



# TRUE INITIATIVE

## 2025 Year End Report

Coordinating Infrastructure, Catalyzing Opportunity

[www.truehawaii.org](http://www.truehawaii.org)

## Executive Summary

# 2025: The Year Hawai'i's Technology Ecosystem Came Together

### **2025 was the year everything changed.**

Hawai'i's most influential organizations came together around a single realization: we're stronger coordinated than fragmented.

The Technology Readiness User Evaluation (TRUE) Initiative's inaugural year under new executive leadership proved something Hawai'i needed to see: coordination infrastructure actually works. When you give Hawai'i's diverse stakeholders a neutral forum, strategic facilitation, and shared commitment to values-centered technology adoption, extraordinary things become possible.

### **This was the year TRUE:**

- Convened 450+ of Hawai'i's technology leaders at the 4th Annual AI & Cloud Innovation Summit, bringing together C-suite executives from healthcare, finance, government, education, and tourism—guided by three enduring principles: Service, Resilience, and Skills
- United 18 organizations across healthcare, finance, government, education, and technology, creating Hawai'i's first sustained cross-sector coordination infrastructure for strategic technology adoption
- Hosted three executive networking events in partnership with Transform Hawai'i Government and Gartner, fostering partnerships between technology leaders, universities, and enterprises
- Partnered with Accenture for an executive event on workforce and AI featuring Accenture's US Public Sector Lead
- Completed pilot work for the \$150,000 GIA Grant from the City and County of Honolulu, exceeding goals by up to 9x in homeless care coordination outcomes
- Launched workforce pipelines through partnerships with world-renowned research institutions to bring accessible AI education to Hawai'i's community colleges



# Why This Matters Now

**AI will transform every organization in Hawai'i over the next 24 months.** The question isn't whether to adopt, but whether to adopt **coordinated** instead of alone.

TRUE is how Hawai'i coordinates technology adoption. We're the bridge connecting technology vendors, state government, educational institutions, and for-profit enterprises so innovation becomes jobs, capacity, and durable infrastructure.

About TRUE

# The Coordination Infrastructure Hawai'i Needed

Here's what everyone knows: Hawai'i's cost-of-living crisis won't fix itself. Economic diversification beyond tourism requires creating high-paying jobs in sectors that don't yet exist at scale here. Technology adoption is essential but risky, especially for Hawai'i organizations operating in unique contexts that generic solutions often don't address.

**TRUE changes this equation.**

Established in 2019 in direct response to Hawai'i's ALICE Report economic inequities, TRUE operates on a distinctive "demand-side" model: We're not a grantmaker. We're not a direct service provider. We're coordination infrastructure: Hawai'i's strategic operator and bridge builder for technology transformation.



# What Makes TRUE Different: The Coordination Model



## We convene partners

We convene partners who might otherwise compete or operate in silos



## We create playbooks

We create playbooks so each organization doesn't reinvent approaches



## We broker partnerships

We broker honest partnerships because we don't sell technology or compete for contracts



## We document success

We document what works and make it available for broad use

This coordination unlocks resource sharing, reduced duplication, partnership formation, knowledge transfer, and collective intelligence—18 organizations' implementation experience versus figuring it out alone.

 **Translation:** Every dollar invested in TRUE's coordination infrastructure multiplies across the ecosystem.

# Values-Centered Technology Adoption: The Hawai‘i Advantage

TRUE grounds all work in values that emphasize connection, responsibility, and sustainability:

## Mālama ‘āina

Caring for the land and environment through sustainable practices

## Lōkahi

Unity, harmony, and collaboration across sectors

## Kuleana

Responsibility to community and future generations

## ‘Ohana

Family and interconnected community wellbeing

Every partnership, every initiative, every decision gets evaluated through this values framework: Does this technology serve community needs? Does this create sustainable local jobs, or extract value? Does this build durable infrastructure, or create new dependencies?

The 4th Annual

# Hawai'i AI & Cloud Innovation Summit

## Where Hawai'i's Technology Ecosystem Meets

The Hawai'i AI & Cloud Innovation Summit Presented by Google became the annual gathering where decisions get made, partnerships form, and Hawai'i's technology future gets shaped. Held on September 10, 2025, this summit was about choosing to navigate this moment with intention.

450+

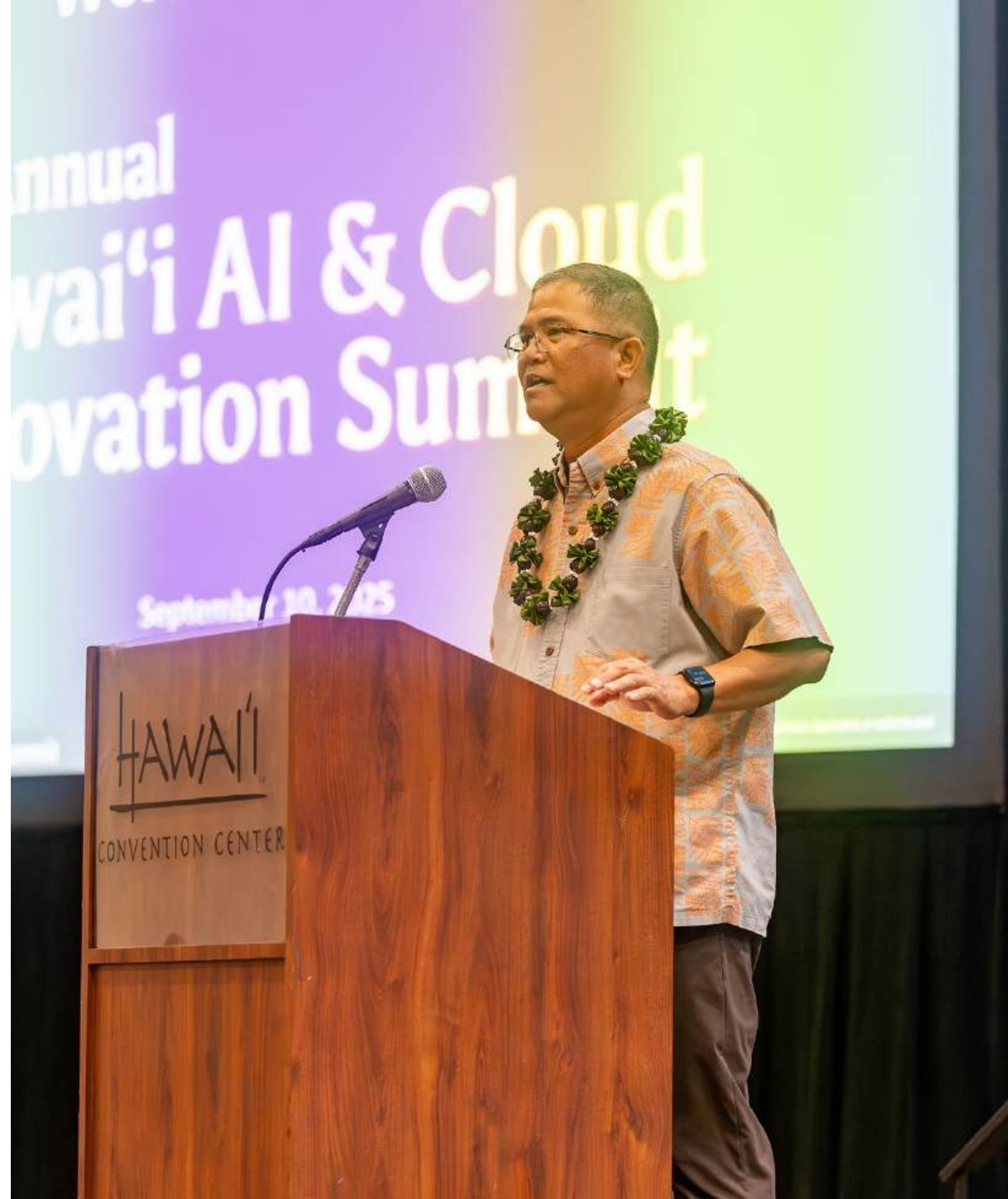
Attendees

620

Registered

11

Major Sponsors



# What Made 2025 Different: ALOHA Intelligence

State CIO Christine Maii Sakuda opened the summit by drawing a powerful parallel between Hawai'i's voyaging tradition and digital transformation. Just as Hōkūle'a and Hikianalia navigate by stars, currents, and ancestral wisdom, organizations today must navigate the digital ocean guided by data, purpose, and cultural values.

Sakuda introduced the concept of "**ALOHA Intelligence**"—reframing AI to represent the values embedded in the Hawaiian concept of Aloha: Akahai (tenderness), Lōkahi (unity), 'Olu'olu (agreeable), Ha'aha'a (humility), and Ahonui (patience). She also invoked "Ancestral Intelligence" with the 'ōlelo no'eau: 'I Ka Wā Ma Mua, Ka Wā Ma Hope (The Future Is in the Past).



# The State of Readiness: A Community in the "Messy Middle"

Pre-summit survey data revealed where Hawai'i organizations stand:

68%

Mid-journey

33% exploring options + 34.8% actively implementing

62.5%

Using AI tools

But only 52.4% have adopted cloud infrastructure

70%

Report confidence

Yet only 18.5% have achieved full integration

📌 **The insight:** Hawai'i organizations don't need more vision decks—they need actionable, tested, repeatable frameworks. The summit's demand for upskilling (65.5%), real-world use cases (61.9%), and implementation guidance (54.2%) directly mirrors the barriers of expertise gaps and unclear ROI.

# Summit Highlights and Key Speakers

Director James Tokioka (DBEDT) opened by emphasizing technology adoption's importance for Hawai'i's economic future. Sessions included:

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## Keynote

**"Hawai'i's Roadmap to a Technology-Enabled Government"** – Christine Maii Sakuda (State of Hawai'i CIO) and Chris Hein (Field CTO, Google Public Sector)

## Cybersecurity

**"Hawai'i Cyber Readiness 2025"** – Kathy Cruz (Google Public Sector/Mandiant)

## Panel

**"Democratizing Data & AI Resources"** – Rebecca Cai (State of Hawai'i CDO), Ed Sniffen (State of Hawai'i DOT Director), Hawai'i State Representative Sean Quinlan, Michael Heath (SHI)

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## Workforce

**"Career Pathways in an AI Economy"** – Garret T. Yoshimi (University of Hawai'i System CIO) and Charles Elliott (Google)

## Innovation

**"Vibe Coding: AI-Powered Service Delivery"** – James Hogarty and Dean Hazama (State of Hawai'i DCCA)

His closing message resonated throughout: **No task is too big when done together.**

# Building Relationships That Become Hiring Pipelines

In partnership with Transform Hawai'i Government (THG) and Gartner, TRUE hosted three invitation-only networking and professional development events in 2025. These intimate convenings fostered partnerships between committee members, universities, and enterprises—creating the relationships that translate into internships, hiring pipelines, and collaborative research.



## May 15, 2025: "Demystifying Deployment of Generative AI Initiatives"

*Entrepreneurs Sandbox, Kaka'ako*

- **Danielle Clapp, Senior Executive Partner, Gartner** – presented frameworks for categorizing AI ambitions and identifying key metrics for success
- **Nicole Cacal, Executive Director, TRUE Initiative** – shared use cases from Hawai'i organizations that successfully navigated AI deployments



Attendees gained insights on both straightforward and hidden costs associated with AI deployments, with practical strategies they could apply immediately.

# August 21, 2025: "Unlocking Agentic AI"

Entrepreneurs Sandbox, Kaka'ako



- **Peter Doohar, Senior Vice President of Digital Strategy, Servco Pacific Inc.** – shared how Servco is exploring AI agentic workflows to streamline mobility operations, blending task automation with autonomous decision-making
- **Mahdi Belcaid, Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Information and Computer Sciences, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa** – presented research at the intersection of AI, data science, and computational biology, emphasizing ethical, responsible AI

## December 10, 2025: "Tech & AI Trends for 2026 and Beyond"

*Entrepreneurs Sandbox, Kaka'ako*

A panel discussion on prognostications about Hawai'i's tech and AI future, based on Gartner's global research:

**Rick Hopper**

Executive Vice President & Chief Information Officer, HMSA

**Christine Maii Sakuda**

Chief Information Officer, State of Hawai'i

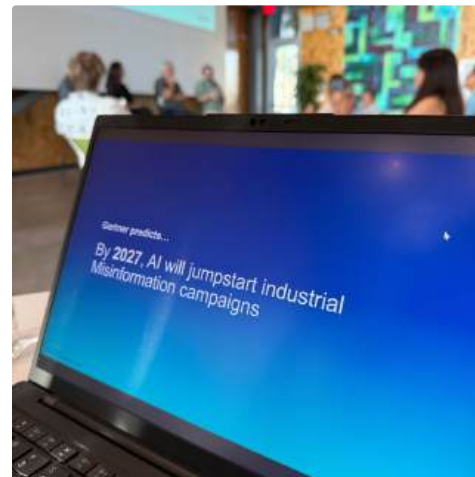
**Christopher Ragan**

Senior Managing Partner, Gartner

**William Kumagai**

Executive Director, Transform Hawai'i Government (Moderator)

**Workforce Impact:** These events created direct connections between technology leaders and educational institutions, fostering internship opportunities, research collaborations, and hiring commitments that strengthen Hawai'i's local talent pipeline.





## Accenture Partnership Event

# December 2, 2025: "Hawai'i Workforce and AI"

*Entrepreneurs Sandbox, Kaka'ako*

TRUE Initiative and Accenture partnered to present an evening focused on the intersection of workforce development and artificial intelligence, featuring:

- **Tamara Fields, US Public Sector Lead, Accenture** – connected national enterprise perspectives on AI workforce transformation to Hawai'i's unique ecosystem needs



This partnership exemplifies TRUE's role in bridging global technology leaders with Hawai'i's workforce development priorities, ensuring that insights from the world's leading consulting firms translate into actionable strategies for local organizations.

## Homeless Care Coordination Pilot

# GIA Grant: Proving Technology Creates Human Impact


TRUE completed pilot work for the \$150,000 Grants in Aid (GIA) Project from the City and County of Honolulu, demonstrating that technology adoption generates measurable outcomes while serving Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations.

## Project Objective

Expand the homeless care-coordination solution with IHS outreach workers and other agencies serving the homeless population on O'ahu through onboarding, training, change management, continuous app improvement, and ongoing software maintenance, operations, and support.

## Results: Exceeding Every Goal

Metric	Goal	Achieved	Result
New users onboarded (professionals)	52	51	98%
New clients entered into system	612	1,044	Nearly 2x
Clients provided coordinated services	210	1,307	Over 6x
Clients placed in temporary shelter	31	273	Nearly 9x
Community engagements	21	25	119%

-  **Workforce Connection:** This pilot created roles in data stewardship, care coordination, and technical support—proving that technology adoption generates local jobs while serving vulnerable populations. The project strengthened data quality and coordination in the field and positioned participating agencies for continued scale.

# Committee Membership

## 20 Organizations Investing in Coordination

Twenty of Hawai'i's largest organizations comprised TRUE's committee in 2025. This represents strategic investment in coordination infrastructure they recognize as essential for navigating technology transformation together.



# Nā'au Ao: AI Art Visions of Hawai'i

Launching January 20, 2026



Nā'au Ao (roughly translated as "intelligent heart" or "learned intuition") is a student AI art competition for grades 6–12 that integrates AI literacy with creative expression. By challenging young people to use AI as a collaborative tool for artistic creation, TRUE introduces the next generation to technology not as a replacement for human creativity, but as an amplifier of it.

The competition culminates in a gala showcasing student work, celebrating young innovators while demonstrating that Hawai'i's values-centered approach to AI begins with how we educate our keiki. This initiative builds the foundation for a future workforce that approaches technology with both technical skill and cultural grounding.


# Kupuna Tech Initiative

## Aging-in-Place Innovation Showcase: Spring/Summer 2026

Hawai'i faces a growing elder-care challenge: shortage of facilities, escalating costs, and persistent caregiver shortages. Many kūpuna want to remain independent at home, but families lack early-warning visibility into risks like falls, prolonged inactivity, and social isolation. Privacy concerns make "camera-first" monitoring unacceptable for many households.

TRUE is incubating a "Kupuna Tech" pilot pathway that prioritizes non-invasive safety signals, clinical validation, trust-building across stakeholders, and practical adoption models that can be replicated across buildings.

The Aging-in-Place Innovation Showcase will be hosted at a technology-forward retirement community, enabling vetted technologies to be demonstrated in a trusted environment. This seeds pilots that can later expand to HOAs and condo properties across Honolulu, including naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs).

 **Workforce Connection:** This initiative creates local jobs in installation, support, data stewardship, and care coordination—sustainable roles that serve Hawai'i's aging population while building technical capacity.

# Academic Research Partnership for AI Training

## Programming launching Fall 2026

TRUE has formalized a partnership with a world-renowned academic research institution to expand access to effective and affordable AI training aligned with industry needs for entry-level and current workers.

Designed to build a more inclusive AI-powered workforce in Hawai'i, the program has a particular focus on transforming community colleges into AI-skilling engines. The ambition is to create an effective and scalable pipeline from AI education and training to AI-enabled jobs that is more accessible and affordable than traditional pathways.



In 2026, TRUE will coordinate multi-party funding agreements, broker University of Hawai'i partnerships for local implementation, align DBEDT economic development priorities with educational programming, and recruit employer commitments from committee member organizations to hire program graduates.

# The Unified Workforce Development Thread

## Every Initiative Connects to Job Creation

TRUE's role as ecosystem catalyst means that every 2025 initiative (whether convening, piloting, or partnership-building) connects to the same destination: sustainable and local jobs in technology.

Initiative	Job Pathway
Hawai'i AI & Cloud Summit	Career mapping tools, employer-education partnerships, hiring pipeline commitments
TRUE/THG/Gartner Networking Series	Executive relationships → internships, research collaborations, hiring
Accenture Partnership	National enterprise insights → local workforce strategy alignment
Homeless Care Coordination Pilot (GIA Grant)	Roles in data stewardship, care coordination, technical support
Nā'au Ao	Youth AI literacy → future workforce preparation
Kupuna Tech	Installation, support, data stewardship, care coordination jobs
Academic Partnership	Community college → AI-enabled employment pipeline

### Success Metrics: By 2029, TRUE aims to facilitate:

- 300+ cumulative new jobs through partnership programs
- 50+ direct technology job placements annually through workforce initiatives
- \$100,000+ average starting salaries for program graduates
- Career advancement tracking showing participants' income growth over time

# Mahalo: Gratitude & Acknowledgment

## This Is Only Possible Together

TRUE's 2025 accomplishments reflect collective commitment across Hawai'i's technology ecosystem: the organizations, leaders, and community members who believe collaboration matters and are willing to invest in making it real.

Our deepest gratitude to the committee member organizations whose financial commitment and strategic partnership made 2025's foundation-building possible. To our summit sponsors, networking event partners at Transform Hawai'i Government and Gartner, and every speaker who shared their expertise—mahalo nui loa.

**Join us for what comes next.**

**Mahalo** for investing in Hawai'i's  
technology future.

**Mahalo** for building with us.

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*TRUE Initiative is a Hawai'i-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. TRUE serves as a public-private partnership convening enterprises, tech vendors, academia, and government to accelerate workforce technology adoption. TRUE creates real-world use cases, strengthening local business capabilities, and helping Hawai'i's households increase earning potential.*