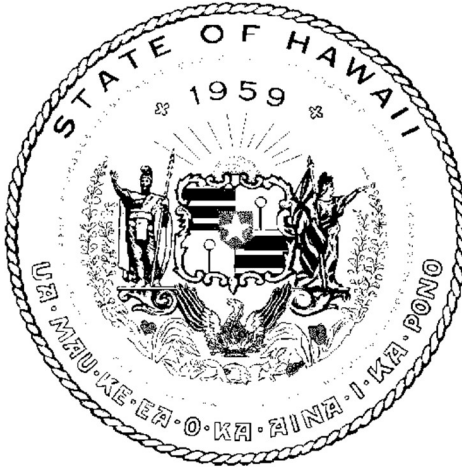




THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

**Annual Report on the
(1) Development and Expansion of Telework Initiatives
and
(2) Receipt and Expenditure of Federal Moneys
Related to Broadband**

CABLE TELEVISION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE OF HAWAII

Submitted December 2023

Annual Report on the Development and Expansion of Telework Initiatives

This report is filed pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) section 440G-11.5(b), which requires the director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) to submit an annual report to the Legislature “on the department’s efforts to use broadband and its products and services to develop and expand telework initiatives, including telework participation levels and trends of both private and public sector employees in Hawaii.”

The DCCA formed the Broadband Assistance Advisory Council (BAAC) as required under Act 199, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2010, as amended by Act 151, SLH 2011, to advise the director on, among other things, “policy and funding priorities to promote and encourage use of telework alternatives for public and private employees” and other states’ best practices involving telework promotion and policies. The BAAC’s Adoption Work Group, formed shortly thereafter, advised at that time that efforts would be best spent on removing barriers to adoption across the State and promoting broadband use through applications. To promote and encourage the use of telework alternatives for public and private employees, however, the DCCA provides information and links to other state and federal telework “best practices” on its Cable Television Division’s broadband webpage at <https://cca.hawaii.gov/broadband/telework-resources/>.

Beginning in fiscal year FY 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drove both public and private employers to offer and use telework alternatives to keep their employees safe, help prevent the spread of the virus, and address workforce retention and hiring issues. Acceptance and use of telework alternatives continue to grow because of its benefits as a valuable employment recruitment and retention tool to meet the operational needs of private and public employers, and as a means to reduce impacts on the environment and improve the quality of life of our residents.

In January 2023, the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) issued new State Telework Program Guidelines to provide participating departments a framework for offering telework for state employees, and also provided accompanying training courses on the Telework Program. By Executive Order, Governor Josh Green advocated employee participation in the Telework Program where offered by departments. Given the widespread receptiveness to telework and the technology needs addressed during the pandemic, the primary hurdles to telework to be addressed are broadband infrastructure extension and digital equity. The State and other government and private stakeholders are currently working on plans and programs to overcome these hurdles using the current federal broadband and digital equity funding programs.

Annual Report on the Receipt and Expenditure of Federal Moneys Related to Broadband

This report is filed pursuant to HRS section 440G-11.5(c), which requires the DCCA to report annually to the Legislature on the receipt and expenditure of federal moneys from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and moneys from other federal appropriation measures or applicable federal acts for broadband facilities, services, equipment, or projects. Final receipt of moneys from ARRA for broadband-related projects occurred in 2015.

Other federal moneys received by the State for broadband facilities, services, equipment, or projects in FY 2023 included the following:

1. Schools and Libraries Universal Support Program (via Federal Communication Commission (FCC))

Under this program (commonly referred to as the “E-rate program”), eligible schools, school districts and libraries may apply for funding under two categories of service: category one services to a school or library (telecommunications, telecommunications services and Internet access), and category two services that deliver Internet access within schools and libraries (internal connections, basic maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband services). Discounts for support, range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible services, depend on the service area level of poverty and its urban or rural classification. E-rate program funding is based on demand up to an annually Commission-established cap of over \$4 billion.

The E-rate program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the direction of the FCC. According to USAC, for funding year 2023 (July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023), approved funding commitments totaled \$1,121,934.81 for various school districts, various state public charter schools, and the Hawaii State Public Library System through the E-rate program.¹

2. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD)

The State received \$5,000,000.00 in planning funds under BEAD, created through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), to plan for the deployment and adoption of affordable, equitable, and reliable high-speed Internet service across the State. The initial planning grant funds various activities including identifying unserved and underserved households, increasing capacity of the State Broadband Office, and engagement between the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), community stakeholders, and

¹ Amounts are based on USAC's reporting procedures, and the release schedule of funding waves in each funding year may not always align with the State's FY.

other private and public entities to better understand barriers to adoption for unserved and underserved communities.

3. The State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program

The State received \$570,883.00 in planning funds under the Digital Equity Act, funded by the Infrastructure Investment, and Jobs Act, to plan for the deployment and adoption of efforts to promote digital equity throughout the State. The planning funds are to be used for various activities including development of the Digital Equity plan for Hawaii by DBEDT, conducting outreach by the State Broadband Office with stakeholders in unserved and underserved communities, and development of collaborative partnerships among stakeholders to achieve digital equity across the State.

4. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

The State received \$115,475,318.00 under the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to implement two broadband infrastructure programs that aim to provide reliable internet access to households across the state. The funds will be applied to the Hawaii Subsea Middle Mile Program designed to address the unique subsea cable infrastructure in the State, and the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) Connections Program to upgrade public housing facilities to provide residents with access to affordable, high-speed internet.

5. Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Outreach Grant Program

DBEDT received \$740,000.00 to conduct outreach for the ACP, which will be administered by the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office. The grant provides funding and resources to increase awareness of and participation in the ACP by households who may be in need of such resources across the State.

6. Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) received \$17,284,762.85 under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) and IIJA, for broadband adoption activities, including telehealth, distance learning, telework, and digital literacy. The dual Broadband Use and Adoption and Planning, Engineering, Feasibility, and Sustainability Studies project will assist rural areas with high concentrations of Native Hawaiians in developing programs and resources to address technology gaps and build capacity to use broadband services. DHHL will conduct a planning study in support of future broadband infrastructure deployment projects.

7. Community Project Funding (CAA)

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations received \$975,000.00 through a Community Project Funding appropriation funded by the CAA, to provide digital literacy training via in-person computer classes and access to online learning resources to help individuals attain computer skills and perform basic activities available online. The Workforce Development Council, in partnership with the Hawai'i State Library System, is advancing this project.

8. Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (via U.S. Department of the Treasury)

The University of Hawaii (UH) expended \$417,998.00 for a Permit Study relating to a contract with Ocean Networks for an Archaeological Assessment & Landing site Topographic Survey for the inter-island submarine fiber optic system, which is needed to provide connectivity between the islands to ensure access to reliable high-speed internet across the State.

9. Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (via U.S. Department of the Treasury)

UH expended \$649,062.78 in sub awarded funds from B&F for a Desktop Study relating to broadband infrastructure. These funds were a disbursement for a contract with Ocean Networks to identify suitable landing sites, landing stations, the safest submarine cable routing and the required cable specifications to build the new inter-island fiber optic system for the State.

10. Various Funding – Department of Health (DOH)

The DOH received various telehealth-related funds, including the following federal funds listed by DOH program:

Amount	Funding Source	Period of Funding	Program Receiving Funding	Program Activities
\$600,000/year	Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)	6/1/03-5/31/24	Genomics Section	Support purchase of equipment and genetic counseling services by telehealth to the neighbor island families, including the development of family resources to access telehealth for the University of Hawaii Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center.
\$5,000,000	ARPA (via CDC)	6/1/21 – 5/31/24	Genomics Section	Support the Library Telehealth Access

				Project which funds health and digital navigators to work in 16 state libraries across the state in underserved areas to help individuals/families learn how to access on-line health information & telehealth visits; and funds mobile clinic vans and community health workers on each island which allows telehealth to be done in the library parking lot, community sites, or even a patient's home. Received no cost extension until May 31, 2024. Funds have been redirected with approval of CDC to provide emergency telehealth access for Maui.
\$600,000	Public Health Service Act, Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021, CRRSAA - Grant to address COVID-19 health disparities among high-risk and underserved populations	6/1/21 – 5/31/23	FHSD - Office of Primary Care and Rural Health	The Project ECHO Hawaii activity was completed on May 31, 2023. Below is a summary of what was accomplished. Project ECHO Hawaii (www.hawaiiecho.info) oversees four clinical series: (1) behavioral health (2) geriatric care (3) pediatric care and (4) opioid/substance use disorders. Over the two-year contract period (June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2023), Project ECHO Hawaii provided continuing medical education (CME) training through a total of 216 tele-clinic sessions (98 behavioral

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				health, 52 geriatrics, 44 pediatrics, and 22 opioid/substance use disorders). The average attendance was 56.3 participants per tele-clinic session, with 1,352 individual (unduplicated) attendees and a total attendance of 12,159 (duplicated) participants. Of the 216 tele-clinic sessions offered, Project ECHO Hawaii incorporated COVID-19-related healthcare information into approximately 10% (22 sessions) of the trainings as guidelines, recommendations, and best practices evolve during this public health emergency.
\$805,291 + \$200,000 = \$1,005,291	Same as above	6/1/21 – 5/31/24	FHSD - Office of Primary Care and Rural Health	Rural Equity for Advancing Community Health (REACH) telehealth pilot to increase understanding/utilization of telehealth technologies to improve healthcare access in rural and medically underserved areas, including training Community Health Workers/students as telehealth navigators to conduct home visits and support seniors in accessing healthcare, and providing tablets, laptops, and mobile hotspots as needed.