



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HAWAI'I WORKFORCE FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE JOINS NATIONAL FUND FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS NETWORK, HIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Collaborative advances efforts to provide equitable access to living-wage jobs for Hawai'i residents

Honolulu (July 5, 2022)– The Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative (HWFC) is a new effort founded by Hawai'i-based foundations to strengthen partnerships and systems so that all Hawai'i residents have equitable access to living-wage jobs. Launched by the [Harold K.L. Castle Foundation](#), [Hawai'i Community Foundation](#), [HMSA](#), [The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation](#), the Collaborative announced today that it has been invited into the [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#) network. The partnership enables HWFC to advance its mission to offer greater access and opportunity to Hawai'i's local workforce and strengthen Hawai'i's economy overall. With the addition of Hawai'i, the National Fund network is made up of 34 regional collaboratives, and the Hawai'i collaborative will be the only active collaborative to represent an entire state.

"The Weinberg Foundation is deeply committed to increasing local access to high-quality jobs in Hawai'i, especially on our neighbor islands and rural communities with limited access to resources," said **Kelly Miyamura, Program Officer, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation**. "Through the Weinberg Foundation's grantmaking in Baltimore, Chicago, and New York, we've seen the incredible impact of collaborating with other funders and institutional partners. While Hawai'i is unique in its opportunities and challenges, we appreciate new learning and approaches to support our local people and communities, ensuring they can live, work, and thrive here in Hawai'i."

Joining the National Fund for Workforce Solutions as Hawai'i's first statewide funder collaborative, HWFC will have the opportunity to connect with local leaders throughout the country to identify trends, opportunities, and best practices in workforce development. The National Fund for Workforce Solutions invests in a national network of 34 communities taking a demand-driven, evidence-based approach to workforce development and promoting and investing in equitable outcomes. Through the partnership, HWFC will have access to competitive funding opportunities to support the Collaborative's initiatives in Hawai'i.

“Cross-sector partnerships are the key to fueling our economy and uplifting Hawai‘i’s people,” said **Alex Harris, Vice President of Programs, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation.** “Together, we’ve created a talent roadmap and are expanding work-based learning, rapidly re-skilling and credentialing, and investing in health care, technology, skilled trades, and other high-priority sectors to build a higher-skilled, local workforce. With the strength and support of the national network behind us, we hope to accelerate community solutions leading to greater financial health and prosperity for local families and individuals.”

To guide HWFC’s efforts to create a diverse and qualified local talent pool, Matt Stevens joins HWFC as executive director, effective July 1, 2022. A resident of Kapa‘au, Stevens is the founder and president of the Kohala Data Group, offering a variety of services to empower data champions to advance social impact and public sector initiatives.

With more than 15 years of valuable industry experience, Stevens specializes in bringing together people, process and data to serve as the foundation for sustainable, impactful collaborative initiatives. His work has made significant contributions to communities across the country, including Colorado, where he built the foundation for a workforce and higher education data collaborative, which gained state-level support.



Matt Stevens, Executive Director, Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative

“Leveraging collaboration and data, we have the ability to identify and deliver solutions for the social challenges our communities face,” said **Stevens**. “I’m humbled to have the opportunity to use my experience – and the expertise of these critical partner organizations – to expand the workforce pathways here in Hawai‘i. There is already so much great work happening across our state. Through this collaboration, we can ensure that we are all pushing in the same direction toward equitable outcomes for all Hawai‘i residents.”

Under Stevens' leadership, HWFC will advance significant initiatives and play a catalytic role in framing policy, convening, organizing, sharing data, and advancing best practices for the community's benefit.

HWFC was formed in response to several issues facing Hawai'i's community, including the economy's dependence on sectors typically built on low-wage jobs, the disparity of opportunity for disadvantaged populations, the trend for high-wage positions to be awarded to mainland hires, and the fragmentation and disorganization of the workforce field. By establishing career pathways, elevating workforce development, leveraging data and best practices, and developing an enduring collaborative, HWFC envisions a thriving Hawai'i economy that will strengthen families and communities across the state.

To date, the funding organizations involved have secured a total of \$400,000 in initial funding to launch and staff the Collaborative. Together, the founding members also aligned additional funding around several pathway efforts to immediately create positive community impact. These efforts included contributing \$550,000 to Hale Makua Health Services to help young people in Maui County access entry-level positions in healthcare and gain the skills necessary to succeed in the nursing profession. Through this initiative, the organizations created pathways for Maui residents to enter into living-wage nursing careers, creating a larger workforce of trained professionals able to provide kūpuna with the necessary care.

In addition to the founding organizations, the Collaborative includes The Stupski Foundation, Strada Education Network, Kamehameha Schools, The Kirk-Landry Charitable Fund, and The Kosasa Foundation. As HWFC moves forward, the Collaborative plans to recruit additional funders to join the initiative.

To learn more about the Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative, please email matt@hawaiiwork.org or visit hawaiiwork.org.

Media Kit

- [Headshot](#)

###

About Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative

Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative was launched in partnership by HMSA, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and the Hawai'i Community Foundation to strengthen partnerships and systems to provide equitable access to living wage jobs for Hawai'i residents. The Collaborative's mission is to increase island prosperity by strengthening public-private partnerships and systems that increase the number of high-quality jobs that support individuals and communities, preparing and connecting local residents to these high-quality jobs, with a focus on equity, so they can earn wages and benefits that allow them to

support themselves and others, and increasing employment, earnings, and equity for local residents, strengthening the Hawai'i economy overall. Funds to support the work of the collaborative are provided by all of the member foundations and administered by the Hawaii Community Foundation.

About National Fund for Workforce Solutions

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions invests in a dynamic national network of 30+ communities taking a demand-driven, evidence-based approach to workforce development. At the local level, the National Fund's partner organizations contribute resources, test ideas, collect data, and improve public policies and business practices that help all workers succeed and employers have the talent they need to compete. Learn more at www.NationalFund.org.

About Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

Founded in 1962, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation works to build resources for Hawaii's future. We do so by investing in promising initiatives and organizations through grantmaking, using our convening power, and introducing and spreading new ideas and approaches to help solve some of Hawaii's most pressing problems. We work to: (1) close the achievement gap in public education so that all of Hawaii's children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to and benefit from high-quality education, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, that prepares them for a successful future; (2) restore Hawaii's nearshore marine life populations so that future generations can benefit and learn from this rich natural resource; and, (3) build on the strengths of Windward Oahu communities through investments that support the region's rich cultural legacy, its youth and families, and its natural resources.

About Hawai'i Community Foundation

The vision of the Hawai'i Community Foundation is to create an equitable and vibrant Hawai'i where all of our island communities thrive. With our 105-year history, trusted expertise, and generous support of donors, we are working to solve our state's most difficult challenges. In 2021, HCF stewarded more than 1,050 funds and distributed \$85.3 million in grants and contracts statewide, including \$7.1 million in scholarships. HCF Offices are located statewide on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island. For more information about HCF, please visit www.hawaiicomunityfoundation.org and follow our social media channels on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

About HMSA

Caring for the people of Hawaii is our promise and our privilege. Working together with employers, partners, and physicians and other health care providers, we promote well-being; develop reliable, affordable health plans; and support members with clear, thoughtful guidance.

HMSA is the most experienced health plan in the state, covering more than half of Hawaii's population. As a recognized leader, we embrace our responsibility to strengthen the health and well-being of our community.

Headquartered on Oahu with centers and offices statewide to serve our members, HMSA is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, one of the largest private charitable foundations in the United States, is dedicated to meeting the basic needs of people experiencing poverty. In 2022, the Foundation will provide approximately \$150 million in total grant activity supporting nonprofits that provide direct services in the areas of Housing, Health, Jobs, Education, and Community Services. The Foundation's priority communities include Baltimore, Chicago, Hawai'i, Israel, New York City, Northeastern Pennsylvania, and San Francisco. This includes supporting nonprofits serving federally designated rural areas within, or adjacent to, these priority communities. The Foundation's trustees are Ambassador Fay Hartog-Levin (Ret.), Chair; Robert T. Kelly, Jr.; Paula B. Pretlow; Gordon Berlin; and Nimrod Goor. Rachel Garbow Monroe serves as President and CEO. For more information, please visit www.hjweinbergfoundation.org.

Media Contact:

Catherine Coleman

catherine@bennetgroup.com

(808) 265-0073