
KA LAMA MOHALA FOUNDATION



Project Title:	Ho’oulu I Ka Lama - The Sharing of our Light
Award Amount:	\$1,024,255
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2005 – Sept. 2008
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 4 jobs created
- 1 business created
- 3 Native American consultants hired
- 325 elders involved
- 459 youth involved
- \$15,165 in revenue generated
- 41 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

Ka Lama Mohala Foundation was created in 2002 in Salt Lake City to perpetuate the native arts and culture of Hawaii in Utah. Approximately 3,600 people of Native Hawaiian descent currently live in Utah.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to create a Native Hawaiian Cultural Center for people of Hawaiian descent living in Utah to gather, share, learn and celebrate their Hawaiian culture and language.

The project’s first set of objectives was to establish and operate the Native Hawaiian Cultural Center. Project staff secured an agreement to rent a 10,000 square foot former warehouse building in Midvale.

Volunteers from Utah’s Native Hawaiian community partnered with Salt Lake Community College to renovate, paint, landscape and decorate the Center. Staff formally opened the Center in May 2006 with a traditional Hawaiian blessing. Staff then established an advisory board to guide project implementation by inviting Native Hawaiians involved in local civic clubs. To advertise the presence of the Center, a contractor created a website for the Center which publicized events and services. Staff also distributed a quarterly newsletter to approximately 600 people to share updates on program information.

The project’s second set of objectives was to establish programs that provide opportunities for community members to gather, share, and learn their Hawaiian culture and language. Staff developed an on-site lending library of Native Hawaiian resources that spanned a variety of formats, including books, magazines, DVDs, and CDs. The library also provided computers for community members to research their genealogy and keep in touch with family in Hawaii. The Center hosted weekly hula classes throughout the year for various age groups and skill levels. In the case of the

children’s class, the class-size tripled during the project timeframe, concluding with over 30 youth. Staff implemented a one-week keiki (youth) camp during the project’s three summers, which included various language, culture, arts and crafts, and Hawaiian history activities. The Center operated a canoe group on Great Salt Lake that incorporated all aspects of Native Hawaiian culture, including language, history, values, and water safety. Staff partnered with medical professionals from the University of Utah to hold eight health fairs which offered free health screenings and workshops on a variety of topics, including smoking cessation, exercise, diabetes, and Native Hawaiian health. Staff marketed and provided space for approximately twenty Native Hawaiian artisans to hold workshops on such topics as quilt-making, lei-making, drumming, and paddle-making. The Center was also utilized throughout the project as a venue for Hawaiian cultural performances such as hula shows, Hawaiian movies, and Hawaiian music concerts. Finally, staff provided space for the Native Hawaiian community’s kupuna (elders) to hold weekly topical discussions.

The project’s third set of objectives was to implement revenue generating activities to sustain the operation of the Cultural Center and its programs. Staff created an on-site store named The Taro Patch, which stocks Native Hawaiian products. To increase revenue, the store also sold consignment items from local Hawaiian artists for a 10% fee. Staff rented out the Center’s ample space to a karate club and various other community organizations in an effort to create revenue. In all cases, the organizations moved on to seek permanent rental space elsewhere. Finally, staff staged a Hawaiian culture festival during the project’s third year in the Center’s parking lot. Approximately 1,200 attendees enjoyed Native Hawaiian food, art and crafts

workshops, Hawaiian music, and numerous other cultural presentations.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Native Hawaiian Cultural Center now operates as the first and only center of its kind in the continental United States. It is a place that brings Native Hawaiians together for the preservation, maintenance, and revitalization of Hawaiian culture, values, language, and arts. For the Hawaiian community in Utah, the Center’s programs have served to increase cultural awareness in their daily lives. Participation in project activities also strengthened and broadened community members’ social network. Marcia Stroud, the project manager, shared, “The results are beyond what we ever imagined. We had an idea of a dream place, and it has become a reality. We have a place where we can be ourselves and celebrate our culture.”

Staff incorporated a sustainability plan into the project’s implementation framework, but current revenue streams will not be able to sustain the ongoing operation of the Center. At the end of the project timeframe, staff was in search of a smaller space. Despite this situation, staff will continue to offer the programs with little or no costs attached, including hula classes, the canoe program, and the lending library.