

A REPORT TO THE HAWAI‘I STATE LEGISLATURE PURSUANT TO HCR 184

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
TO COLLABORATE WITH UNIVERSITIES IN THE
STATE TO CONVENE THE
HAWAI‘I CREATIVE INNOVATION GROUP

Submitted by the
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
December 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
A. Statement of Purpose	3
B. Methodology and Scope	4
C. Findings and Recommendations	7
2. Educational and Career Pathways	9
3. Working Group Needs Assessment Reports	16
A. Fashion Design	16
B. Jewelry Design	26
C. Music	31
4. Engagement & Outreach	36
5. Solutions & Recommendations	37



INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

House Concurrent Resolution 184 (HCR 184) requests that the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) collaborate with universities across the State to convene the Hawai'i Creative Innovation Group, with a specific focus on the fashion design and music industries. The resolution emphasizes the importance of these two sectors to Hawai'i's economy, highlighting their contributions to economic growth, job creation, cultural preservation and tourism development. It also recognizes the intrinsic value of fashion designers, fabric artists, musicians and songwriters to the State's identity and the ecosystem that strengthens Hawai'i's cultural landscape in these areas.

The Hawai'i Creative Innovation Group is tasked with identifying pathways from educational programs to career opportunities in the fashion and music industries. This includes assessing the facilities and equipment and developing strategies to grow emerging fashion brands and music businesses. The resolution also seeks to establish infrastructure and support systems tailored to these two sectors, from early-stage trials to commercialization. As outlined in HCR 184, the group is also charged with identifying the following within Hawai'i's fashion and music industry sectors.



B. METHODOLOGY & SCOPE

Vision & Parameters

Prior to its convening, DBEDT established a strategic framework to guide the Fashion and Music Working Group in developing actionable findings and recommendations. DBEDT’s vision emphasizes supporting both new and existing businesses through targeted State investments in initiatives designed to “move the needle” and generate measurable economic impact. This industry-led approach ensures that the working group’s proposed solutions address real-world needs and foster a sustainable ecosystem for growth and innovation.

The purpose of this report is to provide foundational, actionable insights to inform future State investments in infrastructure, program development, and legislation for Hawai‘i’s fashion and music industries.



Working Group for Fashion Design & Music

DBEDT subsequently established a working group comprised of lead advocates and conveners representing the fashion design, jewelry design and music industries. These individuals brought the necessary Industry knowledge and experience, networks, contacts and commitment to serve as leaders for their respective sectors. Jewelry design was included as an integral component of the broader fashion ecosystem, recognized for its role in complementing and enhancing apparel.

Creative Innovation Group Lead Advocates/Conveners

Fashion Design Lead Advocates/Conveners

- Jalene Kanani Hitzeman
President and Creative Director, NOHO Home (Textile Designer, Micro Factory Manufacturer)
- Keola Naka'ahiki Rapozo
Co-Founder, FITTED (HCC Fashion Technology Graduate, Former Tori Richard Designer, Creative Lab Hawai'i Fashion Immersive Mentor)
- Summer Shiigi
Owner/Designer, TenTomorrow (Creative Lab Hawai'i Fashion Immersive Co-Director, InnovateHI Advisor for Fashion)

Jewelry Design Lead Advocate/Convener

- James Friedman, Director, El Dorado Casting Lab (Jewelry Designer, Educator)

Music Lead Advocates/Conveners

- Kalenaku Parish
Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award Winning Artist, Vice President of the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts, Executive Director of the Kapena School of Music, Creative Lab Music Immersive Fellow
- Kala'e Parish
Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award Winning Artist, Producer, Kamakoa Productions, Creative Lab Music Immersive Fellow

Industry Led & Defined Needs Assessments

DBEDT and the working group employed a multi-faceted approach for its information-gathering, focused on peer-to-peer engagement and capturing diverse perspectives. This was achieved through peer interviews; small group discussions and industry needs assessment surveys facilitated by the lead advocates and conveners. Methodologies were tailored for each industry and are outlined in the respective sections of this report. By using this comprehensive approach, DBEDT collected rich insights that serve as the foundation of the report's findings and DBEDT's solutions and recommendations outlined in section 5.



Educational Pathways & Issues

To identify current educational and career pathways in fashion design and music, DBEDT collaborated with the Department of Education (DOE) and the University of Hawai'i (UH) system, including its community colleges. This process involved email communications, phone conversations and data sharing with staff across these institutions. Notably, DBEDT partnered with Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education, which has already developed career pathway maps in other industry sectors and is now working on a similar map for creative industries in Hawai'i.

The research methodology included analyzing various data sources, such as spreadsheets and numerical data provided via email, as well as information gleaned from institutional websites and other online resources. However, the lack of a centralized data tracking system across the entire educational spectrum presented a significant challenge, requiring individualized interactions with staff members from various campuses and departments. Available data often lacked depth, providing general statistics without detailed analysis.

Additionally, the research highlighted discrepancies in data types and tracking methods between primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, complicating direct comparisons. While nearly all Hawai'i high schools offer creative industries programs, enrollment in related programs within the local UH system appears limited. This research also revealed that many current creative Industry professionals do not follow traditional educational pathways.

C. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

“

What emerged through this process were several overarching themes that emphasized the strong need for State Intervention and Investment in the areas of Infrastructure Development, Program Development, Policy Support and Tax Incentives and Financial Relief programs to support and catalyze the growth and foster innovation within the Fashion & Music Industry Sectors, as well as to fill the gaps in the current pathways from Education to Career and Entrepreneurship.

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Several common themes emerged in support of the development of a vibrant and resilient fashion design and music industry ecosystem. Both industries face similar challenges and opportunities, particularly in areas of Access to Infrastructure and Equipment Resources,

Education, Government Support for Tax Incentives and Financial Relief, and Market Access and Promotion.

- **Access to Infrastructure, Equipment & Resources.** Limited access to essential facilities, equipment and skilled labor is a significant barrier to growth for both industries. Fashion designers often lack adequate manufacturing and retail spaces, while musicians struggle to find suitable recording studios, co-writing spaces and performance venues. Collaborative production spaces with state-of-the-art equipment and targeted training programs would help fill the gaps in the current pathway from Education to Career to Entrepreneurship. Investments in infrastructure and equipment also present a unique opportunity to train and upskill the current and future workforce, equipping them with the expertise to operate and maintain advanced technology and equipment.
- **Education and Collaboration.** Stronger partnerships between educational institutions, industry stakeholders and government agencies are essential for creating specialized training and mentorship programs that nurture emerging talent in fashion design and music production. Addressing gaps in the education-to-career pathway is critical to developing a sustainable workforce. Cross-sector networking and collaboration could also foster innovation and unique synergies between the fashion design and music sectors.
- **Government Support.** Stakeholders emphasized the need for State intervention with tax incentives, financial subsidies and other forms of assistance to bolster local manufacturing, innovation, and workforce development. These measures could reduce barriers to entry, facilitate business scaling, and enhance competitiveness in wholesale and export markets for “Made in Hawai‘i” products and music.
- **Market Access, Promotion, and Distribution.** Hawai‘i’s geographic isolation pose unique challenges for global market access. Both sectors face difficulties in reaching broader audiences, underscoring the need for innovative solutions such as robust e-commerce platforms, digital distribution channels and licensing opportunities. Developing effective local and international marketing strategies is crucial for gaining recognition beyond the islands. Collaborative opportunities exist with the tourism industry, participation in trade shows, affordable retail spaces and performance venues can further showcase local fashion designs and music a wider audience.

Solutions & DBEDT Recommendations

Section 5 of this report presents DBEDT’s next steps and solutions and recommendations for Legislative support in response to HCR 184 and the findings of the working group in the following areas: 1) CIP to Retrofit or Construct Infrastructure and Facilities; 2) Tax Incentives for Entrepreneurial Development; and 3) Other Proposed Legislation.

2. EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

OVERVIEW

DBEDT also examined the current educational pathways for music and fashion designed from K-12 through higher education and continuing professional development, to assess their alignment with the needs of these industries

Summary of the Educational Pathway for Music & Fashion

The educational pathway for Hawai'i's music and fashion industries is designed to nurture talent, foster innovation, and prepare students for careers in these dynamic sectors. Spanning from K-12 education through higher education, it includes vocational training and continuing education opportunities. Key features include foundational knowledge and skills in music and fashion disciplines, fostering entrepreneurship and business acumen, integrating industry-specific technology, and building connections between educational institutions and industry partners.

K-12 Education

At the K-12 level, the Hawai'i Department of Education offers programs in Music and Fashion as part of its Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways.

- **Music Education:** The Audio Engineering Technology program grown significantly in recent years:
 - 2023: 63 graduates
 - 2022: 37 graduates
 - 2021: 14 graduates
 - 2020-2017: 0 graduates

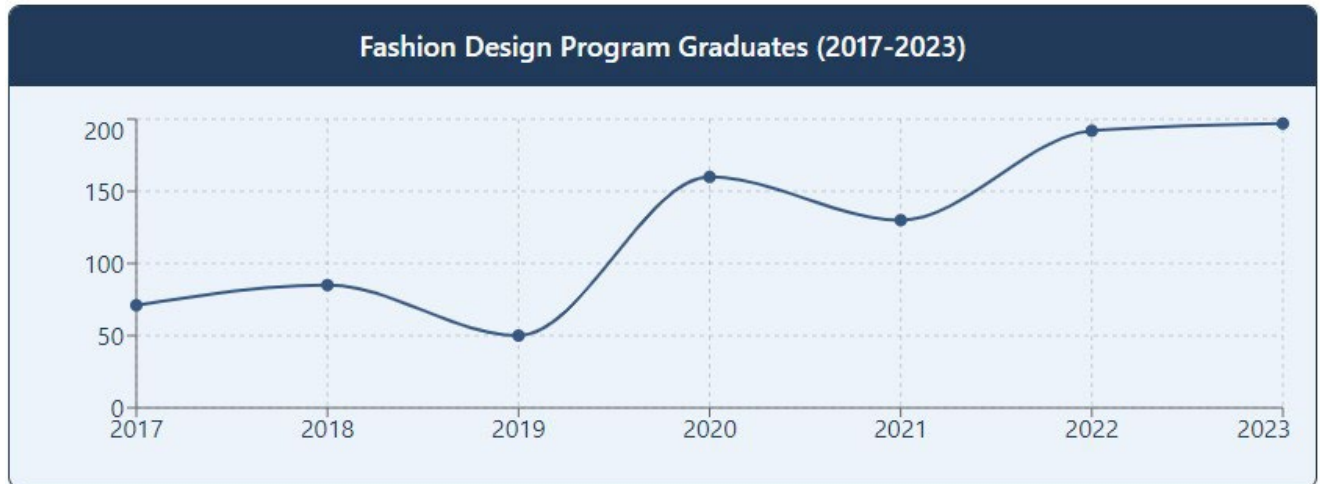
However, as of May 2024, this program is no longer offered at Waipahu High School due to the instructor's retirement, highlighting a potential gap in Music education on the island.

- **Fashion Education:** The Fashion and Artisan Design program includes courses on the design process, construction, and business marketing,



providing a comprehensive foundation for students interested in fashion careers. The Fashion Design program has shown significant growth:

- 2023: 197 graduates
- 2022: 192 graduates
- 2021: 130 graduates
- 2020: 160 graduates
- 2019: 50 graduates
- 2018: 85 graduates
- 2017: 71 graduates



In 2023, the distribution of Fashion Design graduates across O'ahu districts were:

- Honolulu District: 21 graduates
- Central District: 11 graduates
- Leeward District: 65 graduates
- Windward District: 5 graduates



Higher Education

Hawai'i offers a range of programs at both the community college and university levels focused on music and fashion design.

- **Music Programs:** The Music & Entertainment Learning Experience (MELE) program at Honolulu Community College is a cornerstone of music industry education in Hawai'i. This program provides training on sound recording, music mixing, songwriting, artist management and audio post-production for film and television.
 - Fall 2023 enrollment: 76 students
 - Graduate numbers (2015-2019): 14-16 per year

Student origin data for the MELE program reveals broad geographical representation:

- Fall 2023 enrollment: 76 students (stable from 77 in Fall 2022)
- The largest group (30 students) comes from private or out-of-state schools
- DOE districts with the highest enrollment: Central (13 students), Honolulu (13 students) and Leeward (12 students)
- The program attracts students from all major islands, including Hawai'i and Maui

Employment rates:

- 1-year post-graduation: 60-93%
- 3-year post-graduation: 50-80%
- 5-year post-graduation: 47-71%

Recent outcome data for the MELE program shows:

- In the 2023-24 academic year, 14 degrees were awarded and 5 students transferred to UH 4-year institutions.
- The program has a 93% successful course completion rate and 77% fall-to-spring persistence rate.
- Post-secondary placement rate is 67%, exceeding the goal of 35%.
- Over the past five years, the number of majors has decreased from 88 to 74, while degree completion has remained relatively stable.

- **Fashion Design Programs:** The Fashion Technology program at Honolulu Community College is a key player in Fashion Design education in Hawai'i.
 - Fall 2023 enrollment: 53 students
 - Graduate numbers (2015-2019): 30-40 per year (mix of certificates and Associate degrees)

Student origin data for the Fashion Tech program shows diverse geographical representation:

- Fall 2023 enrollment: 53 students (up from 37 in Fall 2022)
- The largest group (27 students) comes from private or out-of-state schools
- DOE districts with the highest enrollment: Leeward (8 students) and Windward (6 students)
- The program attracts students from all major islands, including Kaua'i

Employment rates:

- 1-year post-graduation: 50-95%
- 3-year post-graduation: 44-89%
- 5-year post-graduation: 29-79%

Recent outcome data for the Fashion Technology program shows:

- In the 2023-24 academic year, 6 degrees, 3 certificates of achievement, and 12 other certificates were awarded. 2 students transferred to UH 4-year institutions.
- The program has an 86% successful course completion rate and 70% fall-to-spring persistence rate.
- Post-secondary placement rate is 88%, significantly exceeding the goal of 35%.
- Over the past five years, the number of majors has fluctuated, ending at 49 in 2023-24, similar to 2019-20 levels.

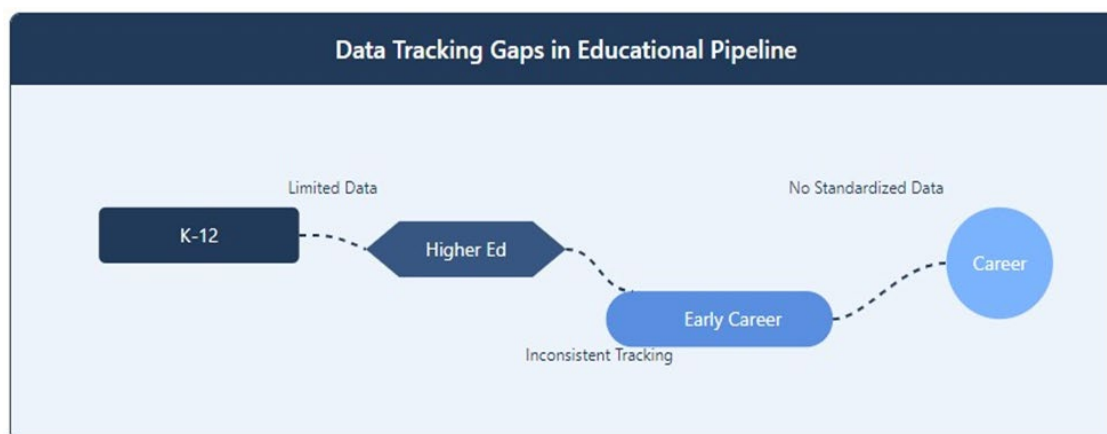
Vocational and Technical Training

- **Music Industry Training:** The MELE program at Honolulu Community College stands out as a key initiative in Music industry training. It provides students with education in sound recording, music mixing, songwriting, artist management and audio post-production for film and television. The program effectively addresses needs by combining technical and business-focused curricula.
- **Fashion Design Industry Training:** The Fashion Technology program at Honolulu Community College provides comprehensive training in fashion design and production. The curriculum covers design processes, construction techniques, and business aspects of the fashion design industry, preparing students for various roles in this dynamic field.

CHALLENGES IN THE CURRENT PATHWAY

Hawai'i's music and fashion design educational pathways face several key challenges:

- **Data Tracking and Outcome Assessment:** There is a lack of comprehensive, consistent data tracking across educational levels and into the workforce. This gap hinders the ability to assess the long-term effectiveness of programs and their impact on students' career trajectories.



- **Alignment Between Education and Industry Needs:** Educational programs often struggle to keep pace with rapidly evolving industry demands. Gaps between industry requirements and educational program content, along with the challenge of balancing industry collaborations with academic commitments, create difficulties for students and institutions.
- **Resource, Funding, and Entrepreneurship Support Limitations:** The need for updated technology and equipment, particularly in the music production field, strains budgets. Additionally, limited information is available on resources for entrepreneurship and continuing education in music and fashion design.
- **Identification of Underserved Areas:** The discontinuation of the audio engineering pathway at Waipahu High School, despite growing graduate numbers, highlights a mismatch between student interest and program availability in music education.
- **Challenges in Keeping Pace with Technological Advancements:** Adapting to the latest tools and techniques in music production and fashion design requires constant updating to curriculum, faculty training and equipment.
- **Geographic Disparities in Program Availability:** Program availability is uneven across Hawai'i. While O'ahu, particularly Honolulu, offers robust programs, other islands have significantly fewer options, limiting access for students in those regions.
- **Housing Affordability and Workforce Development:** Hawai'i's high housing costs presents a significant barrier to workforce development in music and fashion design industries. The affordability crisis affects the ability to attract and retain talent in these industries.

EDUCATOR INSIGHTS

Fashion Technology Program at Honolulu Community College

The Fashion Technology Department Chair at Honolulu Community College shared valuable insights, reflecting trends seen across most creative industries in Hawai'i. Many graduates enter the retail sector, often pursuing fashion design or production as a side passion. Some take an entrepreneurial route, with success stories serving as inspiration for others to start their own brands.

However, students seeking jobs within the industry often face challenges meeting employer expectations due to a lack of hands-on experience. For example, local companies frequently seek pattern makers, yet many graduates are unprepared for these roles. As seasoned pattern makers in Hawai'i retire, this creates a significant opportunity for new talent, but the experience barrier remains significant. The department chair

emphasized the need for more internship opportunities to help students build the necessary skills and experience to bridge this gap.

While entrepreneurship offers an exciting path forward, sustaining a fashion business long-term remains difficult due to the high cost of living. Many talented individuals struggle to pursue their passions, frequently remaining in retail or transitioning to unrelated industries. These challenges highlight the importance of addressing industry demands while equipping students with both technical expertise and entrepreneurial skills to succeed.

Music & Entertainment Learning Experience (MELE) Program at Honolulu Community College

The lead of the Music & Entertainment Learning Experience (MELE) program at Honolulu Community College highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities within Hawai'i's music industry. With most music-related jobs falling under the gig economy, employment in the field demands adaptability both for students and training programs. The gig economy also complicates tracking employment outcomes and longitudinal success, as these jobs often go uncouned in traditional labor statistics.

To better prepare students, the program lead emphasized the importance of internships alongside coursework. A recent success story involved a MELE student securing an internship with the Hawai'i Theatre, demonstrating the potential of stronger partnerships with local creative industry employers to make students more work-ready.

Strengthening industry connections is an ongoing priority for the program, including collaborations with local venues and concert promoters. Additionally, the program lead also underscored the need for clearer educational pathways from middle and high school to programs like MELE. While many public schools in Hawai'i offer music performance opportunities, they often lack instruction in the business of music or trade-specific skills like sound engineering and production, leaving gaps in foundational preparation for music careers.

Another barrier to success for emerging music entrepreneurs is the lack of accessible tools and creative spaces. Hawai'i's existing coworking spaces do not meet the specific needs of musicians, who require facilities like writer's rooms and production studios. Despite these challenges, the program has increased enrollment, signaling renewed interest in its offerings. These dynamics point to the ongoing need for adaptable training, robust industry partnerships, and creative infrastructure to support Hawai'i's growing talent in music and entertainment.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To address these challenges and strengthen Hawai'i's music and fashion design educational pathways, several recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop a unified data tracking system across K-12, higher education, and workforce sectors to better monitor student progression and career outcomes in music and fashion design industries.
2. Enhance alignment between education and industry needs through regular industry advisory panels and expanded work-based learning opportunities.
3. Advocate for dedicated funding streams for music and fashion design programs and create a centralized resource hub for entrepreneurs.
4. Expand music and fashion design programs in underserved areas, particularly on the neighbor islands.
5. Keep pace with technological advancements through regular curriculum updates and partnerships with industry leaders for workshops on emerging technologies.
6. Foster stronger industry partnerships through formal networks and mentorship programs connecting students with music and fashion design industry professionals.
7. Address geographic disparities by investing in remote learning technologies and developing satellite campuses or partnerships with existing facilities on the neighbor islands.
8. Advocate for affordable housing initiatives targeted at students and professionals in music and fashion design to mitigate the impact of high housing costs.
9. Establish a Music and Fashion Design Industries Education and Innovation Hub. This facility would provide state-of-the-art equipment, coworking spaces for startups and freelancers, venues for industry events, and resources for business development and continuing education.

Strengthening Hawai'i's music and fashion design sectors requires coordinated action among educational institutions, industry partners, government agencies, and community stakeholders. These industries are integral to both the State's cultural identity and economic future. Strategic investment in educational pathways will preserve Hawai'i's cultural heritage while creating sustainable career opportunities for residents.



3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. FASHION DESIGN INDUSTRY

OVERVIEW

In coordination with fashion industry leaders Jalene Kanani Hitzeman, Keola Naka'ahiki Rapozo and Summer Shiigi, DBEDT conducted over 20 peer-to-peer interviews with established designers and brands within Hawai'i's fashion industry. The approach was selected as the most effective methodology, allowing the fashion leadership group to engage directly with peers in one-on-one conversations about the challenges and opportunities they encountered from start-ups to established businesses and beyond. Following the interviews, DBEDT and the fashion industry leaders convened small group meetings to review and discuss the feedback collected. This collaborative process provided valuable insights into the current state of Hawai'i's fashion industry and informed recommendations for innovation and growth.

Summary of Findings

Hawai'i's fashion design industry is deeply committed to quality, sustainability, and supporting local communities. However, it faces significant challenges, including access to manufacturing spaces, machinery and technology; difficulties in scaling operations; workforce development constraints; high costs for retail spaces; challenges in establishing and maintaining wholesale relationships; and barriers to reaching broader consumer markets. Despite these obstacles, the industry continues to innovate and adapt through strategic collaborations, a focus on ethical production, and a strong connection to the culture of Hawai'i. Key themes in the State's fashion design landscape include:

- **Small-Batch Production & Customization:** Many businesses emphasize small-batch production and made-to-order models, catering to niche markets and ensuring quality control. This approach minimizes waste and storage costs, while allowing products to be tailored to customer needs.
- **Balancing Local & Overseas Manufacturing:** A mix of local and overseas production is prevalent. Some businesses have pivoted to overseas manufacturing due to local resource limitations or higher costs. Those maintaining local production often operate with small teams or even a single individual, highlighting the challenges of sustaining local operations.
- **Operational Flexibility:** Flexibility is essential to navigating supply chain disruptions and changing consumer demand. Many businesses use hybrid models, combining in-house production with outsourcing depending on the project requirements.



- **Sustainability & Ethical Practices:** Sustainability is a significant focus for many businesses, with some adopting eco-friendly materials and practices, such as regenerating textiles from abandoned fishing gear. Ethical production is also emphasized, including collaborations with local organizations and artisans.
- **Diverse Product Offerings:** Hawai'i's fashion businesses offer a wide range of products, from apparel and accessories to home goods and cultural consulting services. There is a strong connection to Hawaiian culture, with many incorporating local narratives and traditions into their designs.
- **Challenges in Workforce Development:** Finding skilled labor remains a significant challenge. Businesses report gaps in production experience and note an aging workforce that is not being replaced. Workforce development is particularly difficult for companies aiming to scale operations while maintaining quality.
- **Retail & Wholesale Dynamics:** Businesses often operate both online and offline, balancing direct-to-consumer sales through physical stores or markets with wholesale partnerships. The pandemic significantly impacted wholesale operations, forcing businesses to shift focus to online and direct sales.
- **Financial & Logistical Constraints:** Financial management and logistical challenges are prevalent, particularly for businesses trying to grow without incurring debt. Concerns about scaling include the risks of increased production investment without guaranteed returns.
- **Collaboration & Community Engagement:** Collaboration with other local businesses and organizations is a common strategy, enabling expanded product offerings and supporting the local community. Many businesses also emphasize community engagement through educational initiatives and cultural consulting services.

Industry Strengths

The industry has achieved a broad range of successes, including strategic brand building, effective marketing, community engagement and strong customer loyalty. Businesses adapted to challenges, particularly in manufacturing and workforce retention, by fostering strong connections with both their communities and customers. These efforts have enabled businesses to sustain and plan for future growth.

Key success factors include: robust brand recognition, often tied to cultural integration and business models that minimize overproduction; effective social media marketing campaigns that engage both locals and visitors; retail success in tourist-heavy areas, underscoring the strength of business-to-consumer markets; longevity, with some startups thriving for over a decade; mentoring and fostering future entrepreneurs; strong customer loyalty, especially for businesses with physical retail locations; and participation in business accelerators, which provide resources and support for growth.

Industry Challenges & Gaps

Despite successes, the industry faces several interrelated challenges that hinder growth and profitability, including gaps in skilled labor, manufacturing capabilities and technical support, and challenges with facilities and supply chains.

- **Manufacturing:** High upfront costs and limited access to local machinery, advanced technology and textile facilities, coupled with a shrinking local workforce, restrict production capacity and scalability. Outsourcing introduces additional challenges, such as inconsistencies in product quality due to variations in materials and methods.
- **Shipping and Logistics:** High shipping costs, extended shipping times, and complications from tariffs and customs fees are significant obstacles stemming from Hawai'i's geographic isolation.
- **Workforce Challenges:** A shortage of skilled workers, particularly in sewing and technical roles for machinery repair and maintenance, is a persistent issue. The aging workforce and difficulty attracting younger talent exacerbate this challenge.
- **Supply Chain Challenges:** Limited access to base textiles and other materials locally complicates production and increases reliance on external suppliers, adding costs and logistical difficulties.
- **High Commercial Real Estate Costs:** Scarcity of affordable manufacturing, office, retail and warehouse space in Hawai'i limits businesses' ability to establish or expand physical locations. Frequent relocations and restricted scaling opportunities are common challenges
- **Financial Strain:** High operating costs, cash flow issues and difficulties scaling manufacturing or investing in new technologies creates financial strain. Many businesses perceived a lack of State support in areas such as tax breaks, infrastructure incentives and financial relief programs.
- **Fragmented & Siloed Industry:** Resources scarcity has fostered a perceived "hush hush" culture, which often hinders collaboration, sharing and access to critical resources like materials sourcing and skilled labor.
- **Scaling & Growth:** Balancing in-house production with outsourcing complicates quality control and the ability to meet demand. Many businesses experience strategic uncertainty about the best steps for future growth.
- **Educational & Entrepreneurial Training Resources:** There is a need for targeted workshops, incubators, training programs and mentorship to help designers develop entrepreneurial skills and navigate manufacturing and production challenges.

Opportunities for Innovation & Growth

Businesses aim to address challenges and gaps by investing in advanced technology and machinery and fostering collaboration. Technological advancement is viewed as transformative but presents challenges related to cost and implementation. Reducing environmental impact through innovative materials and sustainable production methods is a major focus. Expanding training programs and attracting skilled labor are critical priorities for the industry's future. Additionally, leveraging e-commerce, streamlining retail operations, and increasing government support and consumer education are seen as essential for driving innovation and growth.

Strategic Areas for Fashion Industry Development



- **Collective Access to Infrastructure Facilities & Resources:** There is strong support for collaborative work environments that foster innovation, idea sharing, and resource efficiency. Desired features include shared equipment, retail areas, networking opportunities and well-designed communal spaces.

However, the success of such spaces depends on effective management. Concerns were raised about equitable resource distribution and protecting intellectual property and original designs, emphasizing the need for careful oversight to ensure a productive and fair environment for all participants.

- **Equipment, Machinery & Technology Advancement:** The adoption of advanced technologies to streamline processes is viewed as transformative. Equipment needs include high-capacity digital printers, direct-to-garment printers, screen printing facilities, automated sewing machines, plotters, cutting and pattern grading equipment, and specialized machines for advanced sustainable textile technologies.

Exploring cutting-edge technologies like 3D Printing was also suggested as a revolutionary tool for creating intricate, complex and unique designs. Providing access to this type of advanced technology would empower designers to experiment with fabrication and elevate their design capabilities.

However, high costs, limited training, and a lack of maintenance support pose significant barriers. Additionally, skepticism remains regarding the short-term feasibility of automation, particularly for skilled labor-intensive tasks.

- **Sustainability Initiatives & Eco-friendly Materials:** Innovation in sustainable fashion design is a significant opportunity. For example, one business plans to source recycled textiles made from ocean waste, transforming them into premium clothing designs. Companies aspire to align their operations with sustainability goals, reducing environmental impact while offering high-quality products.
- **Workforce Development, Training & Skill Development:** Transforming workforce development is a pressing need, with a focus on technical skills such as sewing and machinery operation. Efforts should also aim to make these roles more appealing to potential workers. New opportunities like exchange programs, internships and mentorships are critical for addressing the shortage of skilled workers.
- **Mentorship & Guidance:** Mentorship in areas like entrepreneurial skill development, scaling businesses, and building connections with larger companies is seen as a way to elevate local small businesses and foster collaboration.
- **E-commerce & Retail Optimization:** Expanding and improving e-commerce platforms is seen as essential for growth. Businesses also highlight the need for advanced retail tools, such as improved POS systems, AI-driven solutions, label and tag printers, and inventory management tools, to streamline operations and enhance customer experiences.



- **Physical & Digital Presence, Market Access & Visibility:** Designers aspire to open new retail stores, expand wholesale accounts, enhance e-commerce capabilities and create demonstrative retail spaces that integrate manufacturing with customer interaction.
- **Government Support (Tax Breaks, Incentives & Financial Investment):** Businesses are calling for tax breaks for production facilities and incentives to foster innovation and investment in local manufacturing and workforce development. Access to financial support is also seen as critical for reducing barriers to scaling businesses, particularly in wholesale and export markets.
- **Consumer Education:** Educating consumers about the challenges and processes involved in local manufacturing is viewed as an opportunity to encourage mindful shopping and increase support for brands prioritizing ethical and sustainable production.

Marketing Strategies

Businesses primarily rely on social media platforms, websites, and grassroots methods to market their products, focusing on organic growth with minimal paid advertising. These strategies are aimed at maintaining strong customer relationships and driving sales both locally and to the Continental U.S.. Grassroots efforts, including word-of-mouth, community engagement, local markets, pop-up events, and brand collaborations, are widely used to enhance brand visibility.

Many businesses want to expand their marketing efforts and transition to a more structured and strategic plan. There is a growing interest in exploring paid advertising and participation in trade shows to reach new markets, including the U.S. East and West Coasts and international markets like Australia. Additionally, businesses are considering the establishment of Hawai'i showrooms on the Continental U.S. to further increase their market share.

Accelerator/Incubator Programs & Resources

Accelerator and incubator programs are positively regarded by the industry when they are specifically designed to address the unique needs of the fashion design sector rather than offering generic solutions. Stakeholders emphasized the critical need for professional assistance in areas such as marketing, financial management, pricing strategies, and solutions for managing manufacturing costs and logistics. Additionally, there is a demand for comprehensive business resources to support business planning, financial management, accounting, e-commerce development, digital and social media strategies, and legal guidance tailored to the needs of small businesses.

Legislation, Tax Incentives & Financial Relief

Industry stakeholders recommend that the State provide increased support to address systemic challenges through tax relief, subsidies, and financial assistance. Key proposals include offering financial aid for equipment purchases, facility upgrades, and commercial lease breaks, as well as assistance with overhead costs to alleviate operational pressures. Tax credits for manufacturing and exporting activities, along with tax breaks and subsidies to incentivize local hiring and workforce training, are also considered essential. Additional recommendations focus on incentives to encourage sustainability practices and financial support to reduce the barriers to entry for new and scaling businesses. Subsidies for products branded as “Made in Hawai‘i” as seen as an opportunity to promote local production and enhance the visibility of Hawai‘i-made goods in the marketplace.

FASHION HUB PRODUCTION LINES

LINE

1

SILK SCREEN PRINTING

Rotary screen printing presses with multiple screens and washout booths

LINE

2

SUBLIMATION PRINTING

Digital printing technique that transfers designs onto fabrics using heat and pressure

LINE

3

DIRECT TO SUBSTRATE PRINTING

Digital printing method that prints directly onto fabric

LINE

4

SEWING/EMBROIDERY STATIONS

Industrial/professional grade sewing machine stations

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH: FASHION DESIGN HUB – A VISION FOR HAWAII'S FASHION DESIGN FUTURE

The findings highlight the potential transformative impact of establishing a centralized fashion design hub in Hawaii. Such a facility could address the many challenges currently facing the fashion design community by providing shared resources that reduce individual overhead costs and lower barriers to entry for local designers and entrepreneurs.

A centralized space would serve as a space to foster collaboration, innovation, workforce development and knowledge sharing among industry professionals. By offering access to specialized equipment and expertise, the hub could improve product quality and production efficiency while enabling designers to scale their operations.

Beyond addressing operational challenges, the hub could also serve as a focal point for tourism and education, showcasing Hawaii's fashion design heritage alongside contemporary innovations. This dual purpose would enhance Hawaii's cultural appeal and provide educational opportunities for aspiring designers. Furthermore, the hub could create jobs, support sustainable local production and reduce the State's reliance on imported goods, aligning closely with Hawaii's broader sustainability goals.

FASHION DESIGN HUB CONCEPT

MANUFACTURING
& PRODUCTION

STATE OF THE ART
EQUIPMENT/TOOLS

WAREHOUSE +
SHIPPING/RECEIVING

COLLABORATION &
EVENT SPACES

PACKAGING/
LABELING

OFFICE, RETAIL &
SHOWROOMS

FACILITY, TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES

Manufacturing & Production Space Requirements

The proposed facility would require a minimum of 30,000+ square feet space dedicated to manufacturing and production, with the flexibility to compartmentalize the space as needed. to be compartmentalized as needed. Key area would include a loading dock for shipping and receiving, production lines for printing, pressing, cutting, and washing, as well as dedicated spaces for sewing, folding, packaging, boxing and warehousing/storage.

Four production lines have been identified as essential components for the manufacturing and production facility, reflecting the practices and needs of the majority of Hawai'i's current fashion design industry.

FASHION HUB PRODUCTION LINES

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| LINE | 1 | SILK SCREEN PRINTING
Rotary screen printing presses with multiple screens and washout booths |
| LINE | 2 | SUBLIMATION PRINTING
Digital printing technique that transfers designs onto fabrics using heat and pressure |
| LINE | 3 | DIRECT TO SUBSTRATE PRINTING
Digital printing method that prints directly onto fabric |
| LINE | 4 | SEWING/EMBROIDERY STATIONS
Industrial/professional grade sewing machine stations |

Technology & Equipment Priorities

A comprehensive list of essential equipment and technology has been identified to enhance community access to design and manufacturing resources. These resources include items that are either not readily available for community use or are limited in local availability. Additionally, the integration of advanced equipment, such as 3D printers, is recommended to elevate the design capabilities and innovation within Hawai'i's fashion industry.

General Fashion Hub Equipment Requirements

Printing Systems

- Direct to Fabric Printing Single Step Digital Printing Machine (e.g. KORNI)
- Sublimation Machines (4 Printers and 2 Presses)
- Large Format Digital Printers (Epson/Roland)
- Rotary Silk Screen Printing Machinery
- Pattern Graders (Gerber)

Digital Tools

- Digital and 3D Software
- Pressing and Finishing Machinery
- Cutting Equipment (2 Units)

Sewing Equipment

- Industrial Sewing Stations (6-8 Units)
- Industrial/Professional Sergers
- Placket Machines
- Button Sewing Machines
- Foldover Elastic Machinery
- Overlock and Cover Stitch Machines
- Flat Seam Machinery

Specialty Equipment

- Commercial Embroidery Machinery
- Cap/Hat Embroidery Machinery
- Packaging and Labeling Machinery
- 3D Printer (for advanced design capabilities)

Equipment specifications subject to industry standards and requirements

3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

B. JEWELRY DESIGN INDUSTRY

OVERVIEW

DBEDT collaborated with Jewelry Design Lead Advocate and Convener James Friedman of the El Dorado Casting Lab to implement a needs assessment survey sampling of over 40 established and aspiring jewelry designers. El Dorado Casting Lab is a collaborative work and educational space dedicated to nurturing emerging talent and fostering a sense of community within the industry. It has been instrumental in supporting the design and production journey for many local jewelry designers.

Summary of Findings

The primary findings highlight several priority needs for Hawai'i's jewelry designers, including access to a high-quality full-service maker space,; enhanced capacity for sourcing and manufacturing; continuing education and workforce development (access to diverse and skilled labor); and strategic marketing initiatives.

Key industry findings demonstrate the need for:

- 40. Community maker spaces and co-ops to facilitate scalable production and ensure quality assurance;
- 41. Opportunities to display and sell finished products, such as co-op spaces, retail venues, maker markets, and festivals; and
- 42. Educational programs, training and business accelerator and incubators to enhance industry knowledge in:
 - Creating, rendering, and prototyping designs using CAD software, CAM hardware and 3D printers;
 - Learning gemology, lapidary techniques and manufacturing processes, including fabrication, casting, stone setting, engraving, and finishing; and
 - Developing entrepreneurial skillsets, including business planning, marketing, accounting, bookkeeping, e-commerce, social media management, legal support (e.g., intellectual property and copyright protection), and professional photography.



Business Description, Materials Used & Production

Jewelry designers described their businesses as local jewelry design and retail, fine jewelry, custom Hawaiian jewelry, island-inspired, unique and one-of-a-kind, start-up phase, and R&D development phase.

The most commonly used materials include sterling silver, karat gold, and gold-filled for jewelry fabrication. Other materials used include base metals, palladium, platinum, bronze, copper, pearls, gemstones, leather and clay. Others noted working with enamel, minerals, beads, shells, and precious and semi-precious gemstones.

Designers noted a variety of production processes, with casting (76.1%), solder assembly (63%), fabrication (63%), and stone setting (50%) being the most utilized. Other production methods include wax carving, bead embroidery, wire wrapping, enameling, stone and gem inlay, hand-knotted beads and silver clay.

Industry Gaps & Challenges

The following themes emerged as significant gaps and challenges within the sector:

- Prohibitive costs and limitations in accessing production spaces
- Lack of access to cutting-edge technology and high shipping costs
- Challenges with sourcing and accessing raw materials
- Limited outsourcing options to scale production effectively
- Insufficient professional learning opportunities, including classes, conferences, shows, networking events, mentorships and apprenticeships
- Limited opportunities for local distribution, including markets, shows, events and co-op physical spaces with low or no overhead
- Limited capacity to design and implement traditional and innovative marketing strategies

Opportunities for Innovation & Growth

The following themes emerged as opportunities for innovation in the jewelry sector:

- Investment and low-cost or free industry access to production spaces, technology, machinery and tools, and co-op marketplaces and showrooms
- Development of maker spaces to expand casting, printing, milling, and laser cutting and engraving capabilities
- Increased messaging around ethical sourcing and the use of sustainable, recycled and upcycled materials
- State investment in financial relief and programs to support scaling efforts
- Public or private sponsorship or scholarships for educational classes or jewelry tradeshow attendance

Marketing Practices

Current marketing practices among jewelry designers include leveraging social media, business websites, Etsy, and participation in festivals such as in Made in Hawai'i Festival, local pop-ups, farmers markets and craft fairs. A small number of designers also referenced storefront visibility and word-of-mouth as marketing tools.

Designers expressed a desire to expand their market reach by participating in trade shows and high-end craft fairs, growing their social media presence, and utilizing influencer marketing. Additional priorities include securing placement in both trade magazines and local publications that reach both residents and tourists, designing and launching professional business websites, and showcasing products in physical retail spaces.

Collaborative Workspaces & Entrepreneurial Services/Resources

- **Collaborative Workspaces:** There is a high interest in collaborative workspaces within the jewelry design community, with 63% of respondents expressing enthusiasm for such environments, 32.6% considering it, and only 4.3% indicating disinterest. These findings demonstrate a strong desire for shared spaces that foster collaboration, creativity and a sense of community.
- **Services, Education, and Resources:** Designers consistently expressed a high level of interest in business accelerator and incubator programs, as well as training in essential areas such as business planning, accounting and bookkeeping, e-commerce, social media and intellectual property and copyright protection. There is also strong interest in improving capacities for sourcing materials and supplies, scaling for small- to medium-sized operations, and best practices for pricing and production planning. Additionally, designers seek opportunities to participate in trade conferences and shows to broaden their industry exposure.
- **Jewelry Design Education:** Designers identified specific educational needs in production and design, including bead, channel, stone setting; gemology, CAD and 3D design, wax modeling, casting, engraving and finishing, sourcing and manufacturing, as well as mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities.

Infrastructure & Resource Capacity

Findings indicate that investments in the development of a collaborative maker space can significantly enhance local jewelry design production. Such space would improve community access to technology, supplies, materials, resources, and educational opportunities, fostering peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. Streamlining acquisition processes for materials and supplies could further reduce costs and production timelines, making local manufacturing more efficient and cost-effective.

- **Human Capacity:** Expanding Hawai'i's jewelry design industry workforce requires strategic investments in workforce development and diversification. Addressing skilled labor shortages caused by relocation and retirement is critical. Opportunities for

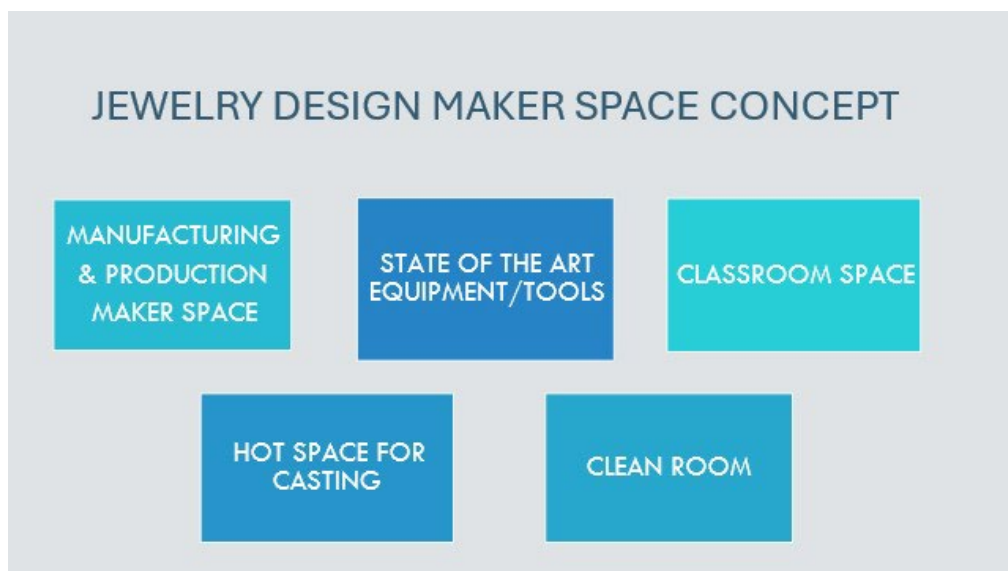
mentorship, apprenticeships, networking, and peer-to-peer learning should be prioritized, along with investments in continuing education. Establishing youth-focused maker spaces and programs that place jewelry design makers in schools as “makers in residence” will also nurture the next generation of talent and provide hands-on learning experiences for young students.

- **Industry Capacity:** Building industry capacity will require strategic marketing initiatives, such as co-op display spaces, craft fairs and marketing education programs. These programs should focus on leveraging social media, designing email campaigns and creating opportunities for in-store and pop-up events. Collaborations with public agencies, the tourism industry, local influencers, and brands can further elevate the visibility and success of Hawai‘i’s jewelry designers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH: JEWELRY DESIGN MAKER SPACE VISION

The jewelry design industry in Hawai‘i represents a significant opportunity for economic growth and cultural expression. Survey findings underscore the pressing need for a comprehensive jewelry design maker space to serve the local community. A well-equipped facility would address key challenges by providing a collaborative environment where designers can scale production, maintain quality, and access advanced technologies and training.

Based on survey findings and insights from El Dorado Casting Lab’s extensive experience in serving the industry, a jewelry design maker space of approximately 2,500 square feet is recommended to meet the needs of Hawai‘i’s jewelry designers. The following scenario outlines the proposed jewelry maker space, including considerations for ventilation, heat mitigation and general safety requirements to ensure a secure and efficient working environment.



FACILITY, TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES

Manufacturing & Production Space Requirements

A minimum 2,500-square-foot maker space is recommended to address the manufacturing and production needs of Hawai'i's jewelry design community. The facility would be designed with flexible compartments to accommodate various functions. These include a manufacturing and production area equipped with a modular ventilation system required, state-of-the-art equipment and tools, and classroom space for educational purposes that does not require ventilation. A clean room would be dedicated to administrative and office space, while separate areas would house computers, 3D printers, laser cutters, and storage. Additionally, the facility would include a dedicated hot space for casting and investing, fitted with a fixed ventilation system to ensure safety and meet industry standards.

Technology & Equipment Priorities

The maker space would provide access to advanced equipment and technology, offering tools essential for design, production, and finishing processes that are either unavailable or limited locally. This infrastructure would significantly enhance the capacity and quality of production for Hawai'i's jewelry designers:

General Jewelry Maker Space Equipment Requirements

Digital and Design Tools

- Pro-jet/Large Capacity 3D Printer
- 3D Scanner
- CAD Design Software Licenses
- Laser Cutter/Engraver

Casting Equipment

- Commercial Plating System
- Induction Vacuum Casting Machine
- Centrifugal Casting Setup
- Burnout Oven

Finishing Equipment

- Mass Media Finishing Technology
- Polishing System with Ventilation
- Ultrasonic Cleaning System
- Rolling Mill/Wire Fabrication
- Lapidary Polishing System

Workspace Equipment

- Classroom Workbenches
- Flex Shaft Tools and Bit Kits
- Benches and Bench Lights
- Mini Torch System with Supplies
- Commercial Oxygen Generator
- Large Screen Display for Instruction

3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

C. MUSIC INDUSTRY

OVERVIEW

DBEDT and the lead advocates and conveners for music, Kalenaku Parish and Kala'e Parish, collaborated with the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts, a non-profit Hawai'i organization representing the largest segment of Hawai'i's music industry and the producer of the annual Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards, which celebrates the achievements of the State's top music professionals.

The information gathering methodology included a combination of peer-to-peer interviews, small group discussions and surveys with over 35 industry members. Feedback was further analyzed through small group discussions with an advisory committee comprised of leaders who serve play dual roles in the Hawai'i's music and business communities.

The primary findings indicate a strong for a state-of-the-art music hub in Hawai'i to address the current challenges faced by the local music industry and provide long-term solutions. A centralized hub would offer musicians, educators and industry professionals access to essential facilities, resources and opportunities for collaboration, and creating an environment that fosters creativity, economic growth and cultural enrichment.

The long-term "move the needle" objective is to elevate the Hawai'i music industry into a dynamic epicenter for musical excellence, drawing inspiration from model cities such as Austin and Nashville. The following outlines the specific industry needs, community benefits and economic impact of developing a dedicated music facility for music, setting the stage for Hawai'i to take a leading role in the global music landscape.

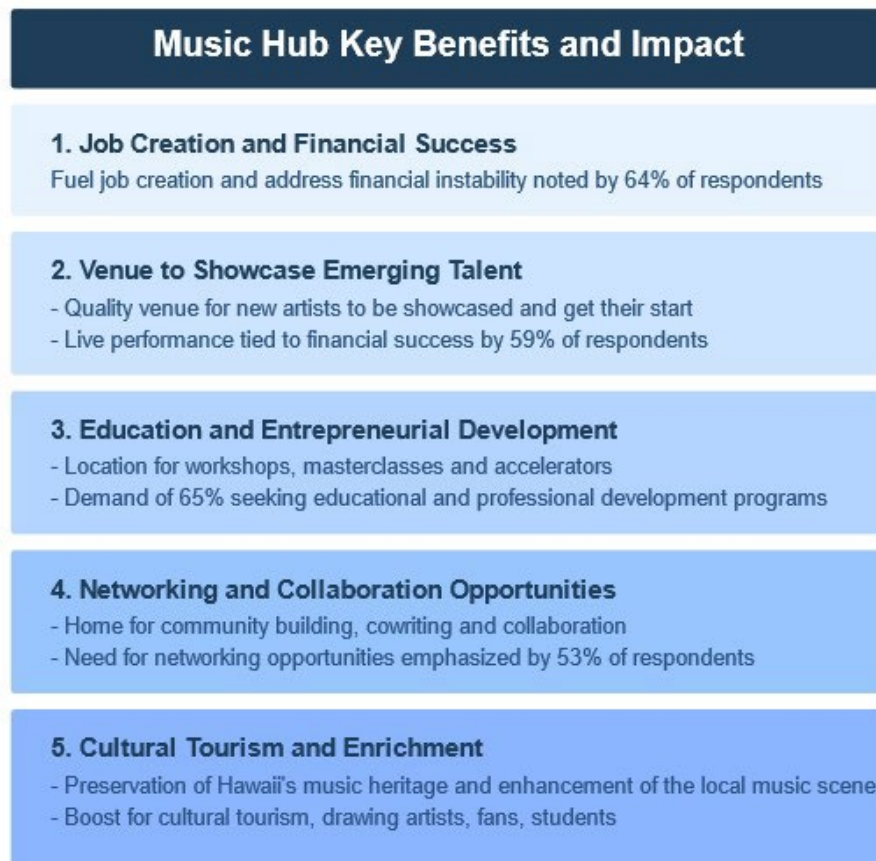
Summary of Findings

A diverse cross-section Hawai'i's industry participated in the information-gathering process. Of the respondents, 47% identifying as professional band members, 41% as recording and award-winning solo artists, and 12% as agents, publishers, managers, or other industry professionals. The peer-to-peer interviews and surveys conducted for this report revealed primary needs of the local music community and identified ways the State can support to build a stronger, more cohesive music industry in Hawai'i.



- **Infrastructure & Program Development:** The local music industry has identified a critical need for facilities and coworking spaces, with 67.6% of respondents emphasizing the importance of spaces designed for collaboration. A centralized hub where musicians can perform, record, network, develop entrepreneurial skills, and co-write would have a transformative impact on the industry.

A dedicated music hub would directly address these needs, supporting the growth of Hawai'i's music industry by providing solutions to key challenges and opportunities highlighted in the following needs assessment. This facility would benefit both the community and musicians, fostering creativity, professional development, and industry-wide collaboration.



- **Tax Incentives:** There is strong support for establishing a Hawai'i tax incentive program designed to boost the local music industry. The proposed program would offer refundable tax credits to film and media productions that use at least 50% original music created by local artists. By covering labor and music production costs within the state, the initiative would attract more film, television and advertising projects to Hawai'i. This would not only increase demand for local music but also stimulate economic growth in the music sector. It would create more opportunities for local songwriters and producers while positioning Hawai'i as an appealing destination for music and media production.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH: MUSIC HUB – A VISION FOR HAWAI‘I’S MUSIC FUTURE

The establishment of a centralized music hub presents a transformative opportunity to address the challenges facing Hawai‘i’s music industry. This facility would provide critical support for local musicians, enabling them to achieve greater success and recognition. By serving as a focal point for musical creativity and innovation, the hub would reinforce Hawai‘i’s reputation as a vibrant center for music, fostering cultural enhancement with far-reaching effects, including a potential boost in tourism and the attraction of music enthusiasts from around the world.

A multipurpose music hub would contribute to a thriving music scene by creating new job opportunities, stimulating related businesses, and enhancing the economic vitality of the Hawai‘i music industry. By equipping the industry with the necessary infrastructure and resources, the hub would ensure that Hawai‘i’s unique musical heritage not only survives but thrives for future generations.

The successful implementation, planning and development of the music hub would require collaboration with industry-led organizations like the Hawai‘i Academy of Recording Arts (HARA) and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Recording Academy (Grammys). Additionally, targeted strategies for community engagement and marketing will be essential to attract musicians, industry professionals, and audiences. Developing community events that will engage both residents and visitors would further strengthen the hub’s role as a cultural and economic catalyst.



FACILITY, TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES

Facility Requirements & Components

A 20,000-square-foot facility is envisioned to support Hawai'i's growing music industry, providing versatile spaces for recording, teaching, rehearsals and performances. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, the hub will uphold high-quality standards, positioning it as a premier facility for musicians, educators and the broader community.

- 1. Recording Studios (2,500 square feet):** Five soundproof studios equipped with recording equipment, mixing consoles and seating will cater to both professional and amateur musicians. Recording and production, two areas identified as a key success factor by over 40% of respondents, will be supported in these essential spaces.
- 2. Rehearsal Rooms (1,500 square feet):** Two flexible rooms will provide space for solo or band practice and rehearsals, meeting the needs of 88% of band members and solo artists. These rooms will ensure access to essential resources for preparation and refinement.
- 3. Tracking Rooms (1,500 square feet):** Three specialized rooms tailored for different instruments, such as drums, grand pianos, and vocals, will feature high-quality recording capabilities. These spaces will allow artists to work with world-class equipment, enhancing their creative process.
- 4. 350-Seat Theatre with Museum & Café (12,000 square feet):** A mid-sized theatre venue with a seating capacity of 350, including a main seating area, potential balcony and backstage facilities, will support educational events and live performances by established and emerging artists. With a 2,000–3,000-square-foot stage, this space was identified as a cornerstone of success for 60% of respondents. The theatre could also house a museum space to showcase artwork and historical artifacts that honor and celebrate Hawai'i's rich musical and cultural heritage. A café will offer a relaxed environment for networking and fostering a sense of community among artists and attendees.
- 5. Teaching Spaces (1,800 square feet):** Five rooms designed for individual or small group lessons will support music education. With 30% of respondents identifying as music teachers, these spaces will address the need for dedicated instruction areas.
- 6. Collaboration Spaces:** In response to the 53% of musicians citing networking as a challenge, dedicated areas for songwriting and co-writing will encourage creativity and collaboration among industry professionals, fostering new connections and projects.

Technology & Equipment Priorities

General Music Hub Equipment Requirements

Soundproof Studios

- Professional-grade soundproofing materials
- Mixing consoles
- High-end microphones
- Monitors and Audio interfaces
- Digital Audio Workstations
- Outboard gear (compressors, preamps)
- Sound isolation doors and windows

Rehearsal Rooms

- PA system with speakers and console
- Basic backline equipment
- Keyboards and Drum kits
- Instrument and Music stands
- Wall-mounted acoustic treatments
- Microphone stands and cables
- Musicians seating and storage

Tracking Rooms

- Acoustic treatment systems
- High-end instrument microphones
- Drum kit with microphones
- Grand piano
- Isolation booths
- Headphone monitoring systems
- Audio interfaces and AD/DA converters

350-Seat Theatre Space

- Professional PA and lighting systems
- Stage microphones
- Full backline equipment
- Multimedia projection systems
- Stage risers and curtains
- Backstage green room
- Sound mixing booth

Teaching Spaces

- Upright piano or keyboard
- Chairs and Music stands
- Basic amplification equipment
- Whiteboards and projection screens
- Storage lockers
- Recording devices
- Headphones for focused listening

Equipment specifications subject to industry standards and requirements

4. ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

DBEDT has been actively engaging with organizations that support fashion and music programs and cohorts, including Pa'i Foundation, Purple Mai'a, and Hale Kua by Manaola. DBEDT is also actively engaged in discussions with organizations developing to support these creative industries. These discussions include Kamehameha Schools' upcoming 'Ōlauniu project, a creative hub in the Kalihi Kai area, and the Lili'uokalani Trust's creative hub, which aims to provide training in creative industries for their beneficiaries. DBEDT is also working with the Stadium Authority to integrate cultural and community elements into the stadium redevelopment plans.

OUTREACH



5. SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrating DBEDT's Framework with HCR184 Findings

The findings and recommendations from the HCR184 legislative report align seamlessly with the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) strategic framework as outlined in "The Economic Landscape of Hawai'i." DBEDT's emphasis on creative industries as a primary sector underscores its commitment to diversifying Hawai'i's economy by building resilient ecosystems for sectors such as fashion design, music and film. This integrated approach includes targeted support for workforce development, infrastructure investment, and strategic incentives across the entire lifecycle – from incubation to maturity.

Strategic Alignment with the Economic Landscape Framework

Hawai'i's creative industries are a key driver of innovation and economic diversification within the DBEDT framework. By leveraging initiatives such as a Creative Innovation Hub, DBEDT aims to build robust infrastructure to support the growth of emerging creative businesses. The fashion and music industries, highlighted in HCR184, present significant opportunities for local entrepreneurship, cultural preservation and global market expansion.

Findings to Inform Implementation

The report findings identify several systemic gaps—such as access to facilities, workforce training, and market channels—that hinder the scalability of Hawai'i's fashion and music sectors. These findings align with DBEDT's ecosystem pillars:

1. **Infrastructure:** Investments in shared facilities, such as a fashion design hub and a music hub, address critical needs for production, collaboration and innovation. These spaces, equipped with advanced technologies like 3D printing for fashion and soundproof studios for music, directly align with DBEDT's goal of supporting small business expansion.



2. **Workforce Development:** Nearly half of Hawai'i's high school graduates (49%) do not enroll in college immediately after graduation, according to the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE). This significant statistic underscores the importance of creating alternative pathways that lead directly from education to meaningful careers in creative industries. To address this challenge, DBEDT is collaborating with HIDOE and Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education to align curricula with career opportunities in Arts & Communication and Business as part of the broader Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways initiative.

DBEDT has conducted visits to middle and high school complexes across the state to identify alignment gaps between educational offerings and industry needs. These insights have informed strategic priorities, including programs that equip students with the skills needed for high-demand jobs in fashion, music, film, and other creative sectors. By bridging these gaps, DBEDT ensures that students, particularly those not pursuing college degrees, can transition into careers that leverage their creative talents.

This cradle-to-career workforce development approach addresses skills shortages in areas like technical production and entrepreneurial expertise while creating equitable opportunities for youth across the state. Internships, mentorships, and hands-on training programs form a key component of DBEDT's strategy to strengthen Hawai'i's creative industries. By aligning education with industry demands, DBEDT is building a resilient talent pipeline to sustain Hawai'i's economy and cultural identity.

3. **Incentives and Policy:** Proposed tax credits and financial relief programs aim to lower entry barriers and stimulate local manufacturing and innovation. Policies, including tax incentives for production and export, are integral to DBEDT's support for Hawai'i's creative industries and align with the findings of HCR184.

Implementation Phases within DBEDT's Framework

1. **Phase 1: Foundation**

- a. Identify and secure funding for critical infrastructure projects such as the fashion and music hubs.
- b. Conduct comprehensive needs assessments to refine facility designs and program offerings.

2. **Phase 2: Build & Scale**

- a. Launch targeted pilot programs for skill development, focusing on underserved areas.
- b. Establish partnerships with local institutions, industry leaders, and organizations to co-develop training curricula and incubation programs.

3. Phase 3: Integration & Growth

- a. Enhance export capabilities by integrating creative industries into Hawai'i's broader economic initiatives such as HiSTEP.
- b. Expand global markets access through strategic partnerships and digital marketing initiatives.

Supporting Deliverables in HCR184

The HCR184 report provides actionable recommendations that inform DBEDT's strategic plan:

- **Legislative Support:** Capital improvement projects (CIP) to retrofit and construct facilities aligned with the State's infrastructure goals.
- **Economic Growth:** Proposals for tax incentives and entrepreneurial development programs that support scaling efforts and foster a thriving creative economy.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Recommendations for enhancing market access via e-commerce and international trade platforms to support Hawai'i-made products and align with DBEDT's vision.

Conclusion

The integration of DBEDT's economic diversification framework with the HCR184 findings establishes a cohesive, multi-phase strategy to strengthen Hawai'i's creative industries. This alignment builds a solid foundation for fostering innovation, preserving cultural heritage, and creating sustainable economic opportunities for Hawai'i residents.





STATE OF HAWAII • DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

