



BISHOP MUSEUM

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Bishop Museum Receives Grant to Fund New Project Providing Mentoring and Training Programs

The “Growing Capacity” project supports those working or interested in working in Hawai‘i museums and museum-like organizations.

Honolulu, Hawai‘i — Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum has been awarded a two-year Federal grant of \$95,382 from the Native American Native Hawaiian program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) (#MN-252908-OMS-23). The grant will fund a new project that provides online training and mentoring programs for those working or interested in working in Hawai‘i museums and museum-like organizations.

The “Growing Capacity” project partners the Museum with Nonprofit GrowthGen, LLC (NPGG), which was created by former Bishop Museum staff members Mary Ramsay and Mandy Kirchgessner. Through this collaboration, one of the three training and mentoring programs provided will be in grant writing. The focus of the remaining two programs will be determined by a survey to be delivered in November, to individuals and organizations in the museum / informational education sector to identify the kinds of professional development most needed.

Recruitment for these free programs will prioritize Native Hawaiians and those working in Native Hawaiian-serving organizations, providing eight free seats per program plus a stipend for each participant.

“We want to grow the workforce in Hawai‘i and keep museum professionals here,” said Janet Bullard, Bishop Museum vice president of advancement and marketing communications, and acting director of government relations, and director of this project. “If we can collectively curate more dollars and resources for our Hawai‘i museums, we can better stabilize the collections, stories, and staff positions that keep our organizations fortified. Really, we want all our museums to not just survive, but thrive.”

“As a Native Hawaiian-serving institution, we are honored to help facilitate these training and mentoring opportunities,” added Bullard.

“There are so many things that really excite us about this funding,” said Mary Ramsay, co-founder of NPGG. “It is an opportunity to encourage synergies and partnerships among Hawai‘i museums, cultural organizations, library archives, and other museum-like organizations to increase resources for all. NPGG is committed to the mentoring process and works with each cohort to foster sustaining bonds among

participants and between the organizations they represent.”

The state of Hawai‘i has over 90 museums and museum-like organizations (gardens, zoos, and other informal education sites) as well as library, archives and cultural organizations that care for Hawai‘i’s resources, collections, and collective stories. Most of these organizations are nonprofits and rely heavily on fundraising and the generosity of the community to sustain their operations. Like other nonprofits, museums and museum-like organizations must strike a balance between doing the work of caring for the resources they steward, sharing the stories tied to those resources and collections, and maintaining the organization’s financial and organizational stability. Fundraising and strengthening organizational capacity, while a challenge, can be especially taxing on smaller organizations where staff exhaustingly shift between many roles every day.

“The types of capacity-building skills at the heart of NPGG’s work can impact an organization for decades,” added Mandy Kirchgessner, NPGG co-founder. “Participants who go on to successfully fundraise, manage projects, and evaluate programs have higher career and earning potential in this field – and their organizations will benefit from the ripple effects of those skills.”

NPGG ran a pilot grant-writing program in 2021/2022 at Bishop Museum. Results of that program, which included 1:1 mentoring as each participant prepared a proposal for a real funder, have already demonstrated a high yield of new grants coming to the Museum. Of the six people participating in this training and mentoring program, four wrote proposals to Federal agencies and private foundations. All four proposals were funded.

Several museums and colleagues across the state, including Donkey Mill Art Center, East Hawai‘i Cultural Center, Friends of ‘Iolani Palace, and Lyman Museum wrote in support of this grant proposal. Leah Caldeira, Bishop Museum director of Library & Archives, Kamalu du Preez, Bishop Museum cultural resource specialist and Hawai‘i Museum Association Board Member, and Halena Kapuni-Reynolds, associate curator for Native Hawaiian history and culture for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) are advisors to this project.

While the IMLS grant will cover the materials, costs, and a stipend for eight participants in each of three, Hawai‘i-focused trainings, the project team is hoping additional funders will come to the table to support more participants. Persons and organizations interested in sponsoring participants in training programs should contact Nicole Sakai at nicole.sakai@bishopmuseum.org. Museums (and like organizations) with staff interested in participating in this program should sign up to receive the survey and project updates.

There will also be Listening Sessions held via Zoom on Friday, Nov. 17 at 8:00 am HST and Tuesday, Nov. 21 at 11:30 am HST. NPGG will provide the link to all who express interest.

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About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum:

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration, celebration, and perpetuation of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai‘i and the Pacific. The Museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the Museum thrives as an educational center for the community and is widely regarded as the world’s premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content.

Bishop Museum’s vast collections of more than 25 million objects and specimens represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, over 2 million cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and 1 million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai‘i and the Pacific as well as the proud

legacy of scholarly research spanning 130 years.

Bishop Museum proudly serves more than 200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits.

To learn more about the Museum's research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit BishopMuseum.org, follow @BishopMuseum on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), become a fan of Bishop Museum on [Facebook](#), visit Bishop Museum's [YouTube](#) channel, or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Bishop Museum is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer, and welcomes applicants from the military, veterans, and those with disabilities. Learn about careers at Bishop Museum at BishopMuseum.org/Careers and on its [LinkedIn](#) page.

[Bishop Museum Press](#) is Hawai'i's oldest book publisher and one of the first scholarly publishers in the Western Hemisphere, and has published over 1,200 titles and distributed over 1 million books in 72 countries worldwide.

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