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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CULTURE AND ARTS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that culture, arts, and  
2 history are essential pillars of Hawaii's identity and are vital  
3 to building vibrant, resilient, and connected communities. The  
4 State has long supported these efforts through the state  
5 foundation on culture and the arts, which plays an important  
6 role in promoting the arts and expanding access for residents  
7 statewide.

8           The legislature further finds that jurisdictions around the  
9 world have advanced innovative, place-based strategies that  
10 integrate culture, arts, and history into planning,  
11 infrastructure, and community development, resulting in stronger  
12 public spaces, increased economic activity, and more dynamic and  
13 inclusive communities.

14           The legislature also finds that Hawaii can build upon its  
15 existing foundation by expanding its capacity to support  
16 creative community development, foster cross-sector



1 collaboration, and advance projects that meaningfully integrate  
2 culture and the arts into the fabric of everyday life.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish the  
4 office of community culture, arts, and innovation as a sister  
5 entity to the state foundation on culture and the arts to  
6 broaden and strengthen the State's creative portfolio. The  
7 office shall identify and advance best practices; support state  
8 agencies and community partners in implementing innovative,  
9 place-based strategies; and prioritize projects that enhance  
10 public spaces, strengthen community connections, and improve  
11 quality of life across the State.

12 The office shall also establish a community and cultural  
13 partnership program to serve as a resource for communities  
14 statewide. The program shall support efforts that preserve and  
15 elevate cultural and historical assets, stimulate social and  
16 economic activity, and catalyze positive, community-driven  
17 change, with projects serving as scalable models for replication  
18 in other communities, as appropriate.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 201, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
20 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and  
21 to read as follows:



1 "PART . OFFICE OF COMMUNITY CULTURE, ARTS, AND INNOVATION

2 §201-A Definitions. As used in this part:

3 "Executive director" means the executive director of the  
4 office of community culture, arts, and innovation, appointed  
5 pursuant to section 201-B(b).

6 "Office" means the office of community culture, arts, and  
7 innovation established pursuant to section 201-B.

8 §201-B Office of community culture, arts, and innovation;  
9 established; executive director. (a) There is established an  
10 office of community culture, arts, and innovation within the  
11 department of business, economic development, and tourism for  
12 administrative purposes only.

13 (b) The office shall be headed by an executive director  
14 who shall be appointed by the governor without regard to  
15 chapter 76. Notwithstanding section 76-16(b)(17), the exemption  
16 from chapter 76 under this subsection shall not expire.

17 (c) The executive director may employ staff for the office  
18 without regard to chapters 76 and 89; provided that the staff  
19 shall be members of the employees' retirement system and shall  
20 be eligible to receive the benefits of any employee benefit  
21 program generally applicable to officers and employees of the



1 State. Notwithstanding section 76-16(b)(17), the exemption from  
2 chapter 76 under this subsection shall not expire.

3 (d) Department heads may temporarily assign additional  
4 employees from existing positions within their departments to  
5 the office; provided that the employees shall represent their  
6 respective department's needs, assist other departments, or  
7 otherwise support the needs of the office during the course of  
8 their assignment with the office.

9 (e) The office may provide grants and contract for the  
10 provision of programs and services to perform its functions and  
11 duties pursuant to section 201-C.

12 **§201-C Office of community culture, arts, and innovation;**  
13 **functions and duties.** The office shall:

14 (1) Execute projects and programs related to community  
15 improvement as directed by the governor and  
16 legislature;

17 (2) Support and assist other state departments and  
18 agencies with creative and innovative improvements to  
19 their projects, programs, and endeavors to add value  
20 to communities;



- 1           (3) Develop creative and innovative projects, programs,  
2           and endeavors and pilot new approaches to add value to  
3           communities, their culture, and quality of life;
- 4           (4) Identify creative and innovative best practices used  
5           by other jurisdictions, assess their value to the  
6           State, and innovate accordingly;
- 7           (5) Ensure communication with the state foundation on  
8           culture and the arts regarding the office's functions  
9           and duties for consistency and better planning for the  
10          State; and
- 11          (6) Adopt rules in accordance with chapter 91 for the  
12          purposes of this part.

13          **§201-D Annual report.** The office shall submit an annual  
14 report summarizing its activities during the preceding year to  
15 the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening  
16 of each regular session. The report shall include:

- 17          (1) Creative and innovative strategies proposed or  
18          employed by other jurisdictions that the office has  
19          identified that may have potential benefit for  
20          communities in the State;



1 (2) Funds received and expended for the activities of the  
2 office from federal, state, private, and philanthropic  
3 sources;

4 (3) The office's programs and activities throughout the  
5 year;

6 (4) Plans and direction for the coming year; and

7 (5) Any other findings and recommendations, including any  
8 proposed legislation.

9 **§201-E Community and cultural partnership program;**

10 **established.** (a) In addition to other duties, the office shall  
11 establish a community and cultural partnership program focused  
12 on improving communities. The program shall serve as a  
13 community resource to enhance historical culture, stimulate  
14 social and economic activity, create positive change in the  
15 community, and serve as a template for improvements in other  
16 communities, as may be appropriate.

17 (b) The office may contract with one or more entities to  
18 administer the community and cultural partnership program and  
19 complete the actions required by subsection (c).

20 (c) The program shall endeavor to:



- 1           (1) Identify and organize community stakeholders and other  
2           community-based organizations that may contribute to  
3           the community and cultural partnership program;
- 4           (2) Engage the community to develop improvements that  
5           exhibit the area's history from its origins to the  
6           present day;
- 7           (3) Assess the physical, social, and economic conditions  
8           of properties and infrastructure in the area;
- 9           (4) Coordinate with stakeholders to provide for  
10          preservation, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use diversity  
11          and assist with design and permitting information to  
12          help property owners, business owners, and developers  
13          who are considering property improvements to best  
14          reflect the cultural narrative and historical context  
15          of the area;
- 16          (5) Organize culture and arts and improvement projects to  
17          improve and expand public spaces and enhance streets,  
18          infrastructure, facades, and vacant storefronts;
- 19          (6) Organize community culture and arts events, including  
20          the closures of streets for events and multi-use  
21          purposes that can enhance community life by providing



- 1 safe and inclusive opportunities for recreation,  
2 active transportation, and cultural engagement;
- 3 (7) Help facilitate the establishment of a business  
4 improvement district, or similar organization, and  
5 related community services;
- 6 (8) Seek additional funding to improve the community and  
7 help enhance a geographically defined area that  
8 actively preserves, showcases, and evolves the  
9 cultural, historical, and artistic identity of a  
10 community through ongoing cultural practices, local  
11 businesses, public spaces, and programming, in a  
12 manner that is community-driven, supports economic  
13 vitality, and provides authentic, place-based  
14 experiences for residents and visitors;
- 15 (9) Draft a statewide strategic economic and physical  
16 revitalization design implementation plan with  
17 proposed projects, starting with the Honolulu  
18 Chinatown area;
- 19 (10) Work with appropriate agencies and stakeholders to  
20 better design and integrate active, safe, and  
21 protected multi-modal pedestrian, bicycle, and public



1 transit through the area, including to any nearby  
2 transit hubs or rail stations; and

3 (11) Identify and develop other innovative projects,  
4 programming, or improvements to enhance the  
5 community."

6 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$300,000 or so much  
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the  
9 establishment of the office of community culture, arts, and  
10 innovation, including for the following purposes:

- 11 (1) The establishment of one full-time equivalent  
12 (1.0 FTE) executive director position;
- 13 (2) The establishment of one full-time equivalent  
14 (1.0 FTE) specialist position; and
- 15 (3) Other expenses for the purposes of this Act.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
17 business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes of  
18 this Act.

19 SECTION 4. In codifying the new sections added by  
20 section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute



**1** appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating  
**2** the new sections in this Act.

**3** SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.



**Report Title:**

Office of Community Culture, Arts, and Innovation; DBEDT;  
Establishment; Positions; Reports; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes the Office of Community Culture, Arts, and Innovation within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for administrative purposes only. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds for an Executive Director position and Specialist position within the Office of Community Culture, Arts, and Innovation. Establishes the Community and Cultural Partnership Program.  
(CD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

