

University of Hawai'i plays pivotal role in broadband expansion

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The University of Hawai'i (UH) is playing a pivotal role in the state's efforts to bridge the digital divide and provide high-speed internet access to all residents. Hawai'i has been awarded over \$149 million in federal funding to expand and upgrade broadband infrastructure through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program.

UH is leading key components of the state's Connect Kākou initiative, which aims to leverage over \$400 million in federal grants and matching funds to improve internet connectivity across the islands. This funding will be used to deploy and upgrade high-speed internet networks, ensuring reliable and affordable service for all Hawai'i residents.

"Strengthening and upgrading our broadband pipelines is crucial to keep us connected to each other and the rest of the world," said UH Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Garret Yoshimi said. "Hawai'i's location in the Pacific means we depend heavily on internet access, which will be integral to all our future endeavors."

Once deployment goals are met, remaining funds will be allocated to support internet adoption, training, and workforce development initiatives.

"Ensuring that every person in Hawai'i has dependable access to affordable high-speed internet service is crucial to our state's economic, educational and social progress," said Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke. "The Biden-Harris Administration and the NTIA have been exceptional partners in our efforts to develop and build the necessary infrastructure to bridge the digital divide across the islands—from Hanalei to Hilo, mauka to makai, and everywhere in between. Today's announcement marks a monumental milestone for our

Connect Kākou initiative. With this unprecedented federal funding, we are making a significant leap towards eliminating barriers and tackling inequities within our communities.”

The BEAD program, authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides \$42.45 billion in funding to states for broadband expansion.