

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of Native Hawaiian Relations
May 5, 2025 HŌ‘IHI Program Grant Webinar 2
Transcript (lightly edited)**

[OPENING SLIDE]

0:00

Aloha, I am Ke‘alapualoke Fukuda here.

0:01

I'm also here with my colleagues, Lisa Oshiro Suganuma and Ka‘aleleo Wong, also from the Department of the Interior Office of Native Hawaiian Relations.

0:11

We will be recording this session for sharing on our website as well for folks who weren't able to attend this presentation as well as our prior presentation that we had in April.

0:22

So I hope everybody is OK with that and just adding your questions to the chat. We are with ONHR, a very small office within the US Department of the Interior under the Secretary's office. Let's take care of just a little bit of housekeeping.

[HOUSEKEEPING SLIDE]

0:42

Again, microphones muted.

0:44

We will answer the questions in the chat at the end or if you're not comfortable with putting them in the chat, if you can hold on, we can unmute our microphones at the end of the presentation.

0:58

And I'll let you know when we're going to go ahead and allow people to unmute and ask their questions.

1:01

We just ask that you refrain from doing so while I'm speaking.

1:06

Please be respectful of time and other participants' desires to ask questions.

1:10

So if you do have very specific questions for your program or the project that you want to

run, maybe schedule a separate time to reach out to me so that we can discuss. So that we can honor the group's time and resources, especially since this is taking place during everyone's lunch time, and allow for more Q&A.

1:33

At that time you will use the raise hand function.

1:36

If nobody raises their hands, I'll go through the chat and Q&A and I'll answer all the questions in the chat and Q&A. We can unmute you for further discussion and clarification as well.

1:45

And then we will be putting all of this information on our ONHR website, which is www.doi.gov/hawaiian/hoihi.

[NĀ PAHUHOPU SLIDE]

1:56

So today, I'm going to cover the background of the NATIVE Act and then it's tie into our HŌ'ŪHI grants program.

2:04

The key provisions of the notice of funding opportunity that we just recently put out for this fiscal year, the availability of our technical assistance, recap of important reminders and deadlines specific to this funding opportunity, contact information, and then we'll do the Q&A.

[NATIVE ACT BACKGROUND SLIDE]

2:27

So the NATIVE Act is an Act that Hawai'i Senator Brian Schatz sponsored back in 2016, I believe, which serves to support Native Americans as well as Native Hawaiian organizations to participate more fully in tourism activities to increase visitation to tribal lands,

2:53

‘āina, wahi pana for us here in Hawai‘i and really help to have authentic and respectful experiences for both the visitors as well as kānaka here in Hawai‘i.

3:08

So to that end, one of the functions of the ACT is to provide grants, loans and technical assistance to tribal governments and organizations, and also to Native Hawaiian organizations.

3:21

And that is why the NATIVE Act is stewarded by our office, the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations.

[NATIVE ACT – KEY PROVISIONS SLIDE]

3:29

So just a little bit more in terms of what NATIVE Act does on the action part of what we're looking for. For these grants, really we're looking at empowering Native Hawaiian organizations to showcase our specific foods, traditions and histories for the Native Hawaiian community to really help to maintain our traditions, identify those traditions and cultural features that are important to sustain the Native Hawaiian community.

4:00

And I'll get a little bit more into what that means in terms of the notice of funding in a little bit.

4:06

And really to provide visitor experiences that are authentic and respectful of both our place and our culture.

4:15

And then finally, really to enhance the efforts to promote understanding and respect for the diverse cultures and subcultures within the United States to the overall tourism activities within the country.

[HŌ'ŪHI PROGRAM ORGANIZATION SLIDE]

4:31

So our program is stewarded by our office, the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations within the US Department of the Interior.

4:38

I serve as our program manager for our HŌ'ŪHI program.

4:42

And what that means is I provide the programmatic support and coordination between the Native Hawaiian community and the federal government to ensure that the NATIVE Act is implemented and it's fully implemented within Hawai'i and within our Native Hawaiian community.

5:00

We also partner with the Department of the Interior's Interior Business Center.

5:04

If you ever hear me use the acronym IBC, that's what I mean.

5:07

I'm so sorry.

5:08

We have a lot of abbreviations and acronyms within the federal government.

5:13

So if I use something that I haven't explained, please let me know.

5:17

But IBC is responsible for our technical and administrative support for the programs, so they help us with our grant submissions, award negotiations. and those contracting features to make sure that it's compliant with federal requirements.

5:34

And then they also help us in terms of progress monitoring and financial reporting.

5:39

So I do have one of our IBC partners on the call today in case there are any technical questions that come up in the chat.

5:47

That's Tristan Harley.

5:48

He is one of our key grant specialists over in IBC that we work with.

[HŌ'ĪHI PROGRAM OVERVIEW SLIDE]

5:57

And so for our program that we run through the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations for the NATIVE Act, we call our program the HŌ'ĪHI grants program and that really comes from the acronym for Heritage Tourism Opportunities in Hawai'i.

6:14

That is the name that we chose to give our program.

6:17

The vision of our program is to really to reflect the values of hō'ihī and the 'ōlelo no'eau "E hō'ihī aku, e hō'ihī mai," which is to receive and to give respect in tandem.

6:31

And really that's the core principles of what we're trying to do in terms of tourism within the Native Hawaiian community. Making sure that we are mindful of place, practices, and culture and providing opportunities that engage visitors in a way that makes sure that our practices and traditions and our places are stewarded with the utmost respect.

6:59

And then we are also really focused on the economic development side of tourism, which is really looking at making sure that Native Hawaiians are engaged in the tourism industry and sector in a way that allows Native Hawaiians to have resources that allow us to uplift communities, maintain historic and sacred sites appropriately, and you know, allow for a liveable wage for Native Hawaiians.

[HŌ‘IHI PROGRAM OBJECTIVES SLIDE]

7:29

So the HŌ‘IHI program objectives are to showcase our traditional knowledge and practices or come up with and implement new programs and strategies that showcase the history, places, arts, food, tradition, history and continuing vitality of our people.

7:50

I will give a few examples of some past grantees as well in upcoming slides.

7:55

But I do want to let you know that some of our previous programs are also available on our website.

8:00

So you can take a look at past grantees and their program activities that align with these priorities.

8:08

They identify, enhance, revive or maintain loea, wahi kūpuna and wahi pana to sustain the distinctiveness of the Native Hawaiian community in Hawai‘i and provide for authentic and respectful visitor experiences.

[2025 HŌ‘IHI PROGRAM GOALS SLIDE]

8:26

So for this year our program goals are really to continue in this tradition that we have established for our grant programs.

8:36

So uplifting and perpetuating traditional practices through demonstration, usage, protocol - those are some program activities that are appropriate under HŌ‘IHI.

8:48

Supporting the maintenance, enhancement, and protection of our natural resources, our wahi kūpuna or wahi pana, areas that are impacted by tourism here in our state.

9:00

Enhance the entrepreneurial capacity of Native Hawaiians, creating business opportunities that work with the visitor industry, offer business and economic development training, or do some sort of stimulation of economic activity related to tourism.

9:18

As well as provide authentic and respectful visitor experiences that convey and reaffirm our principles of HŌ‘IHI, reciprocity between place and resources, practices, and traditions.

[HŌ‘IHI PROGRAM DEFINITIONS & ELEMENTS SLIDE]

9:35

So before we go any further into the NOFO, just as an FYI, we do have some definitions and elements that are documented within our guidance.

9:46

Firstly, Native Hawaiian traditional cultural practices are included but not limited to those practices listed.

9:54

So if we did not include a traditional practice of your place or your area, that doesn't mean that it's not included.

10:04

We would probably need a little bit more explanation of that practice.

10:09

Visitors or guests is a little bit of a different definition than what you might be thinking.

10:15

We include visitors or guests to be expansive of residents of the state of Hawai‘i as well as people who have travelled from outside Hawai‘i to Hawai‘i.

10:26

So I would, for example, I live on O‘ahu, I would be a visitor to Hawai‘i Island.

10:34

I would be considered a visitor.

10:35

If I was going to participate in, say, Merrie Monarch activities, I would be a visitor to that space.

10:44

Reciprocation is the willful action or gesture of appreciation and gratitude for what's been received.

10:50

So we want to see that demonstration of respect be documented within your proposals. Project site or location really depends on the actual project activities.

11:05

And you'll see some of the grantees have place-based projects, 'āina based projects, but some are not.

11:11

And it really depends on the proposed activities.

11:14

But if they are project or site specific, there are some requirements that we have in terms of documentation within the NOFO as well as ensuring that we understand the cultural or historic significance of that place.

[2024 HŌ'ŪHI PROGRAM AWARDEES SLIDE]

11:33

So just to give you an example of some of the grantees, last year, we were able to award the following projects.

11:40

And I'm just going to give a little bit of a highlight for each project.

11:43

But like I said, prior year awardees are on our website.

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So this is just a 2024 list.

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We do have our previous projects also on our website.

11:55

Our first grantee was Hawai'i Island Land Trust, HILT, and they were awarded to help support their educational curriculum that they use with schools, as well as with visitors to the site, for Mahukona on the Big Island.

12:13

So Mahukona is a significant voyaging place to our community and they are rebuilding a navigational and ecological complex.

12:27

We also funded Hui Maka'āinana o Makana over on Kaua'i for their Hā'ena State Park visitor engagement and resource management activities.

12:36

If you've ever been there, you know that they've been doing that stewardship work for a long

time and we were helping them to enhance some of their activities that came on post pandemic.

12:45

Koa 'Ike we funded for their economic development program for cultural practitioners and small business owners.

12:52

Basically it's a small business incubation project for practitioners and small business owners to help to identify their client base and grow and expand their business projects within the visitor industry.

13:06

Kumano I Ke Ala o Makaweli, also over on Kaua'i, is restoring native forests and food systems in Makaweli, Kaua'i.

13:14

They are also creating educational curriculum to share with both visitors and schools on that 'āina. Mana Maoli's program is a little bit of a different one for us.

13:27

They are using music and media to create community and 'ōpio engagement for our youth.

13:34

So it's not specifically 'āina based, but there are 'āina sites for their project that they're using to develop these educational materials that will be shared globally through social media.

13:52

If you're familiar with Mana Maoli's work, I'm probably articulating it very poorly, but it's along the lines of sharing our culture and the strengths of our 'ōpio with the world.

14:06

And then finally, we funded the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, NaHHA, for their Ho'okipa Hawai'i showcase, which happens in February.

14:15

So in the past we've had questions about whether or not a project has to be a full year or if they can be events based.

14:23

NaHHA's project is a little bit of both where they have their Ho'okipa Hawai'i weekend, which happens in February, but they also throughout the year do knowledge programs and sit and learns with cultural practitioners. And provide professional development for Native Hawaiian organizations with a certificate course that really helps them to grow their business and then culminates with that showcase within Waikīkī.

[NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) SLIDE]

14:55

So for this year's funding, the funding opportunity is listed right here.

14:59

So you have that available.

15:01

It's also on our website, so it's easy to access.

15:05

If you need to search it, you can do a keyword search through grants.gov on the side, and you're able to look up the opportunity number, as well in the CFDA number.

15:18

So any of those ways are a great way for you to go ahead and find that grant opportunity.

15:24

Total funding, we are anticipating about \$1,000,000 worth of funding.

15:28

That's about what we get annually with a grant floor of \$50,000 and grant ceiling of awards of about \$200,000.

15:37

Usually our grants are around \$100,000 to \$120K-ish in terms of what the ask is from the grant applicants.

15:50

And then we're looking at about 5 to 10 awards for this year.

[ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION SLIDE]

15:58

So in order to be eligible for the HŌ'ŪHI program, you need to be a nonprofit.

16:05

You need to be a nonprofit that maybe doesn't have a 501(c)(3) status, can maybe be a 501(c)(4), but other than institutions of higher learning.

16:14

So UH is not eligible for this opportunity.

16:19

Native Hawaiian tribal organizations, nonprofits that do have their 501(c)(3) status, again other than institutions of higher education.

16:28

And then we need programs that meet the definition of a nonprofit that serves the interests of Native Hawaiians, in which Native Hawaiians serve in substantive or decision-making roles and is recognized for expertise in Native Hawaiian culture and heritage.

[NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) SLIDE]

16:49

So for the funding opportunity, here are some key dates.

16:52

We posted the funding opportunity, the NOFO, back in April, at the beginning of April.

16:58

This is our second of two pre-proposal informational sessions.

17:03

One was held in April and then we had this one in May because the first was around Merrie Monarch time and we knew it was really difficult to catch some folks.

17:12

So hopefully these are enough.

17:14

But again, as I said in previous slides, we will be posting these.

17:19

So if you know of people who weren't able to attend today, these materials are going to be available on our website.

17:26

Also, attendance at a pre-proposal informational session is not required.

17:30

That's not a prerequisite to submitting an application.

17:33

So folks didn't have to come to this to be able to submit.

17:37

Our closing date for applications for this round is June 9th, 2025.

17:43

I have a little bit of information on a future slide, but please note the time when I say it

because it is aligned with Eastern Standard Time, so it's not midnight Hawai'i time. Before you apply,

17:56

you are required to submit your application through grants.gov firstly, but you also need a sam.gov registration.

18:04

So if you do not have your sam.gov registration, I recommend you do that as soon as possible just to make your life easier.

18:11

You'll notice that you will be able to begin an application in grants.gov.

18:15

However, if you do not have your sam.gov registration, when it comes time to submit it, you won't be able to submit.

18:22

So again, take care of that sam.gov registration as soon as possible.

18:28

We anticipate making awards in October, early October. Our grant period

18:34

Can be typically anywhere from a year to up to 36 months from the award date.

18:39

So a year to three years.

18:41

Most people's projects are typically around a year.

[KEY PROVISIONS OF THE NOFO SLIDE]

Into the nitty gritty of the actual notice of funding opportunity.

18:51

For those of you who have applied or have looked at our funding opportunities in the past, you'll notice the format's a little bit different.

18:58

So I just want to draw your attention to some of the key elements within the new funding opportunity.

19:04

Instead of having them in sections, they're on certain pages.

19:07

So pages 7 through 10 has the application content and format which are going to be really important.

19:14

First, firstly, really look at your statement of need.

19:18

Why is your project necessary and how does it advance the goals of the NATIVE Act and HŌ'ŪIHI specifically?

19:24

So you need to address those things for your project goals and objectives.

19:29

What are the outcomes and how will you be achieving those outcomes?

19:32

So all of your outcomes should have goals and actionable items that are attached to them.

19:39

Your project activities and work plan.

19:41

The reviewers will need to see the activities with detail to see how those are going to be happening and the timeline as well, which I'm going to get to in the next bullet point.

19:53

How those activities are going to help you to meet the goals and objectives that you just stated.

20:00

And relatedly, your project schedule and milestones, how are your project schedule and milestones going to be mapped out?

20:07

That can be on a calendar basis.

20:09

I

20:10

don't really recommend that because things can fluctuate, but maybe like on a quarterly basis, quarter one, we're going to be doing these activities, quarter 2 and so forth and so on,

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just so you give yourself some flexibility. For project monitoring and evaluation,

20:27

how are you going to monitor each of the project activities and how are they tied to whether or not your project is successful?

20:36

So anytime you have a deliverable, you should also have a monitoring requirement and then a reporting requirement.

20:45

So something that might be quantifiable.

20:47

So for example, if you're having community events, what does a successful community event look like?

20:54

Maybe how many people attended and participated.

20:57

If you're doing surveys, a certain survey response and then and searching satisfaction levels within those responses, that kind of thing.

21:08

And then we would like to know who's undertaking the activities.

21:12

So if you are as a Native Hawaiian organization applying for the grant, but you're working with additional partners and key individuals, please provide all the details as to who the other entities are and the work they're doing and why do you need to be engaging these people to be doing that work?

21:32

Your reciprocation and sustainability pieces.

21:35

So how are these activities related to the concept of HŌ'ŌHI and the values of HŌ'ŌHI and sustainability as well.

21:46

And then a map of your project area.

21:48

Again, this is related to programs that are site specific.

21:51

If you do have a site specific 'āina based project, we ask that you provide a location address and map.

21:57

There's some additional details within the NOFO that you can look at, but we just need to know the site, its history and relevance to the project that you're conducting, and then your permissions to conduct the work on that site. Site access and controls with federal environmental compliance.

22:13

So again, if it's site specific, you we'll need to know that you're authorized to conduct the activities and then a detailed budget and proposal and justification.

22:23

We use the SF424A budget form for you to be able to complete your budget activities.

22:30

And we ask that you include your narrative and justification as well.

22:33

So if you have budget line items, we need to know what those costs are, how they relate to your goals and why you need us to fund them.

[OTHER PROJECT NARRATIVE DETAILS SLIDE]

22:44

All right.

22:45

So for your project, we really ask that you write your project, and it says this in the NOFO.

22:50

So please, please, please pay attention because it's a little bit different than last year.

22:55

I think last year we asked for 20 pages.

22:57

This year, no more than 15 pages, please.

22:59

I mean 15 pages, no more than 15 pages in total.

23:05

Times New Roman, 12 point font, single spaced, regular margins and formatting.

23:11

Again, your sam.gov registration needs to be complete before we can move forward with reviewing your proposal. Your attestation or documentation confirming your eligibility as a Native Hawaiian organization.

23:24

So that's the document that says that you meet those requirements that I noted previously.

23:30

Your documentation of nonprofit status, your 501(c)(3) letter from the IRS, your certifications regarding lobbying, if that's applicable for you and your organization. You can review those documents and see if that's relevant to the work that you're doing.

23:46

Any disclosures that need to be made in terms of both conflicts of interest or lobbying as appropriate, and then any overlap or duplication of effort.

23:57

Please note that we do not allow for funding for the same project to be used for the HŌ'ŌHI program.

24:07

So for example, if you're already receiving funds from the federal government for the specific project, you'd need to show us that you're either doing different activities or this is a new project related to the work that you do, but something that shows that we're not duplicating funding for these projects.

[PROPOSAL EVALUATION & SCORING SLIDE]

24:30

So in terms of proposal criteria and scoring, the proposals will be evaluated by a committee.

24:36

It will be merit based. Projects can receive a total of 100 points.

24:42

These are the categories that we're looking at.

24:44

So technical merit is 30 points.

24:47

Whether or not your project meets the goals and milestones and they're clearly described. Your methodology and activities are sound and effective. And everything matches up. Again, if you have activities that you're basically drawing line to line, connecting the dots for the reviewers.

25:04

Your work plan and project schedule count for 25 points.

25:07

We're looking to see whether or not your project or plan is reasonable.

25:12

Your schedule is reasonable with milestones and outputs so that we can see how you're tracking and monitoring your activities throughout your grant's life cycle.

25:22

Your monitoring and evaluation is worth 20 points.

25:25

We want to see relevant information and data gathering to support your project and its effectiveness.

25:32

So really explain to us what your metrics are for success and how you're going to be checking in and meeting those metrics throughout your project.

25:43

Your qualifications as an organization are 10 points.

25:46

We want you to show that you have experience, knowledge, and abilities to perform the work and achieve project goals.

25:53

You don't necessarily have to have federal funding experience.

25:57

We just want to know that you're able to do the work that you're proposing to do for this project.

26:03

Your budget is worth 15 points, and it's looking at whether or not you've really put some thought into how those funds are going to be used and how they're going to ensure that you can implement your work plan and activities and stay on schedule.

[RECAP & IMPORTANT REMINDERS SLIDE]

26:24

So again, just a few friendly reminders related to the project or to the grant overall.

26:30

Please make sure that your submissions are sent or you hit that submission button on grants.gov prior to 5:59 PM on June 9th.

26:43

So June 9th, 2025 at 5:59 PM is when the proposal cut off is.

26:50

Please note it's not midnight Hawai'i time.

26:53

It's connected to Eastern Standard Time.

26:54

So I can't articulate that enough.

26:57

Please, please, please, please, please be sure -- mark that on your calendars, put it in your phones, whatever you have to do to make it so you remember that it's not midnight.

27:07

Please.

27:07

We want you to be successful.

27:10

Your proposal submissions need to be done through grants.gov.

27:14

We recommend you use the Grants.gov Workspace to help you with your forms and upload attachments before you complete your application package.

27:23

It'll help you go back and revisit things and build your proposal in a cleaner way.

27:32

So really, really take advantage of the workspace.

27:37

Please also be mindful of the requirements.

27:39

So again, it's in the NOFO, it's in this presentation, but you've seen the requirements and then try to address those as much as possible to ensure that your application is both complete and as thorough as possible.

27:53

Again, our total funding, we're anticipating \$1,000,000 in funding.

27:58

We're probably going to award or we will be awarding projects between \$50,000 and \$200,000.

28:04

Please don't ask for the full million dollars. We're trying to spread this money out across organizations.

28:12

Our estimated grants are going to likely be around \$120,000.

28:16

Most this year were around \$100,000.

28:19

And so that's going to be around 5 to 10 awards that we're looking at starting October 1st, 2025.

28:26

And again, grant periods are usually around a year, a year to two years, but can go all the way out to three years as needed.

[CONTACT INFORMATION SLIDE]

28:39

And if you have any questions in the meantime, or you think of something in the future and you want to reach out or like I said in the beginning, if you want to ask me project specific

questions specific to your organization and the program that you want to apply for funding for, you can reach out to me directly as the program manager.

29:02

My contact information is here.

29:04

I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

29:06

Happy to jump on a Zoom or a conference call as appropriate, as needed.

29:13

I'm available all the Hawai'i time.

29:16

I'm, I'm in a Hawai'i time zone, so it's pretty easy.

29:19

We also have our grants management specialist, Tristan Harley, who's also on the call.

29:24

But Tristan works with our IBC center and he makes himself available even though he's not available locally.

29:33

He actually is wonderful about making himself available to our Hawai'i clientele.

29:37

So if you have any questions, you can reach out to him in his office on the technical aspects of the grants and they're happy to help you in any way, shape or form to be a successful applicant.

[MAHALO! QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION SLIDE]

29:53

And with that, I'm going to stop sharing and I think we're going to stop recording as well and head over into the question and answer session.