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Hawai'i Tourism Authority Reinvests \$3.78 Million to Support Community Projects, Festivals, Events Statewide

Five on-island managers appointed to administer contracts

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority's (HTA) Signature Events and Community Enrichment programs demonstrate its longstanding commitment to reinvesting in the community and implementing its [Strategic Plan](#) and [Destination Management Action Plans](#). HTA today announced it is awarding \$3.78 million in funding to support 76 community projects, festivals, and events throughout the state as part of its Signature Events and Community Enrichment programs in 2023.

"The festivals and events being supported by our Signature Events and Community Enrichment programs are integral to Hawai'i's multi-cultural community and contribute to a stronger, diversified economy," said John De Fries, HTA's president and CEO. "By providing funding assistance to these programs on each island, we are vigorously supporting our kama'āina – cultural practitioners, musicians, artists, athletes, production staff, nonprofit groups, and volunteers – who are sharing meaningful experiences with residents and visitors alike."

Since 2017, HTA has invested more than \$11 million to over 411 community projects and events. HTA's Signature Events program supports major festivals and events that provide a unique and enriching experience, preserve Hawai'i's natural resources, perpetuate Hawaiian culture, and celebrate the islands' multi-cultural diversity and community. HTA's Community Enrichment program supports community-based projects and experiences that encourage tourism diversification in the areas of agriculture, culture, culinary, education, health and wellness, nature, sports, and voluntourism. Both programs seek to build kama'āina leadership capacity in Hawai'i's communities and organizations.

HTA has partnered with the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) and Island Chapters to administer its 2023 Signature Events and Community Enrichment Programs. Funded by HTA, five program project managers have been appointed to administer the awardee contracts in each county.

- **Christy Calabrese** has recently re-joined HVCB. She is responsible for managing the statewide Signature Events and Community Enrichment awardee contracts. With years of experience, she has a background in travel trade and tourism.
- **Michelle Pope** has joined the Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau. A dynamic professional who is driven by clear communication and efficient workflows, she is passionate about building community and supporting local non-profit organizations.
- **Sumithra Balraj** has joined the Maui Visitors and Convention Bureau encompassing Maui, Moloka'i and Lāna'i. Most recently, she served as the director of public relations at The Westin Maui Resort & Spa.
- **Taryn Pascua** has joined the O'ahu Visitors Bureau. Born and raised on O'ahu, she has more than eight years of experience in project management, communications, and marketing. Pascua has partnered with various nonprofits and stakeholders to create impactful campaigns that support the community.

- **Lani Kauai** joined the Kaua'i Visitors Bureau in 2015. In addition to managing the Community Enrichment Program on Kaua'i for 2022 and 2023, she handles a range of responsibilities including coordinating familiarization programs, travel and tradeshow, webinars, and presentations.

HTA 2023 SIGNATURE EVENTS PROGRAM AWARDEES

Multiple Islands

Organization	Project	Islands	Award Amount
Epic Sports Foundation	Moloka'i 2 O'ahu Paddleboard World Championships (M20)	Moloka'i, O'ahu	\$35,000
Hawai'i Ag & Culinary Alliance dba Hawai'i Food & Wine Festival	Hawai'i Food & Wine Festival	O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i Island	\$350,000
Hawai'i International Film Festival	43 rd Annual Hawai'i International Film Festival	Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i Island	\$150,000
Nā Wāhine O Ke Kai	Nā Wāhine O Ke Kai 2023 – Annual Women's Moloka'i to O'ahu Outrigger Canoe Race	Moloka'i, O'ahu	\$20,000
O'ahu Hawaiian Racing Association	The 72 nd Annual Moloka'i Hoe	Moloka'i, O'ahu	\$100,000

Hawai'i Island

Organization	Project	Award Amount
The IRONMAN Foundation	2023 VinFast IRONMAN World Championship	\$500,000

Maui

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Chaminade University of Honolulu	Maui Jim Maui Invitational	\$200,000

O'ahu

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Aloha Week Hawai'i, Inc. dba Aloha Festivals	Aloha Festivals 2023	\$100,000
Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts	46 th Annual Nā Hokū Hanohano Awards	\$50,000
Kalihi Palama Culture & Arts Society	Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition and Hō'ike	\$100,000
Moanalua Gardens Foundation, Inc.	46 th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival, Ola ka Hula I ka Po'e Hula	\$100,000
ODKF Support, Inc.	2023 Duke Kahanamoku Ocean Festival	\$65,000
Teach for America, Inc.	ESPN Events – Hawai'i Bowl and Diamond Head Classic	\$300,000

HTA 2023 COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM AWARDEES

Multiple Islands

Organization	Project	Islands	Award Amount
Kaikeha, Inc.	5th Annual Garden Island Boogie Board Classic 15th Annual Hubb Keiki Fest Turtle Bay Pro	Kaua'i, O'ahu	\$25,000
Kanu Hawai'i	"Give Back December" – Visitor Volunteer Engagement Program	Statewide	\$40,000
Kī Hō'alu Foundation	32nd Annual Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival – Maui Style 41st Annual Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival – Waikīkī Style 31st Annual Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival – Kaua'i Style 26th Annual Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival – Kona Style	Maui, O'ahu, Kaua'i, Hawai'i Island	\$48,000
Polynesian Football Hall of Fame	Polynesian Football Hall of Fame	O'ahu, Maui	\$25,000

Hawai'i Island

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Hawai'i Keiki Museum	Island Science Lecture Series	\$10,000
Hawai'i Island Pacific & Asia Cultural Celebrations	Hawai'i Kuauli Pacific & Asia Cultural Festival	\$30,000
Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival, Inc.	Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival - 2023 Season	\$60,000
Hawaiian International Billfish Association	61st Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament	\$30,000
Kai 'Ōpua Canoe Club	Queen Lili'uokalani Canoe Races 50th Anniversary	\$50,000
Kailua Village Business Improvement District	Street Eats, A Kailua Village Food Truck Festival	\$15,000
Kona Coffee Cultural Festival	52nd Kona Coffee Cultural Festival	\$75,000
Nā'ālehu Theatre	Aloha Shirt Festival, Vintage Era Exhibit and Fashion Week Hawai'i	\$10,000
Nā'ālehu Theatre	Hilo Hawaiian Music Festival	\$14,000
Volcano Art Center	Volcano Art Center's Niaulani Trail Program & Forest Fair	\$14,000

Maui

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Arts Education for Children Group	2023 Maui Music Festival Series	\$25,000
Hāna Arts	Hāna Arts Presents! – An Events and Workshops Program for East Maui	\$25,000
Hawaiian Kamali'i, Inc. dba Hawaiian Canoe Club	2023 Pailolo Challenge	\$20,000
Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe Voyaging Society	Gathering Of The Voyagers	\$30,000
Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center	"Celebrating the Visual Arts of Hawai'i" Hui No'eau Exhibitions	\$25,000
Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center	"Captivate the Artist in You" Art Workshops with Hui No'eau	\$20,000
Lōkahi Pacific	Festivals of Aloha	\$60,000
Lōkahi Pacific	Emma Farden Sharpe Hula Festival	\$20,000
Maui Arts & Cultural Center	Maui 'Ukulele Festival 2023	\$20,000
Maui Arts & Cultural Center	Visual Arts Exhibitions 2023	\$20,000
Maui Pops Orchestra, Inc.	Maui Pops Orchestra 2023 Holiday Pops Concert	\$6,000
The Lahaina Restoration Foundation	Moku'ula Experience	\$36,000

Moloka'i

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Youth In Motion	Molokai Holokai Ho'olaule'a	\$67,322

Lāna'i

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Lāna'i Culture & Heritage Center	Preserving and Honoring Lāna'i's Japanese History	\$25,000

O'ahu

Organization	Project	Award Amount
AccessSurf Hawai'i, Inc.	17th AccessSurf Hawai'i Anniversary	\$33,000
Bishop Museum	Moonlight Mele 2023	\$30,000
Haleiwa Waialua Historical Society	Waialua Town Interpretive History Signage, & Walking Tour	\$10,000
Hawai'i Bicycling League	2023 Honolulu Century Ride & Aloha Fun Ride	\$35,000
Hawai'i LGBT Legacy Foundation	Honolulu Pride	\$35,000
Hawai'i Forest Institute	2023 Hawai'i's Woodshow, Na Lā'au o Hawai'i	\$8,500
Hawai'i Korean Chamber of Commerce Foundation	19th Annual Korean Festival	\$50,000

Hawai'i United Okinawa Association	41st Annual Okinawan Festival	\$50,000
Kala Foundation	2023 Hawai'i 'Ukulele Festival	\$30,000
Kumu Kahua Theatre	Mendokusai	\$20,000
Lanikai Athletic Club, dba 7Gen Culture	The Lū'au – Hawai'i's Largest Grass Volleyball Tournament	\$15,000
Mauka to Makai Makaha Foundation	West O'ahu Ocean Safety Project	\$30,000
Mauka to Makai Makaha Foundation	Braddah Mel's Waterman Surfing Championship	\$30,000
Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji / Mō'ili'ili Summer Fest	10th Annual Mō'ili'ili Summer Fest 2023, Honolulu's Largest Bon Dance	\$15,000
Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association	Ka Huina 2023	\$50,000
Nurture Cultivate, Inc.	2nd Annual Ehuloha Health & Wellness Festival	\$15,000
Oahu Intertribal Council	47th Annual Honolulu Intertribal Powwow	\$5,000
Waimea Valley (aka Hi'ipaka LLC)	Waimea Valley Summer Concert 2023	\$25,000

Kaua'i

Organization	Project	Award Amount
Anaina Hou Community Park	Live On The Lānai	\$8,000
Arts Kaua'i	Kaua'i Songwriters Music Festival	\$7,500
Hanapēpē Economic Alliance	2023 Kaua'i Chocolate & Coffee Festival	\$45,000
Historic Waimea Theater & Cultural Arts Center	Emalani Festival – Eō e Emalani i Alaka'i	\$51,600
Ka Imi Na'auao o Hawai'i Nei Institute	Heiva I Kaua'i 2023	\$11,000
Kapa'a Business Association	Old Kapa'a Town 1st Saturday Ho'olaule'a Multi-Cultural Celebrations	\$5,000
Kaua'i Economic Development Board	Kōloa Plantation Days 2023 "Uniting Cultures as One 'Ohana"	\$43,500
Kaua'i Soto Zen Temple Zenshujji	Soto Zen Bon Festival	\$10,000
Kaua'i Japanese Cultural Society, Inc.	Kaua'i Matsuri Festival 2023	\$25,000
Kaua'i Yoga & Peace Festival	Aloha Kaua'i Yoga Festival & Worldwide Peace Meditation Summit	\$5,000
Mālie Foundation	2023 Hawaiian Cultural Events and Kaua'i Mokihana Festival	\$25,000
Po'ipū Beach Foundation	New Year's Eve Celebration	\$25,000
Po'ipū Beach Foundation	Po'ipū Food & Wine Festival	\$45,000
Rice Street Business Association	2nd Saturday Downtown Līhu'e Night Market	\$8,500
Rice Street Business Association	Rice Street Block Party	\$10,000
Rice Street Business Association	Thanksgiving Turkey Trot	\$5,000
The Kaua'i Marathon	The Kaua'i Marathon & Half Marathon	\$49,800

Headshots of Program Managers:

<https://finnpartners.box.com/s/gln1kdmtvg6hn9l41fgh0h2f153n4n2p>

Photos of 2023 Signature Events and Community Enrichment Awardees:

<https://finnpartners.box.com/s/sj2sfkhi7igaa4irbj8ygrfh823lybx>

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 Ku'u Home – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit

www.hawaiitourismauthority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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