YOU’RE THE JUDGE!
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (FOA)

Work-based Learning Opportunities ($100,000 for three years)

Hawaii businesses struggle to fill vacancies during this period of historically low unemployment. Meanwhile secondary students wonder where the living wage jobs lie, what skills they need to develop as well as how to plan for life after high school. This, at a time when nearly three-quarters of all jobs in Hawaii will require some college or training after high school. Hawaii faces a real labor disconnect between the skills and knowledge demanded by our economy and the talent produced by education and workforce training programs.

One solution lies with new ways to help students move from education into the workforce through smarter college to career pathways. At the FUNding Foundation, we are encouraged by the promise of high schools that offer challenging academic core courses, a cluster of career and technical education courses and chances to apply learning in the real world. The FUNding Foundation’s mission is to: (1) provide academically rigorous career pathways to high school students, (2) offer student supports, especially for low-income students, (3) provide work-based learning opportunities, and (4) build partnerships through leveraging.

Key to student success includes work-based learning opportunities such as internships, career fairs and job shadowing that breathe life into academic content while developing employability skills like problem solving and communication. But for students, these transformative experiences are typically hard to find and often disconnected from their interests.

This FOA will enable an intermediary to manage or expand the regional partnership between high schools within one or two complex areas, and relevant partners from the postsecondary and business sectors. Priority will be given to proposals that include high schools with well-defined career academy structures, strong postsecondary relationships and clear workplace opportunities within one or more high growth or high need economic sectors. Added priority will also be given to proposals that provide a thoughtful treatment for how these efforts will be sustained once grant funds are expended.

Minimally, the project should:

a. Provide a set of learning experiences across grades 9-14 that move the student from early career exposure to career exploration and eventual career immersion.

b. Coordinate relevant partnership activities within a framework of work-based learning. Based on school interest, these activities may include, but are not limited to, guest speakers, mentors, curricular advice, field trips, teacher externships, job shadowing, mock interviews, student internships, or service on an academy advisory board.
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SCENARIOS

SCENARIO #1: Local Connections

Local data shows alarming achievement gaps for low-income students in standardized assessment scores, dual-credit completion, and college enrollment (Hawaii Data eXchange Program Report, 2016). Low-income students are also less likely to take advantage of opportunities, such as career academy enrollment, than their peers. The Local Connection program will address this need by connecting programs serving at-risk populations to provide career exploration and work-based learning opportunities to economically disadvantaged youth. In this way, the Local Connection project will capitalize on successful programs, combining efforts to strengthen and expand smart career pathways into Maui County’s high-growth high-need economic sectors.

SCENARIO #2: Career HI-way: Smart Paths to Hawaii’s In-Demand Jobs

Career HI-way: Smart Paths to Hawaii’s In-Demand Jobs will create smarter college to career pathways that involve career exposure, career exploration, and career immersion connecting high school students to local high-growth high-need career opportunities. The proposed program includes: (1) High School Educators Exposure Workshop to introduce the career pathways to high school counselors and career academy coordinators, (2) Spring Break Career Camp to expose students to multiple pathways through experiential learning and professionals in the industry, (3) career assessment and exploration as part of the Spring Break Career Camp, (4) summer education and training opportunities where students are immersed in the career path of their choice to earn either noncredit professional-standard certifications (with matriculation agreements in place to transfer to college credit or priority for selective program admissions) or college credit, (5) job shadowing and job-readiness skill development, and (6) career immersion through paid summer or academic-year internships. Six pathways have been identified based on local labor market data indicating projections for high-need jobs in Maui County to include: (1) Nursing, (2) Dental, (3) Building Maintenance/HVAC, (4) Truck Driver/CDL, (5) Counseling & Mental Health, and (6) Greenhouse, Agriculture, & Aquaponics. Anticipated end results include completion of noncredit certifications, postsecondary enrollment after high school graduation, and increased job experience for youth. The project aims to strengthen the connections between existing partnerships and programs to build a sustainable pipeline of smart career pathways.

SCENARIO #3: The Internship Promotion (TIP)

The Internship Promotion (TIP) will be a one-stop career center where Maui County high school students can take career assessments, attend career-speaker events, select a career shadow experience, or be matched with an internship based on their individual interests. Students will receive labor-market information to identify high-need jobs in Maui County. TIP will prioritize serving low-income students (two-thirds of participants). TIP interns will receive a stipend as well as tuition paid for dual-enrollment college courses. As students completing dual-enrollment programs are shown to enroll and persist in college at higher rates (Community College Research Center, 2012; An, 2012), outcomes of TIP will include college credit completion, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary persistence.
SCENARIO #4: Project Intervention

It is imperative that local Maui County students be connected to and prepared for entry into high-demand living-wage Maui County jobs as well as competitive in a global society. Globally, U.S. students are falling behind, ranking below 38 countries for math and 24 countries in science, according to the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016). Nationally, Hawaii students test among the lowest in math (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), science (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), and on the ACT (46th in the nation; ACT, 2016). Locally, high school students on Maui score lower than state averages in math and science, with 26% of Maui students proficient in each subject (HI DOE, 2016). Moreover, Native Hawaiian students score even lower on state achievement tests (16% in math, 13% in science; HI DOE, 2016) and show minimal educational attainment rates at a mere 15% for Native Hawaiian adults, nearly half the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). UHMC is uniquely positioned to orchestrate change to prepare our students for local workforce needs. Project Intervention will provide engaging workshops to Native Hawaiian and low-income students in grades 9-12 at the high schools as a traveling career center for Baldwin and Maui High Schools. The workshops will include career exploration activities, career speakers, and experiential activities in high-demand living-wage jobs. Outcomes include increased career awareness about and exposure to living-wage local jobs to motivate students to excel in school and enter a smart career pathway.

SCENARIO #5:

Locally produced food is both a challenge and opportunity for Maui County. Hawaii imports as much as 90% of its food primarily from the continental U.S. 2,500 miles away (Office of Planning, Department of Business Economic Development & Tourism, 2012). The Maui County Strategic Plan focuses on developing the agriculture industry cluster (County of Maui Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2016). Once a plantation-based mono-crop economy, Maui is moving towards diversified small-farm agriculture. The number of small farms has more than doubled from 1974 to 2007 (University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization, 2012) presenting an opportunity to increase agricultural revenue through cutting-edge technology advances and value-added products. Furthermore, the closure of Hawaii Commercial & Sugar (HC&S) Company brought 36,000 vacant acres of land. With an increased focus on small-acreage agricultural parks in Maui County, there is an opportunity for small-scale farming operations to develop and manufacture value-added products. According to the Maui County Farm Bureau, Maui farmers are an aging population with few younger generation replacements interested in pursuing agriculture-related careers. The AgriTech program will re-imagine the agriculture and food-industry pathways to suit Maui County’s emerging opportunities and needs. New technology will bring a different generation of farmers, with automated activities and system monitoring. Supporting industries, such as value-added food entrepreneurs, must be developed simultaneously for the farming industry to survive by increasing profit through developing food products with longer shelf lives marketable to a tourism industry. AgriTech will introduce students in 9th and 10th grade to exciting possibilities in agri-business, agri-technology, and value-added food product development. The programming will provide multiple hands on activities to expose students to the new agriculture and food-industry pathways. During 11th grade, students will shadow current farmers and food entrepreneurs. The program will culminate during the senior year with an internship experience supported by instruction for the intern to re-imagine the current agriculture and food scene on Maui. Throughout the program, higher-level meetings will occur between schools, postsecondary, and business industries to create new smart educational pathways to ignite the future of agriculture in Maui.