

HONOLULU USA

Preface: Despite its remote location, Honolulu has become an important hub for Pacific trade and business. With impressive plans for public-transport renovation and a skilled young workforce, there’s plenty going for Hawaii’s capital.

Population: 390,000
Key trades: tourism and agriculture
Time to register a business: 2 to 3 working days if express, otherwise 7 to 10 days
Annual hours of sunshine: 3,200
International flights: 22

Quote: *‘The city has become an attractive place for those looking to establish a second career’*

With its sun-soaked climate and laidback lifestyle, Honolulu may not immediately spring to mind as a top global business city. But positioned almost equidistantly between the US and Japan, Hawaii’s state capital has become a hub for Pacific trade.

As one of the most popular tourist destinations in the US, it’s perhaps unsurprising that Honolulu is an important centre for international air travel. From the charming airport terminal, flights leave for destinations across North America, Asia and Australasia.

A city that has long been dominated by cars, Honolulu will soon be a place where public transport offers an efficient alternative to bumper-to-bumper traffic. By 2019 the Honolulu Rail Transit project will be complete, predicted to remove around 40,000 cars from the city’s congested roads. And with a 12-minute link from Honolulu’s airport to the centre, the new rail transit link will make the city’s global business ties even more efficient.

Infrastructure aside, setting up a business in Honolulu is relatively easy. While normal business registration takes up to 10 days, an expedited service is available to process applications within two days. And sourcing a talented workforce shouldn’t be too hard either. With sun, sea and surf available pretty much all year round, as well as good schools and residential neighbourhoods, there’s plenty to make relocating an experienced team relatively simple.

Hawaii’s homegrown population is also a dynamic one. Over recent years, Honolulu has seen many of its young people returning home after university in mainland US. Setting up media companies, restaurants, organic farms and clean-tech businesses, young entrepreneurs are leading a generation that is reinvesting in its hometown, spurred on by the city’s increasing global importance. Former furniture sellers Mark Pei and Travis Flazer set up Hound and Quail in 2011, selling an eclectic mix of curiosities from around the world.

But it’s not just Hawaiians who have decided to move back to Honolulu. The city has become an attractive place for those looking to establish a second career in an environment where the standard of living is higher than many other US cities. Eric Rose left his restaurant business in Seattle to set up the Morning Glass coffee shop in the Manoa Valley. Waking early each morning, Rose roasts the beans and bakes the pastries himself before heading out for his daily surf. Serving customers at the breezy café located near the University of Hawaii’s main campus, Rose’s working day unfolds at Honolulu’s easy pace, one with which few other cities are able to compete. — (M)



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- 01 Downtown farmers' market
- 02 View over Honolulu
- 03 Hawaii governor's office
- 04 Eric Rose, owner of Morning Glass coffee shop

- 05 Didi Robello, who runs Aloha Beach Services on Waikiki
- 06 State capitol building
- 07 Alan Joaquin, the man behind FarmRoof