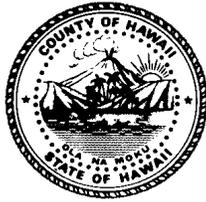


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### NEWS RELEASE

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### PUNA STRONG GRANT PROGRAM RECIPIENTS RECEIVE FUNDING FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECTS

The County of Hawai'i and the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) continue their partnership and support for the Puna Strong grant program as recipients are now poised to receive funds. Puna Strong remains focused on disaster readiness and building community resilience for the Puna communities impacted by the 2018 Kīlauea eruption on the Island of Hawai'i with a \$500,000 investment in nonprofit organizations and partnerships leading community-driven projects.

This is the second year that Puna Strong awarded grants to various organizations in the Puna district. Of the 14 organizations that were selected through a rigorous organizational assessment and application review process this year, 13 were involved in the program last year. Grant awards varied between \$20,000-\$50,000 for each organization.

“We came back for the second year because we learned so much the first year,” said Kehaulani La'a, President of Volcano Friends Feeding Friends. “Knowing there were so many resources available to help us in our journey made a huge difference.”

The approach to Puna Strong drives investments in the organizations of Puna to catalyze impactful projects that build community resilience. The County of Hawai'i and HCF spent months guiding each organization through interviews, assessments, technical assistance, project feasibility analysis, and site visits to help each group fully realize their potential in the community. This second round of Puna Strong also featured larger grant awards than last year, allowing for organizations to expand their capacity. In the coming year, grantees will be engaged in peer learning circles and technical assistance trainings organized by the County of Hawai'i and HCF.

“What I love the most about this program is that it unites so many different resources on our island to come together and help strengthen growth and resilience after the eruption,” says

Mayor Mitch Roth. “The resources, experience, and knowledge shared by HCF and County specialists with these organizations will help them blossom and reach their full potential to serve the Puna community.”

These 14 organizations are focused on a range of issues important to the community, including community-based disaster management, individual and family resource hubs, support services for targeted populations, protection and preservation of Wahi Pana, and community resource centers.

This year’s list of recipients are: Hawai‘i’s Volcano Circus, Ho‘oulu Lāhui, Mālama O Puna, ‘O Maku‘u Ke Kahua Community Center, Equality HI, Girls to Women Mentoring Hawai‘i, Grassroots Church, Hawai‘i Animal Kuleana Alliance, Men of PA‘A, Pōhaku Pelemaka, Volcano Friends Feeding Friends, Hawai‘i Tracker / Hawaiian Volcano Education & Resilience Institute, Nā Maka Hāloa O Waipi‘o, and Puna Rising.

“Each and every one of these organizations is passionate about serving the community and taking care of the ‘āina,” said Diane Chadwick, Director of Donor Relations at HCF. “HCF is proud to partner with the County of Hawai‘i for Puna Strong and we look forward to seeing these organizations grow.”

For more information about Puna Strong, visit our [website](#).

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