

# STRENGTHENING HDOA'S ABILITY TO ACCESS FEDERAL FUNDING

Funding grant writing staff within the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is a valuable investment that can yield a high return and long-term benefits for the state. Not only are they essential for pursuing new funding but also for maintaining existing federal grants – particularly crucial given current uncertainties in the federal funding landscape – which makes it imperative to build this capacity as quickly as possible. Filling these positions also follows through on legislators' requests to maximize existing positions toward legislative intent.

## Budget Request

**Three grant writer positions to be dedicated to securing block and competitive federal grant programs.**

- HDOA manages approximately \$6 million in recurring annual grants. For FY2025, an additional \$22 million in new federal funding opportunities has been identified, bringing the total potential grant funding to \$28 million.
- **Examples of funding opportunities are:**
  - \$5 million - USDA Regional Agricultural Promotion Program
  - \$5 million - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Storage Projects
  - \$1.82 million - USDA Local Food for Schools and Child Care Program
    - \$1.32 million for school food programs
    - \$496,000 for child care facilities
  - \$1.21 million - USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance Program
  - \$1 million - USDA Regional Food Systems Partnerships
- These grants support diverse agricultural initiatives including innovation, water infrastructure improvements, and food systems development.

## Why Grant Writers?

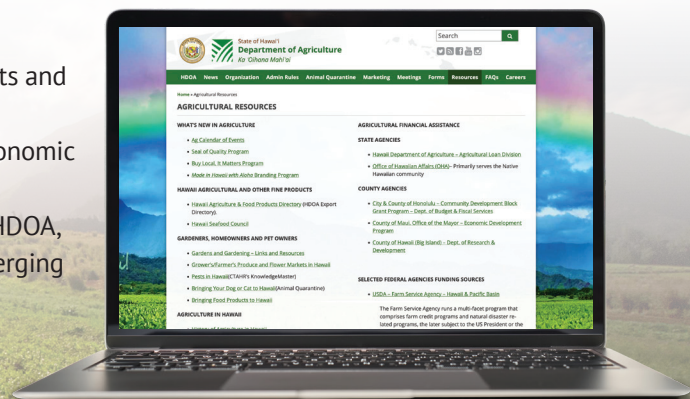
**This investment in personnel could result in a return on investment dozens of times over.**

**Skilled grant writers will help the State to:**

- Access federal funds by preparing competitive and compelling grant proposals that align with local farmer needs
- Identify and pursue grants that supplement and leverage existing State resources, maximizing the impact of HDOA's programs

**Federal grants will provide:**

- Additional means to support important projects and services without solely relying on State funds, especially in times of natural disasters and economic hardship
- A diversified source of long-term funding for HDOA, offering stability and flexibility to address emerging challenges or capitalize on new opportunities



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## Did You Know That ...

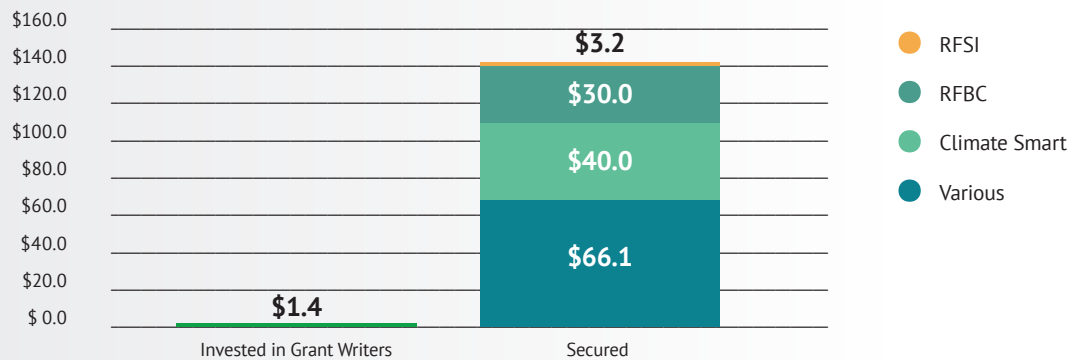
Stimulus bills approved by Congress beginning in 2020 unleashed the largest flood of federal money into the U.S. economy. Roughly \$5 trillion went to households, mom-and-pop shops, restaurants, airlines, hospitals, local governments, schools, and other institutions around the country grappling with the blow inflicted by COVID-19. A number of large USDA grant programs were created. The HDOA needs grant writer support in order to go after these multi-million-dollar opportunities.

## Other Benefits for the State

**By having grant writers on HDOA's staff, the State will benefit from:**

- Grant writing is a specialized skill, and having dedicated grant writers allows other HDOA staff to focus on their core responsibilities leading to better use of resources and expertise.
- Aligned grant-seeking efforts with the HDOA's strategic goals and priorities ensures that all federal funding opportunities will support the agency's long-term objectives.
- Stronger partnership with Hawai'i's congressional delegation to better communicate the agricultural industry's needs.

**Funding Invested vs. Secured (\$s in Millions)**



## Return on Investment

**Grant writers provide a significant return on investment**

Investing in grant-writing capacity not only pays for itself but also brings in funds several times the initial investment.

- Ulupono Initiative invested \$1.4 million in grant writers over the past 10 years through organizations such as The Kohala Center, O'ahu Agriculture & Conservation Association, and Hawai'i Farm Bureau.
- Secured ~\$140 million for local agriculture (100x return on investment).
- This included unprecedented funding from the USDA.
  - \$40 million from the Climate-Smart Commodities program to help farmers fund climate-smart farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
  - \$30 million from the Regional Food Business Centers (RFBC) program to establish regional centers, which provide farmers with grants and connect them with federal programs.
  - \$3.2 million from the newly created USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program.