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Hawai'i Tourism Authority Announces Funding Opportunities to Support Natural Resources, Culture, Community Festivals, and Signature Events
Applications Available Through New 'Umeke Digital Portal

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is encouraging the community to submit applications for funding support through its upcoming programs: Kahu 'Āina, Kūkulu Ola, the Resort Area Hawaiian Culture Initiative, Community Enrichment, and Signature Events. HTA, in partnership with Kilohana, today unveiled a digital portal, *'Umeke, Powered by Hawai'i Tourism Authority*, for the community to submit all applications online.

HTA will provide funding support to nonprofit organizations, community groups, practitioners, projects, and events occurring in Hawai'i. Kilohana, HTA's contractor which is responsible for developing and implementing destination stewardship initiatives statewide, is administering these programs.

"An essential part of our kuleana at HTA is investing in our islands' people, culture and places, guiding us collectively toward a more regenerative Hawai'i for residents and visitors alike," said Daniel Nāho'opi'i, HTA's interim president and CEO. "The funding opportunities offered through these programs leverage tourism's economic benefits to support successful community initiatives."

'Umeke is a gourd or bowl, like one may use to hold poi or water. In the context of these programs, 'Umeke (umeke.kilohana.com) is the repository for community funding support, as guided by HTA's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and Destination Management Action Plans.

Applications for funding support are now open for the following HTA programs on 'Umeke:

2023

- The **Resort Area Hawaiian Culture Initiative** provides culturally appropriate greetings and entertainment in resort areas. For 2023, HTA has shifted this program to support displaced musicians and cultural practitioners who previously worked in resort areas on Maui that have been impacted due to the loss of tourism.

2024

- The **Kahu 'Āina** (formerly known as Aloha 'Āina) program supports responsible community-based entities with an emphasis on 'āina-kānaka (land-human) relationships and knowledge that manage, preserve and regenerate Hawai'i's natural resources and environment.
- The **Kūkulu Ola** program supports community-based awardees that enhance, strengthen and perpetuate Hawaiian culture through genuine experiences for residents and visitors.
- The **Resort Area Hawaiian Culture Initiative** in 2024 provides support to cultural practitioners providing authentic Hawaiian experiences and musicians providing Hawaiian entertainment and music in resort areas statewide.

- The **Community Enrichment** program supports unique, authentic and highly valued visitor-related experiences, and represents activities that are developed by the community, for the community, and are things the community is willing to and wants to share with visitors.
- The **Signature Events** program supports major festivals and events that attract attendees and participants from outside the state and have extensive opportunities for national and international marketing. They are typically high-profile events that are larger in scale than those in the Community Enrichment program. These events also have a high media value, i.e., print, online and broadcast impressions.

Each of these programs also work to strengthen kama'āina leadership capacity in Hawai'i's communities and organizations.

HTA and Kilohana will be hosting two virtual webinars on Zoom to help interested applicants with their understanding of HTA's strategic direction and vision, the RFP applications, and award process. Interested applicants will be able to submit questions in an interactive Q&A session during these briefings. A recording of both webinars will be posted online for those who are unable to attend.

- Session #1: October 10, 2023 from 10 to 11 a.m.
- Session #2: October 12, 2023 from 6 to 7 p.m.

The deadline for applicants to submit proposals is Monday, November 13, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. HST. To view the Requests for Proposals, visit www.hawaii tourism authority.org/rfps/.

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About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to Mālama Hawai'i – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit hawaii tourism authority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Threads and [Twitter](#).

About Kilohana

Kilohana is the tourism division of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA), and its kuleana is to promote Hawai'i as a world-class destination; ensure Hawaiian traditions and culture are perpetuated; as well as keep community and 'āina at the center. Kilohana brings together decades of expertise rooted in a shared vision for transformation in the tourism sector. Strategists, creatives, researchers, and Native Hawaiian cultural experts have gathered to overhaul Hawai'i's approach to destination stewardship, visitor management, and marketing to better share our cultural heritage and values in a way that enriches the lives of residents and visitors.

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