



For Immediate Release

July 28, 2015

**OHA Approves \$1.5 Million Award to Continue Program
that Helps Native Hawaiians Gain Financial Independence**

HONOLULU—Helping Hands Hawaii (HHH) received a \$1,559,750 award from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to continue the Pūnāwai Program, which provides asset incentives, financial literacy and multi-service referral activities designed to improve the quality of life for Native Hawaiians currently living at or below 250% of the federal poverty guidelines for Hawaii. This program has been a combined effort between HHH, Catholic Charities of Hawaii (CCH) and Hawaiian Community Assets (HCA) since August 2013, and this award continues the partnership through 2017.

HHH will continue to provide emergency financial assistance and information and referral services on Oahu while CCH will provide the same services in Maui, Hawaii and Kauai counties. HCA expands its role to deliver financial education, financial counseling and Individual Development Accounts savings match/asset building products for all counties.

This collaborative approach is essential to the long-term financial success of Native Hawaiians and will utilize the resources and knowledge of all three organizations, which have long histories of providing services and supports to Native Hawaiians. These agencies have a variety of services that empower low-income, homeless and otherwise at-risk individuals and families to become self-sufficient.

“Helping Hands Hawaii is humbled and blessed to serve and support Native Hawaiians who struggle to live in a decreasingly affordable Hawaii,” said President and CEO Jan Harada of Helping Hands Hawaii. “We are fortunate to be engaged in a true collaborative partnership with Catholic Charities Hawaii and Hawaiian Community Assets, two organizations that share our desire to operate with integrity, compassion and humility to help Native Hawaiians realize a more financially stable future.”

“This partnership allows us to collaborate and leverage our skills and resources to help more Native Hawaiians in need,” said Rona Fukumoto, Division Administrator of Catholic Charities Hawaii.

“We mahalo Office of Hawaiian Affairs for their continued investment in culturally-relevant financial education and financial assistance for its Native Hawaiian beneficiaries,” said Jeff Gilbreath, executive director of Hawaiian Community Assets. “Our partnership with Helping Hands Hawaii and Catholic Charities allows the three of our organizations to teach families the skills necessary to manage their household finances while at the same time providing them with the opportunity to act and apply these learned skills by participating in the Pūnāwai IDA product.”

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About Helping Hands Hawaii

Helping Hands Hawaii (HHH) was founded in 1974 and connects individuals, families and organizations with essential human and material resources. Through our variety of programs, we provide a full continuum of care and help people overcome obstacles, like homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse and language access. Our strong partnerships with local social service providers and innovative approaches strengthen our community by helping people to help themselves. To learn more, visit www.HelpingHandsHawaii.org.

About Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Serving Hawai'i since 1947, Catholic Charities Hawai'i offers assistance to people in need, regardless of faith and culture. Long trusted in the community for its innovative and professional approach to human services, Catholic Charities Hawai'i provides much needed services through over 30 programs statewide. Catholic Charities Hawai'i is fully accredited by the Council of Accreditation. They are a partner agency of Aloha United Way and a member of the nationwide Catholic Charities USA organization. For more information, visit www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org.

About Hawaiian Community Assets

Hawaiian Community Assets is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, HUD-approved housing counseling agency and community lending institution that builds the capacity of low- and moderate-income communities to achieve and sustain economic self-sufficiency with a particular focus on Native Hawaiians. For more information, visit www.hawaiiancommunity.net

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