

ANNOUNCING: \$5,000 in Grant Awards for Female Adaptive Surfers

AccesSurf Hawaii (ASH) is proud to announce the Women's Grant Program for the 2026 Hawaii Adaptive Surfing Championship (HASC), generously funded by the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF).

FIVE female athletes will each receive \$1,000 to support their participation in HASC, taking place the week of May 5th - 8th, 2026.

Who Can Apply?

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a **female athlete**
 - Must plan to **attend and compete at HASC 2026**
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What Are We Looking For?

This grant prioritizes athletes who need it most. We're seeking compelling stories that demonstrate:

1. Financial Need We want to support athletes for whom this grant will make a meaningful difference in their ability to attend HASC. Whether it's travel costs, equipment, accommodations, or other expenses—we want to hear how this award will help you get to the competition.

2. Your Story Tell us your journey. How did you discover adaptive surfing? What drives you to compete? We're looking for an authentic story told in your own voice.

How to Apply

Application Requirements:

Submit a video (maximum 3 minutes) that includes:

- Your personal surfing story—how you came to adaptive surfing
- Your financial need and exactly how the grant would support your participation in HASC 2026

Important Video Guidelines:

- **Film yourself speaking directly to the camera**—use your phone or laptop camera (low production quality is perfectly fine!)
- **Solo submission only**—the video should feature only you speaking (no additional footage, music, or editing)
- **Speak in your most comfortable language**—we welcome submissions in any language

Alternative format available—If you require an accommodation for a speech impairment, the application portal includes the option to submit a written testimonial.

What We DON'T Want:

- No fancy edited videos with additional footage or b-roll
- No music overlays or professional production
- No one else speaking on your behalf

Why? We want to evaluate applications based solely on your ability to express your story and needs, not on access to video editing software, social media managers, or production resources. This ensures fairness for all applicants.

Scoring Criteria

A panel of three reviewers will score each submission based on the following rubric:

FINANCIAL NEED (50 points possible)

What to evaluate:

- How clearly does the applicant articulate their financial barriers?
- Would the \$1,000 grant make a meaningful impact on their ability to attend HASC?
- Do they provide specific details about what expenses the grant would cover?

Scoring Scale:

45-50 points: EXCEPTIONAL NEED

- Clear, compelling demonstration of significant financial barriers
- Very specific explanation of expenses (travel, accommodations, equipment, etc.)
- Grant would make the difference between attending or not attending HASC
- Need is well-articulated and includes enough detail

35-44 points: STRONG NEED

- Clear demonstration of financial barriers

- Good explanation of how grant would be used
- Grant would significantly ease financial burden
- Need is articulated and includes adequate details about expenses

25-34 points: MODERATE NEED

- Some financial need is expressed
- General explanation of expenses
- Grant would be helpful but may not be critical
- Need is stated but lacks detail or specificity
- Could benefit from clarification

15-24 points: MINIMAL NEED

- Limited demonstration of financial need
- Vague or unclear about how grant would be used
- Grant seems nice-to-have rather than essential
- Minimal detail provided
- Need is not well-established

0-14 points: NEED NOT DEMONSTRATED

- No clear financial need expressed
- No explanation of how grant would help
- Appears applicant could attend without grant assistance
- Very vague or missing financial information

COMPELLING STORY (50 points possible)

What to evaluate:

- How well does the applicant tell their story?
- Is the story authentic, personal, and engaging?
- Do they effectively communicate their connection to adaptive surfing?
- What does HASC mean to them, and do they convey this meaningfully?
- Is the presentation clear and heartfelt (regardless of production quality)?

Scoring Scale:

45-50 points: EXCEPTIONAL STORY

- Deeply personal and authentic story that creates emotional connection
- Clearly articulates their journey to adaptive surfing with specific details
- Powerfully conveys what HASC means to them

- Excellent communication—clear, organized, heartfelt
- Viewer feels they can truly understand the athlete's passion and journey
- Demonstrates strong self-awareness and reflection

35-44 points: STRONG STORY

- Personal and engaging story
- Good explanation of how they came to adaptive surfing
- Clearly expresses what HASC means to them
- Good communication—mostly clear and organized
- Viewer connects with the athlete's passion for the sport
- Shows reflection on their journey

25-34 points: GOOD STORY

- Adequate personal story shared
- Covers the basics of their surfing journey
- Expresses interest in HASC
- Communication is clear enough to understand their story
- Touches on personal experience

15-24 points: BASIC STORY

- Limited personal detail
- Brief or surface-level explanation of surfing background
- Minimal expression of what HASC means to them
- Communication is unclear or disorganized in places
- Difficulty understanding their motivation or passion
- Lacks personal depth

0-14 points: INSUFFICIENT STORY

- Very little personal story shared
- Does not adequately address how they came to adaptive surfing
- Unclear what HASC means to them
- Poor communication—very difficult to follow
- Cannot assess their connection to the sport
- Missing key elements of the prompt

Privacy & Your Submission

Your video will NOT be shared publicly. We will not post your submission on social media or use it for promotional purposes.

However, your video may be shared with our sponsor, the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF), to:

- Demonstrate the impact and value of their contribution
- Help us secure additional funding to support more female athletes in future years

If selected as a grant recipient, you will be asked to:

- Provide a shout-out to AccesSurf Hawaii and the Challenged Athletes Foundation after the competition (via social media, interview, or other format)
- Share your HASC experience to help promote future grant opportunities

Application Timeline:

Application Deadline: February 24, 2026 at 11:59pm HST

Award Announcement: March 1, 2026

HASC Competition: May 5th - 8th, 2026

Questions?

Contact AccesSurf Hawaii at: leah@accessurf.org

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