

“Community Innovations to Improve Maternal Health in Hawai’i” 2025 Awardees

Community Innovation funding seeks to invest in knowledge, leadership, and solutions that emerge from within communities themselves. Hawai’i Hospital Education and Research Foundation, in partnership with the Hawai’i Maternal and Infant Health Collaborative, awarded a total of \$750,000 in State Maternal Health Innovation (MHI) funds across seven (7) projects.

Summary

No.	Proposal Title	Submitter/Service Provider	Reach/ Location	Timeline (Yrs)	Budget
1	Ka ‘Āmana Ko’okua Mentorship Program	Kalauokekahuli	Statewide	3	\$150,000
2	Hamakua-Kohala Health Maternal Health Project	Hamakua Health Center, Inc DBA Hamakua-Kohala Health	Hamakua Coast, Hawai’i	3	\$150,000
3	From Birth to Belonging: E Ola Nā Makuahine through Early Connection, Navigation & Peer Support	Family Hui Hawaii	Oahu, Maui County	3	\$150,000
4	Strengthening the Maternal Mental Health Workforce	Castle Medical Center dba Adventist Health Castle	Oahu	2	\$50,000
5	Advancing Community-Centered Perinatal Data Equity in Hawai’i (alt-PRAMS)	Tagata Moana Hui Foundation	Statewide	3	\$150,000
6	Happy Mama Hour	Community Clinic of Maui, Inc. dba Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center	Maui	2	\$50,000
7	A Nest for Mom- Maternal Health Text Messaging	Family Support Services of West Hawaii- DBA Family Support Hawaii	Statewide, rural	2	\$50,000
Total					\$750,000

1. Ka ‘Āmana Ko’okua Mentorship Program

Organization: Kalauokekahuli
 Funding Amount: \$150,000
 Project Period: 3 years

Provides training in culturally-grounded prenatal, birthing support, and postpartum care for Ko’okua (traditional Native Hawaiian birth-support provider) mentees who, upon graduation, will be able offer free services to Native Hawaiian and Pasifika families across Hawai’i. The mentorship is intended to increase the number of birth-support service providers in Hawai’i, increase awareness and utilization of critical services for birthing families in rural communities, and decrease the rates of severe maternal morbidity, maternal mortality, and perinatal mental health disorders.

2. Hamakua-Kohala Health Maternal Health Project

Organization: Hamakua Health Center, Inc DBA Hamakua-Kohala Health

Funding Amount: \$150,000

Project Period: 3 years

Develops a maternal health program focused on pregnant and postpartum individuals facing the greatest care barriers to care, including those experiencing homelessness. Built around a culturally responsive, team-based model, the program will be operationalized by a Nurse Midwife, Community Health Workers (CHWs), and Care Coordinators, including a newly proposed Care Coordinator/Outreach Worker dedicated to maternal health. This Care Coordinator/Outreach Worker will proactively engage with all prenatal patients and provide consistent, individualized support through the post-partum year, offering in-home visits as needed. The coordinator will also work with patients to address social drivers of health (SDOH) such as housing instability, food insecurity, and transportation gaps that directly impact maternal and infant outcomes. Emphasis will be placed on supporting pregnant individuals who are unhoused, ensuring they receive compassionate, continuous care across clinical and community settings. This integrated approach strengthens capacity to reduce disparities, improve maternal health outcomes, and promote health equity. Together, this interdisciplinary team will create a safety net that empowers clients to access services, build healthier lives, and thrive in the face of adversity.

3. From Birth to Belonging: E Ola Nā Makuahine through Early Connection, Navigation & Peer Support

Organization: Family Hui Hawaii

Funding Amount: \$150,000

Project Period: 3 years

A culturally grounded, trauma-informed model that integrates three core strategies: Early Connection at Birth, Family Navigation, and Peer-to-Peer Hui Support. Together, they form a continuum of care that reaches mothers early, reduces isolation, and fosters emotional well-being before crisis occurs. From Birth to Belonging will serve prenatal and postpartum moms across O'ahu and expand services to Maui County, where maternal health disparities are deepened by geographic and systemic barriers. The program will deliver outreach, facilitate peer groups, and support families through Family Navigation and trained parent leaders while monitoring changes in depressive symptoms, parenting confidence, service access, and engagement.

4. Strengthening the Maternal Mental Health Workforce

Organization: Castle Medical Center dba Adventist Health Castle

Funding Amount: \$50,000

Project Period: 2 years

Provides the initial support and training needed for staff to improve screenings, referrals and follow-ups for perinatal patients with mental health needs and risk factors at a birthing hospital on O'ahu. Providers and staff will obtain Certification in Perinatal Mental Health.

5. Advancing Community-Centered Perinatal Data Equity in Hawai'i (alt-PRAMS)

Organization: Tagata Moana Hui Foundation

Funding Amount: \$150,000

Project Period: 3 years

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) families in Hawai'i experience some of the highest rates of preterm birth, maternal mental health concerns, and other adverse perinatal outcomes—yet remain persistently underrepresented in national data systems like the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). Historically, PRAMS has failed to reflect the linguistic, cultural, and structural realities of NHPI communities, leading to harmful data gaps and misaligned policies. Tagata Moana Hui Foundation proposes alt-PRAMS, a 3-year initiative to co-create an alternative, culturally grounded, and equity-centered perinatal surveillance system in Hawai'i. This pilot will engage NHPI birthing people, community health workers (CHWs), and maternal health stakeholders in designing and testing an inclusive data collection model rooted in Indigenous values and family structures. Activities will include convening a Community Advisory Board, conducting listening sessions across O'ahu and neighboring islands, co-developing a survey instrument inclusive of multigenerational and non-cis heteronormative family dynamics, and piloting data collection through trusted CHWs. The project aims to generate actionable data that accurately reflect NHPI maternal health experiences and to build local capacity for sustainable, community-led health surveillance. Findings will inform statewide maternal health initiatives and be shared with government and policy partners to shape more equitable systems. By reimagining how and for whom data are collected, alt-PRAMS seeks to shift the narrative to ensure NHPI families are not only counted, but centered, valued, and empowered in the systems that reflect their truth.

6. Happy Mama Hour

Organization: Community Clinic of Maui, Inc. dba Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center

Funding Amount: \$50,000

Project Period: 2 years

A group-based postpartum support program designed to care for mothers after childbirth. Unlike traditional postpartum care, which often ends after the six-week checkup, Happy Mama Hour extends engagement through 12 months postpartum. This ongoing support creates opportunities to identify and address health or emotional concerns early, helping to prevent complications and strengthen maternal resilience. Happy Mama Hour will be open to all patients within 12 months postpartum, with a special focus on high-risk case management patients and patients who entered prenatal care after the first trimester.

7. A Nest for Mom- Maternal Health Text Messaging

Organization: Family Support Services of West Hawaii dba Family Support Hawaii

Funding Amount: \$50,000

Project Period: 2 years

Provides two-way texting support for mothers during the prenatal period. The primary goal for this project is to reach prenatal women with comprehensive maternal health messaging and connecting them with relevant resources and referrals in the community as needed.