subject to Change

Key Dates and Times	Activity
Wednesday, October 29, 2025	Grant RFP Release Date.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday, November 7, 2025, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM, HST; or • Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 6:00 -7:00 PM, HST • Friday, November 14, 2025, 6:00–7:00 PM HST 	<p>Optional Pre-offer conference sessions (virtual only). Please go to the DHHL Grants webpage -- Grants – Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for information on how to attend the pre-conference. Same presentation will be repeated at each session.</p> <p>Instructions on where to access the recording for future viewing will be posted on the DHHL Grants webpage.</p>
Friday, December 5, 2025 By 4:00 PM HST	Due date to submit questions to DHHL.Grants@hawaii.gov. Questions will be answered in writing.
Friday, December 12, 2025 By 4:00 PM, HST	Due date for DHHL written responses Only those responses which promote better understanding of the RFP WILL BE PUBLICLY POSTED AT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPO HANDS: https://hands.chawaii.gov/hands/opportunities
Friday, December 22, 2025 By 2:00 PM, HST	Pre-opening modification and withdrawal notice to DHHL shall be accepted at: DHHL.GrantsRFP@hawaii.gov
Monday, January 12, 2026 Before or by 2:00 PM HST This is a firm deadline unless changed by DHHL	Proposals' due date/time. Electronic submittals shall be accepted at: DHHL.GrantsRFP@hawaii.gov
January 2026	Proposal evaluations by the DHHL Grants Committee
Thursday, February 5, 2026	Matrix of scores completed
February 17 – 18, 2026	DHHL Grants Review Committee makes award recommendations for Hawaiian Homes Commission decision-making and award approvals
March 2026	Notifications to all applicants and begin contract review with awardees
July 1, 2026	Estimated grant agreement start date

(Dates subject to change)

DISCUSSION

A total of 50 grant applications were received by the January 12, 2026, 2:00pm deadline and email notifications were sent to each applicant to acknowledge receipt of their application. See Table 3 below. Three applications were submitted after the deadline and were not accepted.

Table 3
 Number of applications received by island
 and received by the grant deadline

Applications received	Organizations submitting	Island
10	7	O`ahu
3	3	Kaua`i
10	6	Maui
3	2	Moloka`i
0	0	Lāna`i
22	12	Hawai`i
2	2	Statewide
50	32	TOTAL

There were two phases of review. The first phase checked for eligibility and compliance with RFP requirements and with Hawaii Compliance Express. In phase 1 review, 7 applications were deemed not eligible for further review. The remaining 43 applications were forwarded to the DHHL Grants Review Committee for Phase 2 review and evaluation. The committee consisted of department staff. The committee reviewed applications based criteria including:

- applicant's organizational capacity, experience, track record
- project readiness and sustainability
- community support
- Beneficiary involvement and benefit to beneficiaries of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, as amended (HHCA)
- Sustainability

The grant application packets included a description of the review process, a detailed explanation of all the review factors, and stated the RFP minimum requirements to meet. A checklist was provided in the application packet to assist applicants. All required forms were also included in the application packet. Three applications were received AFTER the posted 2:00 pm January 12, 2026 deadline. All applicants were notified in writing acknowledging receipt of their application. Subsequent written notices were sent on application status.

For RFP-26-HHL-002, a total of 19 applications were received by the January 12, 2026 deadline. All applications were complete. One application was ineligible. All other applicants were in compliance with Hawaii Compliance Express. The maximum amount of funding that could be awarded to a grant applicant under this RFP is **\$1,000,000**.

The total amount requested by eligible applications was **\$11,611,705**. This amount is more than double above the budget allocation of **\$5,000,000**. Per the RFPs, the department may supplement this RFP with the balance of un-allocated funds from any other RFP.

For RFP-26-HHL-003, a total of 16 applications were received by the January 12, 2026 deadline. All applications were complete and two were ineligible. All other applicants were in compliance with Hawaii Compliance Express. The maximum amount of funding that could be awarded to a grant applicant under this RFP is **\$200,000**. The total amount requested by all eligible applications was **\$3,551,817**. This amount is almost double the allocated budget of **\$1,800,000**. Per the RFPs, the department may supplement this RFP with the balance of un-allocated funds from any other RFP.

For RFP-26-HHL-004, a total of 9 applications were received by the January 12, 2026 deadline. All applications were complete and three were ineligible. All other applicants were in compliance with Hawaii Compliance Express. The maximum amount of funding that could be awarded to a grant applicant under this RFP is **\$20,000**. The total amount requested by all applicants was **\$125,000**. This amount is **\$75,000** below the budget allocation of **\$200,000**. Per the RFPs, the department may move the balance of un-allocated funds to any other RFP. Such funds are recommended to be moved to supplement recommended awards for **RFP-26-HHL-002 and RFP-26-HHL-003**.

For RFP-26-HHL-005, a total of 6 applications were received by the January 12, 2026 deadline. All applications were complete and one was ineligible. All other applicants were in compliance with Hawaii Compliance Express. The maximum amount of funding that could be awarded to a grant applicant under this RFP is \$1 million. The total amount requested by all eligible applicants was **\$3,576,647**. This amount is one and half times more than the budget allocation of **\$2 million**. However, the DHHL Review Committee is recommending partial funding for a total of **\$1,620,000**. This leaves a remaining balance of \$380,000. Per the RFPs, the department may move the balance of un-allocated funds to any other RFP. Such funds are recommended to be moved to supplement recommended awards for **RFP-26-HHL-002 and RFP-26-HHL-003**.

Table 4 below is a summary of grant budget amounts, grant application requested amounts and DHHL recommended amounts. Further details are found in Tables A, B, C and D.

TABLE 4
Summary of Budgeted, Requested, and Recommended Amounts

Request for Proposal (RFP)	Budgeted amount	DHHL Funds Requested	Recommended Amount	Sources of Funds
RFP-26-HHL-002	\$5,000,000	11,611,705	5,379,750	STATE
RFP-26-HHL-003	\$1,800,000	3,551,817	1,875,250	STATE
RFP-26-HHL-004	\$200,000	125,000	125,000	STATE
RFP-26-HHL-005	\$2,000,000	3,576,647	1,620,000	STATE
TOTALS	\$9,000,000	18,871,169	9,000,000	

The funding recommendations were made based on the following evaluation criteria. The criteria below were stated in each grant application packet and presented by DHHL staff at the grant informational meetings. Meetings were held virtually on November 7, 12, and 14, 2025 and recorded for later viewing.

Evaluation Criteria for all RFPs:

- (1) Organizational Capacity: evaluates the applicant's capacity (ie, people resources, administrative systems, technical capacity) and track record to carry out the proposed project work plan and activities; to handle grant funds responsibly; and to promptly expend the grant funds.
- (2) Community support and relations: evaluates the organization's level of community support, need for its programs and services; ability to outreach and engage with beneficiaries; and to maintain good working relations with beneficiaries, other community groups, and government agencies.
- (3) Project Readiness: evaluates the project's readiness including a clear project proposal, project team structure is operational, and project budget is realistic.
- (4) Beneficiary Involvement and Partnerships: evaluates the extent to which beneficiaries identified the need for the project, beneficiary involvement with planning and participating in the project.

- (5) Sustainability: evaluates the applicant's preparedness to maintain the project after the grant is completed; leadership succession planning; and sound business plan.

Additional points were given for proposals with matching funds and in-kind donations. And, additional points were given for other considerations, including prior DHHL Grantee performance.

A summary list of funding recommendations and details of the grant applications that were reviewed are in the attached Exhibits.

AUTHORIZATION

Community Grants are one form of assistance to implement the Community Development component in the NHDPP. The current 2026 - 2027 NHDPP was approved by the HHC in June 2025. The NHDPP is authorized under HAR Chapter 6.1 of Title 10. Further, the NHDPP shall be funded by NHRF, federal, state, county and private sources.

In consultation with the State Department of Accounting and General Services, State Procurement Office, DHHL's Community Development Grant Program is modeled after the State of Hawaii's procurement process known as Competitive Sealed Proposals or "Request for Proposals." The law and rules governing this form of procurement are covered under Hawai'i Revised Statutes Section 103D-303 and HAR Subchapter 6.

RECOMMENDED MOTION/ACTION

DHHL staff respectfully requests approval of the recommended motion as stated above.