



**Hawaiian
Electric**

NEWS RELEASE

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Grants awarded to help develop local workforce

Total of \$25,000 for nonprofits based in Wahiawā and Wai‘anae

HONOLULU, June 16, 2023 – Hawaiian Electric has awarded a \$15,000 grant to the Whitmore Economic Development Group and a \$10,000 grant to the Wai‘anae Economic Development Council for programs that provide business, trade and technical skills training while creating employment opportunities in underserved communities.

“The overarching goal of the nonprofit organizations aligns with our own work to strengthen the economic stability of our communities through workforce development,” said Kurt Tsue, Hawaiian Electric community affairs director. “Of equal importance, their forward-looking programs offer sustainable and diverse business opportunities across industries.”

Founded in 2013, the Wahiawā-based Whitmore Economic Development Group focuses on building capacity for sustainable employment in Hawai‘i’s agricultural industry. Its Workforce Development Training Program is an intensive, 12-session course designed for eligible applicants 18 years and older to acquire or upgrade trade/construction skills and earn certifications that can count toward job placements or promotions.

Held once a month on weekends, courses cover various topics and regulations from workplace safety to heavy equipment operation. Trainees can work in diverse industries including broadband, environmental, renewable energy and other fields which ultimately impact agriculture and agribusiness.

The Wai‘anae Economic Development Council was founded on the mission of expanding economic opportunities for Wai‘anae Coast residents by developing the community’s natural, cultural and human resources. WEDC’s latest project, E Mau Ke A‘o, is a Hawaiian culture-based entrepreneurial workshop series tailored for cultural practitioners to gain business and technical skills needed for developing online content and e-commerce capabilities.

By the end of the year, workshop participants will have completed FEIN and DCCA registrations, opened a business bank account, and launched an online platform that is open for business while increasing public access to cultural knowledge.

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