

University of Hawaii gets \$4.6M from USA Funds for workforce development

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The University of Hawaii at Manoa campus.

COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

[USA Funds](#) has awarded \$4.6 million to the [University of Hawaii](#) to support graduation rates and strengthen the Hawaii workforce, the university announced Wednesday.

The initiative will help combat the Hawaii "brain drain," university officials said.

UH President [David Lassner](#) thanked the nonprofit for its "innovative vision and very generous investment" in Hawaii students and future professionals.

"What this project is all about is helping us understand the current and emerging workforce needs in the state of Hawaii and then designing both education and training programs that reach all the way down into our public schools through public higher education all ten UH campuses and into the workforce," he said. "One of the pieces that USA Funds is helping us build is a data system that will help us track how our graduates do when they move into the workforce, so we can see which of our programs are really working effectively."

Funding will be directed towards the Hawaii Innovation Initiative and the Hawaii Graduation Initiative.

It will also support public-private partnerships between UH, the state Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations, the state Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, the [Hawaii State Department of Education](#), the Hawaii Business Roundtable, and the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii.

“This transformative initiative will build Hawaii’s innovation economy and workforce, ensuring Hawaii is able to create and attract the jobs of the future and fill these jobs with in-state talent,” said [William Hansen](#), USA Funds president and CEO. “USA Funds is delighted to extend our five-decades-long partnership with Hawaii by working with the University of Hawaii in collaboration with the business community to ensure that the state has thousands of additional employees equipped with science, technology, math and engineering skills. This partnership will link student success in higher education to rewarding and fulfilling careers following graduation, while enhancing the state’s overall economic vitality.”

The grant will also support an Innovation Workforce Program to meet immediate community job needs. It will also create a STEM Center of Excellence with a focus on guiding students grades K-12 through science, technology, engineering and math career paths.

Lorin Eleni Gill covers health care, nonprofits and the University of Hawaii for Pacific Business News.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/news/2015/10/28/university-of-hawaii-gets-4-6m-from-usa-funds-for.html>