



Kaulunani Community 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 and 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 initiatives that promote the protection and enhancement of urban and community forest ecosystems – tree planting, the care of trees, and education on tree issues where we live, work, learn, and play.

- Grant awards range from **\$20,000–\$50,000**
- Up to **\$400,000** in total funding
- Expected **8–12 awards**

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. (State and Local 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 (4 weeks after grant agreement is fully signed)	Late May, 2026
Project completion (all funds must be spent)	April 15, 2027
Final financial report & invoice due	May 15, 2027

Categories

All place-based projects must relate to urban and community forestry and occur on public or publicly accessible land. All projects must take place in Hawai'i.

Community Grant Projects may include components from this non-comprehensive list:

- Tree plantings & giveaways
- 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
- Stipend, mini-grant programs for tree-related activities
- Training for staff and/or volunteers; workforce development
- Tree / urban forestry management plan development
- Invasive species, pest and disease management for trees
- Tree nursery capacity building
- Trees as green infrastructure (e.g. to manage stormwater runoff, firewise landscaping, education and outreach etc.)
- Urban wood utilization
- Agroforestry

Eligible Project Component Guidelines

Tree Planting, Giveaways, and Tree Nursery Capacity Building

- 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 [SelectTree](#) (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. A nursery quote for the proposed species is encouraged, as it reflects thoughtful consideration of availability and project feasibility.
- Funds can also be used to enhance the growing environment of a tree or group of trees for long-term success. This includes activities to increase available soil volume or to enhance soil quality, irrigate trees, and protect trees. The installation of root barriers is also included.
- 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.
- Planting trees to increase equitable distribution of tree canopy cover across a community is encouraged. Learn more about Hawaii's tree canopy [here](#).

Tree Maintenance

- If hiring tree pruning services, seek a certified arborist who follows ANSI 300 standards. Refer to the [Aloha Arborist Association](#) and the [International Society of Arboriculture's Certified Arborist](#) databases.
- Tree maintenance should focus on a prescriptive approach to long-term tree health and structural improvements. This could include structural pruning/training of young trees, crown cleaning and corrective pruning of mature trees, deep root feeding, cabling/bracing, and soil compaction mitigation.
- Funds can be used for supplies and equipment to maintain and care for trees, including hand and pole pruners, pruning saws, watering bags or tanks, and staking materials. Any single piece of equipment must not exceed \$9,999.
- Funds can also be used to conduct training/upskilling for employees and volunteers, related to tree care and maintenance.

Education and Outreach

Funds can support forming a tree committee, developing a tree ordinance or policy, training, or professional development for staff or volunteers. See [Arbor Day Foundation](#) for ideas.

Funds can also be used to improve awareness and education of the importance of community trees and their management. 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 Inspiration and Expression

Funds may support new events or extensions of existing events that 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).

Stipends or mini-grants

Awarded funds can be re-distributed to organizations or individuals in support of proposed tree-related project activities such as tools and supplies, cultural and educational programming, artist stipends, tree installations, transportation to access community forest sites. Up to a 10% administrative fee may be provided to the awardee to manage their program. Proposals should describe the applicant's experience managing stipend distribution and their connection to potential recipients of funds. Applicants are not required to name recipients at the time of application, but should instead describe the types of recipients they intend to support.

Management Plan Development

Funds can be used to develop plans to guide future community tree management. Examples include a shade tree preservation plan, urban or community forest management plan, tree planting plan, street/trail/bike path tree management plan, urban or community forest conservation plan, town forest recreation plan, or any other planning efforts that support or incorporate a community tree program.

Invasive Species, Pest, and Disease Management for Trees

Funds can be used 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. Examples of supported activities include development of a pest preparedness or management plan, development of a public awareness campaign, and health assessments of trees or other species of concern. Visit <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/> for more information.

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.

Examples of project costs include:

- Services, supplies, equipment*, or facilities used on the project.
- Trees to be planted, site preparation, tree protection, and associated supplies necessary for successful tree planting and establishment.
- Equipment* to increase the organization's capacity to plant 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).
- Labor, services, supplies, equipment, or facilities provided to the project by third parties.

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

Ineligible costs include:

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

Please contact Kaulunani if you have a question about allowable expenses.

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 [Grant 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 campaign.
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 7 days or less of date of submission) must be uploaded to show applicant's compliance at the time of application submission.

[2026 Community Grant Application](#)

2026 COMMUNITY 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-third payable after the signing of the grant agreement as accompanied by an invoice,
- one-third at a mid-project point as accompanied by a progress report and 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

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