



## **Important Announcements and Format Changes for National History Day 2026**

Aloha Hawai'i History Day teachers,

On behalf of the Hawai'i History Day team, I'd like to communicate a few upcoming changes in the format of our 2026 trip to the National History Day competition and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i National Project Showcase. While Nationals (June 2026) may feel far in the future, I hope this early notice may be helpful in your preparations and communications.

Like so many, our nonprofit has suffered [major federal funding cuts](#) in 2025, forcing us to reduce staff and programming. Thanks to your advocacy and support, Hawai'i Council for the Humanities has been able to adapt and find a path forward to keep Hawai'i History Day going as a history and civics program deeply valued by our community. We will continue to provide strong educational resources statewide, run local district competitions, run the State contest, and serve as the National History Day affiliate—making this program accessible to Hawai'i educators. However, we will be unable to organize HCH travel packages and chaperones for the Hawai'i delegation to the National competition and National 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Showcase in June 2026.

### **Students who qualify for 2026 National History Day and the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i National Project Showcases will need to:**

- Arrange their own transportation for themselves and their projects to and from UMD.
- Arrange their own lodging for the competition week (On-campus lodging is still an option and NHD/HCH will coordinate to ensure that all those from Hawai'i who are lodging on campus will be in the same building).
- Arrange their own chaperones to and from UMD and for the duration of the trip.

### **For 2026, Hawai'i Council for the Humanities will:**

- Continue to run the Hawai'i History Day District Competitions, in collaboration with local district partners.
- Continue to run the Hawai'i History Day State Competition, including providing travel scholarships to neighbor-island teachers and students.
- Facilitate at least one informational meeting for qualifying students and their teachers and families who will participate in National History Day.
- Organize mentor support for each of the 5 project categories for students who qualify for Nationals (after the State Fair).
- Send the Program Director to National History Day who will meet students and teachers participating in the competition or the 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Project National Showcase at UMD.
  - The Program Director will provide support (coordination, information, liaison with National History Day) for students from Hawai'i.
- Disseminate information and provide timely communication on the National Contest schedule, updates/changes, and other information, both before and during the competition.

- Send out T-Shirts, buttons, and certificates to all students attending Nationals.
- Ensure that all students who enter National History Day complete registration and have all required project materials uploaded to the online system by the due dates.
- Provide ways for Hawai‘i students, parents, and teachers to communicate during the Competition/Showcase week (via WhatsApp messaging group).
- Coordinate opportunities for optional large group activities, such as: Ice Cream Social or Pizza Party (at UMD housing), and a Congressional Delegation Visit.
- Coordinate the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i National Project Showcase with Smithsonian NMAI.
- Coordinate any other project showcase opportunities from NHD on the week of the competition.
- Secure the same housing location for all Hawai‘i participants for those who are lodging on campus.
- Secure the seats for the Hawai‘i group at XFinity Center for the award ceremony. HCH will bring banners, flags, and other items to represent Hawai‘i.

### **New for 2026 State Competition:**

- If a student with a qualifying project ranked #1 or #2 at the State level declines to participate in National History Day, the student with a project ranked #3 will be offered the opportunity to participate in the National competition. There will be a “confirm by: \_\_\_\_\_” date set to allow a student with a rank #3 project to decide and prepare if there is an open spot.

### **Travel Options:**

The changes in format for the National History Day trip can provide options and opportunities.

- Cost:
  - The cost for travel and lodging may be cheaper than a travel package from HCH.
- Flexibility:
  - With this format, there will be flexibility for arrival and departure times as well as arrival and departure places.
  - Smaller groups mean travel options might be easier. You can shuttle, uber, rent a car, or catch the metro to and from the airport.
  - Members of the travelling parties (both those that are chaperoned by a teacher and those chaperoned by family members) will have full control over their travel arrangements and itineraries.
- Pre-Trip Coordination
  - Teachers from the same school or different schools may consider pairing up to chaperone students from the same school or multiple schools.
  - HCH will offer opportunities for Hawai‘i group gatherings and group communication, and these will all be optional.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to further talk through these changes. We are committed to weathering these storms together as a community, and supporting the best possible experience for our students this year.

Thank you,

–Devin and Hawai‘i History Day team