

Service Excellence Certificate

2025-2026

SCHOOL YEAR RECAP



JAMES CAMPBELL HIGH SCHOOL

The ClimbHI Service Excellence Certificate, developed for the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, has reached **4,343** students statewide since it was launched in early 2020.

The Service Excellence Certificate helps graduates be more workforce ready. The curriculum was exclusively developed in partnership with the Nolan School of Hotel Administration at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University, one of the leading hospitality administration programs in the world. Upon completion of the 9 module, on-demand training, students receive a Service Excellence Certificate of Achievement from Cornell University and ClimbHI. Courses cover skills development, managing customer interactions, and Aloha Spirit Law as outlined in the Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

During the 2025-2026 school year, over **540** students and teachers from **14** high schools statewide were sponsored through generous donations from 11 partners. Over the course of the last 6 years, over **\$336k** has been directed to this important workforce development credential.

Mahalo to our Partners and Schools

for their generous support of this program.



PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS:

- Farrington High School
- James Campbell High School
- Kahuku High & Intermediate School
- Kaimuki High School
- Kapolei Charter School
- Kapolei High School
- Kauai High School
- Kealakehe High School
- Konawaena High School
- Maui High School
- Molokai High School
- Pearl City High School
- Radford High School
- Waipahu High School

Student Key Takeaways

“ One key takeaway for me from this training was learning how to integrate the Aloha Spirit world wide in every scenario, not only in the hospitality work place.

“ I learned a great deal about management, which will be extremely helpful for my future work!



“ One key takeaway that I obtained from this training was learning the different tools and skills that are key when it comes to working with people. There are many different aspects of hospitality than we think, and being able to learn all of them was really awesome.

“ One key takeaway from the training was learning how to recover from mistakes. I learned that mistakes can happen, but what matters most is how you respond and fix the problem. Good Service is about handling challenges in a positive way.

“ One key takeaway for me was the Prep-Exchange-Follow On Cycle. It taught me to prepare before the exchange (review notes, speak with your peers, shared experiences), do your responsibilities (the exchange part), and reflect on your actions (follow on).

“ One key takeaway for me was that service excellence isn't just about doing your job, but about how you make people feel. I learned that good service comes from being respectful, understanding different cultures, and genuinely caring about others.

“ Here in Hawai'i, we are known for our renowned hospitality, and to upkeep that we need our future workforce to be able to provide quality experiences and services. Without educating our hospitality workforce, less tourists will be willing to visit Hawai'i, harming the industry and our economy. To be able to be given this opportunity early in highschool, the essential skills can already start being developed rather than waiting to be taught it in life after highschool.

Mahalo from Students



KAHUKU HIGH & INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

- “ I just want to say thank you to all of the donors that made this training opportunity possible. This was a really great experience that I hope future students can also have the chance to participate in. It gave really good tools, advice, and informational things that help us understand more about the industry and what it’s all about. So, thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity!
- “ Mahalo to the donors for making that training possible. I am very grateful for the opportunity to learn valuable skills like teamwork, communication, and service recovery.
- “ Mahalo for your effort into making this experience possible for my peers and I. We were able to gain valuable lessons which will not only help us in future jobs, but in daily life with communication skills.
- “ Mahalo nui loa for making this opportunity possible. Because of your support, I was able to learn professional skills that will help me in future careers and in serving my community. Your investment in students like me truly makes a difference, and I am grateful for the chance to grow through this experience.
- “ Mahalo for believing in us and giving us this opportunity!
- “ At first I was shy to interact with guests or people I’ve never met. I wanted to learn how to, and with this certification program I was exactly able to do so. I learned that interactions were beyond just picking up a certain topic, but also going beyond to search for visual clues like the environment, a guest’s expression, and their tone towards me. I even got to learn how conflict resolution really worked, and that sometimes; not every situation requires you to always apologize, opposite of what I had thought was mandatory in the hospitality industry. And rather, empathize with the guest and their situation. I can’t wait to use these skills for when I eventually become a flight attendant, to further succeed in the industry thanks to this program.

Teacher's Letter

Aloha to the generous sponsors,

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your generous sponsorship of my students in the ClimbHI Service Excellence Certificate Program.

After speaking with several local hotel human resource managers, it is clear that this certification significantly enhances students' marketability and readiness for employment. Many shared that their own managers undergo this same certification training, which speaks volumes about its value and industry relevance.

As a Title I school, many of my students would not have had the opportunity to participate due to financial constraints. Your support through Expedia made this experience accessible, opening doors that would otherwise have remained out of reach.

Because of your investment, our students are not only gaining valuable skills but also confidence as they prepare to enter the workforce. Your commitment to education and workforce development is truly making a lasting impact.

Thank you again for your generosity and support of my students.

Much appreciation,

Julie Onigama

Kaimuki High School

Hospitality & Tourism Pathway/CTE Coordinator

Reach out to info@climbhi.org for more information on student sponsorships or training enrollment.

<https://climbhi.org/programs/certificate-of-service-excellence/>