



Office of Economic Development

Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

**Nalani Brun
Director**

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Economic Development partners with our community to develop and implement creative strategies to enhance economic opportunities and build a better quality of life for the people of the County of Kauaʻi.

II. DEPARTMENT GOALS

The goals of this office are:

- A. Assist businesses of all sizes, emerging industries, and organizations in providing technical and possible financial support, as feasible, to provide meaningful employment opportunities for all the County of Kauaʻi's residents.
- B. Utilize the Guiding Principles of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and other community plans to help improve and diversify Kauaʻi's economy:
 - Economic Diversification: To strengthen selected industry clusters to minimize dependence on a single industry and maximize creative expansion.
 - Economic Self-Sufficiency: To minimize imports where possible and promote import substitution.
 - Economic Opportunity for all: To offer an appropriate education and training opportunities to give workers choices and to promote living wages.
- C. To work with the business community and partners to ensure Kauaʻi's workforce meets their needs today, as well as in the future.
- D. Assist the business industries in growing their businesses to meet the needs of the island and beyond, through partnership, technical assistance, education and accessing resources.

Duties and Functions

1. *TOURISM*: Co-Lead and work on projects related to the Destination Management Action Plan which has replaced the Tourism Strategic Plan and cooperate with and support visitor industry partners.
2. *FILM*: Increase film opportunities and support film partners on Kauaʻi. Increase other areas of Creative Industries including cultural and performing arts, emerging media, music, and entertainment industries.
3. *AGRICULTURE*: Increase agricultural production and products on Kauaʻi, support agriculture partners, and monitor viability of the Sunshine markets.

4. *SUSTAINABILITY*: County government leads by example by developing, adopting, and implementing sustainable practices and policies. Support and leverage community efforts that promote island sustainability.
5. *ENERGY*: The objective of the County's Energy Program is two-fold: (1) to manage, reduce, and facilitate the County's fossil energy use through increased efficiency in both facilities and fleets, and (2) to initiate, coordinate, and partner with stakeholders and the community on innovative programs and projects in the clean energy and transportation sector.
6. *WORKFORCE*: Support partners direct programs relating to workforce training and workforce programs as they relate to our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
7. *BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT*: Build a thriving, resilient, and interconnected economy that supports businesses, emerging industries, and nonprofits by: (1.) Providing direct support to businesses by providing technical assistance, connections to resources and community partners, and guidance navigating government bureaucracies; and (2.) Identifying, reporting, and addressing challenges in the business community; (3) supporting the Kaua'i Made program.

III. PROGRAMS

GRANT PROGRAM (All sectors)

The OED grant program is generally a competitive awards program that supports sustainable economic development in agriculture, tourism management, film & creative industries, sustainability and energy, business, and workforce capacity building. Proposals must address and support the chosen sector area program's goals and objectives. This fiscal year we continued to focus our efforts on larger grants of approximately \$50,000 for projects that helped move the needle on solving problems including those called out by our community in community plans. Staff are assigned grant funded programs monitoring by sector area of the program and capacity availability.

INNOVATION AND LINE ITEMED GRANTS:

- A. Objective
 - The objective of the grant program is to create funding opportunities that support partners in creating programming in the sectors of agriculture, sustainability, energy, destination management, product enhancement, creative industries, workforce, business support and special events.
- B. Highlights: See listing of grants provided.

Table 1. OED Grant Program Data-Grants managing in FY24

FY2024 GRANTS			
SECTOR	NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION	PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT
AG FARM EXPANSION GRANT (AFEG)			
AGRICULTURE	HALE PUNA	EXPANDING LOCAL ORGANIC CROPS	\$45,000.00
AGRICULTURE	HFUF	FOOD TO FARM COMPOSTING	\$76,650.00
AGRICULTURE	HUI MAKAAINANA O MAKANA	AG EXPANSION	\$80,000.00
AGRICULTURE	IWIKUA	PROPAGATION STATION - WHS NURSERY	\$20,710.00
AGRICULTURE	KAUAI COUNTY FARM BUREAU	MUNG MEE FARM EXPANSION (WATCHARA)	\$30,000.00
AGRICULTURE	KAUAI COUNTY FARM BUREAU	SEPTIC SYSTEM FOR AN ON FARM COMMERCIAL KITCHEN	\$29,842.92
AGRICULTURE	KAUAI NORTH SHORE FOOD PANTRY	EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS	\$10,141.00
AGRICULTURE	KUMANO I KE ALA O MAKAWELI	MAHAHAI PROJECT	\$80,000.00
AGRICULTURE	NORTH SHORE EVP	INCREASING KAUAI'S FOOD SAFETY CERTIFIED FARMS	\$57,499.00
ARPA GRANTS			
AGRICULTURE	KEDB	SUSTAINABLE RANCHING PROJECT	\$100,000.00
AGRICULTURE	UH	GOFARM AGRITOURISM	\$103,401.00
CREATIVE IND.	KEDB	KAUAI FILM INDUSTRY MEDIA RELAUNCH	\$182,000.00
TRANSPORTATION	RCCA	MOBILITY HUB PLAN	\$150,000.00
DIRECT GRANTS			
BUSINESS	KAUAI CHAMBER	HOH/SISTER CITY LV	\$20,000.00
TOURISM	GIAC	E KANIKAPILI KAKOU 2024	\$20,000.00
TOURISM	GIRCD	STEWARDSHIP HIKI NA AKALA/MALAE	\$10,000.00
TOURISM	KAUAI SOTO ZEN TEMPLE ZENSHUJI	SOTO ZEN BON FESTIVAL	\$10,000.00
TOURISM	MALIE FOUNDATION	MOKIHANA FESTIVAL & EVENTS 2024	\$20,000.00
TOURISM	PIHANA KA IKENA	KAUAI CULTURAL EDUCATION/STEWARDSHIP	\$20,000.00
TOURISM	WAI MEA THEATRE	EO E EMALANI 2024	\$40,000.00
INNOVATION GRANTS			
AGRICULTURE	GIRCD	CRB COLLABORTION	\$40,000.00
AGRICULTURE	HOOMALU KE KAI	DEVELOPING NATIVE OYSTER, SHRIMP AND LIMU AQUACULTURE	\$48,000.00
AGRICULTURE	MALAMA KAUAI	KALO TO KULA	\$49,972.00
AGRICULTURE	MALAMA KAUAI	VALUE-ADDED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES	\$21,000.00
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES	HALE PUNA	FARM TO OHANA: A FRESH PRODUCE PROJECT IN WEST KAUAI	\$10,000.00
SUSTAINABILITY	HILT	KAHILI BEACH PRESERVE CULTURAL EDUCATION & STEWARDSHIP	\$25,000.00
SUSTAINABILITY	HOOMALU KE KAI	PLASTIC UPCYCLING AND OCEAN BOUND PLASTIC DIVERSION	\$49,254.00
KEKAHA CAC			
KEKAHA CAC	B&G CLUB OF HAWAII	AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR KEKAHA YOUTH'	\$35,000.00
KEKAHA CAC	E OLA MAU	KEKAHA FAMILY FUN DAY 2023	\$46,400.00
KEKAHA CAC	E OLA MAU	KEKAHA COLLEGE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, 2023	\$70,200.00
KEKAHA CAC	KEALA FOUNDATION	KEKAHA FITNESS CENTER RESIDENT SCHOLARSHIP	\$44,458.40
KEKAHA CAC	KEKAHA ELEM PTA	KEKAHA WINTER CELEBRATION	\$37,800.00
KEKAHA CAC	KEKAHA ELEM PTA	KEKAHA ES ANNUAL HAWAII ISLAND EDUCATIONAL TOUR 2024	\$30,025.00
KEKAHA CAC	KEKAHA HAWAIIAN HMSTD	KEKAHA KEIKI CHRISTMAS 2023	\$7,310.00
KEKAHA CAC	KEKAHA HAWAIIAN HMSTD	PUU OPAE FARM AND IRRIGATION PROJECT - GARDEN PROJECT	\$15,700.00
KEKAHA CAC	KEKAHA PW ORG	KEKAHA POP WARNER AGILITY AND SAFETY PROPOSAL	\$51,394.48
KEKAHA CAC	KEKAHA PW ORG	NANOBYTELABS STEM PROGRAM, 2023	\$20,658.00
KEKAHA CAC	WAI MEA PROJECT GRAD 2010	WAI MEA PROJECT GRAD 2024	\$20,000.00
KEKAHA CAC	WESTSIDE BASKETBALL CLUB	ENDLESS SUMMER TOURNAMENT & TRAVEL	\$9,610.00
KEKAHA CAC	WESTSIDE BASKETBALL CLUB	PARTICIPATION ENTRY FEES & MAINTENANCE	\$9,800.00
LINE ITEM GRANTS			
AGRICULTURE	AINA HOOKUPU	KILAU EA COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL CENTER	\$500,000.00
ALL	KEDB	2022-2026 CEDS SUPPORT	\$75,000.00
HEALTH & SAFETY	YWCA	FAMILY VIOLENCE SHELTER 23-24	\$85,518.00
HEALTH & SAFETY	YWCA	SEXUAL ASSAULT TREATMENT PROGRAM 23-24	\$70,518.00
TOURISM	KVB	2023-2024 KVB CONSUMER PROMOTION GRANT	\$250,000.00
TOURISM	KVB	KVB EXTRA FUNDING SUPPORT 2024-2025 & 2025-2026	\$100,000.00

Table 2. OED Grant Types

GRANT TYPES	TOTAL
AG EXPANSION	\$429,842.92
ARPA	\$535,401.00
DIRECT	\$215,000.00
INNOVATION	\$243,226.00
KEKAHA	\$389,355.88
LINE ITEM	\$1,081,036.00

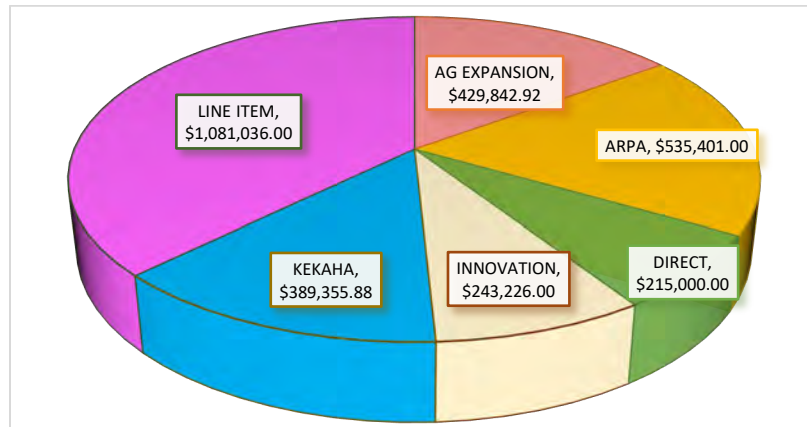


Figure 1. Grant Funding Award Distributions

ARPA PROGRAMS (\$535,401):

OED managed several ARPA funded programs during this fiscal year including:

- ARPA Sustainable Ranching Coop Project through KEDB which is closing.
- ARPA Kaua’i Film Industry relaunch social media and Promotion campaign which is continuing.
- ARPA Ag-Tourism Cohort for Farms through GoFarm-UH which is closing.
- ARPA co-funded Mobility Hub Plan which is continuing.

TOURISM: DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

During the FY2024, OED participated, along with the Kaua'i Visitor's Bureau, the Kaua'i Community, and the Hawai'i Tourism Authority in working on projects called out by the Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP) for the Visitor Industry which has replaced the work of the Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP). Many of the goals in the TSP were reiterated again in the DMAP. This allowed OED and partners to continue the efforts we had already been working on.

A. Objectives

- The objective of the tourism strategic plan is to refocus tourism to responsibly manage the economic activity of Kaua'i tourism in a sustainable manner while creating memorable experiences for visitors, improving quality of life for residents, and ensuring the stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

B. Highlights

- OED continues to participate in the DMAP-destination management action plan along with partners, Kaua'i Visitors Bureau, and the Hawai'i Tourism Authority; the website <https://kauaifestivals.com/> continues to be the favorite go-to for Kaua'i residents, visitors and hoteliers. In conjunction with this website our Facebook and Instagram pages are posting weekly; Funding was obtained this year from the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and so we were able to start up our Kahea Harbor Greetings program again in May 2024 and concludes in Dec 2024. Japan sister cities continue to do visits through student programs, Matsuri Festival and Kaua'i Marathon.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES/FILM PROGRAM

A. Objective

- The Film Commission program's objective is to increase film opportunities and other areas of Creative Industries including cultural and performing arts, emerging media, music, and entertainment industries, and to support our film community.

B. Highlights

- Film Commission program measures are based on economic impact through film production company expenditures and jobs created which are tracked on a Fiscal Year basis. The below figure represents the film production data for FY '23-24 (VIA DBEDT)

- CY2023 was a slow year for Kaua'i and all other major outer islands. Post-production events held here boosted our production numbers making a solid year economically for creative industries on Kaua'i. Yet, a lack of larger film productions, once a yearly event, has dwindled as it has on all major outer islands. Shipping costs, hotel room rates and lack of infrastructure and film industry talent many of whom moved off island during the pandemic, along with the general high cost of travel, has seen this demand diminish in Hawai'i and move to cheaper, international venues that are similar like Fiji and Thailand. Recent efforts at education and training via the good jobs and similar programs hope to rebuild our on-island talent with better paying jobs.
- FOHI – The Film Office of the Hawaiian Islands has been reborn. Efforts of the State & Island Film Commissions to collaborate more closely with the State Film Office has brought about a new MOU in attempt to formalize a new collaborative structure between the state and county film offices. This includes long and short-term strategic planning, film permitting digital modernization with an online Creative Lab Hawai'i portal that would integrate county/state permitting, locations, a directory of all creative sector skilled workforce and businesses.
- Strategy for stabilization and growth includes film tax credit stability, infrastructure incentives, education to workforce career pipeline, industry specific training to job placement and purpose- built studio facilities.
- The Kaua'i Creative Technology Center recently held their soft grand opening.

Table 3. Kaua'i Film Industry

	# of Permits Issued	Filming Days	Approx. Spend	Hawaii Crew
Print or Digital Ads	7	30	\$206,000	20
Documentary - TV or other	8	24	\$144,000	12
Feature Film	0	0	\$ 0	0
TV Show/Series	2	20	\$250,000	25
Music Videos	2	4	\$ 20,000	7
Misc (Wedding, etc.)	19	30	\$110,000	26
Totals	40	124	\$820,000	81

<i>Production Tax Credit 2023</i>	<i>\$4,240,353.52</i>
<i>Non Qualified Spend (Permits/State)</i>	<i>\$ 894,606.50</i>
<i>County non State Lands Est Spend</i>	<i>\$6,497,635.27</i>
<i>O/A Permit (State)</i>	<i>\$ 50,616.67</i>
TOTAL	\$7,442,860.44

AGRICULTURE

A. Objectives

- The Agriculture Program supports the viable growth of Kauaʻi's agriculture sector by working closely with agriculture producers, agriculture organizations, federal and state agencies, and other key stakeholders. To this end, OED supports various agriculture endeavors and participates in networking to match agricultural needs in the county with opportunities represented by state, federal, and educational agencies.

B. Highlights

- **Workforce Development:** OED is actively investing in workforce development by creating an agricultural educational pathway. In collaboration with the Department of Education, OED has implemented Roots of Learning: Kauaʻi's Ag Education Pathway for Young Learnings. This initiative aims to introduce elementary students to agriculture through exposure and awareness programs, laying the foundation for future interest in the industry. Additionally, a new partnership with the Kauaʻi Economic Development Board and the Grove Farm Foundation aims to engage eighth-grade students in hands-on agricultural experiences, with the goal of increasing interest in Natural Resource and Agriculture Academies at the high school level. By fostering this early connection to agriculture, OED is not only strengthening its workforce but also ensuring that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support the island's food system and economy.
- **Kauaʻi Agritourism:** OED contracted the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaiʻi (RCUH) to develop a coordinated learning cohort for local farmers and ranchers who are interested in and prepared to expand their operations to include an agritourism component. The goal of the cohort was to foster industry growth and build capacity at both the industry and individual business levels. As part of this project, the following agribusinesses received consultation: Kauai Sea Farm, Kumano I Ke Ala, Jerry's Rice Farm, Kipu Ranch, Rainbow Roots Farm, Aina Hookupu O Kilauea, Kapaa Banana, Old Koloa Regenerative Farm, Kauai Farmacy, and Common Ground Kauai. During consultations and site visits, it was determined that several of these businesses required additional approvals before they could move forward. RCUH worked to address each business's specific opportunities and project ideas, including but not limited to the development of tour routes, creation of tour scripts, staff and venue readiness training, social media and marketing campaigns, target market strategies, and support for navigating the County permitting processes. Kumano I Ke Ala, Lydgate Farms, and Kipu Ranch all received funding to assist their efforts to implement and or expand the agritourism component of their portfolio.

- **Strategic Agriculture Economic Development Plan:** OED partnered with the Kauaʻi Economic Development Board to develop a comprehensive Agriculture Economic Development plan, which was published in late 2023. The strategic plan envisions a Kauaʻi agriculture industry that is prosperous, resilient, and a global leader, all while honoring the island’s unique culture and heritage. The plan’s mission is to sustainably produce and promote world-class agricultural products to ensure the health and prosperity of Kauaʻi and the planet. As the plan has moved into the implementation phase, current efforts are focused on creating an Agricultural Economic Development Advisory Committee. This committee will be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders who will collaborate to develop a detailed implementation plan. The goal of this committee is to foster shared ownership and buy-in, ensuring that the tasks required to accomplish the plan’s objectives are executed effectively. By bringing together key stakeholders, the advisory committee will play a critical role in driving the success of Kauaʻi’s agricultural industry.
- **Invasive Species Mitigation Efforts:** OED has been actively involved in efforts to mitigate the impact of invasive species on Kauaʻi’s agriculture sector. This past year, two species of particular concern are the rose-ringed parakeet (RRP) and the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), both of which pose significant threats to the island’s ecosystem and agriculture industry. To address the growing concerns related to RRP, OED has been an integral part of the Kauaʻi Rose-Ringed Parakeet Working Group. This collaborative group consists of various stakeholders working together to develop and implement strategies to control the parakeet population. One key initiative spearheaded by OED is an online citizen science survey aimed at gathering community level data on the distribution and behavior of RRP. The survey invites residents, businesses, and visitors to report sightings of RRP, providing valuable information that is used to inform population control measures. This community-driven approach not only enhances data collection, but also raises public awareness about the issue, fostering greater community involvement in mitigation efforts. CRB is another invasive species threatening Kauaʻi’s ecosystems and agriculture industry. First detected in Lihue in May 2023, CRB continues to raise significant concerns and pose a threat to the islands ecosystems and agriculture industry. In the latter half of the last fiscal year, OED applied for and was awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Hawaiʻi Department of Agriculture to combat the spread of CRB in green waste. This funding will enable OED to enhance public education and outreach, support monitoring and detection efforts, and hire a consultant to conduct a study on practical and effective measures the County can implement to control the spread of CRB.
- **Legislative Support:** OED tracks and testifies on key State legislative measures that impact the Kauaʻi agriculture industry. Additionally, we review

and provide feedback on local government policies and proposed bills impacting the agricultural sector.

- **Groups, Networks and Affiliations:** The Agriculture Specialist is actively involved in several networks, which play a crucial role in supporting agricultural development and sustainability. This involvement helps to facilitate communication, collaboration, knowledge exchange, and resource sharing among various stakeholders in the local agriculture sector. Over the past year, the Agriculture Specialist participated in the County of Kaua’i Resilience Team, Hawai’i Food Systems Policy Network, Hawai’i Four County Sustainability Network, United Sustainability Directors Network, and the Garden Island Resource Conservation and Development. In addition, the Agriculture Specialist participated in several working and technical advisory groups, including the State Climate Change Commission’s Farming, Ranching, and Food Systems Technical Working Group and Biofuels and Land Use Technical Working Group, the Kaua’i Rose Ringed Parakeet Working Group, the Kaua’i Invasive Species Committee’s Executive Committee, the Hawai’i State Meat Processing Task Force, and the County of Kaua’i Disaster Recovery Working Group.

AGRICULTURE (County Sunshine Markets)

The Sunshine Market Program provides access for farmers to the public via produce sales events.

- A. Objectives
 - The objectives of the Sunshine Market Program include helping to promote and provide a venue for selling local farmers’ produce.
- B. Highlights
 - Due to the increase in private markets, improved producer-to-market networking, and the aging farming population, the County Sunshine Markets have struggled to maintain vendor participation. We continue monitoring the last remaining market to inform decision-making regarding whether to continue funding the Sunshine Market program.

Table 4. Sunshine Market Selected Statistics

Selected Statistics	CY 2021	CY2022	CY 2023
Sunshine Markets	2	2	2
Sunshine Market Farmers/Vendors	35	20*	20*
Sunshine Market Annual Revenue	\$160,153	\$110,587	\$163,765

*Due to COVID-19, most farmers have either retired or found additional venues to sell their products.

ENERGY PROGRAM

A. Objectives

- The objective of the County's Energy Program is two-fold: (1) to manage, reduce, and facilitate the County's fossil energy use through increased efficiency in our facilities and renewably fueled fleets, and (2) to initiate, coordinate, and partner with stakeholders and the community on innovative programs and projects in the clean energy and transportation sector.
- Goals for energy use reductions within County operations:
 - Electricity: Reduce County use by 30% by 2023 vs FY 2012 baseline (set in 2013).
 - Transportation: 100% renewable fuel use by 2035 (set in 2017).

B. Highlights

- **Electric Vehicle Chargers:** The County has made progress on the Congressional Designated Spending (CDS) Level 3 EV Charging Network Project, working through National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) clearance in-house. During this next fiscal year, we will procure chargers, design and engineering services, and start construction. The County additionally applied for the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) to install Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at the Lima Ola Affordable Housing Development.
- **Mobility Hubs:** The County launched the Coconut Marketplace Mobility Hub Plan in July '23, working in a public-private partnership with ABC Stores, State Legislature, and the visitor and business industries, to develop a vision and implementation plan for a mobility hub that could be replicated around the island. The long-term goal is an island network of mobility hubs, connecting people with shuttles and other shared mobility options, including micro-mobility, so residents and visitors can elect to get around the island without always choosing a single-occupancy vehicle. The Plan will be finalized in November '24.
- **Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Planning:** The Energy Coordinator works with colleagues from OED, the Planning Department, Mayor's Office, and KEMA to create an island-wide climate adaptation and action plan (KCAAP). The Energy Coordinator and Sustainability Coordinator also works closely with Planning on the mitigation piece, supporting consultants, County agencies, and community on developing greenhouse gas reduction strategies for Kaua'i. The draft plan will be ready for public review in Fall '24, and Plan is expected to be ready for adoption in 2025.
- **Networking and Knowledge-Sharing:** Program staff are members of multiple nation-wide and state-wide collaborative networks, including the Urban

Sustainability Director’s Network, the Statewide Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Coalition, the Four County Sustainability Network, and Drive Electric Hawaii, in which the Energy Coordinator is the Vice Chair for DEH. These networks and partnerships allow our staff to remain engaged in state-wide initiatives, policy conversations, knowledge-sharing, and potential procurement opportunities.

- **KIUC Renewable Portfolio Standard:** For the fifth straight year, Kaua’i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) leads the State of Hawai’i in renewable generation, achieving 57.9% renewable for 2023. This puts KIUC ahead of the State of Hawai’i requirement of 40% by 2030, to be achieved by each electric utility as established by HRS § 269-92(a), as amended. Solar contributed 38.1% of KIUC’s generation in 2023. Almost one-third of the solar production came from members’ rooftop systems. Other renewables contributing in 2023 were hydropower (12%) and biomass (7.8%). During 2023 KIUC began using biodiesel to enhance its renewable portfolio. Kaua’i can depend on 100 percent renewable energy during a few hours on much of our sunny days.
- We did not meet our 2023 efficiency goals and will not make progress to reduce County electricity use by 30% vs FY’12 baseline until there are additional efficiency projects funded and implemented by the County. The Police Complex (3990 Kaana) and at Līhu’e Wastewater Plant are two of the best candidates to deliver larger savings. The CIP team is working on a new project to replace the HVAC systems at the Police Complex and the Līhu’e Civic Center which is promising and should significantly impact energy use.

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

A. Objectives

- The County’s General Plan promotes a sustainable island by, “growing responsibly to meet the needs of current and future generations without depleting resources.” Working towards the goal of a sustainable island requires a collective effort from both the county and the community. The primary objectives of the County’s Sustainability Program are to:
 1. Foster the concept of sustainable, long-term thinking that considers multiple impacts of actions on the environment, social equity, and the economy, into all county policies and activities. **Institutionalize sustainability as a county value.**
 2. Help the County develop innovative, inter-departmental programs that save money, support local businesses, create jobs, improve quality of life, and protect the environment and public health.
 3. Track improvements and successes for the government program over time using verifiable metrics. Improve the county’s data collection system so progress can be measured.

4. Develop relationships between the county, non-profit organizations, and businesses to share sustainability practices, ideas, and opportunities for collaboration.
5. Conduct meaningful and equitable engagement to ensure programs and policies are inclusive of the many diverse voices on island.

B. Highlights

- **Kekaha Road Brownfields Program:** The environment provides the foundation for a sustainable community, which supports a sustainable economy. Cleaning up and reinvesting in brownfield properties provides an opportunity to improve and protect the environment. In October 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the County a \$300,000 Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant to evaluate and prepare a brownfields inventory, conduct Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), and develop remedial and cleanup plans for Kekaha. With assistance from Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., a qualified environmental professional firm, the County has completed the Kekaha Road Brownfields Assessment Report, established an Advisory Group, hosted a community meeting in partnership with E Ola Mau o Kekaha, and released a community survey. The new owner of Kekaha Sugar Mill, Lot B (TMK 130071040000), has agreed to participate in the program. The County is now developing a scope of work for Phase II ESAs to assess contamination and determine necessary cleanup measures. For more information, visit <https://kauaiforward.com/kekaha-brownfields-study/>.
- **Youth Climate Practitioners (YCP), Spring 2024:** County Staff held the second YCP course, open to all high-school aged students on the island. The primary goal was to educate students about the State and County's sustainability goals while introducing them to various career opportunities in the field. Structured around the Aloha+ Challenge, each session took students to community organizations working towards one of the six sustainability goals: Clean Energy, Waste Reduction, Local Food Production, Smart Sustainable Communities, Natural Resource Management, and Green Workforce & Education. As part of the curriculum, students partnered with local restaurants to guide them through the Hawai'i Green Business Program certification process. This year, six out of the 18 restaurants awarded the Hawai'i Green Business Certification were from Kaua'i, with students assisting five of those. For more information about the class, visit the StoryMap: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cd64217c5e2340f9936f26e03571e859>
- **Climate Adaptation and Action Planning:** Several members from the Office of Economic Development are on the County Resilience team, working with the Planning Department, UH Sea Grant, Emergency Management Agency, and Mayor's Office to develop the Kaua'i Climate Adaptation and Action Plan. The team, along with Raimi + Associates, hosted the third round of outreach

to hear community members' opinions about potential climate adaptation and mitigation measures. The team is reviewing the draft CAAP before releasing to the public in Fall 2024. The Plan is anticipated for adoption in the third quarter of FY 2024. More information can be found on the program website at <https://kauaiadaptation.com/>.

- **Active Communities and Play Streets Kaua'i:** Program staff is part of the Play Streets team, which includes OED's Agriculture specialists, the Hawai'i State Department of Health, the Planning Department, Get Fit Kaua'i, Na Lei Wili Area Health Education Center, and other community organizations. Play Streets Kaua'i aims to connect communities through active play by improving community designs for safe, accessible, and equitable access to physical activity. In rural areas like Kaua'i, challenges such as limited resources, sidewalks, playgrounds, and parks make promoting physical activity difficult. Play Streets addresses this by temporarily closing streets to create safe spaces for active play and fostering community connections. Since July 2022, the team has hosted twelve successful events across the island. They have also partnered with Kaua'i Community College's Create Media Department to develop a promotional video showcasing the success of Play Streets. More information is available at www.playstreetskauai.com.
- **Community Collaborations: Ho'olaulea no ka Honua:** Staff continues to build partnerships and collaborate on programs and events for the community. In celebration of Earth Day, OED's sustainability coordinator and agriculture specialist partnered with Kaua'i Community College and Kaua'i Economic Development Board to host Ho'olaulea no ka Honua, an event to honor community organizations working on sustainability and agriculture and aimed to improve long-term sustainability by familiarizing Kaua'i residents with island wide efforts that they can get involved in. The event was held on KCC's campus with more than 300 attendees. Participants had a chance to engage with more than 20 community organizations and enjoyed prizes, free chili bowls, and a create-your-own pizza station using fresh local toppings and KCC's woodfire pizza oven. Due to the success of the event, staff and partners are expanding the event to be an annual occurrence. Staff will start preparing for Earth Day 2025 in January 2025.
- **Tracking Emerging Sciences and Opportunities:** Program staff are members of the Urban Sustainability Director's Network, the Four County Sustainability Network, Hawai'i Green Growth's Voluntary Local Review Task Force, and the Built Environment Task Force. These networks allow staff to remain engaged in state-wide initiatives, policy conversations, knowledge-sharing, and potential procurement opportunities.

WORKFORCE Program

The Office of Economic Development and administration changed our relationship with the WIOA program that provides services to the workforce via the American Job Center. We assigned our portion of funding back to the WDC to be managed directly by the Workforce Development Division (WDD). We are providing space for the American Job Center which includes the WDD, partner work areas and computer areas for the public. Costs to maintain the space are being handled directly by the County of Kaua'i. Kaua'i maintains its seat on the Workforce Development Board that is a statewide entity.

B. Highlights

- The AJC continues supporting participants coming to the Job Center requesting services, seeking assistance with signing onto Hire-net, creating resumes and filling out job applications.
- With the guidance of Bennette Misalucha as the new Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Council, she hopes to find ways to reengage in workforce development.
- In FY 24, OED Staff coordinated one job fair in April.
- OED worked with the Kaua'i Community College via a grant to provide Certificate courses and training. Highlighted programs included project management, forklift skills, security training, home health care and others.

BUSINESS INNOVATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS (Business)

KAUA'I MADE

The Kaua'i Made is a program created by the County of Kaua'i to officially represent products made on Kaua'i, by Kaua'i people, and are authentic to Kaua'i.

A. Objectives

- The goal of the Kaua'i Made Products sustainability program is to build upon the foundation of the program launch and establish priorities for the lasting success of this important program.
 - Increase the sale of products grown, created or manufactured in and by the people of Kaua'i; Increase the number and variety of products available on Kaua'i and elsewhere; Increase the visibility of the Kaua'i Made products in retail establishments and on the worldwide web; and to deliver information on how to purchase Kaua'i Products to visitors, residents and others through a variety of marketing vehicles.

B. Highlights

- Kaua'i Made redesigned Tote bag & luggage tags. A new look!

- Continued partnership with Sheraton Coconut Beach initiating a last Friday of the month Kaua'i Made Product Fair for members only.
- Held an Annual Holiday Fair in December showcasing 40 members.
- Kaua'i Made Marketing & Branding to build into our Retail Members (Big Save/Times, Salty Wahine, Aunty Lilikoi, Jacqueline on Kaua'i)
- Easter Craft Fair event with outdoor games, Easter Bunnies, and Entertainment.
- Increased usage of online applications.
- Kaua'i Made shopping guide continues to be printed quarterly with updated membership listing.
- Work with Kaua'i Family Magazine to promote Kaua'i Made and our Annual Holiday Fair. 15,000 copies island wide distributed.
- Tapped into Taste of Hawaii congressional event in Washington, D.C. sending three Kaua'i Made Member' products to promote and share awareness about Kaua'i Made (Kauai Chocolate, Kauai Gourmet Nuts).
- Kaua'i Made partnered with HTA/KVB in collaboration with Outrigger Kaua'i Beach Resort & Grand Hyatt Resort & Spa creating an event for both visitors & residents to celebrate the rich Hawaiian culture on our island. Event highlighted local entertainment, cultural workshops, local crafters and vendors offering Kaua'i Made and island products.

BROADBAND

High-speed internet benefits everyone on the island, including businesses, entrepreneurs, kupuna, students, and residents. OED has taken on the responsibility of coordinating the broadband efforts on the island to ensure that every household in Kaua'i has access to affordable high-speed internet. These efforts have involved collaborating with state and federal representatives, the other three counties, internet service providers, and countless specialists with ties to broadband initiatives. The Business Specialist oversees Kaua'i's BEAD (Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment) Program's Challenge Process, holds community outreach meetings, community training sessions, coordinates digital equity projects, and collaborates on state and county broadband strategies.

A. Objectives

- Improve the broadband infrastructure in Kaua'i.
- Identify the underserved and the unserved.
- Increase digital equity.

B. Highlights

- Held the first statewide conference on broadband and digital equity, with presentations by state and national experts, Lieutenant Governor Luke, Senate President Kouchi, and more.

- Managed Kauaʻi’s BEAD Challenge Process, holding community training sessions around the island to gather the documentation needed to ensure that every home, no matter how rural, has access to affordable highspeed internet. The majority of the homes recorded during this process will receive high-spiced fiber internet connectivity at no cost to themselves.
- The County of Kauaʻi’s Broadband Story Map is a succinct outline of our current internet connectivity issues and our goals for the future. The story map can be found at bit.ly/kauaibroadband
- Through collaboration with partners at DHHL, Kauaʻi has access to internet speed data from Ookla - the most widely used speed test available. Access to internet speed data gives insights into where needs might exist and guides where to focus outreach efforts.
- Community outreach meetings were well attended and well received. Key influencers in the community were won over and will help spread the word.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Business Specialist works diligently to foster a thriving, resilient, and interconnected business community. Their primary mission is to support businesses, emerging industries, and nonprofits by providing essential services and addressing community challenges. Through a combination of direct support and proactive problem-solving, the Business Specialist plays a critical role in nurturing economic growth and sustainability.

First, the Business Specialist offers comprehensive support to businesses, including technical assistance, access to vital resources, and connections to community partners. By guiding businesses through the complexities of government processes and regulations, the specialist ensures that they have the necessary tools and knowledge to succeed and expand.

Second, the Business Specialist is dedicated to identifying, reporting, and addressing challenges within the business community. By staying attuned to the needs and concerns of local businesses, they advocate for their interests and implement solutions that enhance the overall business environment.

A. Objectives

- Provide tools, resources, knowledge, and connections to current businesses so they may continue to grow and prosper.
- Attract new and innovative businesses.
- Remove common roadblocks for businesses to ensure a healthy business ecosystem.
- Grow and upskill the workforce.
- Increase capacity of local nonprofits.

B. Highlights

- **Business Retention & Expansion Program** - The Business Retention and Expansion Program is focused on stabilizing current businesses and setting them up for growth. Last year the Business Specialist visited over 400 businesses in-person, to better understand the challenges facing Kaua'i's business community. Data and information gathered at every meeting was used to inform new programs and was presented to the Mayor's office to keep them informed of the happenings in the business community. This year, the goal is to visit 100 businesses and to build stronger relationships with 10 high-impact businesses – those with high growth potential, large employers, and organizations focused on community good. By building stronger relationships with high-impact businesses, we hope to encourage job growth and investment in the community, protect against business closures by providing resources and technical assistance, and foster an innovative and diversified economy.
- **Digital Marketing “Jumpstart” Program** – The Jumpstart program was born from insights shared from a struggling business and brought to life through a collaborative effort with the County of Kaua'i and Dev-Island, a local nonprofit focused on workforce development. After talking with a local business, the Business Specialist found that many businesses struggled to reap the rewards of a steady social media marketing campaign and a well-positioned website, causing them to miss out on advertising opportunities, virtual traffic, and ultimately, sales. The Jumpstart program trained enterprising Kaua'i locals to become digital marketers, and then paired them with Kaua'i businesses. The businesses received free digital marketing services for 6 months, and the digital manager was paid for their work and received valuable experience in an emerging industry. As part of the onboarding process, the businesses decided on criteria for success, and agreed that if that criteria for success were met, they would continue paying for the service for an additional three months at least. The results of the programs were unbelievable – some businesses receiving an increase of over 300,000% in website impressions, and others receiving an increase in over 2,000% in engagement. Needless to say, it was a huge boon to the businesses involved, and the majority of the businesses decided to stay on as paying customers after the program's end.
- **Enterprise Zone Program** -The Enterprise Zone (EZ) program is a State-County partnership lead by the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT). The Business Specialist serves as the EZ Coordinator for Kaua'i and works with DBEDT to recruit businesses for the program. The program allows local businesses that are growing and creating jobs on island to benefit from tax savings.

- **Groups and Affiliations** - The Business Specialist also represents the County at various business-focused organizations. Regularly attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, and even serving as an Ex Officio Board Member for the Līhu‘e Business Association. The Business Specialist is also the Committee Chair for an Island-wide high-school Academies Freshmen Advisory Committee, gathering input from industry experts and using it to guide and inform the career academies experience. The Business Specialist is a part of many committees that address workforce development, agriculture, green business, emergency response, housing, and more.
- **Legislative Support** - OED tracks and testifies on key State legislative issues that impact the economy and Kaua‘i businesses. We review and provide feedback on local government policies and proposed bills impacting the economy.

KAUA‘I FORWARD WEBSITE

Over the last year, the site has shifted to focus on moving forward and spreading information on economic opportunities. It contains an expanded list of financial, food, health and other resources for residents and businesses and ties to our government site: <https://kauaiforward.com/>.

- A. Objectives
 - The objectives are to continue to provide timely and accurate information for Kaua‘i residents regarding economic development for as long as the site is needed and used.
- B. Highlights
 - Revamp of the website to try to provide ease of use for residents. Planning for a media program to do outreach on OED efforts.

IV. BUDGET

Expense Type	FY 2024 (Budget)	FY 2024 (Actual)
Equivalent Personnel	9	9
Salaries & Wages	1,095,533	1,009,093
Operations	2,883,237	2,340,736
Equipment	1272	1109
Total	3,928,770	3,349,826

Other OED Funds	FY 2024 (Budget)	FY 2024 (Actual)
Kaua'i Made	179,394	179,394
Kekaha Host Community Benefit	596,393	476,484
ARPA Funding	2,100,000	1,992,551
EPA Grant	300,000	51,517
DMAP Program Funds-Mob Hub	100,000	100,000
Harbor Funds-HTA	92,000	92,000

V. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/EVALUATION

The Office of Economic Development met together again this year to assess last year’s efforts on projects for FY24 and compare it with goals and objectives for the next five years. Over the first year, OED called out 90 projects to work on. Of those, 51 were completed, 32 needed to be readjusted and 7 were put on hold. Over the July 2023 to June 2024 period, 19 additional projects were completed, 1 project was placed on hold, 3 projects were cancelled, and many projects had deadline adjustments. In total, as of August 2024, there are 74 projects in progress, 113 projects completed, 22 projects placed on hold and 22 projects cancelled. Some other projects were deleted due to being redundant or did not make it past the ideation phase and considered not useful as considerations for future projects at this time. OED continues to use technology to track where we are with those project timelines.

OED launched another round of Innovation Grants that replaced the routine sector specific OED grant program. Once again, the goal of this specific grant program was to provide funding for innovative projects to generate short-term and long-term economic growth and diversification in Kaua’i. Grant applicants were required to have identified a partner to work with to complete the project. The funds distributed this year affected all sectors. We again utilized a public platform, [Consider.it](#) to engage the community in reviewing proposals. We received positive feedback from the community, and they enjoyed seeing what innovations were out there. This process also helped engage possible applicants in the future.

OED, working in partnership with the Kaua’i Economic Development Board and the rest of the state, completed the Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was accepted. The six CEDS areas of focus for Kaua’i include: sustainable practices and technology; food and agriculture; health and wellness; visitor industry management including natural resources conservation and preservation; and science and technology. OED utilizes this plan to help guide applicants to our innovation grants.

We expect to continue building the capacity of our team to help our community rebuild an economy of balance. We will continue to work on projects that accomplish goals laid

out in our county plans and generate new plans that pave the way for our community's priorities moving forward. We are grateful to the administration for the room to explore and test new innovative waters.