

AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP

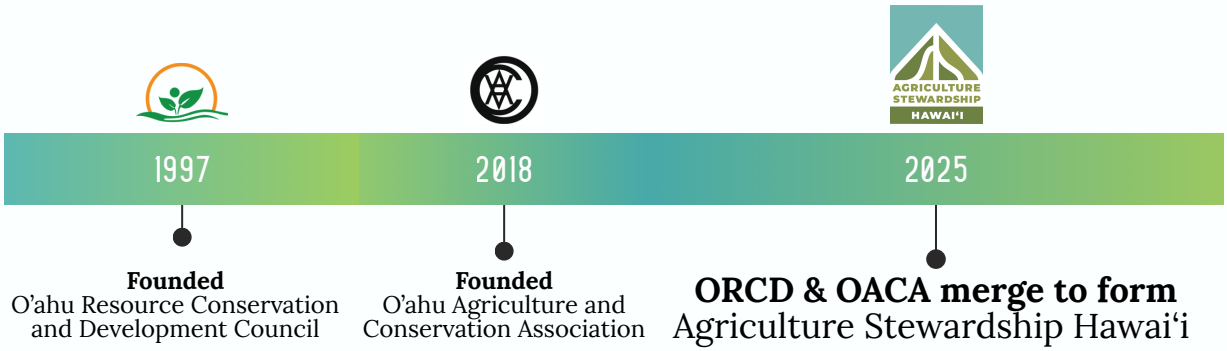
HAWAIʻI

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP HAWAI‘I

Empowering Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities to nourish land and people.

In October 2025, two long-standing and trusted farmer support organizations – O‘ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (ORCD) and O‘ahu Agriculture and Conservation Association (OACA) – **merged to form Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i (Ag Stew)** — a statewide organization built on more than 35 years of combined experience connecting Hawai‘i’s farming and ranching communities with the tools, funding, and technical support they need to care for the land and build lasting livelihoods.



Hawai‘i faces a moment of real urgency for its agricultural future – and real opportunity. Ag Stew exists where the two meet, working alongside farmers, ranchers, and land stewards across the state, providing hands-on technical assistance, conservation projects, and direct access to funding that supports healthy lands, working farms, and resilient local food systems.

Since 1997, we have channeled millions of dollars to agricultural and conservation projects across the islands – improving soil health, water quality, and farm productivity while deepening the relationship that makes this work possible. Ag Stew carries that legacy forward with expanded reach and a shared mission: to strengthen Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities and care for land and people across generations.



WHO WE SERVE

- **Farmers and ranchers across all Hawaiian Islands**
- **Agricultural businesses and food producers**
- **Conservation districts and land stewards**
- **Community organizations and public agencies**

HOW WE SERVE

Free Grant Research & Grant Writing Support	Funding Assistance for Conservation Practices	Conservation Planning & Monitoring Services
Registration Support for State & USDA Programs	Technical Support for Agricultural Operations	Statewide Policy & Advocacy

“We envision thriving, resilient agricultural communities stewarding Hawai‘i’s lands, waters, and agroecosystems for current and future generations."

OUR METHODS



Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i works where agriculture and environmental conservation meet – on the ground, in the field, and at the table where policy is made. Our approach integrates conservation planning, technical support, funding access, and collaborative partnerships to address challenges facing Hawai‘i’s farmers, ranchers and other land stewards.

We prioritize working lands and the people who steward them – including communities that have historically faced barriers to agricultural support. Our work is shaped by a deep respect for the traditional knowledge, values, and practices that have sustained these islands for generations, and a commitment to solutions that are practical, place-based, and built to last.

PROGRAMS

HEALTHY AGROECOSYSTEMS

Through direct funding assistance and in-field technical assistance, we help farmers and ranchers adopt conservation practices that improve soil health, water quality, and long-term farm productivity. From working farmland to coastal and wetland systems, we meet producers where they are – with practical support tailored to Hawai‘i’s unique landscape.



THRIVING FARMS

Producers who are navigating agricultural funding shouldn’t need a grant writer on their staff. We provide free one-on-one assistance with grant writing, loan applications, and financial education – helping producers of all sizes access the public and private funding they need to strengthen farm business viability and local food system resilience.



RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS

Strong farms need strong systems. We collaborate with government agencies, nonprofits, funders, and industry partners to shape the policies, infrastructure, and investments that determine what’s possible for Hawai‘i’s agricultural future.



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dave Dutra Elliott



To our partners, funders, and friends of Hawai'i's agricultural community,

2025 was not the year any of us anticipated. Sweeping federal funding cuts, freezes, and abrupt program terminations sent real shockwaves through Hawai'i's food and farming systems — disrupting operations, straining livlihoods, and placing producers across our islands in genuine uncertainty. The needs of our community grew faster than any single organization could fully meet, and we felt the weight of that every day.
And yet — this is also the year Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i (Ag Stew) came into being.

The merger of O'ahu Resource Conservation & Development Council and O'ahu Agriculture & Conservation Association could not have come at a more necessary moment. What might have looked like two organizations weathering a storm separately became one organization with greater reach, a growing team, and a unified mission: to stand with Hawai'i's farmers, ranchers, and land stewards through exactly these kinds of challenges.

In 2025, Ag Stew opened the Kunia Farmer Service Center, launched the Farmer Help Desk, and channeled over $1.5 million in capital to producers — all while building the infrastructure that will make this work stronger in the years ahead. None of it happened alone. It happened because of the partnerships, trust, and generous support of people and institutions who believe in Hawai'i's agricultural future as deeply as we do.

At the heart of everything we do, we work to care for the land that sustains us. This value lives in every conservation plan we develop, every farm we support, and every relationship we invest in. We are building toward a Hawai'i where healthy soils, clean water, thriving farms, and resilient communities are realities passed from one generation to the next.

To every funder, partner, and supporter who made 2025 possible: mahalo. Your investment keeps 28 years of progress from being lost to a single year of disruption — and gives us genuine confidence as we look toward 2026 and beyond.

Mahalo nui loa,

Dave Dutra Elliott

Dave Dutra Elliott
Executive Director, 2019 - 2026



AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP HAWAIʻI



INVEST IN HAWAIʻI'S AGRICULTURAL FUTURE

The challenges of 2025 made clear that federal funding alone cannot sustain Hawaiʻi's food system — and that when the right support is in place, this community is resilient and ready to grow. In 2026, Ag Stew is expanding our team, launching new projects, and deepening our commitment to supporting farmers and ranchers through meaningful, high-impact conservation and agri-business development work that strengthens Hawaiʻi's agricultural communities for the generations to come.

Every $1,000 invested in Ag Stew's Grant Writing Technical Assistance generates $4,500 for Hawaiʻi's farmers, ranchers, and agricultural nonprofits — a 4.5:1 return that stays in Hawaiʻi's food system.

In 2026, we are setting a goal of raising $500,000 in private philanthropic support.

For Our Foundation Partners

Your investment has made everything in this report possible. As demand for our services grows and the need for a strong backbone organization has never been more clear, we invite you to deepen that partnership — ensuring Ag Stew can meet this moment and build toward a food system resilient for generations to come.

For Individual Donors and Major Gift Partners

Ag Stew is actively building relationships with individual donors who share our commitment to Hawaiʻi's agricultural future. Private investment gives Ag Stew something grants cannot: flexibility — to move quickly, fill gaps, and invest in the long-term capacity that makes all of our programs work.

Partner With us

We would love to talk about how your investment can strengthen Hawaiʻi's agricultural future. Whether you are a foundation looking to deepen an existing partnership or an individual donor interested in learning more about Ag Stew's work, we invite you to reach out — every conversation starts with a shared commitment to Hawaiʻi's farms, land, and communities.

You can contact our Executive Director, Dave Dutra Elliott, directly at dave@agstewardshiphawaii.org

Ready to give now? Visit www.agstewardshiphawaii.org/donate

OUR IMPACT IN 2025

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i builds capacity to serve producers on all islands

Hawai'i's agricultural producers continue to face real barriers – limited access to capital, technical expertise, and extreme environmental conditions that increasingly threaten working lands and water resources. Navigating competitive funding environments and complex regulatory systems while trying to sustain a farm is not a small ask.

The opening of the Kunia Farmer Service Center marked a tangible milestone in Ag Stew's formation — bringing the combined services of ORCD and OACA under one roof for the first time, giving producers across the state a dedicated place — in person or remotely — to access one-on-one assistance, connect with resources, and build the relationships needed to grow their operations and strengthen financial sustainability.





With federal funding under pressure, the urgency around capital access intensified. To better serve producers across the state, we launched the Farmer Help Desk — a targeted resource for producers directly affected by federal funding disruptions, providing free consultations, application support, and referrals to alternative funding opportunities. We also maintained a publicly accessible grants and funding database to keep producers informed of new opportunities amidst all the changes.



We invested in the broader system as well — facilitating statewide networks of agricultural service providers, lenders, and funders to improve coordination and reduce duplication of effort. Through cost-share programs, conservation planning, business development support, and farmer-to-farmer learning, producers were better equipped to make strategic investments in their operations and their land.

The results extend beyond individual farms. Healthier soils, protected water resources, and stronger producer networks mean an agricultural system more capable of withstanding whatever comes next — and a local food system better positioned to nourish Hawai'i's communities for the long term.

2025

AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP HAWAIʻI



By The Numbers

292
producers served across all programs.

Providing funding and technical assistance for the implementation of

30
types of conservation practices on

1,865
Acres

$1.55M
Capital Secured for Producers

45
zipcodes reached on

5
islands

while collaborating with

30
partner organizations

KUNIA FARMER SERVICE CENTER

In 2025, Ag Stew opened the Kunia Farmer Service Center — a dedicated one-stop hub where Hawai'i's farmers, ranchers, and land stewards can access the full range of Ag Stew programs and services, whether they come in person or connect remotely from any island. Made possible through the generous support of the Denver Foundation, the Center marks a significant milestone in Ag Stew's formation: for the first time, our combined services are available under one roof, with a single, welcoming entry point for any producer who needs support.

The Center is where Ag Stew's work begins. Producers come with questions, challenges, and goals — and leave with a clear picture of what resources are available to them, what steps to take next, and who can help them get there. It is the connective tissue between Ag Stew's programs and the agricultural community we serve.



Farmer Help Desk

At the heart of the Kunia Farmer Service Center is the Farmer Help Desk — Ag Stew's centralized intake and referral service. Launched in 2025 with seed funding from Nuestro Futuro Foundation in response to the severe economic uncertainty facing Hawai'i's agricultural community, the Farmer Help Desk listens to producers, understands their needs, and connects them with the programs, funding, and technical assistance most relevant to their operation.

Beyond individual support, the Help Desk plays a broader organizational role — collecting real-time information on the needs and barriers facing Hawai'i's producers, identifying gaps in available services, and referring clients to partner services based on their needs. Our process enables us to consistently improve services to better meet on-the-ground needs.



176

new farmers & racnhers completed intake in 2025

Outreach & Intake

Engaging producers is the first step. Through community workshops, farm site visits, informational sessions, and direct outreach, Ag Stew brings the Farmer Help Desk to producers wherever they are — answering questions, gathering eligibility information, and creating the direct touch points that lead to meaningful support.

Producers are engaged through a personalized intake process conducted through in-person visits at the Center, virtual meetings, or phone calls. Our team captures baseline information about each producer's operation and priorities. That information is then used to determine the most appropriate referrals and next steps.

HOSTED
17
outreach events promoting our services

SHARED
Shared **606**
funding opportunities with farmers & ranchers

3,194
Instagram followers, with 12% growth

4,047
Newsletter Subscribers, with 20% growth

Refferal Network

Intake information doesn't just serve individual producers — it builds a clearer picture of what Hawai'i's agricultural community needs most. Those insights strengthen Ag Stew's referral network, ensuring that every producer is connected to the right resource at the right time, whether that's an Ag Stew program or an external partner organization.

26
Internal Refferals
to Ag Stew Programs

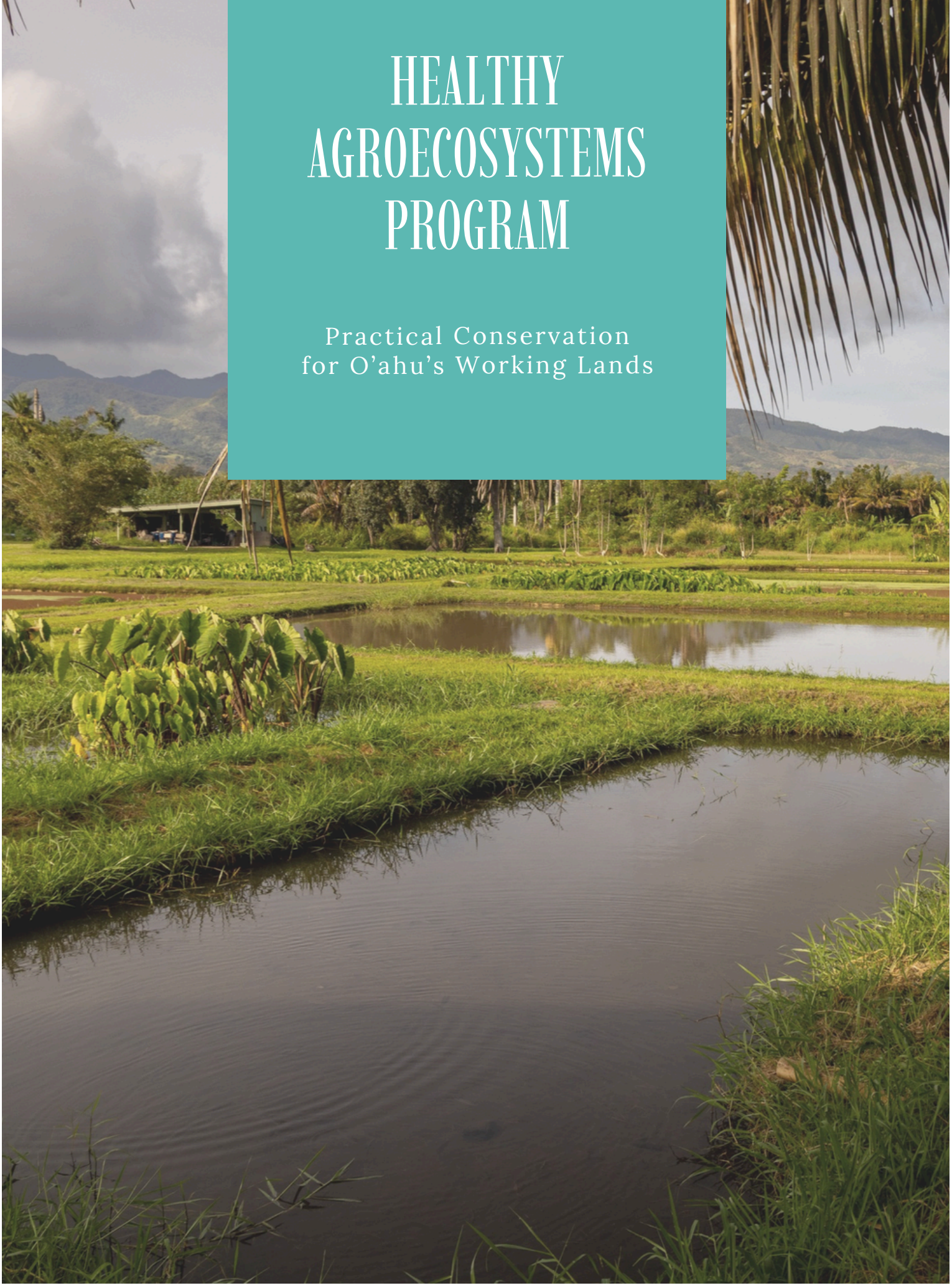
83
External Refferals
to Partner Organizations

21
trusted organizations in our partner network

GOFARM HAWAI'I
HFU Hawai'i Farmers Union
HAWAI'I GOOD FOOD ALLIANCE
FSA FARM SERVICE AGENCY
FTHF FEED THE HUNGER FUND

HEALTHY AGROECOSYSTEMS PROGRAM

Practical Conservation
for O'ahu's Working Lands



The **Healthy Agroecosystems Program** helps Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers care for their land while keeping their operations viable. Through multi-year conservation projects, site-specific planning, hands-on technical assistance, and direct financial support, the program addresses both natural resource priorities and the practical realities of running a farm — because long-term environmental stewardship and long-term farm viability are inseparable goals.

Work is shaped by ongoing engagement with agricultural communities and focused on the challenges that matter most: protecting water quality, improving soil health, reducing erosion, advancing climate-smart practices, and stewarding sensitive ecosystems including loʻi kalo (working wetlands). Our cost-share programs make conservation more accessible by reducing the financial burden on producers, and projects are intentionally designed to support on-farm infrastructure alongside natural resource improvements — recognizing that a well-functioning farm operation and a healthy landscape reinforce each other. Multilingual outreach programs ensure that producers across the state's diverse farming community can access and benefit from program services.



5,336 ACRES
of agricultural land received technical assistance

1,865 ACRES
of implemented conservation practices

112 FARMS
participated in programs and services

29
Conservation Plans developed for clients

CONSERVATION PLANNING SERVICES

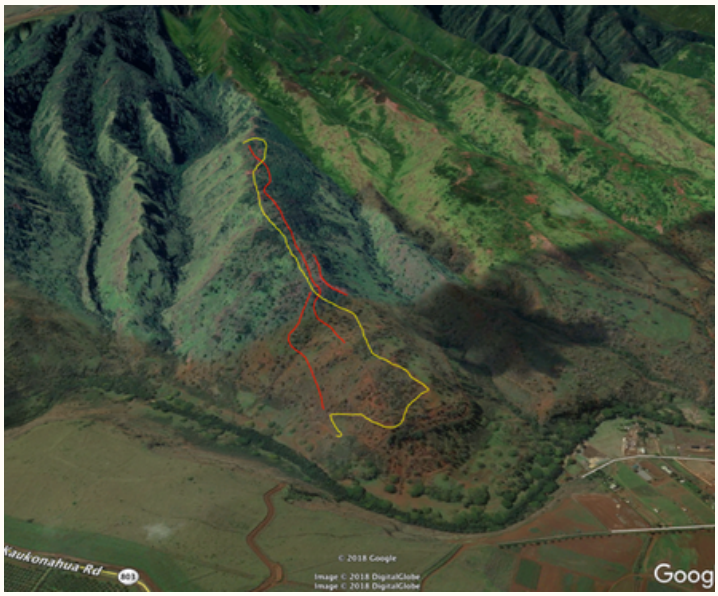
In coordination with regional Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Ag Stew conservation planners provide free and affordable NRCS-aligned conservation planning and monitoring services, identifying resource concerns and developing implementation roadmaps that enable measurable, lasting benefits for land, water, and farm operations. These plans give Oʻahu-based producers clear guidance for stewardship practices and help streamline permitting exemptions for agricultural work that minimizes environmental impact.



Producer Highlights

Kamananui Cacao Orchards

Kamananui Cacao Orchards is a 56-acre property on the upper slopes of Mount Kaʻala. The farm participated in the project while converting a half-acre parcel of dense invasive forest into active agroforestry — a transition that, on steep and erosion-prone terrain, carries real risk of significant sediment runoff.



Project support enabled the establishment of ʻilieʻe (Plumbago zeylanica) ground cover throughout the developing cacao system to stabilize soils, along with 324 windbreak trees to reduce wind exposure and slow surface runoff. Mulching, soil amendments, and staking improved soil structure and supported tree establishment in a wind-exposed site. The restored parcel now stands as a practical demonstration of how thoughtful agroforestry can strengthen farm viability while contributing to measurable improvements in water quality downstream.



THRIVING FARMS PROGRAM

Connecting producers and nonprofits to direct funding opportunities



The **Thriving Farms Program** strengthens the financial resilience and long term viability of Hawai'i's agricultural producers by expanding access to capital and building grant readiness skills. Through free hands-on grant writing services, we work directly with farmers, ranchers, agrifood businesses, and agricultural nonprofits to develop competitive grant applications and improve their odds of success.

Beyond proposal development, our grant writing and financial readiness education offers workshops and individualized support to build producers' understanding of grant and loan processes, budgeting, and financial documentation — giving them the confidence and capacity to pursue diverse funding sources on their own terms.

To keep producers informed about timely opportunities, Ag Stew conducts ongoing funding research, maintains a publicly accessible grant and funding database, and distributes a bi-weekly Ag Funding Newsletter highlighting new and relevant opportunities.

Together, these services equip Hawai'i's agricultural community with the tools, knowledge, and capital needed to sustain and grow thriving farm operations.

THRIVING FARMS SERVICE MENU

- Grant Readiness Assistance
- Grant Research Assistance
- Grant Writing Assistance
- Capital Access Training
- Free Grant Database



Available Statewide!

All Services Are Free

Thriving Farms Impacts in 2025

38 PRODUCERS
received grant writing technical assistance

127 PRODUCERS
attending grant access workshops

16 GRANTS
submitted on behalf of producers

29
Conservation Plans developed for clients

Between 2024-2025

$609K
in funding awarded directly to producers

$5.7M
awarded to agricultural nonprofits

$703K
in funding pending review



Producer Highlights

Our project work in 2025 spanned three interconnected areas:

Capital Access and Grant Readiness: Direct technical assistance and education to help producers and agrifood businesses identify, apply for, and secure public and private funding.

Producer Network and Leadership Development: Support for the Women Farmers Network, the AgTraining and Technical Assistance Hui Network, and targeted programming for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and rural producers facing distinct barriers to agricultural support.

Clean Energy and Farm Infrastructure: Helping producers access USDA renewable energy funding, reducing operating costs and strengthening long-term farm resilience.

Thriving Farms in Action

In 2024, Michael Kamiya of Kamiya Gold Inc. partnered with Ag Stew to secure funding through the USDA Rural Energy for America Program. With hands-on support navigating application requirements, coordinating technical documentation, and liaising with USDA Rural Development, Michael successfully secured a $40,868 award — completed in 2025.

The funds were used to install a photovoltaic system on the farm, powering a cold storage facility, lowering long-term energy costs, and strengthening overall operational resilience.

"Shortly after having the PV system installed, the Punalu‘u area experienced an 8-hour power outage from high winds. Luckily, the PV system powered up the Tesla Powerwall with enough energy to keep the refrigerator running until the power came back on. With the refrigerator running, it kept all the papaya chilled. Fortunately, we didn't have to unload the refrigerator or find an alternative way to keep the fruit cool." — Michael Kamiya







RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS

From field to policy

The **Resilient Food Systems & Policy Program** collaborates with government agencies, nonprofits, funders, and industry partners to strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural policy, food systems, and infrastructure. Our core initiative — the Hawai'i Statewide Food Systems Coordination — connects stakeholders across the state around a unified food system agenda, translating shared goals into measurable outcomes through research, policy engagement, and on-the-ground coordination.

In 2025, the program focused on three priorities: strengthening local food systems, enabling equitable access to institutional markets, and accelerating collaboration across government, community, and industry.



Key Highlights

- Provided backbone support for Hawai'i's Statewide Food Systems Coordination, connecting state agencies, counties, and community partners around shared food system goals.
- Supported the introduction, passage, and implementation of Act 239 — the State of Hawai'i's Interagency Food Systems Working Group — translating food system working group goals into actionable, measurable outcomes.
- Convened monthly statewide coordination calls with public agencies, nonprofits, and food system stakeholders to align efforts, share information, and support policy development.
- Facilitated an Ag-Camp bringing together agencies, legislators, and community-based organizations to advance shared food system priorities and build cross-sector momentum.
- Disseminated two statewide federal funding reports identifying gaps and opportunities to better position Hawai'i's food system amid shifting federal priorities.
- Partnered with the Hawai'i Food Systems Summit to highlight disaster preparedness coordination and response data gaps.
- Launched a statewide mapping of institutional food purchasing networks — engaging schools, healthcare systems, and nonprofits — to identify opportunities to expand local sourcing.
- Advanced food security strategies including the Food Security Fund for the Honolulu Charter and support for the Food as Medicine initiative.



LOOKING AHEAD: 2026 & BEYOND

REFLECTIONS

2025 was a year that tested Hawai'i's agricultural community — and revealed its resilience. Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i emerged from it with deeper partnerships, expanded services, and a clearer sense of what this work requires. In 2026, we are building on that foundation with intention: growing our team, launching new projects, and investing in the infrastructure that will make our support systems stronger and more connected for years to come.

GOALS IN 2026-2027

HEALTHY AGROECOSYSTEMS

We will be hiring a program manager and expanding our conservation portfolio in 2026. We will launch our 16th year of providing cost-share funding to help farmers implement conservation practices. This year, that work will focus on Kaiaka Bay, one of O'ahu's most at-risk watersheds. We are also supporting the installation of liners in 500,000 gallons of irrigation reservoirs in central O'ahu, strengthening groundwater conservation and expanding water sources for fire mitigation across the region



THRIVING FARMS

Growing demand for grant writing services is driving program expansion in 2026. We are actively recruiting a Thriving Farms Program Manager to meet producers where they are in an increasingly competitive funding landscape. In 2026, we will deliver more than 1,500 hours of grant writing technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, organizations and food system practitioners. We aim to prepare at least 30 successful funding applications on bhelaf of producers.



HARVEST NETWORK CRM - HAWAI'I AGRICULTURAL REFERRAL & VETTING SYSTEM:

Hawai'i's agricultural support organizations are stronger together than apart — but until now, there has been no shared system to connect them. In 2026, Ag Stew will launch the internal version of HARVest CRM, a shared digital platform that streamlines producer intake, coordinates referrals across organizations, and tracks outcomes statewide. By 2027, HARVest will open to partner organizations across Hawai'i — reducing duplication, closing service gaps, and ensuring that every producer who reaches out gets connected to the right support.





AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP

HAWAIʻI