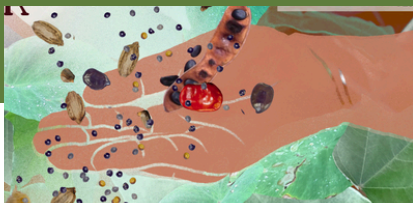


Seeds of Legacy

Seeds of Abundance



Message from Our Board Chair & Executive Director



Seeds are extraordinary. They can withstand fire and drought and ocean, and burrow into darkness. Seeds safeguard and carry forward our precious histories and memories.

In these times of hate, violence, and uncertainty, we find inspiration in the strength of seeds. This annual report covers the period from our devastating funding loss in April 2025 to a season of regrowth in March 2026. It tells the story of program, staff, operational cuts. It tells about the strong and dedicated hands of our community to advocate, innovate, shore up, and carry on.

We give thanks to seeds, and to all who plant and tend them.

A seed can be an idea that leads to a plan. Before making major changes, we listened to our community, reflected on our data, and thought hard about our best impact and role.

We focused on making impact in three areas: our local humanities ecosystem, civic education and engagement, and the Council’s sustainability into the future.

Mahalo nui for being there for us and for the public humanities through tremendous hardship. We are so grateful to turn our hands to the earth with you, and to continue to grow the connection and love that sustains us all.

We trust in our community and the future we are planting.



Halena Kapuni-Reynolds
Board Chair



Aiko Yamashiro
Executive Director

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Director, Community Partnerships

Ange Ramos
Office Manager

Aiko Yamashiro
Executive Director

Dorian Langi
Volunteer Hawai’i History Day Program & Curriculum Specialist

2025-2026 Impact Across Hawai'i

11

20 Online or
Out of State

167

Since 1973, the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities has worked to make the **public humanities accessible to all** across the state through **grants, partnerships, and public programs.**

3

83

29

**PUBLIC HUMANITIES
ACTIVITIES** held on 5 islands
and beyond (see map) **313**

**PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED** **149,359**

SPENT IN STATE thru
grants, programs,
& partnerships **\$654,008**

Statement of Activities - FY2025

Fiscal Year 2025: November 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025

Revenue

Grants - Federal	\$941,197
Grants - State/Local	\$35,928
Grants - Foundations	\$511,666
Contributions	\$98,194
Contracts/Other	\$45,540
Unearned Income	\$18,272
Total	\$1,650,797
In-Kind Contributions	\$933,586

Expenses

Program Services	\$603,987
Community Grants	\$50,021
Federal Grant Termination	\$92,453
Management	\$246,757
Fundraising	\$108,209
Total	\$1,101,427
To sustain operations for FY2026	\$549,370

Anticipating no new federal grants

Programs



Hawai'i History Day

With the help of a Hawai'i State Legislature's Grant In Aid of \$125,000, Hawai'i History Day as the state affiliate of National History Day was able to continue its year-long history and civics program for 4th- to 12th-grade students at public, private, and charter schools.

Students become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights, and artists as they create unique expressions of history. They and their projects then compete at the district, state, and national levels.

Youth practice skills that prepare them for life, work, and citizenship by devising their own analytical questions and thesis, analyzing information, working with primary and secondary sources, and presenting their projects to judges and an audience.

"From a rural community, [our] Island kids may travel for athletics, but the opportunity to create a project, revise, and present at the state level provides them with much more perspective on what is out there."

"It also gives them the realization of the high level of the work produced by other schools. Students who have attended states have returned more worldly and motivated to reach for higher goals than what they may be limited to within their community."

High School Social Studies Teacher

Through written surveys, participating teachers shared these responses about the impact of History Day:

- **92%** felt HHD made their students **more interested in history**.
- **100%** felt HHD improved their students' **research skills**.
- **100%** felt HHD helped prepare their students for **college**, **92%** for **civic engagement**, and **83%** for **employment**.

2025-26 Program Highlights

3,999 students learned from the History Day curriculum and resources.

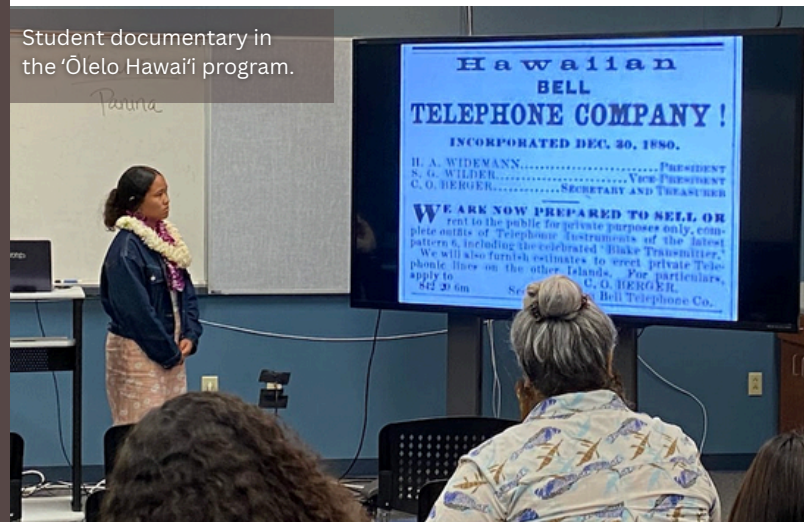
726 students and **73** teachers from **36** schools on **5** islands submitted **462** projects.

17 students submitted projects in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

\$31,910 in Community Awards contributed by **23** community sponsors was presented to students and teachers.

\$21,965 in travel support for students, teachers, and chaperones to State and National competitions and showcases.

Student documentary in the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i program.



Teacher Development & Success

Visionary and dedicated teachers power this program. HHD, together with National History Day, provides a wealth of resources online and in person, in English and 'ōlelo Hawai'i, in areas such as curriculum development, competition guidelines, an expanded online directory of in-state research resources, and recognition.

HHD coordinated workshops on Moloka'i and Hawai'i, and provided travel support to a training on O'ahu.

While challenges such as time and meeting deadlines remain for teachers, in response to a written survey,

- **100%** felt the History Day framework **strengthened their teaching** of history, research, civics, social studies, and writing.

“Learning our history – and the history and governments of other cultures – is the foundation of change. It is how we will gain the necessary knowledge to uplift our people. We will not discover a weapon or strategy to get what we want, because the solution is in the ‘ike of our kūpuna and in history.”

-HHD Student Historian

Amplifying Student Research & Stories

Student projects and stories ground us in the wisdom and experience of the past and guide us in navigating a shared and complex present and future. As part of national and state competitions, projects were presented at public showcases, including at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian for 'ōlelo Hawai'i projects.

Community partners have also helped uplift student projects and stories. The Hawai'i Pono'i Coalition has organized the HHD Student Film Showcase at the Hawai'i Supreme Court as part of Hawaiian History Month in September. And an estimated 5,000 visitors in Hilo could experience Hawai'i District student projects through an exhibition at the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo.

Organizations ranging from Matson and First Hawaiian Bank to the Hawai'i Labor Heritage Council and the League of Women Voters have sponsored awards and provided cultural and civic activities at competitions.

4 Teacher Workshops

Workshops on Moloka'i, Hawai'i, and O'ahu (co-sponsored), and an online orientation.



22 Teacher Awards & Nominations

2 Outstanding HHD Teacher Awards, 2 NHD Teacher State Nominations, and 18 community awards for teachers of recipient student projects.



5 Project Showcases

In Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, MD, and on Hawai'i and O'ahu.



Community Partnerships

Supported 51 Community Awards for students and teachers and 7 cultural and civic activities at district and state competitions.



Programs



Nā Mana Wai gathering at Bess Press

Nā Mana Wai

When federal funding was cut, the Nā Mana Wai program pivoted from a pilot speakers bureau for poets and storytellers, to a **pair** of interisland gatherings. **58** writers, artists, cultural practitioners, and partners came together to share skills, deepen relationships, and offer analysis on the challenges and opportunities of our field. One of the beautifully visualized, guiding 'ōlelo no'ēau is below left.

Here are some of the seeds of wisdom and insight shared, captured by Marion Cadora in her reflection, “Building a Vision of Care,” in the report of the first gathering:



An Invitation

Extending an invitation is part of the practice of inclusion. Often, people are waiting for an invitation in. Reaching out to invite others is part of our kuleana to ensure everyone feels welcomed and included.

Expanding Definitions of Creativity

We must continue to reconsider who “counts” as an artist and work to open our circles to include different voices, practices, and ways of making and knowing.

Self-Care

Burnout is real, especially for those tasked with “bringing arts to the community,” often those most impacted by colonization. Taking breaks, disconnecting, and finding moments for healing are essential acts of care for ourselves.

Child + Kupuna Care

When many in our arts and culture community are also caregivers, it's important to consider how spaces can become more accessible, whether by offering stipends for child/kupuna care or providing child care services.

Art is not a hobby

Funding is essential. We must always find pathways to support and sustain our artists and their practices.



Try Think Project Team: Brandy Chang, Rob Chang, & Tammy Jones

Contact: Rob Chang
trythink@gmail.com

Try Think

Since 2009, Try Think has built *community* as a verb through facilitated conversation programs that bring residents of 3 O'ahu correctional facilities together with community members.

Try Think held **38 weekly meetings with a total of 514 resident and community member attendees**, and led by Program Director Rob Chang and 2 trained facilitators. In August 2025, Try Think

partnered with the East Hawai'i Cultural Center on Hawai'i to participate in an exhibit sharing reflections by Try Think participants inside and facilitate a community conversation.

Following federal funding cuts, Try Think transitioned from HCH in July 2025 to operate on its own as the Try Think Project, which in May 2026 became a 501(c) nonprofit.

Hawai'i Poet Laureate

Thanks to the unwavering support of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and the Hawai'i State Public Library System, we were able to continue our Hawai'i Poet Laureate partnership program.

In 2025, **Poet Laureate Brandy Nālani McDougall** gave **13 readings and 6 writing workshops** on O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i, working with museum, cultural centers, schools, and public libraries. Brandy has also been invited to share Hawai'i's stories at universities in New York City, California, and France, and at the British Museum, United Kingdom.



At the dedication of Wahi Pana Triangle Park



Poetry reading and writing workshop with Kaua'i Writers Garden on Kaua'i

"Writing does reflect power in Hawai'i, so you do have to be intentional about reaching out to people and encouraging people who aren't included. That is where the public libraries and 'āina organizations [and others] come in."

-Hawai'i Poet Laureate Brandy Nālani McDougall

"As a civic practice, poetry cultivates connection and tenderness in our community. ... In all of Brandy's Poet Laureate work, she forwards a vision of poetry as healing our connections with ourselves, our community, and our home."

-Kaua'i County Council Resolution of Appreciation to HPL Brandy Nālani McDougall, sponsored by Councilmember Addison Bulosan

Towards the end of 2025, a committee of writers, performers, and educators from O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, and Hawai'i selected our **2026–2029 Poet Laureate Lee A. Tonouchi**.

A celebration in February 2026 at the Honolulu Public Library expressed appreciation to Brandy and welcomed Lee.

Invite the Hawai'i Poet Laureate to Your Event:

tinyurl.com/HPL-Invite2026



Hawai'i Poets Laureate Brandy Nālani McDougall (2023-25), Lee A. Tonouchi (2026-29), and Kealoha Wong (1995-2022) at the Hawai'i State Public Library.

Photo credit: State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

Programs

Community Grants

Since 1973, the Community Grants program, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities, has supported reflection and learning across the state by funding a wide range of locally led public humanities projects.

Federal cuts to NEH last year shut down our Community Grants program, breaking a legacy of 53 years. Although no new grants were awarded this past year, we are proud to share the grants that closed out in FY2025.



Kaua'i

Kaua'i: The Separate Kingdom - \$10,000
Kaua'i Museum Association, Ltd.

Ku'u Home O Pā'ūla'ūla-Connecting Lāhui - \$10,000
Friends of King Kaumuali'i



O'ahu

AI Impact on the Humanities - \$7,480
Hawai'i Book & Music Festival

Annual Reports & Newsletters 1907-2006 - \$10,000
Palama Settlement

Asia Pacific Dance Festival 2024 - \$10,000
University of Hawai'i System

Celebrating Micronesian Voices - \$9,762
East-West Center

Funding for Travel--the 1898 Project - \$6,316
George and Marguerite Simson Biographical Research Center

Hawai'i's Untold Africana Experiences - \$10,000
Obama Hawaiian Africana Museum

Hawai'i Ma Kahaone Beaches of Hawai'i - \$10,000
Hawaiian Historical Society

Hawai'i Triennial 2025 Docent Program - \$10,000
Honolulu Biennial Foundation dba Hawaii Contemporary

Limuhinaula - \$10,000
Mālama Learning Center

Outdoor Circle at Hawaii State Archives - \$10,000
The Outdoor Circle

Printer Lei Project - Risography - \$10,000
Honolulu Printmakers

The Past's Plan for Hawai'i's Future - \$8,858
University of Hawai'i System

"The workshop awoke something in me to connect once more to the depth of who I am. I am forever grateful!!!"

-Filipino Voices in Hawai'i Participant



Maui

Ka Ulana 'Ana I Ka Piko - \$9,050
Hui No'eau

Pigs from the Sea - \$10,000
Maui Academy of Performing Arts

Sense of Place / Place of Sense - \$10,000
Maui Arts & Cultural Center



Hawai'i

Hānau Ka Mo'olelo Exhibition & Programs - \$10,000
Donkey Mill Art Center



Kohala Voices: Youth Documentary Film - \$10,000
North Kohala Community Resource Center

Korean Art & History Across the Pacific - \$9,978
University of Hawai'i System

Lauhala Weaving Knowledges/ Practices - \$10,000
Enlivened Cooperative

Preserve and Share Hilo's Pharmacy Past - \$4,221
Lyman House Memorial Museum



Multiple Islands

Filipino Voices in Hawai'i - \$10,000
Filipino Association of University Women

Hawai'i's Kāhuli: Tiny Epics of Survival - \$10,000
Mānoa Heritage Center

Living History of Prince Kūhiō - \$8,112
Hawai'i Pono'i Foundation



Online

Bamboo Ridge Oral History Project 2025 - \$9,000
Bamboo Ridge Press

Mo'olelo Matters Speaker Series - \$10,000
Aloha Kuamo'o 'Āina

Partnerships

We regularly work collaboratively and flexibly with organizations, groups, and individuals that activate the humanities to address a timely social need.

Kā Moloka'i Makahiki Hula Lineages of Moloka'i Panel



I “remembered the connection of hula to life. Not just movement, but understanding ‘ōlelo with movement, coupled with commitment to learn + teach.

This is genealogy + history.”

-Audience member, Kā Moloka'i Makahiki Hula Lineages of Moloka'i Panel and Exhibit

Unveiling of the Glade exhibit by Lei Pua 'Ala in Chinatown in March 2026.



By The People - Hula Lineages of Moloka'i Panel & Exhibit

In 2025-2026, humanities councils were invited to participate in **By The People: Conversations Beyond 250**, a series of community-driven programs created by humanities councils in collaboration with local partners. The initiative was developed by the Federation of State Humanities Councils and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

It was our honor to partner with **Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center** and the **Center for Oral History at UH Mānoa** on an interisland Moloka'i-O'ahu partnership to increase connection and capacity around the work of intergenerational oral histories on Moloka'i.

On January 24, 2026, we presented **Nā Lālā o Moloka'i**, a public panel and exhibit honoring the hula lineages of Moloka'i and the role of hula in Makahiki traditions.

Lei Pua 'Ala Queer Histories of Hawai'i

Over the past three years, our partnership project with Qwaves/Kanaka Pakipika has installed **4 physical plaques** and created an **online educational resource of over 84 stories** of Māhū and LGBTQ+ history throughout Hawai'i.

In divisive times, we are so proud to be part of storytelling that creates a safer world for all of us.

Experience these powerful stories on queerhistoriesofhawaii.org.

Tony Quagliano Poetry Award

Lehua M. Taitano, the 2025-26 Tony Quagliano Poetry Awardee, is a queer CHamoru writer and interdisciplinary artist from Yigu, Guåhan (Guam). “Taitano’s poems immerse us in an ecosystem of relation,” noted judge Laurel Nakanishi.



With Gratitude

Every single gift of time, resource, and love is deeply felt. Mahalo nui to all our donors who carried us through the Summer of 2025 by raising \$50,000 to match the Mellon Foundation's pledge to sustain our state humanities councils. Together we enter a new season of healing and growth. In extraordinary times, we plant for abundance.

Donors are listed at the level of their cumulative giving for gifts received during the period of January 1st, 2025 to March 31st, 2026.

ORGANIZATIONS

Gifts of \$5,000 and above

Atherton Family Foundation
Bendon Family Foundation Inc.
Cooke Foundation
Daniel K. Inouye Institute
Federation of State Humanities Councils
First Hawaiian Bank Foundation
Hawai'i Labor Heritage Council
Hawai'i State Legislature Grant in Aid
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The Kamehameha Schools

Gifts of up to \$4,999

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Bamboo Ridge Press
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National History Day
Tony Quagliano International
Poetry Fund
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Department of Ethnic Studies
Center for Oral History
Wurst Family Foundation

INDIVIDUALS

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Albert Hamai
Amy Perruso
Anjoli Roy
Anonymous
Anonymous
Antonio V. & Luz R. Ramil
Ardis Eschenberg
Barbara Bennett Peterson
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Bert Kikuchi
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Annette Lew
 Bob and Adella Buss
 Brandy Nālani McDougall,
 Hawai'i Poet Laureate
 Claire Gearen
 Cristina Bacchilega
 Devin Makizuru



History Day Students
 Kristen Namba Reed
 Nancy Aleck
 Ray Catania
 Robert Chang
 Stacy Hoshino
 Tori Treviño

IN MEMORY OF

Cynthia Buckingham

Gifts of \$1,000 and more

**Monthly donors*

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If we have made an error, please let us know so we can correct our records. Email Michele Mitsumori at mmitsumori@hihumanities.org.



Support the Public Humanities in Hawai'i through an online donation at tinyurl.com/hihumanitiesgive or thru the QR code at left.

Beautiful Cover Art featuring HCH archival and current photos by Cassandra Sun

A Special Mahalo to These Sponsors & Partners



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Seeds of Legacy, Seeds of Abundance

In extraordinary times
We plant for abundance.



**LAND USE IN PUNA:
A HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE**
• A COMMUNITY EXPLORATION OF LAND USE
AND DEVELOPMENT IN PUNA
• A DIALOGUE WITH HUMANISTS
• A PROGRAM PLANNED AND DEVELOPED
BY MEMBERS OF THE PUNA COMMUNITY
• INCLUDE:
• PANEL DISCUSSION
• DEBATE
• DISCUSSION
• A FEW OF LAND USE DECISION
PROCESSES

