STATE LAUNCHES JOB PROGRAM FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

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HONOLULU—Nonprofit organizations, the private sector and government have joined together to launch a program using federal CARES Act funding that will support Hawaii's economy by providing businesses with up to 650 workers who have been displaced in the current economic crisis.

The economic stimulus program is supported by $10 million in federal CARES Act funding that was secured with the help of Hawaii's Congressional delegation and disbursed locally through an appropriation by the Hawaii State Legislature.

"We are grateful to all those who helped Hawaii obtain these federal funds and build an innovative program that supports our local businesses and keeps Hawaii residents employed," said Gov. David Ige. "This is a great example of how we can pull together during difficult times and rise to the challenges facing our economy from the pandemic."

The Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) worked with all the partners to pull the program together. DBEDT contracted with Kupu, a conservation and youth education nonprofit, and Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii (EDAH), an economic development nonprofit, to implement this workforce development initiative. There will be two tracks to this program: "Kupu Aina Corps" run by Kupu and "Aloha Connects Innovation" run by EDAH.

The program will match displaced workers with companies in emerging industries and Aloha+ Challenge sectors such as conservation, renewable energy, agriculture, creative arts, aerospace, entrepreneurship, and STEM fields. The Aloha+ Challenge is a statewide commitment to achieve Hawaii's sustainability goals, and locally driven framework to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The initiative, originally envisioned by Omar Sultan of Sultan Ventures, aims to diversify and

strengthen Hawaii's economy by building a scalable workforce to support the growth of emerging and resilient non-tourism industries. The program will create internship opportunities to provide temporary employment required due to economic injury caused by COVID-19 related business closures, while meaningfully diversifying and strengthening Hawaii's economy.

"We are excited to create some options for those who are currently unemployed and want to seek a different career path," said Kupu CEO John Leong. "These positions will provide on-the-job experience, healthcare, and relevant educational or training opportunities for upward mobility beyond the first phase. The skills learned here will be essential tools for a resilient Hawaii."

The programs' positions will offer:

- 2-1/2 to 3 months of on-the-job training (to December 15)
- Wages starting at $13-$15 an hour
- Health care benefits
- Introduction and mentoring within the emerging, innovation sectors
- Workforce training
- Ideally, after the on-the-job training, individuals will be hired at the sites they are placed at or within the network of their organization, pursue careers in the emerging, innovation sector, or continue with higher education

Eligible Participants:

- Displaced workers
- Recent college graduates
- Recent high school graduates

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, many tourism-related jobs will likely not be available through 2020. Hawaii's heavy reliance on tourism means that the local economy will lag behind the national pace of the recovery process, according to DBEDT's Research and Economic Analysis Division.

"This program proactively and intentionally supports companies while providing job opportunities that are not tourism dependent," said Rich Wacker, president & CEO of American Savings Bank, who, along with other members of the Hawaii Business Roundtable, saw the need for such an initiative.

EDAH Chair, Jeanne Skog added, "These emerging industries represent the future of economic growth for Hawaii. This program will provide displaced workers and recent graduates with opportunities to do critical work for our state, diversify their skillset, and provide organizations

and companies a resource for revival. This program provides an opportunity for faster recovery and allows us to create a more diverse and resilient economy."

Interested participant applicants and companies interested in hosting participants can apply for the innovation track through Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii's website at www.edahawaii.org and the conservation track through Kupu's website at www.kupuhawaii.org/ainainnovation.

About the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT)
DBEDT is Hawaii's resource center for economic and statistical data, business development opportunities, energy and conservation information, and foreign trade advantages. DBEDT's mission is to achieve a Hawaii economy that embraces innovation and is globally competitive, dynamic and productive, providing opportunities for all Hawaii's citizens. Through its attached agencies, the department fosters planned community development, creates affordable workforce housing units in high-quality living environments, and promotes innovation sector job growth.

About Kupu
Established in 2007 as a Honolulu-based 501(c)3 non-profit, Kupu empowers future generations to create a more sustainable Hawaii. The organization provides hands-on training and national service programs that educate and mentor youth to become stewards of culture and environment. Kupu has trained more than 4,000 youth in conservation, sustainability and environmental education. These young adults have supported Kupu partners to provide more than 3 million hours of service, which has culminated in planting over 1 million native plants and removing over 100,000 acres of invasive species. For their service, Kupu has presented close to $7 million in education awards to support the continued growth of its members. To date, Kupu has generated more than $150 million in economic benefits to the state of Hawaii. For more information, follow Kupu on Facebook (http://facebook.com/kupuhawaii) , Instagram (http://instagram.com/kupuhawaii) or YouTube (http://youtube.com/KupuHI) , or visit kupuhawaii.org.

About EDAH
The Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii (EDAH) is a 501(c)(3) Hawaii Corporation. Incorporated in 1998, the Alliance was established to support the initiative of economic development and diversification across the Hawaiian Islands. Promoting economic growth has been the cornerstone mission of Economic Development Association of Hawaii. EDAH is a consortium of organizations with more than 100 years of collective experience. Members represent the business and economic interests of Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, Kauai, Molokai and Lanai. For more information visit www.edahawaii.org.

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