



Kaulunani Arbor Day Grant Program 2026 Request for Proposals

Aloha Tree Lovers!

Kaulunani, the Urban and Community Forestry program of Hawai'i's Division of Forestry and Wildlife, invites proposals that support local urban and community forestry initiatives or projects. These grants help communities and organizations develop and sustain programs that grow urban and community trees and forests.

Available Funds

Funding is available to support community tree planting, tree adoptions, celebrations, and activities on or around Arbor Day 2026 (Friday, November 6th).

- Each grant award will be \$10,000.
- Up to \$80,000 in total funding may be awarded for Arbor Day projects
- Funding for this program is available from the USDA Forest Service under the Code of Federal Domestic Assistance 10.675, Cooperative Forestry Assistance, Federal Fiscal Year 2026 and the State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife Funds.

Who Can Apply

Non-profit organizations, private organizations, schools, places of worship, community groups, and State and County agencies from all islands of Hawai'i are invited to apply. All applicants must provide a current [Hawai'i Compliance Express](#) certification in order for their application to be considered. Applications cannot be submitted without a current Hawai'i Compliance Express certificate showing compliance. (Government agencies are exempt.)

Timeline

Applications open	February 2, 2026
Informational Webinar (attendance not required)	February 9, 2026 (10-11 am)
Applications due at or before 11:59 PM(HST)	March 1, 2026 (Sunday)
Notice of funding approval	Mid-April, 2026
Anticipated project start date	Late May, 2026

<i>(4 weeks after grant agreement is fully signed)</i>	
Project completion (all funds must be spent)	December 31, 2026
Final financial report & invoice due	January 30, 2027

Categories

All place-based projects must relate to urban and community forestry on public or publicly accessible land. All projects (place-based or educational) must take place in Hawai‘i.

Arbor Day Projects are encouraged to focus on:

- Community celebrations with tree planting and/or giveaways. Events should be scheduled on or around Arbor Day 2026 (Friday, November 6th).

Additional components of Arbor Day projects may include:

- Tree care and maintenance, both education and application
- Education and/or outreach about Urban & Community Forestry issues
- Cultural and artistic expression related to urban and community forestry
- Invasive species, pest and disease management for trees

Eligible Project Component Guidelines

Tree Planting & Giveaways

- Funds can be used to grow, purchase and/or plant trees.
- Remember — right tree, right place, right care - when selecting species and planting locations.
 - Refer to [PlantPono](#) and [SelecTree](#) (Pacific Islands list) to aid in selection of appropriate tree species. Firewise landscaping guidance is provided by [Hawai‘i Wildfire Management Organization](#). The [Go Native community portal](#) provides guidance for native and Polynesian plant and tree selection and the associated book, [Go Native](#), provides guidance on landscape design for a range of spaces from small to large.
- The estimated total number of trees to be planted/distributed must be included in the project proposal. All proposals must provide a species list (including Weed Risk Assessment scores, see www.plantpono.org for details).
- Proposals for tree planting projects must include a 12 month (minimum) maintenance plan.
- Proposals for tree distribution projects must describe how they will prevent the spread of invasive species in their area (e.g. little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, coqui)
- Kaulunani encourages project coordinators to obtain trees with propagation sources local to their ‘grow zone’ or moku, as is possible.
- Strategically planting trees to maximize their long-term benefits is encouraged. For example, planting trees to conserve energy, improve or expand recreational space, enhance community resilience, or increase business patronage will receive special consideration. Refer to the USDA Forest Service’s [Vibrant Cities Lab](#) for resources and ideas.
- Strategically planting trees to increase equitable distribution of tree canopy cover across

a community is encouraged. Learn more about Hawaii's tree canopy [here](#).

Education and Outreach

Funds can also be used to improve awareness and education of the importance of community trees and their management as part of Arbor Day celebrations. This may include the ecological, economic, and health benefits (e.g., through shared messaging, and the coordination of events and campaigns, school visits, library visits, farmers market engagement, celebrating the medicinal and food benefits of trees, promoting trees for bioremediation of 'āina, and for cooling).

Cultural and Artistic Expression

Funds may support extensions of Arbor Day events to inspire and excite communities about the value of trees in urban and community forests through incorporating Indigenous and place-based knowledge and practices (e.g., agroforestry inspired recipe book or cooking event, lei making workshop featuring materials from trees, mural, carving, music, hula, dance, theater, film festival, fashion show, drag show).

Invasive Species, Pest, and Disease Management for Trees

Arbor Day events can also utilize funds to educate the community on how best to prepare for and address the impacts of invasive species or other pests of concern, including little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, hala scale, Queensland longhorn beetle, among others.

Eligible Costs

Eligible costs are those necessary for completing the project. Costs must be documented, reasonable, and consistent within the scope of the project. Note that projects must adhere to any procurement policies in place at the applicant's organization, municipality, or educational institution. Please contact Kaulunani if you have a question about allowable expenses.

Examples of project costs include:

- Services, supplies, equipment*, or facilities used on the project.
- Trees to be planted/distributed, site preparation, tree protection, and associated supplies necessary for successful tree planting and establishment.
- Equipment* to increase the organization's capacity to plant and maintain trees and successfully manage a community-wide tree program.
- Public outreach and engagement.
- Salaries and fringe benefits of people working directly on the project (up to 40% of the grant request).
- Development and/or printing costs for education materials.

**Equipment is defined as tangible personal property with a per-unit cost of less than \$9,999 (including delivery).*

Ineligible costs include:

- Food and beverages
- Equipment valued at \$10,000 or more
- Land acquisition

Application and Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Kaulunani Advisory Council for completeness, eligibility, and applicability to the grant category focus areas. The Council recommends selected proposals to the Division of Forestry and Wildlife administrator for funding. Examples of previously funded projects are available on our [Community Partners page](#) as guidance.

Proposal requirements:

1. Project Description: Provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including goals, target audience, activities, timeline, and expected outcomes.
2. Projects must relate to urban and community forestry on public or publicly accessible lands, and must take place in Hawai'i.
3. Budget: Include a detailed budget outlining the use of grant funds.
4. Timeline: Include a brief timeline of project activities.
5. Community Impact: Explain how the project will engage the community and contribute to the overall spirit of the project.
6. Partnerships: Identify partners or collaborators involved in the project and describe their roles.
7. [Hawai'i Compliance Express Certificate](#): A current (i.e., within 30 days or less of date of submission) must be uploaded to show applicant's compliance at the time of application submission. (State and Local Government agencies are exempt.)

[2026 Arbor Day Grant Application](#)

2026 ARBOR DAY GRANT

[APPLY ONLINE HERE](#)

Due 11:59 PM, March 1, 2026

You have the option to start, save and return to your application, as well as share the link with colleagues.

Cost Share Requirements (Match)

The one-to-one cost share requirements using non-federal sources will be waived for this funding opportunity.

However, awardees must track and report total number of volunteers and total hours of volunteer service contributed by their projects.

Payment Process

All funds awarded will be available for payment in accordance with the following schedule:

- one-half payable after the signing of the grant agreement as accompanied by an invoice,

and

- the balance upon completion of the project with verification of payment of all expenses and with submission of a final report and invoice.

Hawai‘i Compliance Express must be in good standing when invoices are submitted or they cannot be processed.

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DLNR) reserves the right to make partial payment upon non-compliance of conditions in the grant agreement. Please allow 4–6 weeks from the time of the invoicing/payment request to receipt of the check.

Resources

We encourage the use of the following resources:

- [Plant Pono](#)
- [Best Management Practices \(BMPs\) for Invasive Species Prevention](#)
- [Tree Canopy Viewer Hawaii](#)
- [www.Kaulunani.org](#)
- [SelecTree Pacific Islands](#)
- [Hawai‘i Wildfire Management Organization - Firewise Landscaping](#)
- [Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project](#)
- [Kaulunani Grantee StoryMap](#)

Kaulunani staff will host **an informational webinar** as a chance for applicants to ask specific questions about the grant categories, application development, and submission process. This webinar will be held virtually using Zoom and pre-registration is not required.

Informational webinar:

- Monday, February 9th, 10-11am, [meeting link](#)

Following the webinar, applicants may schedule individual virtual consultation meetings (20 minutes) with Kaulunani staff.

For more information, assistance, or to schedule a consultation meeting please contact:

Kate Wiechmann, Community Partnership Coordinator
kate.e.wiechmann.researcher@hawaii.gov (808) 256 3340

For more information about the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program, please contact Heather McMillen, DOFAW Urban & Community Forester, at
heather.l.mcmillen@hawaii.gov