

**COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(CBED)
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**

Old Business

Approval of CBED Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for
August 17, 2025

DRAFT

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM (DBEDT)

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CBED)
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2025, AT 10:00 A.M.
No. 1 Capitol District Building,
250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor Conference Room
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

AND VIA VIRTUAL APPLICATION ZOOM: VIDEO/AUDIO CONFERENCE

Advisory Members Present were:

Karen Barr	-	Advisory Council Member (Oahu)
Roberta Melton	-	Advisory Council Member (Kauai)
Kaiana Niezman	-	Advisory Council Member (Hawaii)
Colleen McAluney	-	Advisory Council Member (Oahu)
Teena Rasmussen	-	Advisory Council Member (Maui)
Matthew Loke	-	Department of Agriculture (Ex-Officio)
Michelle Agbigay	-	Advisory Council Member (Hawaii)
Jason Ushijima For	-	Department of Business, Economic
Dennis Ling (Ex-Officio)		Development & Tourism (DBEDT)

Guests:

Eric Bowman	-	Feed the Hunger Fund (FTHF)
William Smith	-	Kauai, SBDC

Staff:

John Cole	-	Attorney General's Office
Timothy Tiu	-	DBEDT
Ram Arnan D. Braza	-	DBEDT

Apologies:

Josephine (Poni) Askew	-	OHA Representative
Dennis Ling (Ex-Officio)	-	Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT)

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Ushijima called the meeting to order on Tuesday, August 19, at 10:00 a.m.
All members and guests participated via ZOOM.

▪ **Welcome Current Council Members and Introduction of any Guests:**

Mr. Ushijima welcomed all present.

A roll call vote was conducted, and all members indicated that they were alone at their respective locations.

Mr. Ushijima introduced Ms. Agbigay, the new CBED advisory council member representing Hawaii County. He also introduced Mr. Smith, a CBED advisory council member candidate from Kauai.

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of Minutes of July 15, 2025:

Minutes of the July 15, 2025, meeting were distributed and reviewed by the Council. Mr. Ushijima asked if there were any comments and/or corrections to the Minutes. There were none and he asked for a motion to approve the Minutes.

The motion was made by Ms. Rasmussen and seconded by Ms. Melton to approve the Minutes of the July 15, 2025 Meeting, as presented.

Mr. Ushijima asked if there were any objections and there were none.

The motion to adopt the July 15, 2025 Minutes was approved unanimously.

Public Testimony:

There was no public testimony.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approval of CBED Loan of \$25,000 to Start Fresh Maui, LLC:

Mr. Ushijima outlined that the company, Start Fresh Maui, LLC dba Maui Chili Chili Oil, a Maui-based business, has applied for a DBEDT/CBED loan seeking a total of \$50,000. The loan would be in partnership with Feed the Hunger Fund who would co-lend with DBEDT/CBED for \$25,000 and the DBEDT/CEBD portion would be for \$25,000. The company is managed by a husband-and-wife team, Deron and Kit Furukawa. He invited Mr. Bowman, Loan Officer of Feed the Hunger Fund (FTHF), to present information about Start Fresh Maui, LLC and owner Mr. Deron Furukawa to the committee.

Mr. Bowman introduced the company, Start Fresh Maui, LLC dba Maui Chili Chili Oil, to the council. He touched on the company's story and its financial history. Mr. Bowman

emphasized that the company has been profitable and that there were no issues approving the loan on Feed the Hunger Fund's side. He stated that this loan is to remodel rented space for the company's commercial kitchen.

Mr. Ushijima stated that this company is located in an Enterprise Zone and they have participated in several events hosted by HiSTEP and DBEDT's Hawai'i Made Programs.

Ms. Rasmussen stated that she worked with Kit Furukawa before they started this business. She asked about the company's kitchen situation and if they are building their own kitchen. Mr. Bowman stated that they are currently renting a commercial kitchen while they are building their own kitchen. He emphasized that once their new commercial kitchen is built, it will give them more autonomy and control over their production.

Mr. Neizman asked about the company's average revenues over the last three years. Mr. Bowman said that the business had \$60k in 2022, \$150k in 2023, and \$230k in 2024. He said that conservative gross revenue projections for 2025 puts it at \$200k.

Mr. Neizman asked if the global debt service coverage ratio used in the matrix is post-loan. Mr. Bowman confirmed that it is post-loan and includes the household and business incomes.

Mr. Neizman asked if there were any comments on Mr. Furukawa's credit score. Mr. Bowman indicated that Mr. Furukawa's individual credit score reflects a typical growing business and since there's no delinquency and credit does not look unmanageable, there is no cause for concern.

Ms. Barr commented that she had personal experience with the product and that it is something she enjoys.

Ms. Agbigay asked about the company's staffing plan on scaling production and order fulfillment. Mr. Bowman said that there is currently no definitive plan to hire more employees since the company is focused on finishing the kitchen first, but he also added that it is one area that the business needs to think about once the facility is completed and they start to ramp up production.

Mr. Ushijima thanked everyone for their input and asked if there were any further questions. Since there were none, he called for a motion to recommend approval of the CBED loan of \$25,000 to Start Fresh Maui, LLC dba Maui Chili Chili Oil.

Ms. Rasmussen made a motion to recommend approval of the loan and Ms. Barr seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken with all Council members voting unanimously.

2. Review of the CBED Loan Portfolio to Date:

Mr. Ushijima stated that there are currently twenty (20) CBED loans made to eighteen different companies. He also stated that two companies fully paid off their loans within the last year.

Mr. Ushijima stated that the CBED loans are supporting one hundred ninety-nine jobs (199) in Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii island. He also presented other statistics on the companies with active CBED loans.

Mr. Ushijima stated that the revolving loan fund with Federal Economic Development Agency (EDA) monies has a current balance of \$258k but the actual available money is only \$71k because of pending loan disbursements. He stated that since it is a revolving fund, some money does go back into the account in the form of loan payments and account interest averaging to about \$90k every six months.

Mr. Ushijima mentioned that the EDA does not have grant opportunities available this year due to recent federal funding changes. He continued that there may be EDA grant opportunities next year but it is not guaranteed, and the award amount may not be in the million-dollar range.

Mr. Neizman asked if there were any thoughts or process to try to increase the percentage of Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander (NHPI) receiving CBED loans. Mr. Ushijima said that CBED has no NHPI owned business loan requirement, however that it was part of CBED's mission to help underserved communities. He noted that CBED encourages the council and resource partners to recommend businesses to apply for a CBED loan.

Ms. Rasmussen said that it would be helpful to get a report or update from previous borrowers just to see how those companies are doing.

Ms. Barr supported Ms. Rasmussen's suggestion. She said that these success stories could also be submitted to the legislature together with the request for funding so the legislators can see the impact the CBED program is making.

Ms. Melton suggested that we prioritize loans as they come in given the current state of funding. She also suggested that the CBED Advisory Council members approach their respective legislators to help support CBED's funding request.

Mr. Loke asked if CBED has sufficient funds for technical assistance. Mr. Ushijima said that there is a separate account with State monies and there is \$171k available but additional funding from the legislature is needed.

Mr. Ushijima suggested conducting a strategy session in October or later to discuss CBED's mission and priorities for moving forward once more details on funding is available.

Announcements

Mr. Ushijima announced the DBEDT is hosting an AI & Cloud Innovation Summit on September 10, 2025, at the Hawaii Convention Center.

NEXT MEETING:

September 16, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting ended at 10:50 a.m., on a motion by Ms. McAluney and seconded by Mr. Loke.

There were no objections and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason S. Ushijima
Branch Chief, BSB BDSD

8/25/2025

Date

New Business

Recommendation/Approval of a CBED Loan of \$60,000 to Gifts by the Sea, Inc. a Honolulu-based manufacturer of bamboo veneer stickers.

This family-owned company was founded in 2018 by Teri Holomalia which she now runs with her son and daughter-in-law. Gifts by the Sea designs and produces their stickers at their Kakaako warehouse and currently has wholesale customers throughout the state, including Safeway, Down To Earth, Foodland/Food Pantry and national clients including Disney Cruise Lines. Co-lending with Feed the Hunger Fund (FTHF), which will also make a loan of \$90,000, loan total will be \$150,000. CBED loan would cover the cost of raw materials, supplies and working capital with the following terms: 6 years at 5.5%.

Underwriting review by Eric Bowman, Loan Officer, FTHF.

FEED THE HUNGER FUND Loan Narrative

- **Business Name:** Gifts by the Sea, Inc.
- **Borrower Name:** Teri Holomalia; Shane Holomalia; Nicole Johnson
- **Contact Information:**
 - **Phone:** 808.348.9125
 - **Email:** giftsbythesea808@gmail.com
- **Borrower Social/Website:** www.giftsbythesea808.com;
www.instagram.com/giftsbytheseahawaii
- **Does the borrower have previous Loans:** No
- **Borrower Risk Rating:** 1
- **Loan Amount:** \$90,000 with \$60,000 from CBED
- **Interest Rate:** 5.5%
- **Term (Months):** 72
- **Conditions on loan approval:**
- **Funding Source:** USDA IRP

PROS:

- **Profitability and Cash Flow:** The business generated ~\$950k in 2025 with an estimated 22% operating margin, producing ~\$166k in cash flow for the owner operators. This demonstrates a viable and scalable core model.
- **Quality of Earnings:** ~75% of revenue is with established, recurring wholesale business; customers include airport retailers, Safeway, Down To Earth, Foodland Food Pantry, institutional accounts, and Disney.
- **Experienced Ownership Team:** Ownership responsibilities are clearly defined across creative direction, operations, financial management, and marketing. The family makes a good team.
- **Vertically Integrated Light Manufacturing:** All UV printing, laser cutting, assembly, and fulfillment are performed in-house. This protects margins and maintains quality control.
- **Loan Improves Efficiency:** The request is structured around cost reduction and working capital stabilization rather than expansion. Debt refinance and inventory stabilization improve liquidity without relying on increased sales projections.

CONS:

- **Reliance on Leased Equipment:** Most major equipment is leased, creating fixed monthly obligations and limited owned collateral. Continued profitability supports lease payments, and refinancing high-interest debt improves global cash flow.
- **Historic Working Capital Constraint:** Limited inventory buffer required air freight purchasing and credit card reliance, increasing costs and compressing liquidity. The core purpose of this loan directly resolves this issue. Bulk bamboo sticker stock purchasing and transition to ocean freight eliminates excess freight expense and high-

interest revolving debt. This structurally strengthens the balance sheet and reduces ongoing financial stress.

- **Customer Concentration:** A significant portion of sales flows through Hawaii-based gift and tourism channels, which can be sensitive to visitor fluctuations. Wholesale revenue is diversified across multiple retail chains, airport vendors, institutional partners, and online wholesale platforms such as Faire. The Disney relationship adds mainland and cruise exposure.
- **Limited Hard Collateral:** With much of the equipment being leased, tangible collateral outside of equipment is limited. The business demonstrates strong cash flow generation and recurring wholesale demand. The inventory purchase funded by this loan creates a stabilized raw material asset base supporting production continuity. Additionally, refinancing unsecured credit card debt converts high-cost revolving exposure into structured term financing with predictable amortization.
- **NARRATIVE:**

Background and History

Gifts By The Sea, Inc. is a Honolulu-based manufacturing company producing eco-friendly UV printed bamboo stickers under its Bamboo Stickers product line. The company was founded in 2018 and is owned and operated by Teri Holomalia, her son Shane Holomalia, and his spouse Nicole Johnson.

Shane serves as Creative Director and leads product design and brand strategy. Teri oversees operations, production, logistics, and financial administration. Nicole manages social media and digital marketing strategy, supporting both wholesale and direct-to-consumer sales channels.

The business operates from a dedicated warehouse facility in Honolulu and manages UV printing, laser cutting, assembly, packing, and wholesale fulfillment entirely in-house. In mid 2025, the company relocated to a larger warehouse to support expanded production capacity. The move temporarily slowed operations for approximately two months but is now complete, with additional laser equipment installed and production stabilized.

Business Concept

Gifts By The Sea manufactures custom bamboo veneer stickers as a sustainable alternative to vinyl stickers. Products are UV-printed and laser-cut from real bamboo veneer, with a proprietary paper backing that provides flexibility and durability. The product is positioned as eco-friendly and Made in Hawaii, creating strong appeal within gift retail, museum, resort, and institutional channels.

Customers include airport retailers at Kona, Hilo, and Honolulu, Safeway, Down To Earth, Foodland Food Pantry, museum and park partners including SSA Group, and national wholesale accounts. The company has secured a Disney Cruise Lines purchase order valued at ~\$80k, currently in production, with projected Disney wholesale revenue of at least \$100k over the next 12 months.

Production capacity is approximately 56k stickers per month at an average wholesale price of \$1.95 per sticker, and existing equipment and staffing can support this volume without additional capital expansion.

Operational Constraint

Despite strong profitability, the business has faced working capital constraints tied to raw material inventory. Bamboo sheets have been purchased monthly using air freight, resulting in monthly landed costs of approximately \$4.6k. Limited inventory buffer has required reliance on high-interest credit cards, with approximately ~\$90k currently outstanding and an interest expense of ~\$2k per month. Air freight premiums add ~\$1k per month in excess freight costs. These inefficiencies create avoidable cash flow pressure despite consistent operating profit.

Loan Purpose

The \$150,000 loan will be used to:

1. Refinance ~\$90k in high-interest credit card debt. (FTHF)
2. Purchase ~\$25k in bulk bamboo inventory sufficient for six to seven months of production. (CBED)
3. Strengthen ~\$35k in working capital reserves (CBED)

An inventory investment provides raw material representing 6 months of production coverage.

The combined elimination of credit card interest and excess freight costs is projected to improve monthly cash flow by approximately \$3k without requiring sales growth.

- PHOTOS:



Loan Presentation:

Date: 2.26.26	Total Project Cost: \$ 208,871
Business: Gifts By the Sea, Inc.	CBED Loan amount requested: \$ 60,000
Principal Name(s): Teri Holomalia; Shane Holomalia; Nicole	Recommended Interest rate: 5.5%
Address: Business Address 518 Kamani St, Honolulu, HI 96813	Term / Amortization: 72
Business Type: Existing	RISK RATING: 1
FTHF Loan Client: No	Access to Other Capital: The company received an effective denial from Geneva Capital. They were approved for \$50k for 6 to 12 months, which is an insufficient amount and term. Additionally, fees would be \$14k for 6 months; which is
Loan Status:	
Business Structure: S-Corp	
Purpose of Loan: Working Capital	Business description: Founded in 2018, Gifts By The Sea manufactures eco-friendly bamboo veneer stickers that serve as a sustainable alternative to traditional vinyl stickers. It has vertically integrates UV printing, laser cutting, assembly, and wholesale fulfillment at its Honolulu warehouse. Its primary revenue comes from recurring wholesale accounts, including retailers, airport vendors, institutional buyers, and branded partners such as Disney. The business model emphasizes Made in Hawaii production, sustainability positioning, and scalable in house operations that support predictable revenue and long term growth.
Jobs created: 1	
Jobs retained: 7	
Ownership Structure:	
33.3% Teri Holomalia 33.3% Shane Holomalia 33.3% Nicole Johnson	

Loan #	Original	Principal	Original Loan purpose	Delinquency	30 +	60+	90+
TOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	-				

COLLATERAL								
Type	Source of Value	Date of Value	Gross Value	Discount rate	Net Value	Prior liens	equity	
Business Equipment - See Chart below	Borrower	2.19.26	\$ 104,100	50%	\$ 52,050	\$ -	\$	\$ 52,050
2005 Ford Transit Connect	KBB	2.19.26	\$ 8,000	80%	\$ 6,400	\$ -	\$	\$ 6,400
Total					\$ 58,450		\$	\$ 58,450
							Collateral coverage	0.97

SOURCES		
Lender	Amount	
FTHF	\$	90,000
CBED	\$	60,000
Equity	\$	58,871
Total	\$	208,871

USES		
Uses	Amount	
Working Capital	\$	119,225
Working Capital - Refi	\$	89,646
Total	\$	208,871

FEES			
Closing Fee:	2.5%	\$	1,500
Wire Transfer Fee		\$	40
Application fee:		\$	-
Borrower to pay all out of pocket expenses			

Equipment List	
\$15,000	Thunder Nova 51 Lase
\$12,000	Epilog Laser Fusion
\$6,000	Apple Laptops high end x3
\$10,000	Hyster Forklift
\$10,000	Roland UV printer LEF-300
\$24,000	Laser exhaust blowers; 3 X \$800
\$6,400	PC that run each machine; 8 x \$800
\$7,200	3D printers Bambu Lab P2s; 9 at \$800 each
\$2,000	Pallet Racking and heavy duty shelving
\$4,000	Office Fixtures and TV screens
\$3,500	Canon Office Printer
\$2,000	LG Energy Efficient AC's; 4 at \$500 each
\$2,000	Event supplies, Pop up tents etc

FTHF Risk Rating Chart

Date: 2.26.26

Borrower: Gifts by the Sea

Loan Officer: Eric Bowman

Rate each category from 1 to 5

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	Score
Personal Net Worth	>\$100K	\$51K-\$100K	\$1-\$50K	\$0-(\$10K)	<(\$10K)	2
GDSC	>1.5x	1.31x-1.5x	1.2x-1.3x	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	1
Collateral Coverage	>100%	75-100%	50-74%	5-49%	<5%	2
Quick Ratio*	>150%	110-150%	100-109%	75-99%	<75%	1
Credit Score	>700	651-700	621-650	600-620	<600	2
Years In Industry	>9	8-9	4-7	1-3	0	1
Years of Industry Management	>5	3-5	1-2	<1	0	1
Owners Equity Into Transaction	>25%	16-24%	10-15%	1-9%	0	1
Business Profitability	Profitable 4 of last 4 years	Profitable 3 of last 3 years	Profitable 2 of last 3 years	Profitable 1 of last 3 years	<2 years operating or non-profitable	1
Business debt ratio**	<70%	71-80%	81-90%	91-100%	>100%	1

*Quick Ratio: (Current Assets - Inventories) / Current Liabilities 3.98

**Business debt ratio: Total Liabilities / Total Assets 0.44 1.3 Avg.

Loan Score	1
1	Excellent
2	Good
3	Acceptable
4	Poor
5	Unacceptable

New Business

Recommendation/Approval of a CBED Grant of \$8,000 to The Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE) Center for Entrepreneurship, a 501(c) Community-Based Organization. The funds will support a cohort of Native Hawaiian-owned small businesses participate at one of three 2026 Merrie Monarch Festival marketplaces: Kāko'o Hawai'i marketplace, 'Ikena 'Imiloa at 'Imiloa Center located on UH Hilo Campus and the Afook-Chinen Civic Auditorium which is one of official locations for the Merrie Monarch Hawaiian Arts & Crafts Fair in Hilo, HI. This is an opportunity for these businesses to increase brand visibility and generate sales. Presented by Lisa Pakele, Program Director, INPEACE Center for Entrepreneurship.

Community-Based Economic Development & INPEACE Center for Entrepreneurship

2026 Merrie Monarch Festival Proposal

Submitted to: Community-Based Economic Development (CBED) Advisory Council

Submitted by: Lisa Pakele, Program Director, INPEACE Center 4 Entrepreneurship

Funding Request: \$8,000

Date: March 17, 2026

Project Overview

The INPEACE Center for Entrepreneurship is seeking \$8,000 in funding from the State of Hawai'i CBED Program to support a cohort of Native Hawaiian-owned small businesses in attending three marketplaces in relation to the 2026 Merrie Monarch Festival. This funding will directly contribute to fostering economic opportunities and sustainable business development for Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs.

The Merrie Monarch Festival: Significance & Economic Opportunity

The Merrie Monarch Festival, held annually in Hilo, is Hawai'i's premier hula competition and cultural event. Attracting thousands of visitors each year, including locals, tourists, and cultural practitioners, the festival is a dynamic and brilliant celebration of Hawaiian culture. The festival provides an unparalleled venue for Native Hawaiian artisans, practitioners and business owners to showcase their craftsmanship, increase visibility for their talents and generate commerce.

About the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE):

INPEACE is a nonprofit organization committed to the education, culture, and economic development of Native Hawaiians. Through a range of programs and initiatives, INPEACE strives to create opportunities that promote self-sufficiency and enhance the quality of life for Native Hawaiian communities. The INPEACE Center for Entrepreneurship supports new family-owned businesses and start-ups across the state to increase their capacity to succeed. The Center provides intensive individual support, personal and business finance training, 1-on-1 coaching, access to business micro loans, peer networking, business equipment, administrative back-office support, specialized services, and expert mentors.

Participation in the festival will allow our cohort members to:

- Access a highly targeted audience of consumers who value authentic, locally made products.
- Increase revenue and expand their customer base through direct sales and networking opportunities.

- Strengthen the cultural and economic vitality of the Native Hawaiian business community.

By securing funding for this initiative, INPEACE aims to:

- Support the economic sustainability of Native Hawaiian-owned small businesses and contribute to the growth of Hilo and Hawaii Island economy.
- Enhance the visibility of Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs in a high-profile marketplace.
- Strengthen community engagement and business development efforts.
- Celebrate and foster Hawaiian cultural and entrepreneurs by showcasing authentic Hawaii-made products at the following marketplaces during the Merrie Monarch Festival:
 1. **The Merrie Monarch Hawaiian Arts & Crafts Fair** features 150 artisans and local makers of handcrafted goods and traditional crafts. Located at the Afook-Chinen Civic Auditorium, adjacent to the location of the hula competition, it is the official craft fair of the Merrie Monarch Festival.
 2. **The Kāko’o Hawai’i marketplace** brings Hawai’i ’s small business community together by providing them with a support system and platform for commerce. The marketplace, held during the festival at Sangha Hall in Hilo, will host more than 50 artists, food vendors and entrepreneurs from across the state.
 3. **'Ikena 'Imiloa at 'Imiloa Astronomy Center, University of Hawai’i , Hilo:** To celebrate the Merrie Monarch Festival, UH Hilo annually hosts cultural pop-up exhibits, lei making and chanting workshops, performances, lectures and panels on Hawaiian song and hula. In 2026, they will host 'Ikena 'Imiloa on the UH Hilo campus at the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center bringing together local artisans and vendors.

Funding Request & Budget Breakdown

The requested \$8,000 will be allocated as follows:

Expense Item	Cost
Vendor Booth & Participation Fees	\$5,000
Travel, Shipping, Logistics Expense Stipends	\$2,000
Training, Marketing & PR outreach	\$1,000

Businesses to be Supported *(see page 5-7 for additional information)*

1. Holo Holo Gold - holohologold.com (Jewelry, ‘Ōpio Youth Business, Keiki Rise 2025 Entrepreneur of the Year)
2. Mahea Lea - themakeke.com/collections/mahea-leah (Artist, Enamel Pin & Stickers, ‘Ōpio Youth Business)

3. Big Boy Sweets - bigboysweets808.myshopify.com (Snacks, 'Ōpio Youth Business, 2023 HVCA Student Entrepreneur of the Year)
4. Pu'uwai Pa'iai Dessert Co. - instagram.com/puuwaipaiaidesserts (Confectionery)
5. The Keiki Dept - thekeikidept.com (Children's Apparel & Accessories)
6. Sugar Caddy - sugarcaddyhi.com (Apparel)
7. North South - instagram.com/northsouthhi (Lifestyle, Apparel)

Proven Results

With CBED's support in 2025, nine (9) Native Hawaiian owned businesses from INPEACE's Center 4 Entrepreneurship thrived at last year's Merrie Monarch Festival receiving technical training, on-air media exposure and one-on-one time with KTA Super Stores' Executive VP Derek Kirisu. Collectively, the nine businesses earned more than \$290K.

Six Oahu Based Businesses

1. The Keiki Dept
2. Kaha Hawai'i
3. Honolulu Baby Company
4. Bujo Bae
5. Mahina Made
6. Kakou Collective

Three Hawai'i Island Businesses:

1. Sweetheart Farm
2. Kaulana Mahina
3. Pawniolo Pets

Conclusion

The Merrie Monarch Festival provides a one-of-kind platform for Native Hawaiian businesses to grow and thrive. By supporting their participation, the State of Hawai'i CBED Program will play a pivotal role in advancing economic self-sufficiency and cultural preservation within the Native Hawaiian community while contributing to the neighbor island business community in Hilo, on Hawai'i Island and connecting native-Hawaiian-owned business across the state.

Merrie Monarch 2026



Center for
Entrepreneurship



HOLO HOLO GOLD Harmoni Kailiwa

First year!

Accessible island inspired jewelry designed for active lifestyles alongside our Sport Aloha line of non-jewelry accessories made for movement and everyday use. Our tarnish free 14K/18K PVD gold jewelry is water safe and lightweight while Sport Aloha focuses on functional accessories athletes and on the go, lifestyles can use without worrying about wear or removal. Each item is packaged in compostable materials because we care about the 'āina and keeping our impact light.



Holohologold | www.Holohologold.com



MAHEA LEA Leah Dakroub

Second year!

Mahea Leah is a Hawai'i-inspired brand that create enamel pins, stickers and other accessories that celebrates Hawai'i's culinary culture, native animals along with nerd culture, Each piece is thoughtfully designed to reflect the beauty of Hawai'i.



Mahealeah



BIG BOY SWEETS Coen Cadinha

Second year!

Big Boy Sweets is a Hawai'i-based snack brand that brings a bold twist to island style snacking with a balance of nostalgia, quality, and aloha. Crafted in small batches, our treats are made for enjoying and sharing.



[Big.boy.sweets](https://www.instagram.com/Big.boy.sweets)

Find these businesses at 'Ikena 'Imiloa at 'Imiloa Center located on UH Hilo Campus

Merrie Monarch 2026



Center for
Entrepreneurship



NORTH SOUTH

Tiffany Ahlo-Garcia, Jarika Naputo,
Cassidy Peters and Kea Peters

First year!

North South is a Hawai'i-based lifestyle brand created by four sisters from the West Side of O'ahu. Built as a sister brand rooted in sisterhood, humor, and a strong sense of place, North South reflects the everyday experiences and perspectives of growing up between mauka and makai.



Northsouthhi



PU'UWAI PA'IAI DESSERT CO

Richanda Mikaele

First year!

Pu'uwai Pa'iai Desserts Co is a dessert company that specializes in creating ono desserts with a paiai twist. Inspired by our tutus kulolo, this small kanaka owned business takes pride in connecting our past (Hāloa) with our present and future as we share our Ono pa'iai creations with kanaka today. We hope to leave a memorable experience with each delicious bite. All our desserts we make are made with aloha and pride.



Puuwaipaiaidesserts

Merrie Monarch 2026



Center for
Entrepreneurship



STATE OF HAWAII • DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM



SUGAR CADDY

Ian & Zsalei Pantorilla

First year!

Blurring the lines between aloha wear and active wear, Sugar Caddy is a Hawaii-based brand bringing bold, high-quality polos and apparel to golf courses, offices, and everywhere in between. Each limited-batch drop fuses authentic island style with performance fabrics delivering standout comfort, personality, and value.



Sugarcaddy_hi | www.Sugarcaddyhi.com



THE KEIKI DEPT

Leilani Sills

Second year!

The Keiki Dept is a Hawai'i-based children's brand creating thoughtfully designed clothing, accessories, and educational products that celebrate our island home. Through prints inspired by native Hawaiian plants and animals—and stories shared in everyday language and 'ōlelo Hawai'i—we help keiki and their 'ohana feel connected to Hawaiian culture and inspired to care for the places and species that make Hawai'i home.



Thekeikidept | www.Thekeikidept.com