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HTA Release (25-04)

Hawai'i Tourism Authority Partners with ClimbHI for 13th Annual LEI Program, Inspiring Hawai'i's Youth to Explore Careers in Hospitality

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is proud to announce its partnership with ClimbHI and the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) for the 13th annual Leadership, Exploration, Inspiration (LEI) Program. This year's event kicks off at the Hawai'i Convention Center on Monday, April 14, 2025, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., this dynamic workforce development initiative will provide over 600 high school and college students from across O'ahu with valuable exposure to a wide range of career opportunities within Hawai'i's vital hospitality industry. Media are invited to attend.

The LEI program is designed to inspire Hawai'i's youth to pursue careers in the visitor industry by offering them the tools and experiences necessary to succeed. Students will engage with industry leaders, participate in hands-on activities, and gain insight into various sectors within the hospitality industry. This year, the event will feature an Exposure Fair, where local businesses and organizations will present career opportunities in short, interactive, "speed-dating" style segments.

"We are thrilled to collaborate with ClimbHI and our industry and community partners to bring this important program to life," said Caroline Anderson, Interim President & CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. "Providing Hawai'i's students with real-world exposure to the many career paths within our visitor industry is key to our future. Through our collaboration with ClimbHI, the LEI program, and our valued industry and community partners, we're not only strengthening Hawai'i's most vital economic sector but also inspiring our youth to explore and pursue the wide-ranging opportunities in our diverse visitor industry."

"LEI is one of the key stepping stones from exposure to careers all the way through to the hiring process, allowing students to achieve their dreams and helping local businesses with workforce development," said ClimbHI President Julie Morikawa. "Mahalo to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, our participating businesses, organizations, local colleges, and volunteers for their continued support of this program in its 13th year."

Following the O'ahu event, the LEI program will extend statewide with additional events in Maui, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i Island, culminating in the participation of more than 1,100 students and one hundred local businesses.

The LEI program not only helps students explore career opportunities but also provides them with continuous support through ClimbHI's Exposure Fairs, Exposureships, the HTA Work Wise program, and other workforce development initiatives. By engaging with local businesses and organizations, students will be empowered to pursue fulfilling careers in Hawai'i's hospitality sector.

Teachers, schools, and community organizations are encouraged to join the ClimbHI Bridge portal for ongoing workforce development and engagement opportunities. For more information, visit [ClimbHI's website](#) or follow the event on social media.

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For more information:

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About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to mālama Hawai'i – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit hawaiiitourismauthority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), and [X](#).

About ClimbHI

Founded in 2009, the Hawai'i-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit ClimbHI seeks to inspire students to finish high school and proceed to post-secondary education or employment by exposing them to future career paths and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. For more, visit climbhi.org.

About LEI

Leadership Exploration Inspiration (LEI) is a workforce development project created by ClimbHI to inspire Hawai'i's youth to pursue careers in the state's hospitality industry and beyond by providing them with the means to achieve success. The program exposes high school students to potential careers and provides college students with hands-on experience through internships. For more, visit climbhi.org/programs/lei.

For more information, contact:

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Keep in touch with HTA via social media:



HTA recognizes the use of the 'okina ['] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the (modern) Hawaiian language; and the kahakō [ā] or macron (e.g., in place names of Hawai'i such as Lāna'i). However, HTA respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

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