



## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

### News Release

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
GOVERNOR

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### **STATE AWARDED \$2.92 MILLION DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE GRANT**

#### **Grant Will Help to Improve Public Workforce System For Persons with Disabilities**

**HONOLULU**—The Hawai'i State Department of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR) announced today that it would receive \$2.92 million in Federal grant monies to implement the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) program in Hawai'i. The grant will allow the state and counties to improve the accessibility and accountability of Hawai'i's public workforce development system for persons with disabilities. The DLIR will build upon the promising practices the state and counties have implemented over the past several years, while studying the effects of innovative ideas to improve employment outcomes for adults with disabilities.

“Obtaining this grant will allow us to collaborate with community and other government partners to create a streamlined pathway to gainful employment for participants,” said DLIR Director Dwight Takamine. “We are focusing on creating meaningful employment opportunities for the wellbeing our disabled population as part of the New Day Plan in both investing in people and improving the workforce.”

"This is the kind of results oriented action that the Hawai'i Fair Share Initiative supports - we're here to help jump start our local economy and so bringing in nearly \$3 million to help prepare all segments of our workforce to be job-ready is right on the mark," said Lieutenant Governor Brian Schatz, whose office runs the Fair Share Initiative that assists in securing additional Federal and private funds for the state.

Other partners that collaborated in the DEI grant development process and participating in the initiative include the UH Center on Disabilities, the County's Local Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Centers, Department of Human Services, the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, Department of Health, the Hawaii Business Leadership Network, and community and non-profit services providers. The grant will serve two of the four counties, which the U.S. Department of Labor will choose by lottery.

In total, seven states obtained grants under the Disability Employment Initiative totaling \$21 million. All projects under this initiative build upon the Department of Labor's Disability Program Navigator Initiative by hiring staff with expertise in disability and workforce issues. The grants also support extensive collaboration across multiple workforce and disability service systems in each state, including vocational rehabilitation services, mental health and developmental disability agencies, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant supported activities, independent living centers, business leadership networks, and other community and nonprofit organizations.

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