



Hawai'i Island's KōCreate Initiative Launches in August with a Bold Vision for Community-Led Futures

June 2025 - A transformative movement is taking root on Hawai'i Island—one that reimagines how communities come together to plan, lead, and shape their future. KōCreate: Designing Homegrown Futures is the latest initiative from Vibrant Hawai'i, made possible through support from the Trust for Civic Life. “KōCreate” combines the Hawaiian word **kō**, meaning to fulfill or carry through, with “create”—reflecting a commitment to bringing community visions to life through collective effort. This place-based effort responds to the urgent need for more inclusive, imaginative, and community-led approaches to housing, economic development, renewable energy, and disaster preparedness.

Rooted in the belief that communities already hold the wisdom, relationships, and creativity to chart their own course, KōCreate shifts the focus of engagement from extracting input to cultivating leadership. It centers community members not as advisors to someone else's agenda—but as the architects of their own solutions.

Launching this August with a dynamic cohort of KōCreators—residents from across Hawai'i Island will embark on a six-month learning journey to build practical skills in organizing, storytelling, systems thinking, and civic trust. Together, they'll strengthen their capacity to lead change grounded in local strengths, lived experience, and collective vision. The initiative is designed and led by a cross-sector team including Breeani Kobayashi-Kūali'i, Ashley Kierkiewicz, Misty Pacheco, Raynn Dangaran, and Janice Ikeda.

“We believe that when community members are supported to organize and take action together, the solutions that emerge are relevant and rooted,” says Janice Ikeda, CEO of Vibrant Hawai'i. “This means investing directly in residents—not just to participate, but to become facilitators, data analysts, and storytellers of their own communities. We are thrilled to launch this initiative with an invitation to imagine and implement new models of leadership rooted in a deep sense of belonging to and responsibility to Hawai'i.”

At the heart of KōCreate is a six-month learning journey grounded in seven core themes that prepare participants to lead with clarity, connection, and purpose. These include visionary communication, relational leadership, and strategic design—equipping participants to inspire action, hold inclusive spaces, and design community-rooted initiatives. Additional focus areas include resource mobilization, organizing and activation, and regenerative leadership practices that sustain long-term engagement. Finally, the theme of civic trust helps KōCreators navigate complex decisions with integrity, empathy, and a deep understanding of power and values.



In 2026, KōCreators will host islandwide gatherings intentionally designed to bring people together through community potlucks, vision board workshops, 3D mapping sessions, and hands-on training in emergency preparedness and energy resilience to generate tangible outcomes, including Community Emergency Action Plans (CEAPs) tailored to local needs and a synthesis of community priorities around housing, energy, and economic opportunity. KōCreate's long-term goal is even more ambitious: to grow confident, connected leadership in every community—so residents are equipped to organize, make decisions, and take collective action for generations to come.

“KōCreate offers a blueprint for what real community-driven change can look like. It's not always clean or linear—it's relational, emergent, and grounded in trust,” says Misty Pacheco, KōCreate Facilitator. “But when done with integrity, it becomes a force for transformation: power is shared, knowledge is honored, change is created together.”

Whether you're a community leader, student, cultural practitioner, or someone passionate about organizing, storytelling, or systems change—**we welcome you**. Together, we'll build the relationships, skills, and strategies needed to turn local vision into collective action.

Learn more and register at: www.vibranthawaii.org/kocreate

Learn more or get involved: contact@vibranthawaii.org | www.vibranthawaii.org

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About Vibrant Hawai'i

Vibrant Hawai'i is a community-driven organization dedicated to strengthening resilience across Hawai'i Island. Through partnerships, programs, and grassroots initiatives, Vibrant Hawai'i works to enhance preparedness and build more connected, resilient communities.