

**STATE OF HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
560 N. NIMITZ HIGHWAY, SUITE 200
(VIRTUAL MEETING - VIA ZOOM WEBINAR)
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND FINANCE
MINUTES**

March 4, 2026 10:00 a.m.

(or immediately following the conclusion of the OHA Beneficiary, Advocacy and Empowerment (BAE) Committee Meeting)

FULL MEETING CAN BE VIEWED AT [03/04/26 Budget and Finance \(BF\) Meeting](#)

ATTENDANCE:

Chairperson John Waihe'e, IV
Vice-Chairperson Dan Ahuna
Trustee Kaleihikina Akaka
Trustee Keli'i Akina
Trustee Luana Alapa
Trustee Brickwood Galuteria
Trustee C. Hulu Lindsey
Trustee J. Keoni Souza

Lei-Ann Durant
Mark Watanabe
Melissa Wennihan
Morgan Kauai Robello
Nathan Takeuchi
Pohai Ryan
Remy Keliioomalua
Yvonne Mahelona

EXCUSED:

Trustee Kaiali'i Kahele

BOARD COUNSEL:

Kapono Kiakona

BOT STAFF:

Anuheia Diuamond
Carina Lee
Crayn Akina

ADMINISTRATION STAFF:

Summer Sylva, Interim CEO / Administrator
K. Sean Kekina, COO / Ka Pou Nui
Bill Brennan, *Director of Communications*
Everett Ohta, *Senior Legal Counsel*
Grace Chen, *Budget Chief*
Kyle Saucier, *IT Systems Engineer & Administrator*
Lise Vaughan-Sekona, *Community Engagement Director*
Poni Askew, *Director of Economic and Business Resilience*
Ryan Lee, *Investment Director, Interim CFO*

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Waihe'e calls the Committee on Budget and Finance meeting for Wednesday, March 4, 2026 to order at **10:22 a.m.** ([0:45 / 1:29:05](#))

Chair Waihe'e notes for the record that **PRESENT** are:

MEMBERS			AT CALL TO ORDER (10:22 a.m.)	TIME ARRIVED
CHAIR	JOHN	WAIHE'E, IV	PRESENT	
VICE-CHAIR	DAN	AHUNA	PRESENT	
TRUSTEE	KALEIHIKINA	AKAKA	PRESENT	
TRUSTEE	KELI'I	AKINA	PRESENT	
TRUSTEE	LUANA	ALAPA	PRESENT	
TRUSTEE	BRICKWOOD	GALUTERIA	PRESENT	
TRUSTEE	C. HULU	LINDSEY		Arrived at
TRUSTEE	J. KEONI	SOUZA	PRESENT	

At the Call to Order, **SEVEN (7) Trustees are PRESENT**, thereby constituting a quorum.

EXCUSED from the BF Meeting are:

MEMBERS			COMMENT
TRUSTEE	KAIALI'I	KAHELE	MEMO – REQUESTING TO BE EXCUSED

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 4, 2026

Chair Waihe'e moves to approve the Minutes of February 4, 2026. [\(4:30 / 1:29:05\)](#)

Chair Waihe'e asks if there are any changes.

There are none.

Chair Waihe'e asks if anyone has signed up to testify on this item.

BF Chair Staff Wennihan states that no one is signed up to testify on this agenda item.

Chair Waihe'e calls for a Roll Call Vote

10:25 a.m.							4:50 / 1:29:05
TRUSTEE		1	2	'AE (YES)	A'OLE (NO)	KANALUA (ABSTAIN)	EXCUSED
VICE-CHAIR DAN AHUNA				X			
KALEIHIKINA AKAKA				X			
KELI'I AKINA				X			
LUANA ALAPA				X			
BRICKWOOD GALUTERIA				X			
KAIALI'I KAHELE							EXCUSED
CARMEN HULU LINDSEY							Not present at time of vote
J. KEONI SOUZA				X			
CHAIR JOHN WAIHE'E	1			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT				7	0	0	2

VOTE: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED

Chair Waihe'e notes for the record that ALL (7) members present vote 'AE (YES) and the MOTION PASSES.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

B. February 18, 2026

Chair Waihe'e asks if anyone has signed up to testify on this item.

BF Chair Staff Wennihan states that no one is signed up to testify on this agenda item.

Chair Waihe'e moves to approve the Minutes of February 18, 2026. (5:15 / 1:29:05)

Chair Waihe'e asks if there are any changes.

There are none.

Chair Waihe'e calls for a Roll Call Vote

10:26 a.m.							5:40 / 1:29:05
TRUSTEE		1	2	'AE (YES)	A'OLE (NO)	KANALUA (ABSTAIN)	EXCUSED
VICE-CHAIR DAN AHUNA				X			
KALEIHIKINA AKAKA				X			
KELI'I AKINA				X			
LUANA ALAPA				X			
BRICKWOOD GALUTERIA				X			
KAIALI'I KAHELE							EXCUSED
CARMEN HULU LINDSEY							Not present at time of vote
J. KEONI SOUZA				X			
CHAIR JOHN WAIHE'E	1			X			
TOTAL VOTE COUNT				7	0	0	2

VOTE: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED

Chair Waihe'e notes for the record that ALL (7) members present vote 'AE (YES) and the MOTION PASSES.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Action Item BF #26-04: Approval of OHA funding for Ho‘ākoako Lāhui event sponsorship awards for the following organizations and events for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, Quarter 4 (Batch 2): ([6:00 / 1:29:05](#))

1. **Kāhuli Leo Le‘a – May Day 2026**
2. **Conservation Council for Hawai‘i – Manu o Kū Festival**
3. **Pakini Loan Fund – Wai‘anae Moku Made**
4. **Ka Po‘e Lawai‘a – Manini & Me Holoholo Festival**
5. **He Ho‘omaka Hou Ana O Puna – Ho‘ike o nā Wāhine – Hāumana KūkāKūkā Program Completion and Kīhei Tying Ceremony**
6. **Ho‘okāko'o Corporation – Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School’s May Day Program – SY 2025-26 – Sense of Place, Sense of Belonging**
7. **Acton Digital Inc (Kaulike Academy) – ‘Ōpio Mākeke: Summer Kickoff Night Market**
8. **Recycle Hawaii – Hawai‘i Zero Waste Youth Planning Convergence**
9. **Symbrosia Foundation – Kona Kai Festival**
10. **North Kohala Community Resource Center – Kohala Kamehameha Day Celebration**
11. **Papa Ola Lokahi – Pūpū ‘Umeke Kā‘eo ‘Ekolu: 3rd Annual Traditional Healers Gathering**
12. **Festivals of Aloha – Na Kamehameha Commemorative Pā‘ū Parade & Ho‘olaule‘a**
13. **Leeward Kai Canoe Club LLC – Lauhoe: Father's Day Regatta Festival**

Chair Waihe‘e asks if there is anyone signed up to testify

There are none.

BF Chair Staff Wennihan states that no one is signed up to testify on these agenda items, however there are representatives from each organization present or online to present.

Chair Waihe'e moves to approve and authorize OHA funding for Ho'ākoakoa Lāhui event sponsorship awards for the following organizations and events for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, Quarter 4 (Batch 2): ([7:30 / 1:29:05](#))

#	Organization Name	Event	Event Date(s)	Evaluation Scores (Out of 50 Points)	Award Amount Recommendation
1	Kāhuli Leo Le'a	May Day 2026	May 1, 2026	Evaluator A: 41 points Evaluator B: 43 points	\$11,250
2	Conservation Council for Hawai'i	Manu o Kū Festival	May 2, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 47 points	\$2,500
3	Pakini Loan Fund	Wai'anae Moku Made	May 2, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 47 points	\$14,400
4	Ka Po'e Lawai'a	Manini & Me Holoholo Festival	May 2-3, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$15,000
5	He Ho'omaka Hou Ana O Puna	Ho'ike o nā Wāhine – Hāumana Kūkākūkā Program Completion and Kihei Tying Ceremony	May 9, 2026	Evaluator A: 44 points Evaluator B: 40 points	\$11,025
6	Ho'okāko'o Corporation	Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School's May Day Program – SY 2025-26 – Sense of Place, Sense of Belonging	May 21-22, 2026	Evaluator A: 40 points Evaluator B: 40 points	\$9,533
7	Acton Digital Inc (Kaulike Academy)	'Ōpio Mākeke: Summer Kickoff Night Market	May 30, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 50 points	\$10,500
8	Recycle Hawaii	Hawai'i Zero Waste Youth Planning Convergence	June 1-5, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 48 points	\$15,000
9	Symbrosia Foundation	Kona Kai Festival	June 5-6, 2026	Evaluator A: 48 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$10,867
10	North Kohala Community Resource Center	Kohala Kamehameha Day Celebration	June 11, 2026	Evaluator A: 47 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$12,800
11	Papa Ola Lokahi	Pūpū 'Umeke Kā'eo 'Ekolu: 3rd Annual Traditional Healers Gathering	June 19-20, 2026	Evaluator A: 46 points Evaluator B: 48 points	\$15,000
12	Festivals of Aloha	Na Kamehameha Commemorative Pā'ū Parade & Ho'olaule'a	June 20, 2026	Evaluator A: 46 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$15,000
13	Leeward Kai Canoe Club LLC	Lauhoe: Father's Day Regatta Festival	June 20-21, 2026	Evaluator A: 48 points Evaluator B: 46 points	\$15,000
			TOTAL		\$157,875

Chair Waihe'e: We'll start with Kāhuli Leo Le'a

BF Chair Staff Wennihan we have Zachary Lum online.

Zachary Lum (Kāhuli Leo Le'a): [\(8:55 – 10:40 / 1:29:05\)](#)

Aloha. Mahalo for this opportunity to provide brief testimony in your consideration of our proposed event, May Day 2026. My name is Zachary Lum, and today I'm representing our nonprofit organization, Kahuli Leo Lea, as its Executive Director.

Since 2019, our organization has taken on the kuleana of continuing a tradition started by my kumu, Robert Cazimero, and his brother Roland. As many may remember, the May Day concert at the Waikīkī Shell, featuring the Brothers Cazimero, was an annual gathering that marked May Day as more than just Lei Day, but a day and evening of music, hula, and the real opportunity to gather the lāhui, as suggested by this Ho'ākoakoa Lāhui funding opportunity. Beyond the merits of our event and its many alignments with OHA's Mana i Maui Ola strategic outcomes that we've articulated in our application, I'm here today to share and emphasize that in the past six or seven years of carrying this tradition as handed to us by our kumu, we have grown the event from a one-night concert to a statewide broadcast, international livestream, with various satellite events in Hawai'i and Japan. This is significant for us not only because of the millions of marketing impressions that we create every year, but more so because our approach is rooted in gathering the lāhui under the auspices of mele and hula. Yes, our event broadcast is entertaining, but in that entertainment we create opportunities for viewers to learn and strengthen the values that, inch by inch, song by song, make us who we are as Hawai'i.

So mahalo for your consideration of our cause to bring mele and its knowledge-bearing capabilities to our lāhui and beyond. Mahalo nui.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Mahalo, Zachary. Trustees are there any questions?

There are no questions.

BF Chair Staff Wennihan Next we have Jonee Peters and Leah Kocher in person.

Jonee Peters (Conservation Council for Hawai'i): [\(11:15 – 13:50 / 1:29:05\)](#)

Aloha, Chair Waihe'e, Vice-Chair Ahuna, and board members. My name is Jonee Peters, I am the Executive Director for the Conservation Council for Hawai'i. We are the oldest nonprofit conservation group in the state of Hawai'i, and we are also the state affiliate for the National Wildlife Federation. I'm coming before you to request funding for our annual Manu o Kū Festival. This is our 11th year. The Manu o Kū bird is very special, it is one of the native birds that you can see readily without having to go hiking or experience any hardship to see it, it's right in downtown.

This festival will be at the 'Iolani Palace grounds. We have about 20 organizations and agencies participating. We do this for the public to see how the Manu o Kū can be an ambassador for all the other native species. When we first started, we had about 150 guests come through the day. Last year, we counted about 500 to 600 people.

Our request for funds today is for tents and the things that we need to conduct this project. We need tents, we are requesting generators, and we need water barrels for the tent. This is a 40-by-40 tent.

Jonee Peters This is a one-day event. It goes from 10:00am to 2:00pm. We have entertainment, speakers, a Manu o Kū bird tour, a scoping area, entertainment, and a costume contest. This has been very successful.

That's what we come before you today, and I want to thank you for this opportunity to come before you. Aloha.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Mahalo, Jonee, Thank you for your testimony. Trustees are there any questions?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Pakini Loan Fund.

Lei Reidel (Pakini Loan Fund): ([14:30 – 17:15 / 1:29:05](#))

Hello. My name is Lei Reidel, I'm the Executive Director for the Pakini Loan Fund, a nonprofit emerging Native community development financial institution. We support small business development in Hawai'i with a particular focus on Native Hawaiian small businesses. Mahalo for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of Wai'anae Moku Made in May. In partnership with the Wai'anae Economic Development Council, Wai'anae Moku Made is more than a marketplace, it's an opportunity for us to support Wai'anae-based artisans, cultural practitioners, farmers, designers, and small business owners who carry forward 'ike Hawai'i through their hands and their work. What they often lack is access—access to capital, access to broader markets, and access to coordinated support systems that allow their businesses to grow sustainably.

This sponsorship will directly uplift Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs by providing structured opportunities to showcase, sell, and scale their products in ways that are culturally grounded and community-centered. Wai'anae Moku Made prioritizes Wai'anae-produced, culturally rooted goods and services, keeping dollars circulating within the moku instead of leaving our community. OHA's support will ensure we have access to logistical needs like tents, tables, and chairs while supporting cultural activities by providing practitioner stipends. Additionally, we'll be able to market the event on a larger scale to draw a larger audience and support economic resilience. Wai'anae faces persistent economic disparities—lower median incomes, fewer employment opportunities, and higher barriers to capital access. Yet we also hold immense cultural wealth and entrepreneurial talent. Wai'anae Moku Made is designed to bridge that gap by creating economic opportunities grounded in our community's own brand of resilience.

Our last Wai'anae Local Made in November 2025 drew roughly 300 participants to the parking lot of Wai'anae Neighborhood Place. While it rained—most unusual for Wai'anae, that night—29 vendors participated, with 26 of the 29 being Native Hawaiian and 27 of the 29 vendors being Wai'anae-based. Of the 29 vendors, roughly 20 were brand new businesses participating in their first makeke. Additionally, we were able to bring 19 community resource partners specializing in small business development to Wai'anae. As of now, we're engaging 25 new Wai'anae-based small businesses—22 of them Native Hawaiian and 22 of them Wai'anae-owned. By the event in May, we're cautiously optimistic that the number will increase to rival our November event.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Wai'anae Moku Made. Please let me know if you have any questions, and we definitely appreciate your support. Mahalo.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Mahalo, Lei. Trustees are there any questions?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Ka Po'e Lawai'a.

Jessica Bates (Ka Po'e Lawai'a): ([18:00 – 22:35 / 1:29:05](#))

Aloha. My name is Jessica Bates, and I'm here to speak on behalf of Ka Po'e Lawai'a and our Holoholo Festival called Manini and Me. The festival focuses specifically on shoreline fishing and structured hands-on participation. The requirement is intentional; learning happens through direct practice with families, so any adult who registers must have a child with them under the age of 15. This ensures direct learning, whether it is from Ka Po'e Lawai'a teaching them or from families continuing generational responsibility for shoreline engagement. This matters to us because shoreline fishing is a part of daily life, especially on the west side. Nearshore resources are not abstract—they feed households and support family stability. When children learn, they grow to understand both access and responsibility. They develop kuleana to themselves, their community, and their land and water.

The goal is to reinforce fishing as a nourishment practice, a Hawaiian cultural practice, and a shared responsibility within families and the community. We believe the impact is practical and measurable. Children leave able to identify local shoreline species and describe where they come from. Adults actively model fishing practices in real time, and Ka Po'e Lawai'a will also be there to teach and guide, especially for families who may be unfamiliar with fishing or who may have lost that knowledge in their family. We believe families will gain a clear understanding of how nearshore resources sustain our households and how we can mālama and responsibly use our west side resources.

We will gather feedback to strengthen future efforts and ensure the work remains grounded and effective—meaning we stay within our community, keep children involved, and continue sharing knowledge so it can thrive moving forward. The Manini and Me Holoholo Festival reinforces responsibility to shoreline fishing within families and helps sustain Hawaiian traditional knowledge through continued practice that is practical and doable within our communities. We want to engage both fishermen and non-fishermen to show the importance of this practice. We believe caring for nearshore resources is a shared responsibility of everyone in the community who uses the beach, fishes, and cares for our 'āina.

The festival is actually just one part of the broader Manini and Me program. Manini and Me is a fish identification program we created to teach our children about fish and where they live. We start in tide pools to expand their knowledge and give them access at an early age. The Manini and Me Holoholo Festival will launch this program to the broader public, allowing fishermen and non-fishermen to come together and create an environment not only for themselves but for the community and for our children. We want to exemplify how Hawaiian fishing culture is important—not only to the west side, but to sustaining and feeding our communities. It reflects the loving, give-and-take relationship we have with the ocean, just as we do with the 'āina.

We're hoping to receive this grant. It is a two-day event. Ka Po'e Lawai'a will be centered at Pōkai Bay as the piko. Participants will fish for a certain number of days, and then on Sunday they will come together for a gathering that is more like a fair, but not a typical community event. We want it to be hands-on and educational for the keiki. There will also be prizes and different levels of recognition.

Jessica Bates Again, the whole purpose of Manini and Me is to teach the next generation. An adult must partner with a child to be entered into the festival, because it is one part of the larger Manini and Me program where we teach fish identification to our keiki.

I can ramble on and on, because it is a passion, but if anyone has questions, I'm grateful for the opportunity to share. Ka Po'e Lawai'a is a young nonprofit, and we're looking forward to growing and expanding this work. Mahalo for your time.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Jessica, Thank you so much, I can hear your passion. Members are there any questions?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have He Ho'omaka Hou Ana O Puna.

Renee Rivera (He Ho'omaka Hou Ana O Puna): [\(23:30 – 28:25 / 1:29:05\)](#)

Aloha mai kakou, o Renee ko'u inoa, o Manokalanipō o Moku o Keawe mai au . Today I want to talk about our program He Ho'omaka Hou Ana O Puna. Our nonprofit has been federally funded for the past two years to bring a pu'uhonua, a community within the community. We work with women who are victims of crime on Hawai'i Island. Bringing a pu'uhonua in the spaces of Moku o Keawe allows us to activate and inspire women who often feel like the world has been against them.

Some of our women wanted to share their own 'ōlelo no'eau they wrote themselves. I'd like to share one that was written by one of the women in our program. Right now, we have 21 women who are engaging in hula, engaging at Hawai'i Community College to get higher education. This 'ōlelo no'eau is *ke kū ne e ka wāhine i o 'oia'ī'o ka wāhine, e lā'au lapa'au, so when women stand in their truth, she becomes medicine*. We all know that our women and our kūpuna are the hosts of the 'ohana. We allow them to tap into aloha and to allow them to know that aloha is not harm. 'Oia'ī'o, speaking your truth is healing, and also safety is a collective kuleana for our communities.

We hold circles monthly and also virtually, we even have women from Guam now joining our virtual meetings. We also want to create a space of ho'ike for these women who have been in our program for two years, that have thrived in life and in our community, and are now accessing higher education, therapeutic services, and ho'oponopono through cultural practitioners on Hawai'i Island. They are also breaking stigma in our community, where we know that our ancestors protect us, and that violence came later. Violence is not our legacy, we need to teach our keiki that violence was not part of who we are—it was learned behavior that was taught to us. Also, we are trying to break these cycles with women and honoring them as a wahi kapu. Also learning that our past and our now, and those yet to come is a kuleana as a collective as our community. So, as we come into our community, and we bring people, Hawai'i Community College on Moku O Keawe, and also on Manokalanipō that we're going to look at the cultural significance of the 'a'ali'i plant. We know that the 'āali'i represents the true strength, not only about standing still, but learning how to bend when the winds come. Learning how to thrive not only in the amazing soil, but the soil that was made for that 'a'ali'i to thrive. As we know that the 'a'ali'i cross roots with each other. These are the weaving of the threads that helps these women stand with each other and hold each other's roots together.

Our program is grassroots, it was founded by an amazing woman who struggled with adversity, but was able to thrive in her life. Many times, we need to become the kākō'o and representatives in our communities and say we healed, and we can continue to heal others, and it comes from us.

Renee Rivera: Mahalo for allowing me to present about our mana-ful circles that we have and hopefully we can have an amazing kīhei dyeing process and a kīhei tying ceremony for these women who have worked so hard over the past two years to show the community that we have the ability to overcome adversity and that we can become a pu'uhonua for someone else. But it starts with us first. If we do not become a pu'uhonua for ourselves, we cannot go out and become a pu'uhonua for others. I hope our ancestors can lead us and our keiki follow us. Aloha. Mahalo.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Mahalo, Renee, that was amazing. Thank you so much for what you're doing, members are there any questions?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Ho'okāko'o Corporation; Jade Bowmann and Pat Ayat

Jade Bowmann and Pat Ayat (Ho'okāko'o Corporation): ([29:00 – 36:10 / 1:29:05](#))

Jade Bowmann: Aloha, my name is Jade Bowmann. I teach at Waimea Middle School in Waimea and have been teaching for 31 years, but I've lived in Waimea for 42 years. I'm a transplant from Kailua, O'ahu, and moving here has been wonderful. It's an amazing place to live and teach. From my classroom, I have incredible views—Mauna Kea on one side, I can see Mauna Loa, Hualalai, and the pu'u on the other. It's gorgeous and really helps our students develop a sense of place.

Our theme at our school is *sense of place, sense of identity*. We try to instill this through different means; through our classrooms, taking them outside the classroom, bringing in cultural members to help teach our students about our place, our 'āina, our culture. Having our May Day program at the end of the year really helps to showcase what the students have learned and the connections they've made with their place, their 'āina and with community. I am in BIG support, and hope that you will help us with our May Day program. I just want to say that our students, when I speak with them and I ask them, why do you think May Day program is important, they consistently express pride and respect for their heritage. Many want to share that with their families, peers, and community members. Even students who moved here from other places gain a sense of belonging and identity through participating in May Day. The May Day program creates lasting memories. Families look forward to it, and it brings the community together to share mana with students and teachers. It's a meaningful way to celebrate and honor Hawaiian culture while allowing students to express pride in their identity through song and hula.

I also want to share testimony from our science teacher and department head, Nau'i Murphy, who couldn't join us today. She writes:

"I'm writing in strong support of the Ho'ākoakoa Lāhui sponsorship request for our May Day program. Our year-long Hawaiian cultural learning is grounded in sense of place, sense of identity, and celebrated through May Day Hō'ike. This event provides a meaningful opportunity to bring families together to celebrate their children's learning, cultural growth, and connection to place. As someone born and raised in Waimea and a former student of this school, I have personally experienced the lasting impact of our May Day program. Over many years, this tradition has built strong relationships among students, families, educators, and cultural practitioners. This joyful gathering strengthens our sense of belonging and connection to place. Generations of families have come together through May

Day, creating shared memories and reinforcing cultural values that define our community. A key component of this experience is the collaboration with Kumu Micah Kamohoali'i and Halau Nā Kipu'upu'u who work with students to prepare grade-level 'oli and hula presentations. This partnership ensures cultural practices are taught with integrity and care while deepening students' understanding of protocol, meaning, and responsibility. It also strengthens the relationship between school and community cultural learners. This sponsorship will support a program and event that strengthens family engagement, promotes 'Ike Hawai'i, and deepens connection to place and 'āina. For these reasons, I respectfully urge approval of the Lāhui sponsorship request."

Mahalo, Naui Murphy, 8th Grade Science Teacher.
Thank you.

Pat Ayat: Aloha mai kakou. Vice-Chair Ahuna, good to see you. Mahalo nui to the Trustees and committee members. I want to echo what Miss Bowmann and Miss Murphy shared. This is obviously a special event for our kula and the haumāna, who take great pride in their preparation and the opportunity to share what they've learned throughout the school year. As a Hawaiian-focused charter school, events like this support our school 'ohana, including parents, extended families, and the broader community. These gatherings create lasting memories that span generations. We are grateful for all the partnerships that help support our haumāna, their learning, and their sharing of cultural knowledge in this special place where we are fortunate to live, learn, and thrive. Mahalo nui for your consideration. We look forward to a wonderful day in May, and of course, you are all welcome to join and experience this special program.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Mahalo, Mr. Ayat, Miss Murphy, Miss Bowmann, thank you so much for sharing, members are there any questions?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Acton Digital Inc (Kaulike Academy)

Coen Cadinha and Leah Dakroub (Acton Digital Inc): [\(37:05 – 40:30 / 1:29:05\)](#)

Coen Cadinha: Aloha mai kakou Chair, Trustees, and members of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of 'Ōpio Makeke. My name is Coen Cadinha, and I am the founder and executive director of Keiki Rise. Right now, there is a clear gap between aspiration and action for our 'ōpio entrepreneurs. This is not due to a lack of talent or vision, but a lack of resources and support. Our 'ōpio are ready to lead with purpose and vision, they are ready to create and innovate, and contribute to Hawaii's future. What has been missing is a pathway that truly believes in them and what they do. Youth don't need permission to lead, they need opportunity, and Keiki Rise is here to provide it. I launched Keiki Rise three years ago, at the age of 15, to create spaces where young people in Hawaii could be trusted, equipped, and empowered to rise. Our organization is dedicated to helping Hawaii's youth become innovators, leaders, and creators—driving businesses, uplifting communities, and shaping a thriving future. Over the past three years, we've supported youth in generating over \$450,000 in sales, hosted over 25 markets, and facilitated more than 50 workshops and classes for young entrepreneurs. Importantly, over 75% of the youth we serve are Native Hawaiian. This is why 'Ōpio Makeke matters. It is more than a market—it's a living investment in the future of our 'ōpio. It's a space where youth step forward as business owners, selling products they've made with their own hands, sharing their ideas, and gaining real-world experience.

We're excited to host 'Ōpio Makeke at Nā Lama Kukui Center, bringing over 20 young entrepreneurs together for a day that is bigger than just a market. It will be a community gathering rooted in culture,

connection, and intergenerational support. The event will feature cultural workshops, live entertainment by local halau and artists, and spaces for people to meet and connect. Through partnerships with the Nā Lama Kukui Center and TLC PR, we are shaping the day as an

intergenerational experience where 'ōpio, kūpuna, and the wider community come together. We'll have Tech Savvy Teens organization that empowers youth to uplift kupuna in the world of technology, and we'll have a lot of other exciting things happening. Supporting 'Ōpio Makeke is more than funding one event. It's saying to our youth, *we see you, we believe in you, and we are willing to invest in your future*, because when a young person is given one real opportunity, that can grow into a business, that business becomes income and that income can support an entire 'ohana, that builds confidence, and cultivate leadership that uplifts the entire community. I humbly ask you to support 'Ōpio Makeke at Nā Lama Kukui. Mahalo nui for your consideration and for believing in the potential of our youth.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you for sharing. Appreciate you guys being here. Members, any questions? You guys did a wonderful job.

Trustee Galuteria: It's more of a comment than a question because I'm very familiar with the work of this young group and one of the offshoots of the Kaulike is a group called Tech Savvy Teens and as a matter of fact they lease some space right here in Nā Lama Kukui. Their efforts is to teach digital literacy to kūpuna and so this is really something, and a few of us qualify for kūpuna already but it's that type of initiatives that we should support. I just wanted to share that, more than a question.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you for being here, members any questions you guys did a wonderful job, thank you

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Recycle Hawaii

Kristine Kubat and Ulu Makamae (Recycle Hawaii): [\(41:35 – 50:25 / 1:29:05\)](#)

Ulu Makamae Aloha. Good morning. My name is Ulu Makuakane, and I serve as the US EPA-funded REO Program Director under Recycle Hawaii and Ka'ū Global Learning Lab. We are a community-driven, zero-waste youth advocacy group aiming to reduce the volume of waste going to our island's only landfill. Our haumana lead this initiative by performing cafeteria waste diversions, waste audits, hosting community collection events, and digital and in-person campaigns. I am here in support of the Hawaii Zero Waste Youth Planning Convergence, to be held in Anahola, Kaua'i, June 1st through 5th. Over four days, 'ōpio from across the pae 'āina will collaborate and plan and organize the larger-scale 2027 National Zero Waste Convergence. Participating groups include the Ka'ū REO program, Hānai Kaiāulu from Nānākuli, Moloka'i High School FFA, E Ala E Kōhala, Maui Huliau Foundation, Keauakaha, and Kaua'i-based youth groups. Each of these groups serves Native Hawaiian youth and their communities through sustainability practices, advocacy, and culturally grounded programming. All youth chaperones and guests will stay at the Kumu Camp, led by the Anahola Hawaiian Homestead Association and Homestead Community Development Corporation. This family-friendly location is ideal for the planning convergence, allowing participants to experience the beauty of Kaua'i while supporting Kumu Camp nonprofits that serve 'ohana and keiki. Each day of the convergence will begin with cultural protocol to set intentions and ground the planning work in 'Ike Hawai'i. Youth will engage in planning sessions, skill-building workshops, zero-waste community education, and learning about the mo'olelo and wahi pana of Kaua'i. A key part of this event is uplifting and building pilina with the Anahola Hawaiian Homestead community. Youth participants will organize and host a

community give-back event, where they will share their 'ike, offering hands-on demonstrations in zero waste practices and providing food for all attendees.

Ulu Makamae: Investing in these convergences is an investment in our 'ōpio. By empowering youth to co-create solutions now, we strengthen Hawai'i's capacity to reduce waste, protect 'āina, and build sustainable systems grounded in culture.

I would now like to turn it over to Recycle Hawaii's Executive Director, Kristine Kubat, to explain the relationship between this planning event and the 2027 National Zero Waste Youth Convergence that will be held on Hawai'i Island next year. Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

Kristine Kubat: Aloha. First, I just have to say that I feel incredibly honored to be considered among this group of participants. Just sitting here and listening to everybody, I've learned so much, and I just feel really honored.

My name is Kristine Kubat, and I serve as the Executive Director for Recycle Hawaii, a nonprofit organization actively engaged in waste diversion and resource recovery initiatives throughout Hawai'i since 1989. In 2021, our organization was awarded a \$1.5 million grant through the highly competitive US EPA Recycling Education and Outreach Award Program. Our program is called the Hawai'i Youth Clean Streams and Waste-to-Wealth Initiative, this community-based, youth-driven program operating out of Ka'ū High & Pahala Elementary School in the Ka'ū district on Hawai'i Island. Our partner in this effort is the Ka'ū Global Learning Lab, which is an academic excellence initiative developed by the school's vice principal, 'Āina Akamu.

Ulu Makuakane, whom you just heard from, serves as the REO Program Director, I just wanted to let you know when you hear REO, what that means, it's an EPA-funded program. A core commitment Recycle Hawaii and Ka'ū Global Learning Lab to receive the EPA award was that we would take our learnings and share them, first with youth throughout Hawai'i, and eventually with youth from across the U.S. Our efforts to engage with youth began with outreach to schools that share Ka'ū High & Pahala Elementary School's status as DOE "underperforming" school—though we use that term lightly, acknowledging that standardized metrics often fail to capture the brilliance and adeptness of Kanaka 'oiwi 'ōpio. Statewide outreach began with a trip to Wai'anae, introducing our program participants to Nānākuli 'ōpio operating as the Scrappahz Union under Hānai Kaiāulu. Since then, we've engaged youth from Moloka'i, Kōhala, Maui, Puna, and now Keaukaha to eventually form the Hawai'i Zero Waste Youth Alliance.

I want to highlight that youth from Ka'ū, Nānākuli, and Moloka'i are the three schools that consistently trade positions at the very bottom of the DOE's performance list, I will also point out that youth from these three schools have earned the honor of representing Hawai'i in indigenous youth programming as part of the prestigious Bioneers Conference in Berkeley, California, later this month. This is proof positive that when 'ōpio are provided with the educational opportunities that relate to and prepare them for the real life issues they will face as adults, they perform at the highest levels.

Looking ahead to the next level of commitment for our EPA award, that's staging a National Zero Waste Youth Convergence. It became clear to us that proper protocol demanded this event be planned, staged, and hosted by the 'ōpio themselves. When we originally proposed this to the EPA, the idea was that our organization was going to stage this national event and we were going to host it and we're not people who can represent the culture, so at that point we said we need to do something to make sure that this event is an authentic representation of culture and 'ike.

OHA's sponsorship of the upcoming planning and community zero-waste intro event will allow youth to plan together and host a public event in Anahola, Kaua'i, introducing the concept of zero waste to the local community. This groundwork will lead directly into the national convergence in 2027.

Kristine Kubat: By OHA sponsoring this stage planning event and the Kaua'i community event, OHA would be included as a sponsor for the 2027 national event. As a way to maximize the impact of our ambitions, we are actively pursuing additional funding to stage the 2027 event as an international youth event. So, we can't use EPA funding to bring youth from Pacific regions, but we are looking for funding for that. We would appreciate learning about any opportunities to partner with OHA to potentially include Pacific Island youth, because what we find in our program, even though it's a federally funded program, a lot of youth identify more closely with Pacific Islanders that they do with youth from the continent. So we wanted to make sure to provide those opportunities as well. I'm happy to answer any questions and feel very honored to be part of this, listening we were so interested and excited to try to collaborate with other organizations. Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you, Kristine. Thank you for your testimony. Members, any questions for Recycle Hawaii?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Symbrosia Foundation

Makanahale Emmsley (Symbrosia Foundation): ([50:50 – 54:50 / 1:29:05](#))

Aloha mai kakou, my name is Makanahale, and today I am representing the Symbrosia Foundation. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Kona Kai Festival and for your recommendation for approval. The Kona Kai Festival is a community-led celebration honoring Hawai'i's relationship with the ocean and inspiring the next generation of ocean stewards. Through panels featuring kupuna to youth who are currently working in various related fields hands-on limu and marine ecosystem educational booths and restoration demonstrations. The festival uplifts 'ike Hawai'i while connecting participants to modern opportunities in conservation, aquaculture, marine science, and 'āina based entrepreneurship. Many Native Hawaiian students interested in marine science or stewardship lack visibility into local career pathways, this event directly connects youth to internships, training programs, and employers working across Hawaii's blue economy. Although our original timeline placed Kona Kai Festival during the school year, adjusted organizational and partner capacities have moved the event to June 14th, 2026. This shift has allowed us to strengthen the program. Career Exploration booths will now be integrated directly into the main event, and we will host a dedicated stakeholder workshop on June 13, 2026 to collectively map blue economy career pathways for local and Native Hawaiian youth and produce a resulting white paper with all stakeholders.

The submitted budget remains unchanged, by doing so, we reduce barriers to entry, strengthen local workforce retention, and support Native Hawaiian leadership in ocean stewardship. This festival strongly aligns with OHA's Mana I Maui Ola framework.

Strategy one; Education, the event strengthens lifelong learning systems rooted in culture and place.

Strategy four; Health of the 'āina and mo'omeheu, it advances limu restoration, nearshore stewardship and perpetuation of cultural practice.

Strategy seven; economic stability, it expands Native Hawaiian access to meaningful and place-based employment pathways.

And **strategy eight; Community economic development**, it uplifts Native Hawaiian owned businesses and practitioners by providing visibility and opportunity.

Makanahale Emmsley: The festival also directly advances OHA's foundational pillars of 'ohana, mo'omeheu and 'āina by creating intergenerational spaces, where families learn together, culture is centered, and stewardship of land and sea is practiced and not just discussed.

Importantly, all OHA funds will be directed exclusively toward core educational programming, youth workforce development materials, essential event infrastructure, and safety logistics. Funds will not be used for food, entertainment, or individual stipends, and every dollar requested is tied directly to a measurable community benefit, supporting culturally grounded education and workforce exposure for Native Hawaiian youth. This investment addresses a critical geographic equity gap; while many largescale cultural and workforce events occur on Oahu, West Hawai'i and Hawai'i Island communities have far fewer opportunities of this scale that center around 'ike kupuna and ocean stewardship specifically, as well as Native Hawaiian career pathways. The Kona Kai Festival expands OHA's reach to Hawai'i Island, ensuring Native Hawaiian youth and Ohana in Kona and surrounding rural communities have equitable access to the same level of culturally grounded programming.

This sponsorship is not simply to support an event, it is a strategic investment in educational access, workforce development, and regional equity. With OHA's partnership, the Kona Kai Festival becomes more than an event, it becomes a platform for strengthening Hawaiian identity, expanding economic pathways, and restoring our collective relationship with kai. Mahalo nui for considering this request. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Makanahale, thank you so much for your testimony. Members, do you guys have any questions for her?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have North Kohala Community Resource Center

No one available at this time.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Papa Ola Lokahi

Napua Casson-Fisher (Papa Ola Lokahi): ([55:40 – 58:40 / 1:29:05](#))

Aloha and Mahalo for allowing us this time to share about our program and for considering your sponsorship for our event. My name is Napua Casson-Fisher, and I am the Director of Community Initiatives at Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board. Papa Ola Lōkahi was established under the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, which was formed by the 1985 E Ola Mau report. For 38 years, OHA has been committed to working with Papa Ola Lōkahi to improve the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and their 'ohana, and we mahalo OHA for that commitment.

With the help of many Native Hawaiian health experts, Papa Ola Lōkahi conducted two updates to the E Ola Mau report—one published in 2019 and the second in 2023. We are currently working on the third iteration of this E Ola Mau a Mau report, which will be published in 2027. Across these

reports, the resounding theme around traditional healing is the need to increase access to traditional healing practices for our lāhui and for the increased support of practitioner workforce to help navigate rising issues. And with this, Papa Ola Lōkahi has hosted two annual traditional healers gatherings, one in 2023, one in 2024, and our next one is in June of this year in Maui. Our first year, we had about 60 attendees on Kaua'i. We had a ceremonial signing of Ke Kuahaua Maui Ola; Traditional Healers Declaration and it was publicly launched. Our second gathering was on Oahu and we had 77 practitioners most of whom are Hawaiian and they span all of the Hawaiian healing modalities.

Napua Casson-Fisher: All of that data and all of that conversation was taken and rolled up to inform this upcoming gathering. These gatherings are mostly to build pilina, to strengthen referral networks, and to create safe space for practitioners to co-learn share solutions and resources. This year we expect about a little more than a hundred attendees on Maui and we're collaborating with the Maui Surge community partners who are contributing to post wildfire healing efforts.

OHA's long-standing partnership with Papa Ola Lōkahi, especially with the traditional healing work, firmly aligns with OHA's strategic plan for health outcomes. Your sponsorship allows us to continue this important work together for the Maui Ola of our Lāhui. Mahalo.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thanks Napua (*audio unavailable*)

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Next we have Festivals of Aloha.

Daryl Fujiwara (Festivals of Aloha): ([59:15 – 1:01:10 / 1:29:05](#))

Aloha. Good morning to all of you trustees. Mahalo so much for the opportunity, my name is Daryl Fujiwara, and I am the Executive Director of Festivals of Aloha. I have been a part of the Kamehameha Day celebrations on Maui since 1999. Celebrating and telling the stories of our ali'i is everyone's kuleana, and by honoring Kamehameha together, we strengthen our sense of identity, unity, and shared responsibility to carry our culture forward. In alignment with the Kamehameha Day Celebrations Commission; this year's theme is *E kū, e ho'ololi*, stand upright and change conditions. Historically, this event was held in Lahaina, and the parade proceeded down Front Street. While the town is rebuilding—and from my recent drives, Front Street is still not ready for us to return—like last year, we are requesting support from OHA for parade safety infrastructure, including barricades, road closure signage, traffic control, and off-duty police. We have not yet found a long-term solution, and we are grateful to OHA for helping to help give us time to find a solution and funding to help cover this in the future.

This year, the event will be held on June 20th, returning to Ka'ahumanu Avenue in Kahului. The pā'ū parade and Ho'olaule'a will start around 9:45 a.m., and we will be at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Shopping Center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with free exhibits, keiki activities, Hawaiian music, and hula. Mahalo for your continued support. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you, Daryl. Members, do you guys have any questions for her?

There are no questions.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Finally, we have Leeward Kai Canoe Club LLC.

Alfred Van Gieson (Leeward Kai Canoe Club LLC): ([1:01:20 – 1:02:45 / 1:29:05](#))

Good Morning and Thank you for having us, my name is Alfred Van Gieson with Lawena Painter and Kepa Resentes, we represent the Leeward Kai Canoe Club out of Kalaniana'ole Beach in Nānākuli. We are a member of the O'ahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association. First, we want to thank you for your support of our event last year, our annual Father's Day Regatta. This is a two-day event that we've named the Lauhoe Father's Day Regatta Festival. We are doing the same event this year and want to keep this simple and straight to the point to avoid prolonging the meeting. If you have any questions, we are happy to answer them.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you guys for being here, I love what you're doing. Father's Day is a special day.

Okay, members if there's no further discussion. There's a motion on the table for all these sponsorship awards. But before we do that, I'm going to need unanimous concensus to bifurcate number seven, which is the Acton Digital Incorporated, Kaulike Academy for our Trustee Galuteria.

Motion #1 to approve and authorize OHA funding for Ho'ākoakoa Lāhui event sponsorship awards for the following organizations and events for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, Quarter 4 (Batch 2): Numbers 1-6, 8-13.

#	Organization Name	Event	Event Date(s)	Evaluation Scores (Out of 50 Points)	Award Amount Recommendation
1	Kāhuli Leo Le'a	May Day 2026	May 1, 2026	Evaluator A: 41 points Evaluator B: 43 points	\$11,250
2	Conservation Council for Hawai'i	Manu o Kū Festival	May 2, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 47 points	\$2,500
3	Pakini Loan Fund	Wai'anae Moku Made	May 2, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 47 points	\$14,400
4	Ka Po'e Lawai'a	Manini & Me Holoholo Festival	May 2-3, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$15,000
5	He Ho'omaka Hou Ana O Puna	Ho'ike o nā Wāhine – Hāumana Kūkākūkā Program Completion and Kihei Tying Ceremony	May 9, 2026	Evaluator A: 44 points Evaluator B: 40 points	\$11,025
6	Ho'okāko'o Corporation	Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School's May Day Program – SY 2025-26 – Sense of Place, Sense of Belonging	May 21-22, 2026	Evaluator A: 40 points Evaluator B: 40 points	\$9,533
8	Recycle Hawaii	Hawai'i Zero Waste Youth Planning Convergence	June 1-5, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 48 points	\$15,000
9	Symbrosia Foundation	Kona Kai Festival	June 5-6, 2026	Evaluator A: 48 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$10,867
10	North Kohala Community Resource Center	Kohala Kamehameha Day Celebration	June 11, 2026	Evaluator A: 47 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$12,800

11	Papa Ola Lokahi	Pūpū ‘Umeke Kā‘eo ‘Ekolu: 3rd Annual Traditional Healers Gathering	June 19-20, 2026	Evaluator A: 46 points Evaluator B: 48 points	\$15,000
12	Festivals of Aloha	Na Kamehameha Commemorative Pā‘ū Parade & Ho‘olaule‘a	June 20, 2026	Evaluator A: 46 points Evaluator B: 45 points	\$15,000
13	Leeward Kai Canoe Club LLC	Lauhoe: Father's Day Regatta Festival	June 20-21, 2026	Evaluator A: 48 points Evaluator B: 46 points	\$15,000
			TOTAL		\$147,375

Vice-Chair Ahuna calls for a Roll Call Vote

12:21 p.m.						1:04:25 / 1:29:05	
TRUSTEE		1	2	'AE (YES)	A'OLE (NO)	KANALUA (ABSTAIN)	EXCUSED
VICE-CHAIR DAN	AHUNA			X			
KALEIHIKINA	AKAKA			X			
KELI'I	AKINA			X			
LUANA	ALAPA			X			
BRICKWOOD	GALUTERIA			X			
KAIALI'I	KAHELE						EXCUSED
CARMEN HULU	LINDSEY			X			
J. KEONI	SOUZA			X			
CHAIR JOHN	WAIHE'E	1					Departed at 10:35 a.m.
TOTAL VOTE COUNT				7	0	0	2

VOTE: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED

Vice-Chair Ahuna notes for the record that ALL (7) members present vote 'AE (YES) and the MOTION PASSES.

Motion #2 to approve and authorize OHA funding for Ho‘ākoakoa Lāhui event sponsorship awards for the following organizations and events for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, Quarter 4 (Batch 2): Number 7

#	Organization Name	Event	Event Date(s)	Evaluation Scores (Out of 50 Points)	Award Amount Recommendation
7	Acton Digital Inc (Kaulike Academy)	‘Ōpio Mākeke: Summer Kickoff Night Market	May 30, 2026	Evaluator A: 45 points Evaluator B: 50 points	\$10,500
			TOTAL		\$10,500

Vice-Chair Ahuna calls for a Roll Call Vote

11:26 a.m.							1:05:05 / 1:29:05
TRUSTEE		1	2	'AE (YES)	A'OLE (NO)	KANALUA (ABSTAIN)	EXCUSED
VICE-CHAIR DAN	AHUNA			X			
KALEIHIKINA	AKAKA			X			
KELI'I	AKINA			X			
LUANA	ALAPA			X			
BRICKWOOD	GALUTERIA					RECUSED	
KAIALI'I	KAHELE						EXCUSED
CARMEN HULU	LINDSEY			X			
J. KEONI	SOUZA			X			
CHAIR JOHN	WAIHE'E	1					Departed at 10:35 a.m.
TOTAL VOTE COUNT				6	0	1	2

VOTE: [] UNANIMOUS [X] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED

Vice-Chair Ahuna notes for the record that SIX (6) members present vote 'AE (YES), ONE (1) RECUSED and TWO (2) EXCUSED and the **MOTION PASSES**.

III. NEW BUSINESS

B. Update: Access to Home Ownership (AHO) Program – Six-Month Update
(1:06:00 – 1:14:40 / 1:29:05)

Vice-Chair Ahuna recognizes Ka Pou Nui Kekina

Ka Pou Nui Kekina calls upon Director of Economic and Business Resilience, Poni Askew to provide the update.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Mahalo, I have a handout that I passed out, which everyone should have, and it looks like Trustee Lindsey has access on the shared screen. I want to mahalo Chair, Vice Chair, and honorable Trustees for allowing me to share our one-year AHO update. This is a substantial moment for our program at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. I'll be covering February 20, 2025, through February 20, 2026, marking AHO's first year.



Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: In its first year, AHO supported 31 Native Hawaiian families in securing home ownership. Behind that number are 31 families who now have stability, equity, and a permanent place in Hawaii. Families who might otherwise still be renting or considering relocation.

To date, AHO has deployed \$2.98 million in committed homeownership funds. These funds helped unlock over \$20 million in private mortgage funding. That means for every dollar OHA committed, nearly \$7 in private lending was activated, a 7:1 leverage ratio.

On average, AHO provided \$96,000 per family toward homes, averaging \$652,000 in value. This reflects AHO operating as intended as a capital tool that multiplies impact through partnerships.

During this report period:

- 726 beneficiaries inquired about AHO.
- 518 completed their HRP verifications.
- 424 were referred to American Savings Bank

The real narrowing begins at financial underwriting; of the 424 referrals, 102 reached final pre-qualification, so we're seeing like a 1-to-4 conversion rate from referral to pre-qualification. Of those pre-qualified, 31 successfully purchased homes. I think it's important to indicate that that 31 was really because of the available funds—more families could have benefited with additional funding.

So, this tells us the barrier is not interest or capability, it's just financial readiness. This typically includes high debt-to-income ratios, income misaligned with current home prices, credit score limitations, or insufficient savings for closing costs. Once beneficiaries are financially prepared, the program performs strongly. Currently, 116 verified beneficiaries remain in queue waiting referral to ASB.

Cost savings for families; one important feature of AHO is the removal of private mortgage insurance (PMI) for participating households, that's translated to an estimated \$32,000 in avoided PMI per

family over the life of the loan, totaling nearly \$1 million in cost savings across 31 families. This reduces monthly payments and strengthens long-term housing stability.

AHO has supported purchases, across multiple islands:

- O‘ahu: 16 loans
- Hawai‘i Island: 8 loans
- Maui: 4 loans
- Kaua‘i: 1 loan
- Moloka‘i: 1 loan

ASB Partnership: Structural Expansion and Future Capacity Planning

American Savings Bank continues to work closely with OHA to strengthen and expand AHO's reach.

<p>Current Structure</p> <p>\$1.00 deposit supports \$1.00 in backing.</p>	<p>Under Review</p> <p>Potential 2-to-1 structure.</p> <p>If approved, the same FY25 and FY26 deposits could support nearly twice as many Native Hawaiian households – approximately 62 families – with an additional 32 families projected in FY27.</p>
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This collaboration reflects ASB's continued commitment to expanding homeownership access for Native Hawaiian families.

Forward Planning & Visibility

Even with a 2-to-1 structure, projected demand may exceed available capacity in future fiscal years.

\$300K	\$1.1M
FY26 Estimated Shortfall	FY27 Estimated Shortfall

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: AHO is turning OHA funds into real homes for Native Hawaiian families, it's unlocking private bank financing to expand access to mortgage credit, it's helping families build generational wealth through home equity, strengthening financial stability for households, and helping beneficiaries remain rooted in Hawai'i.

In its first year, AHO demonstrates strong demand, measurable progress, and responsible use of capital. Today, 116 HRP-verified beneficiaries remain in queue, waiting to be referred to ASB; demand remains steady. Collectively between FY25-FY26 AHO funds are now almost fully committed. As demands continue we are planning ahead so we can provide all of you with clear visibility and into what comes next.

Importantly, American Savings Bank continues to be a strong and engaged partner in this effort. ASB is actively working with OHA to explore additional ways to expand program reach and support more beneficiaries with our existing funds. One structural adjustment currently under review would move from a 1:1 framework that we currently have to a 2:1 structure, which means that for every OHA dollar, ASB could potentially extend \$2 to beneficiaries, ultimately doubling investment. If approved due to these efforts the same funds already approved of \$3 million which housed 31 people would

now turn into \$6 million which would then house 62 families. This reflects ASB's commitment to helping Native Hawaiian families access home ownership.

This is where forward planning becomes really important. Even with this potential adjustment, projected demand will exceed available capacity for FY26. Projections indicate a remaining shortfall of \$300,000. By FY27, the shortfall could reach approximately \$1.1 million if demand continues at its current level. We are sharing this today for transparency and forward planning. I want to emphasize, this is not an action item today, I'm not asking for \$1.1 million today, but I just want the Board and staff to have transparency and information as we look into the future. If the Board would like for the staff to return with options and a formal recommendation, we are prepared to do so.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Chair, Vice Chair, and honorable trustees, mahalo for your continued support of OHA's AHO program. I welcome questions or clarifications as we continue to strengthen this effort together. Mahalo

Vice-Chair Ahuna Mahalo for your presentation—thank you so much.

Vice-Chair Ahuna recognizes Trustee Souza ([1:13:47 / 1:29:05](#))

Trustee Souza: Mahalo, Poni, Thank you to you and your team. I just want to say this has been the most successful housing program to date since I've been here. Also, we've identified the most effective partner for distributing these funds. As mentioned earlier, there may be a future presentation to potentially distribute more funds to American Savings if we continue with this program. Just a heads up to the board—we don't want anyone waiting unnecessarily on that list, 31 families into homes is amazing, and congratulations to Billy and his team as well. Mahalo.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: This program serves a small population, and I can tell not a lot of people from Kaua'i are not qualifying. So, who are we helping—those who already can get loans, or those who have a hard time getting the loans?

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Mahalo for that, at S&I we're identifying the challenges our beneficiaries face. The housing team is working on down payment and/or closing cost assistance, which are major barriers. Between Econ and Housing we're also looking at financial literacy. A lot of the times our beneficiaries come to these loans really not understanding, it's not that they're incapable, they just don't understand the full path of what home ownership could look like. So to have the closing costs is \$30,000 depending on the home purchase. Having a down payment, most people know down payment but they don't understand closing costs. So, in financial literacy opportunities, which I think would be a light lift for our team to implement a program, we might be able to mitigate some of the challenges that our beneficiaries are having in becoming homeowners. So that pathway to home ownership, the great thing about AHO is we've been able to aggregate data through surveying our beneficiaries and really starting to identify maybe some additional programming to get them over the hurdle. I think specifically to the question around Kaua'i, part of what skews the numbers could also be inventory, so how much is available on Kaua'i for vacant homes to purchase is another challenge that we are really learning about as well. So, that's not to say that's the only reason, but inventory seems to be another challenge that our beneficiaries have. So, when a house comes up for sale or a townhouse comes up for sale, it is most ideal that they are already pre-qualified under AHO, have a down payment and understand the process to get to that offer that they would put on the house, because if they don't offer fast enough, the house sells to someone else.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: One more quick question. Say I do well in life and can I qualify for a loan over a million dollars in this AHO program?

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: It's targeted to ohana that's about 140% to 150% AMI. So that's currently the parameters of the program, based on that, it would indicate the I guess the amount that they can purchase a home for.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Real quick, is this the only program we have?

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Currently, this is the only home ownership program that we have at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: *And American Savings funds it?*

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: American Savings Bank has partnered with us to establish this program and make it capable for us to basically do this.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Sorry I just was asking these questions because I like help everybody, not just the ones who can who get, you know what I mean? I like help the ones who cannot too. So I'm looking for that window, that's all. But I think you guys doing a great job.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Appreciate the questions.

Trustee Souza: Mahalo, Trustee Ahuna. If I may respond, this program was already established by American Savings Bank, we incorporated OHA's initiatives into that. A requirement that's separate from the initial American Savings Bank process I guess would be the Hawaiian Registry Program, that's also required right at the beginning. We are working on other programs as well, that will be brought to this Board very soon, kind of working out the kinks and you guys will get an update very soon. I guess to Trustee Ahuna's, maybe getting those numbers from Billy as well you know as far as the different islands and stuff like that and maybe I guess getting the feedback on what has been the biggest challenge. I think to your point, I validate that all day long, it's the inventory and it's expensive out there. It's expensive, median home price, man it's crazy. Anyway, if we can get that information, I think then we can help target messaging or whatever we're doing on our end to help American Savings as well as a partner.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Yeah, definitely.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: I'm just looking for ways to help our people.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Yeah, I appreciate the questions because we can go back and continue to do the good work.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Yeah, you guys are doing great work. Thank you.

Trustee Lindsey: Thank you, I just wanted Poni to briefly tell the Board, just remind them what's being done with the OHA money at American Savings, what are we using our money for, just share that with our Trustees.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Yeah, so our money mitigates the 20%

down payment and that's how we're partnering with ASB. So, we can provide up to 17% in guaranteed funds against our existing bank account or our account that is at ASB. So, we're really using our funds to reduce the amount that our beneficiaries have to come to the bank with, which is no longer 20%, it's only 3%. Normally, when someone comes with less down payment, it requires them to do private mortgage insurance, PMI could add an additional \$500 to \$800 a month in payments that they're responsible for. So, what we do is we guarantee the 17%, and then we remove that need for PMI insurance. So, that's how we are partnering with ASB and they are willing to work with us in that way.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you for that question too, Trustee Hulu, my only concern is the three out of the four that not getting them. It sounds like a cap they putting on us. You know, we heard that word a lot, so it's like we're not qualifying for it, the three out of the four. So we can have this, but I'd like to have something for the other ones too, that's all I'm asking. Thank you, Poni.

Trustee Akaka: Thank you for all you folks are doing in this program and sharing with us some of these visuals. In the next update if I can ask that also be provided, this being highlighted on ASB's website or their social media, on OHA social media as well as perhaps if there's images that can be shown of a handout or brochure there's something that is shared at ASB locations at OHA office locations or anywhere else that it's being shared on, I know that at the neighborhood board meetings on this island, we would have printouts of it shared for any community members that were attending that would be of interest to it and then it was spoken of as well.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Yes, I think we can get them to do that, and is the ask to include on the report a report back of maybe where they're placing it as well as some social media and website traction that they received from placing it?

Trustee Akaka: Yes, I would be interested in knowing what the impressions are. So, for instance, earlier we're discussing or what was shared with us how OHA is being highlighted and the partnerships or what that would look like with these sponsorships and so forth. So, I'm interested in seeing how the collaboration is done and celebrate in that as well. Thank you.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Yeah, mahalo for clarifying. Thank you.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you guys for your presentation, any last questions from members?

There are no questions.

III. NEW BUSINESS

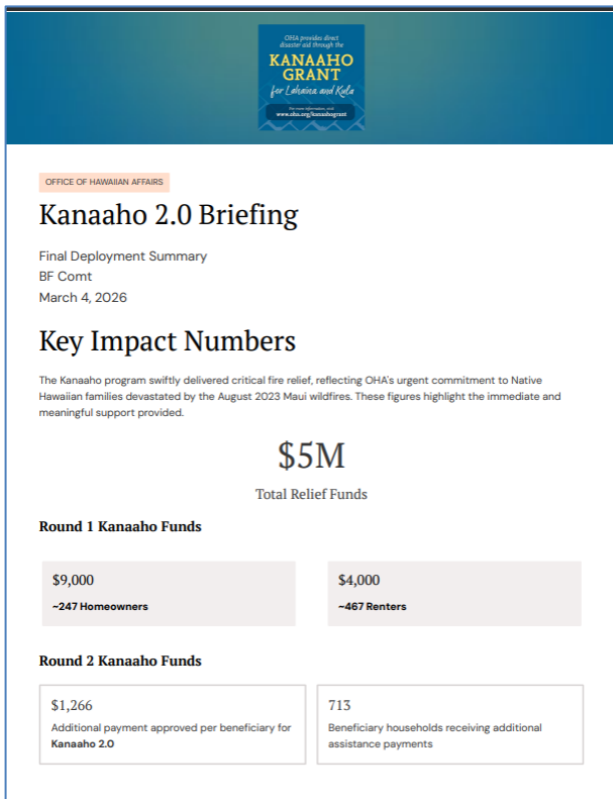
c. Update: Kanaaho Program – Final Update ([1:24:30 – 1:28:10 / 1:29:05](#))

Vice-Chair Ahuna asks if there is anyone signed up to testify on this agenda item.

BF Staffer Akina states that no one has signed up to testify on this agenda item.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: You can move onto the Kanaaho Program Update.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Mahalo. The second document in the packet is the Kanaaho briefing, which provides a final summary of the Kanaaho Maui wildfire relief program, specifically focusing on the deployment of remaining funds approved under Kanaaho 2.0.



Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: As a reminder, the Kanaaho program was created to provide direct disaster assistance to Native Hawaiian beneficiaries impacted by the August 2023 Maui wildfires.

In total, the program deployed \$5 million in wildfire relief assistance. Under the initial round:

- Homeowner households received \$9,000
- Renter households received \$4,000

Following the Budget and Finance Committee amendment to action item BF #25-52, remaining funds were deployed through Kanaaho 2.0, providing an additional \$1,266 payment to 713 beneficiaries who had previously received assistance under Kanaaho 1.0. Together these payments ensured the remaining funds were deployed in alignment with the Board's direction.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew:

On the next page, you'll see the Timeline:

- Following the **August 2023** Maui Wildfires, OHA launched the Kanaaho wildfire relief assistance program in **April 2024** initiating the first round of distributions to eligible homeowner and renter beneficiaries.
- **November 2025:** B&F Committee amended BF #25-52, approving additional Kanaaho 2.0 payments to beneficiaries who had previously been approved to receive assistance.
- Between **Nov 2025–Feb 2026:** Staff conducted distribution and outreach through the OHA Maui office and in Lahaina, ensuring beneficiaries were able to receive their payments and confirming mailing information for beneficiaries requesting their checks be mailed.

At this time all Kanaaho 2.0 relief funds have been issued for distribution. 704 of 713 payments delivered, with 9 pending final administrative resolution. With the deployment of these funds, all \$5 million authorized for Kanaaho wildfire relief have been distributed in accordance with Board authorization. With final administrative items underway, the Kanaaho program is now entering its close-out phase.

Program Timeline

This timeline details the Kanaaho wildfire relief program's phased approach, from the August 2023 wildfires to additional fund distributions and ongoing close-out activities by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs staff.

April 2024

OHA launches the Kanaaho wildfire relief assistance program, initiating Round 1 distributions to eligible homeowner and renter beneficiaries.

November 2025

Budget & Finance Committee amends BF #25-52, approving additional \$1,266 payments to 713 beneficiaries under Kanaaho 2.0.

November 2025 - February 2026

Distribution and community outreach conducted through the OHA Maui Office and Lahaina to ensure all beneficiaries receive their funds.

Current Status & Closing

All Kanaaho 2.0 relief funds have been issued for distribution.

- 704 of 713 payments have been delivered
- 9 payments pending final administrative resolution.

Kanaaho wildfire relief funds have been fully deployed in accordance with Board authorization. With final administrative items underway, the Kanaaho program is now entering its close-out phase.

Prepared for the OHA Board of Trustees – Office of Hawaiian Affairs



Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: Mahalo to the Board for its leadership and support in this effort to provide timely assistance to beneficiaries impacted by Lahaina and Kula wildfires. Mahalo.

Vice-Chair Ahuna recognizes Trustee Lindsey

Trustee Lindsey: I want to thank the staff for being so conscientious on getting those checks out, it wasn't easy. We needed to chase people down to help them, and I am appreciative of the efforts taken by the staff and I mahalo them.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Yeah, thank you staff. You guys did an amazing job and you guys took that effort to chase people down.

Director of Economic and Business Resilience Askew: I give kudos to the Community Engagement team, Thank you.

Vice-Chair Ahuna: Thank you, any last questions from members?

There are no questions.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Souza moves to adjourn the BF meeting.

Vice-Chair Ahuna calls for a **ROLL CALL VOTE**.

11:49 a.m.							1:28:15 / 1:29:05
TRUSTEE		1	2	'AE (YES)	A'OLE (NO)	KANALUA (ABSTAIN)	EXCUSED
VICE-CHAIR DAN AHUNA				X			
KALEIHIKINA AKAKA				X			
KELI'I AKINA				X			
LUANA ALAPA				X			
BRICKWOOD GALUTERIA				X			
KAIALI'I KAHELE							EXCUSED
CARMEN HULU LINDSEY				X			
J. KEONI SOUZA				X			
CHAIR JOHN WAIHE'E	1						Departed at 10:35 a.m.
TOTAL VOTE COUNT				7	0	0	2

VOTE: [X] UNANIMOUS [] PASSED [] DEFERRED [] FAILED

Chair Waihe'e adjourns the BF meeting at 11:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Wennihan
Trustee Aide
Committee on Budget and Finance

As approved by the Committee on Budget and Finance (BF) on March 18, 2026

Trustee John Waihee IV
Chair
Committee on Budget and Finance