

## Application Submittal Checklist

*The following items are required for submittal of the grant application. Please verify and check off that the items have been included in the application packet.*

- 1) Hawaii Compliance Express Certificate (If the Applicant is an Organization)
- 2) Declaration Statement
- 3) Verify that grant shall be used for a public purpose
- 4) Background and Summary
- 5) Service Summary and Outcomes
- 6) Budget
  - a) Budget request by source of funds ([Link](#))
  - b) Personnel salaries and wages ([Link](#))
  - c) Equipment and motor vehicles ([Link](#))
  - d) Capital project details ([Link](#))
  - e) Government contracts, grants, and grants in aid ([Link](#))
- 7) Experience and Capability
- 8) Personnel: Project Organization and Staffing

Denise Yamaguchi

Denise Yamaguchi (Jan 23, 2026 14:05:06 HST)

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

Denise Yamaguchi, Chief Executive Officer

PRINT NAME AND TITLE

January 20, 2026

DATE



STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

**CERTIFICATE OF VENDOR COMPLIANCE**

This document presents the compliance status of the vendor identified below on the issue date with respect to certificates required from the Hawaii Department of Taxation (DOTAX), the Internal Revenue Service, the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), and the Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA).

**Vendor Name:** **Hawaii Ag and Culinary Alliance**

**DBA/Trade Name:** **Hawaii Food & Wine Festival**

**Issue Date:** **12/08/2025**

**Status:** **Compliant**

Hawaii Tax#: [REDACTED]

New Hawaii Tax#: [REDACTED]

FEIN/SSN#: [REDACTED]

UI#: [REDACTED]

DCCA FILE#: 236029

Status of Compliance for this Vendor on issue date:

Form	Department(s)	Status
A-6	Hawaii Department of Taxation	Compliant
8821	Internal Revenue Service	Compliant
COGS	Hawaii Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs	Compliant
LIR27	Hawaii Department of Labor & Industrial Relations	Compliant

**Status Legend:**

Status	Description
Exempt	The entity is exempt from this requirement
Compliant	The entity is compliant with this requirement or the entity is in agreement with agency and actively working towards compliance
Pending	A status determination has not yet been made
Submitted	The entity has applied for the certificate but it is awaiting approval
Not Compliant	The entity is not in compliance with the requirement and should contact the issuing agency for more information

**DECLARATION STATEMENT OF  
APPLICANTS FOR GRANTS PURSUANT TO  
CHAPTER 42F, HAWAI'I REVISED STATUTES**

The undersigned authorized representative of the applicant certifies the following:

- 1) The applicant meets and will comply with all of the following standards for the award of grants pursuant to Section 42F-103, Hawai'i Revised Statutes:
  - a) Is licensed or accredited, in accordance with federal, state, or county statutes, rules, or ordinances, to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
  - b) Complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability;
  - c) Agrees not to use state funds for entertainment or lobbying activities; and
  - d) Allows the state agency to which funds for the grant were appropriated for expenditure, legislative committees and their staff, and the auditor full access to their records, reports, files, and other related documents and information for purposes of monitoring, measuring the effectiveness, and ensuring the proper expenditure of the grant.
- 2) If the applicant is an organization, the applicant meets the following requirements pursuant to Section 42F-103, Hawai'i Revised Statutes:
  - a) Is incorporated under the laws of the State; and
  - b) Has bylaws or policies that describe the manner in which the activities or services for which a grant is awarded shall be conducted or provided; and
- 3) If the applicant is a non-profit organization, it meets the following requirements pursuant to Section 42F-103, Hawai'i Revised Statutes:
  - a) Is determined and designated to be a non-profit organization by the Internal Revenue Service; and
  - b) Has a governing board whose members have no material conflict of interest and serve without compensation.
- 4) The use of grant-in-aid funding complies with all provisions of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii (for example, pursuant to Article X, section 1, of the Constitution, the State cannot provide "... public funds ... for the support or benefit of any sectarian or nonsectarian private educational institution...").

Pursuant to Section 42F-103, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, for grants used for the acquisition of land, when the organization discontinues the activities or services on the land acquired for which the grant was awarded and disposes of the land in fee simple or by lease, the organization shall negotiate with the expending agency for a lump sum or installment repayment to the State of the amount of the grant used for the acquisition of the land.

Further, the undersigned authorized representative certifies that this statement is true and correct to the best of the applicant's knowledge.

Hawaii Ag & Culinary Alliance

(Typed Name of Individual or Organization)

Denise Yamaguchi

Denise Yamaguchi (Jan 23, 2026 14:05:06 HST)

(Signature)

January 20, 2026

(Date)

Denise Yamaguchi

(Typed Name)

Chief Executive Officer

(Title)

## Application for Grants

*If any item is not applicable to the request, the applicant should enter "not applicable".*

### **I. Certification – Please attach immediately after cover page**

#### **1. Hawaii Compliance Express Certificate (If the Applicant is an Organization)**

If the applicant is an organization, the applicant shall submit one (1) copy of a Hawaii Compliance Express Certificate from the Comptroller of the Department of Accounting and General Services that is dated no earlier than December 1, 2025.

#### **2. Declaration Statement**

The applicant shall submit a declaration statement affirming its compliance with [Section 42F-103, Hawaii Revised Statutes](#).

#### **3. Public Purpose**

The applicant shall specify whether the grant will be used for a public purpose pursuant to [Section 42F-102, Hawaii Revised Statutes](#).

### **II. Background and Summary**

This section shall clearly and concisely summarize and highlight the contents of the request in such a way as to provide the State Legislature with a broad understanding of the request. Please include the following:

#### **1. A brief description of the applicant's background;**

Hawaii Ag & Culinary Alliance (HACA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization organized for charitable and educational purposes to put a spotlight on Hawaii as a center for purposeful cultural endeavors by producing world-class culinary experiences which support the farmers, students, chefs and the people who call Hawaii home.

In 2010, HACA launched its first program, the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival (HFWF), to promote local agriculture, elevate emerging culinary talent, and strengthen culinary education. Through HFWF, students enrolled in the University of Hawaii Community College (UHCC) culinary arts programs gain hands-on experience working alongside world-renowned chefs acquiring industry-relevant skills and professional exposure. To date, HFWF has contributed nearly \$1.5 million to UHCC culinary programs through funding for

capital improvements, scholarships, equipment, and educational travel opportunities.

In 2021, HACA expanded its workforce and entrepreneurship focus by launching the From Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise program, in partnership with Leeward Community College (Leeward CC) and the Wahiawa Value-Added Product Development Center (WVAPDC). The program addressed a critical gap for Hawaii-based food entrepreneurs transitioning from home-based and cottage production to compliant, scalable, market-ready businesses. The initiative combined industry mentorship through HACA's culinary network with a 12-week education program delivered by Leeward CC, supporting entrepreneurs producing value-added products using locally sourced ingredients and promoting participants through HACA's marketing platforms.

As demand for the program increased and Leeward CC and WVAPDC expanded their capacity to independently deliver workshops and technical assistance, HACA strategically evolved its role to avoid duplication of services. Beginning in 2025, the initiative transitioned into the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise Scholarship. Through this revised model, HACA provides partial scholarship support to qualified entrepreneurs, continuing to reduce financial barriers for small producers—particularly Native Hawaiian, rural, and emerging entrepreneurs—while leveraging the established expertise and infrastructure of its partners and maintaining HACA's commitment to strengthening Hawaii's local food systems.

In addition, HACA supported the launch of Kapiolani Community College's Culinary Institute of the Pacific-Culinary Institute of America Workforce Development Program (CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program) in 2024. HACA supported the collaboration by coordinating a press conference and launch event, as well as provided marketing support for the program and scholarship assistance for participants.

Lastly, in 2025, with the support of the State of Hawaii, HACA hosted a successful inaugural FEAST Summit (Summit), a workforce professional development conference during the Fifteenth Annual Hawaii Food & Wine Festival on Oahu, featuring industry experts in the food, education, agriculture, sustainability, and tourism sectors. The conference addressed key trends and challenges shaping the future of culinary and hospitality. Topics ranged from the transformation of hospitality through artificial intelligence and the redefinition of luxury and sustainability, to the vital role of workforce development in Hawaii's economy. The Summit is crucial to postsecondary education and workforce development as it bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry demands, building a pipeline of well-trained professionals who contribute to Hawaii's visitor industry and economy.

2. The goals and objectives related to the request;

HACA is requesting Grant in Aid to strengthen Hawaii's culinary workforce by connecting education, professional training, and employment opportunities. HACA's current digital platform will be leveraged to improve coordination between culinary education and the workforce industry. HACA proposes the following:

1. **Bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry practice** by convening education, industry, and workforce leaders to strengthen Hawaii's culinary and food systems workforce pipeline. Building on the success of the inaugural FEAST Summit in 2025, HACA will host the Second Annual FEAST Summit on Oahu, bringing together local and global leaders in food, education, agriculture, sustainability, and tourism. The Summit will provide industry-relevant learning through expert panels, interactive workshops, and facilitated networking designed to expose students, educators, and professionals to emerging trends, career pathways, and best practices. This investment supports workforce readiness, cross-sector collaboration, and innovation within Hawaii's culinary and food industries.
2. **Support small business food entrepreneurs and value-added producers** through scholarships, trade show readiness, and market access preparation. In partnership with Leeward Community College (Leeward CC) and the Wahiawa Value-Added Product Development Center (WVAPDC), HACA will help reduce financial barriers for entrepreneurs using locally grown, raised or caught ingredients. This includes partial scholarships for the next two cohorts (30 entrepreneurs in 2027) to participate in the Aina to Makeke Program to develop their cottage industries, consumer packaged goods, or value-added products into thriving food enterprises, and advanced preparation for 10 entrepreneurs to participate in national or international trade shows, expanding business visibility and growth opportunities beyond Hawaii.
3. **Advance Hawaii's culinary workforce through world-class professional development** by providing scholarships to Culinary Institute of the Pacific-Culinary Institute of America Workforce Development Program (CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program). The scholarships will provide enhanced skills, resources, education, and leadership training for participants. By investing in workforce development, this program aligns with the state's initiative to build a pipeline of highly skilled professionals that will provide higher paying jobs and support economic growth.
4. **Create centralized, web-based, user-friendly directories** that strengthen the education-to-employment pipeline. There will be two directories that:

- a. Connect students and emerging professionals with HFWF chefs and restaurateurs offering internships, stages, and employment opportunities; and
  - b. Document and showcase alumni and businesses that have completed the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise Program in partnership with Leeward CC and WVAPDC's Aina to Makeke program, increasing visibility, networking, and hiring opportunities.
5. **Develop a comprehensive website highlighting HACA's key programs and initiatives.** The website will serve as a year-round hub showcasing Hawaii's culinary workforce development programs, including the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival, the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise Program, and the CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program. The website will be user-friendly and provide accessible tools, including directories that connect students, professionals, and entrepreneurs with training, mentorship, and employment opportunities.

3. The public purpose and need to be served;

Tourism remains a primary economic driver in Hawaii. According to the Hawaii Tourism Authority, total visitor spending in 2024 reached approximately \$20.7 billion, exceeding pre-pandemic levels, with nearly 10 million visitor arrivals statewide. Tourism activity supported an estimated 211,000 jobs and contributed approximately 23–24% of Hawaii's GDP, underscoring its central role in the state's economy across hospitality, retail, food service, transportation, and related sectors.

Dining and food experiences represent a substantial component of visitor spending. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism's 2024 Visitor Expenditure Data, food and beverage accounted for approximately 21% of average daily visitor spending, with visitors spending approximately \$50–\$51 per person per day on food—underscoring the central role of the culinary industry in Hawaii's tourism economy. The State therefore has a direct and compelling interest in ensuring a strong, skilled, and sustainable culinary workforce.

However, ongoing workforce shortages and declining enrollment in culinary education programs threaten service quality, business viability, and long-term economic resilience. HACA's initiatives—ranging from hands-on workforce exposure through the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival, entrepreneurship pathways through the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise Scholarship, advanced professional training through the CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program, and a website that connects education, training, and employment—collectively address this gap. By strengthening workforce pipelines and supporting local food businesses rooted in Hawaii's agricultural sectors, these efforts serve a clear public service by sustaining Hawaii's culinary industry, supporting local employment, and ensuring the continued vibrancy of the State's economy.

4. Describe the target population to be served; and

The target population to be served for HACA programs will include high school students enrolled in culinary arts programs, college students enrolled in the University of Hawaii culinary arts program statewide, industry professionals, and local entrepreneurs, small business owners, and the community at large.

5. Describe the geographic coverage.

Geographic coverage would be statewide.

### **III. Service Summary and Outcomes**

The Service Summary shall include a detailed discussion of the applicant’s approach to the request. The applicant shall clearly and concisely specify the results, outcomes, and measures of effectiveness from this request. The applicant shall:

1. Describe the scope of work, tasks and responsibilities;

With support from this Grant in Aid, HACA will:

1. Bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry practice at a workforce development conference

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Concept and program the conference	HACA
Invite and confirm participating talent	HACA
Promote and market conference	HACA/Culinary Schools
Market and sell tickets to industry	HACA
Coordinate and execute conference	HACA

2. Support small business food entrepreneurs and value-added producers

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Prepare and roll out Cohort 9 & 10 applications	HACA
Market Cohort application opportunity	HACA
Select Cohort of entrepreneurs	HACA/LCC
Execute Aina to Makeke Program	LCC
Identify entrepreneurs for Trade Show Readiness Program	LCC
Provide education and guidance for Trade Show Readiness Program	LCC
Promote businesses participating in Trade Show	HACA/LCC

3. Advance Hawaii’s culinary workforce through world-class professional development

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Prepare and roll out Cohort applications	CIP-CIA
Market Cohort application opportunity	HACA/CIP-CIA
Execute Workforce Development Program	CIP-CIA

4. Create centralized, web-based, user-friendly directories

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Concept and build directory framework	HACA
Data collection and profile development	HACA
Web design and development	HACA
Testing and platform integration	HACA
Outreach and launch	HACA
Maintenance and website updates	HACA

5. Develop a comprehensive website highlighting HACA’s key programs and initiatives

<b>TASKS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Concept and build website framework	HACA
Content development and integration	HACA
Web design and development	HACA
Testing and platform integration	HACA
Outreach, launch, and promotion	HACA
Ongoing maintenance and updates	HACA

2. Provide a projected annual timeline for accomplishing the results or outcomes of the service;

1. Bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry practice at a workforce development conference

Timeline: July 2026 – December 2026

July – August 2026

- Concept and program the FEAST Summit
- Secure venue
- Invite talent, coordinate travel
- Create event design
- Market and promote event

September – October 2026

- Confirm menu and order ingredients
- Market and promote event
- Sell tickets

Print signage

November 2026

Market and promote event

Sell tickets

Execute conference

2. Support small business food entrepreneurs and value-added producers

Timeline: November 2026 – June 2027

November 2026 – January 2027

Identify entrepreneurs for Trade Show Readiness Program

Prepare participants to showcase at national or international trade shows

Promote entrepreneurs' participation

December 2026 – January 2027

Prepare and roll out applications for Cohort 9

Market and promote Cohort 9 application opportunity

Vet and select applicants for Cohort 9

January – March 2027

Execute Cohort 9

February – March 2027

Prepare and roll out applications for Cohort 10

Market and promote Cohort 10 application opportunity

Vet and select applicants for Cohort 10

March – May 2027

Execute Cohort 10

3. Advance Hawaii's culinary workforce through world-class professional development

Timeline: December 2026 – June 2027

December 2026 - February 2027

Market and promote Cohort 25 and 26 application opportunity

February 2027

Market and promote Cohort 27 and 28 application opportunity

March 2027

Market and promote Cohort 29 and 30 application opportunity

April 2027

Market and promote Cohort 31 and 32 application opportunity

June – July 2027

Market and promote Cohort 33 and 34 application opportunity

4. Create centralized, web-based, user-friendly directories

Timeline: July 2026 – June 2027

July – August 2026

Define directory scope, structure, and data fields

Confirm data criteria inclusion

September – December 2026

Collect data and profile development

Finalize directory design

January – February 2027

Build directory websites with search and filter functionalities

Test user accessibility

March 2027

Launch directories

Promote directories

April – June 2027

Review metrics and user feedback

Ongoing updates as necessary

5. Develop a comprehensive website highlighting HACA's key programs and initiatives

Timeline: July 2026 – June 2027

July 2026

Define website structure and functionality

August 2026

Integrate workforce tool, directories, and program resources

September 2026  
Launch website and promote access

October – December 2026  
Review metrics and user feedback  
Ongoing updates as necessary

3. Describe its quality assurance and evaluation plans for the request. Specify how the applicant plans to monitor, evaluate, and improve their results; and

HACA has a record of successfully executing and evaluating its programs, ensuring their impact aligns with the goals of workforce development, educational advancement, and community engagement. HACA understands that continuous monitoring, surveying, and improvement are key to maintaining and enhancing effectiveness to programs and retaining credibility.

**1. Bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry practice at a workforce development conference**

HACA has successfully organized and executed the inaugural FEAST Summit in 2025, delivering the first-ever, industry-relevant professional development learning opportunity featuring over 50 speakers through expert panels, interactive workshops, and facilitated networking. For future Summits, HACA will monitor planning and execution milestones, including speaker confirmation, program development, participant registration, and logistical readiness. Attendance data and session participation will be tracked to assess reach and engagement. Post-Summit surveys will be administered to attendees and speakers to evaluate program quality, content relevance, and the Summit's effectiveness in supporting workforce readiness and career pathways. Survey findings will be used to refine future Summit programming, speaker selection, session formats, and outreach to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with Hawaii's workforce development and economic priorities.

**2. Support small business food entrepreneurs and value-added producers**

HACA has successfully partnered with Leeward CC and the WVAPDC on the From Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise Scholarship and Aina to Makeke programs. HACA will continue to promote these programs through coordinated, multi-channel outreach to engage prospective applicants statewide. Program performance will be monitored from application through completion, with an up-to-date database tracking enrollment, participation, and completion. Participant surveys and post-program indicators, including business readiness and market access outcomes, will be reviewed in coordination with partners to inform continuous improvement and ensure the program remains an effective pathway for food entrepreneurship and

business growth. Participation data will be used to update HACA-owned directory.

**3. Advance Hawaii’s culinary workforce through world-class professional development**

Similarly, HACA will promote the CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program through a robust multi-channel marketing campaign that features strategic outreach to HACA’s database, and targeted promotions to engage prospective culinary professional applicants. HACA will monitor scholarship participation and program completion, maintaining records of participant engagement and outcomes. Participants will have access to HACA-owned directory.

**4. Create centralized, web-based, user-friendly directories**

HACA will collect, organize, and maintain data from participants in the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise and Aina to Makeke programs, the CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program, and chefs and culinary students participating in the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival. This information will be curated into publicly accessible, web-based directories designed to improve workforce and business visibility and facilitate connections across the culinary industry. Quality assurance will focus on data accuracy, consistency, accessibility, and usability rather than participant performance tracking. HACA will monitor directory functionality, user engagement, and accessibility to ensure the directories remain current, user-friendly, and responsive to workforce and industry needs. Feedback and usage data will be used to make improvements to the directories’ structure and functionality.

**5. Develop a comprehensive website highlighting HACA’s key programs and initiatives.**

HACA will track website development, content deployment, and launch milestones, as well as ongoing engagement metrics such as site traffic and interaction with workforce resources. User feedback and performance data will be reviewed regularly to ensure the website remains accessible, relevant, and responsive to workforce and industry needs. Findings will guide content updates and platform improvements.

4. List the measure(s) of effectiveness that will be reported to the State agency through which grant funds are appropriated (the expending agency). The measure(s) will provide a standard and objective way for the State to assess the program’s achievement or accomplishment. Please note that if the level of appropriation differs from the amount included in this application that the measure(s) of effectiveness will need to be updated and transmitted to the expending agency.

Quantitative measures of effectiveness that will be reported to the State agency will include:

1. HACA will coordinate a successful FEAST Summit, a one-day workforce professional development conference for 600 attendees that will include expert panels, interactive workshops, and facilitated networking opportunities.
2. FEAST Summit will include a luncheon featuring locally grown, caught or raised products.
3. HACA will provide partial scholarships to 30 entrepreneurs participating in two (2) cohorts in Leeward Community College Aina to Makeke Program in 2027.
4. HACA will provide scholarships to ten (10) entrepreneurs selected to participate in the Trade Show Readiness Program.
5. HACA will provide scholarships to 64 culinary professionals over four (4) cohorts participating in CIP-CIA Workforce Development Program in 2027.
6. HACA will develop and launch one (1) publicly accessible, web-based directory that connects culinary students and emerging professionals with HFWF chefs and restaurateurs offering internships, stages, and employment opportunities.
7. HACA will develop and launch one (1) publicly accessible, web-based directory listing entrepreneurs who have completed the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise and Aina to Makeke programs, to increase visibility and networking opportunities for Hawaii-based value-added businesses.
8. HACA will develop and launch one (1) comprehensive, user-friendly website that serves as a centralized hub for Hawaii's culinary workforce development programs and key initiatives, providing access to program information, directories, and workforce resources.

## **IV. Financial**

### **Budget**

1. The applicant shall submit a budget utilizing the enclosed budget forms as applicable, to detail the cost of the request.
  - a. Budget request by source of funds ([Link](#))
  - b. Personnel salaries and wages ([Link](#))
  - c. Equipment and motor vehicles ([Link](#))
  - d. Capital project details ([Link](#))
  - e. Government contracts, grants, and grants in aid ([Link](#))

2. The applicant shall provide its anticipated quarterly funding requests for the fiscal year 2027.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total Grant
\$92,725	\$203,025	\$133,525	\$100,725	\$530,000

3. The applicant shall provide a listing of all other sources of funding that they are seeking for fiscal year 2027.

HACA will seek funding through corporate sponsorships and government grants

4. The applicant shall provide a listing of all state and federal tax credits it has been granted within the prior three years. Additionally, the applicant shall provide a listing of all state and federal tax credits they have applied for or anticipate applying for pertaining to any capital project, if applicable.

N/A

5. The applicant shall provide a listing of all federal, state, and county government contracts, grants, and grants in aid it has been granted within the prior three years and will be receiving for fiscal year 2027 for program funding.

2023:

1. \$170,000—Grant in Aid FY’23 for Cottage Industry Program
2. \$350,000—Hawaii Visitors & Conventions Bureau for Hawaii Food & Wine Festival 2023
3. \$67,964—City and County of Honolulu for Non-Profit Recovery Grant Program

2024:

1. \$150,000—Grant in Aid FY’24 for Cottage Industry Program
2. \$190,000—Kilohana by CNHA for Hawaii Food & Wine Festival 2024
3. \$41,000—Kilohana by CNHA for Keiki in the Kitchen 2024

2025:

1. \$75,000—Grant in Aid FY’25 for Cottage Industry Program
2. \$50,000—Maui County Office of Economic Development for Hawaii Food & Wine Festival Kaanapali
3. \$300,000—Grant in Aid FY ’26 for Cottage Industry Program and CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program
4. \$250,000—Council for Native Hawaiian for Hawaii Food & Wine Festival 2025

6. The applicant shall provide the balance of its unrestricted current assets as of December 31, 2025.

HACA's estimated balance of its unrestricted current assets as of December 31, 2025, is approximately \$2,843,000.

## **V. Experience and Capability**

### **1. Necessary Skills and Experience**

The applicant shall demonstrate that it has the necessary skills, abilities, knowledge of, and experience relating to the request. State your experience and appropriateness for providing the service proposed in this application. The applicant shall also provide a listing of verifiable experience of related projects or contracts for the most recent three years that are pertinent to the request.

Hawaii Ag & Culinary Alliance has a proven track record of implementing and managing programs that align with the goals of workforce development. HACA has successfully organized and executed a range of initiatives that directly addresses workforce challenges in Hawaii's culinary, agricultural, and tourism sectors. Key experiences and accomplishments include the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival, which has directly benefited the culinary arts programs statewide and collaborated and highlighted other nonprofit organizations such as Paepae o Heeia and Papahana Kuaola since 2011, facilitated entrepreneur programs for Leeward CC and Wahiawa Value-Added Product Development Center since 2023, and fostered partnerships with Culinary Institute of the Pacific and Culinary Institute of America in 2024. In addition, HACA established the Kokua Restaurant & Hospitality Fund in 2020, a vital resource that provides direct assistance to Hawaii restaurant and hospitality workers facing hardship due to unforeseen crises, such as COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 Maui wildfires. This fund supports workforce stability and helps ensure the continued strength and resilience of the local culinary and hospitality community.

### **2. Facilities**

The applicant shall provide a description of its facilities and demonstrate its adequacy in relation to the request. If facilities are not presently available, describe plans to secure facilities.

HACA office is located at 3538 Waialae Avenue, #202, Honolulu, HI 96816.

## **VI. Personnel: Project Organization and Staffing**

### **1. Proposed Staffing, Staff Qualifications, Supervision and Training**

The applicant shall describe the proposed staffing pattern and proposed service capacity appropriate for the viability of the request. The applicant shall provide the qualifications and experience of personnel for the request and shall describe its ability to supervise, train and provide administrative direction relative to the request.

HACA has a dedicated team of professionals with expertise and is well-positioned to deliver the proposed workforce development programs. The HACA team consists of six full-time employees and one part-time employee.

#### **Denise Yamaguchi, Chief Executive Officer**

Denise Yamaguchi serves as the CEO of the organization and is responsible for the leadership, financials, and execution of the vision and mission as set forth by the organization's strategic plan. Prior to her tenure with the festival and with the Foundation, she was a business development consultant providing both nonprofit and for-profit organizations with fund development, marketing, government affairs, public relations and community relations strategies and solutions. She has more than twenty-four years of experience and has held executive positions with NCL America, Bishop Museum, Japanese Cultural Center, Hawaii Foodbank and U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye's office in Washington D.C.

#### **Aya Leslie, Vice President**

Aya Leslie serves as the Vice President and leads HACA's fundraising and development efforts, including philanthropic and corporate support, cultivating strategic partnerships, and provides oversight and organizational planning and programming of HACA initiatives.

#### **Kristen Lau-Grover, Senior Director of Marketing & PR**

Kristen Lau-Grover is the Senior Director of PR & Marketing and is responsible for providing leadership and strategic direction for all marketing, public relations, and promotional activities for HACA programs. She oversees the Content Marketing Manager, ensuring marketing align with organizational goals and enhance visibility and amplify HACA's impact.

#### **Helene Feagaimaalii, Senior Director of Operations**

Helene Feagaimaalii serves as HACA's new Senior Director of Operations and is a key member of the organization's leadership team. She is responsible for planning, directing, and overseeing all organizational operations, event execution, internal systems, and cross-department workflows to ensure the efficient delivery of HACA programs and initiatives, including the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival, the Cottage Industry to Commercial Enterprise Program, and the CIPxCIA Workforce Development Program. In this role, Helene provides operational leadership to staff and contractors, serving as the backbone of HACA's program execution and ensuring that events,

programs, and internal processes run smoothly, effectively, and in alignment with organizational goals.

**Jenna Gaughan, Talent & Culinary Relations Manager**

Jenna Gaughan is the Talent & Culinary Relations Manager and serving as the primary liaison for participating talent. Her responsibilities include managing talent communications, onboarding, travel coordination, menu planning, hospitality, and on-site logistics for chefs, mixologists, winemakers, brewers, speakers, and special guests engaged in HACA initiatives.

**Staci Lovell, Content Marketing Manager**

Staci Lovell is the Content Marketing Manager and is responsible for promoting all programs of HACA through robust marketing campaigns and targeted promotions to elevate awareness and engagement, as well as maximum enrollment and participation for all of HACA's programs.

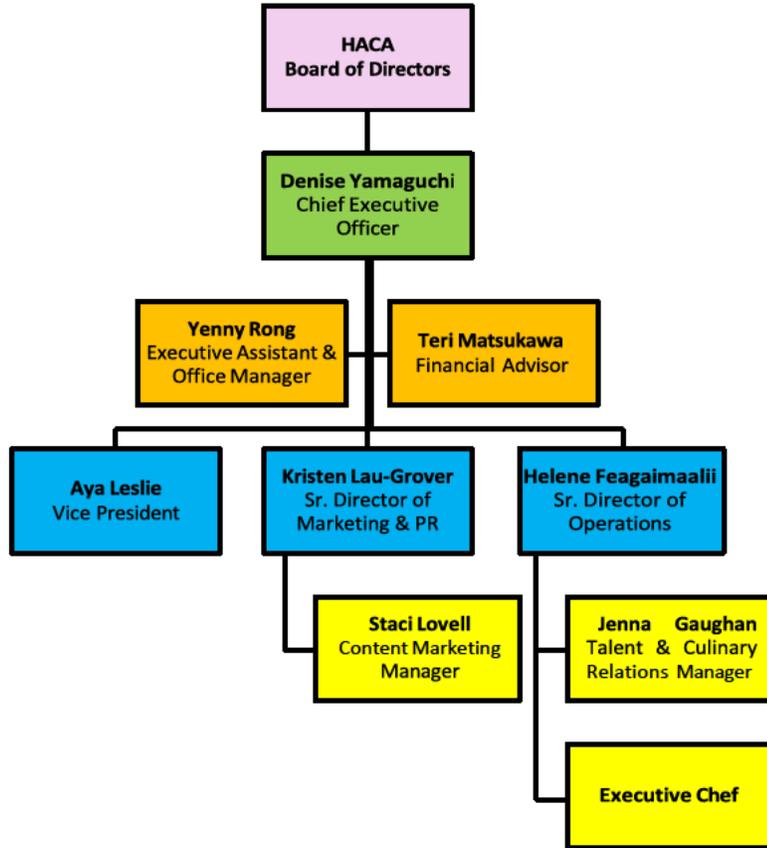
**Teri Matsukawa, Financial Controller**

Teri Matsukawa is the Financial Controller and is responsible for the accounting and financials for HACA.

The HFWF Board of Directors is comprised of a diverse group of leaders in the community, including: Chef Roy Yamaguchi (co-chair), Chef Alan Wong (co-chair), Sharon Brown (treasurer), Meredith Ching (secretary), Vikram Garg (director), Shep Gordon (director), Warren Shon (director), and Mark Teruya (director)

## 2. Organization Chart

The applicant shall illustrate the position of each staff and line of responsibility/supervision. If the request is part of a large, multi-purpose organization, include an organization chart that illustrates the placement of this request.



## 3. Compensation

The applicant shall provide an annual salary range paid by the applicant to the three highest paid officers, directors, or employees of the organization by position title, not employee name.

Chief Executive Officer: \$150,000–\$180,000

Vice President: \$120,000–\$150,000

Senior Director of Marketing & PR: \$100,000–\$120,000

## **VII. Other**

### **1. Litigation**

The applicant shall disclose any pending litigation to which they are a party, including the disclosure of any outstanding judgement. If applicable, please explain.

N/A

### **2. Licensure or Accreditation**

The applicant shall specify any special qualifications, including but not limited to licensure or accreditation that the applicant possesses relevant to this request.

N/A

### **3. Private Educational Institutions**

The applicant shall specify whether the grant will be used to support or benefit a sectarian or non-sectarian private educational institution. Please see [Article X, Section 1, of the State Constitution](#) for the relevance of this question.

N/A

### **4. Future Sustainability Plan**

The applicant shall provide a plan for sustaining after fiscal year 2027 the activity funded by the grant if the grant of this application is:

- (a) Received by the applicant for fiscal year 2027, but
- (b) Not received by the applicant thereafter.

HACA has a proven track record of leveraging state funds, having matched support for the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival by more than 12 times through a combination of corporate sponsorships and corporate and individual ticket sales. If successful, HACA will continue to build on that to proactively secure additional funding through other government grants, corporate sponsorships and private donations, ensuring the sustainability of the programs beyond FY'27.

## BUDGET REQUEST BY SOURCE OF FUNDS

Period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Applicant: HAWAII AG & CULINARY ALLIANCE

BUDGET CATEGORIES	Total State Funds Requested (a)	Total Federal Funds Requested (b)	Total County Funds Requested (c)	Total Private/Other Funds Requested
A. PERSONNEL COST				
1. Salaries	201,500			
2. Payroll Taxes & Assessments				
3. Fringe Benefits				
TOTAL PERSONNEL COST	201,500			
B. OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES				
1. Airfare, Inter-Island				
2. Insurance				
3. Lease/Rental of Equipment				
4. Lease/Rental of Space				
5. Staff Training				
6. Supplies				
7. Telecommunication				
8. Utilities				
9. SCHOLARSHIP	133,500			
10. AUDIO VISUAL	50,000			
11. PROGRAM EXPENSE	5,000			
12. VENUE FACILITIES/LABOR	40,000			
13. EVENT RENTALS	5,000			
14. CONTRACT SERVICES	75,000			
15. FOOD COST	20,000			
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
TOTAL OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES	328,500			
C. EQUIPMENT PURCHASES				
D. MOTOR VEHICLE PURCHASES				
E. CAPITAL				
<b>TOTAL (A+B+C+D+E)</b>	<b>530,000</b>			
<b>SOURCES OF FUNDING</b>		Budget Prepared By:		
(a) Total State Funds Requested	530,000	DENISE YAMAGUCHI	808-386-2538	
(b) Total Federal Funds Requested		Name (Please type or print)	Phone	
(c) Total County Funds Requested		<u>Denise Yamaguchi</u>	January 22, 2026	
(d) Total Private/Other Funds Requested		<small>Denise Yamaguchi [Jan 23, 2026 14:05:06 HST]</small>		
		Signature of Authorized Official	Date	
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>530,000</b>	DENISE YAMAGUCHI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER		
		Name and Title (Please type or print)		

## BUDGET JUSTIFICATION - PERSONNEL SALARIES AND WAGES

Period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Applicant: HAWAII AG & CULINARY ALLIANCE

POSITION TITLE	FULL TIME EQUIVALENT	ANNUAL SALARY A	% OF TIME ALLOCATED TO GRANT REQUEST B	TOTAL STATE FUNDS REQUESTED (A x B)
Executive Chef	1	\$80,000.00	20.00%	\$ 16,000.00
Talent & Culinary Relations Manager	1	\$70,000.00	20.00%	\$ 14,000.00
Senior Director of Operations	1	\$120,000.00	50.00%	\$ 60,000.00
Content Marketing Manager	1	\$70,000.00	35.00%	\$ 24,500.00
Senior Director of Marketing & PR	1	\$100,000.00	35.00%	\$ 35,000.00
Vice President	1	\$125,000.00	20.00%	\$ 25,000.00
Chief Executive Officer	1	\$180,000.00	15.00%	\$ 27,000.00
				\$ -
				\$ -
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>201,500.00</b>

**JUSTIFICATION/COMMENTS:**

**Executive Chef**

The Executive Chef is responsible for all chef-related functions for HACA programs, including ingredient sourcing, menu development, and on-site event execution in coordination with the Talent & Culinary Relations Manager and Senior Director of Operations. This role also supports workforce development efforts by recruiting culinary students and facilitating use of the HFWF chef directory to connect students with internships, stages, and employment opportunities.

**Talent & Culinary Relations Manager**

The Talent & Culinary Relations Manager oversees menu coordination, talent travel logistics, and serves as the primary point of contact for chefs and culinary talent participating in HACA programs. This position works closely with the Executive Chef to ensure successful program execution and is responsible for engaging participating chefs and talent to collect data on internship, stage, and employment opportunities for inclusion in the workforce directories.

**Senior Director of Operations**

The Senior Director of Operations is responsible for the comprehensive planning, coordination, and execution of the FEAST Summit, as well as ensuring operational readiness and logistical oversight for this major workforce development convening.

**Content Marketing Manager**

The Content Marketing Manager is responsible for promoting all HACA programs through targeted marketing and outreach campaigns to maximize awareness, enrollment, and participation. This position also supports workforce infrastructure by managing content uploads and updates for the website and directories.

**Senior Director of Marketing & PR**

The Senior Director of Marketing & Public Relations provides strategic leadership for all marketing, communications, and public relations efforts across HACA programs. This role oversees the Content Marketing Manager, ensures marketing alignment with organizational goals, enhances program visibility, and manages web development and digital platform strategy.

**Vice President**

The Vice President provides executive leadership and oversight for fundraising, development, and sponsorship initiatives, including securing philanthropic and corporate support and cultivating strategic partnerships. This role also supports organizational planning and program implementation across HACA initiatives.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO provides visionary leadership and strategic direction for HACA, ensuring effective execution of programs and initiatives and alignment with organizational goals, including advancing workforce development and strengthening Hawaii's culinary and food economy.

## BUDGET JUSTIFICATION - EQUIPMENT AND MOTOR VEHICLES

Period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Applicant: HAWAII AG & CULINARY ALLIANCE

DESCRIPTION EQUIPMENT	NO. OF ITEMS	COST PER ITEM	TOTAL COST	TOTAL BUDGETED
N/A			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
<b>TOTAL:</b>			\$ -	
JUSTIFICATION/COMMENTS:				

DESCRIPTION OF MOTOR VEHICLE	NO. OF VEHICLES	COST PER VEHICLE	TOTAL COST	TOTAL BUDGETED
N/A			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
<b>TOTAL:</b>			\$ -	
JUSTIFICATION/COMMENTS:				

## BUDGET JUSTIFICATION - CAPITAL PROJECT DETAILS

Period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Applicant: HAWAII AG & CULINARY ALLIANCE

<b>FUNDING AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>						
TOTAL PROJECT COST	ALL SOURCES OF FUNDS RECEIVED IN PRIOR YEARS		STATE FUNDS REQUESTED	OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDS REQUESTED	FUNDING REQUIRED IN SUCCEEDING YEARS	
	FY:2024-2025	FY:2025-2026	FY:2026-2027	FY:2026-2027	FY:2027-2028	FY:2028-2029
PLANS						
LAND ACQUISITION						
DESIGN						
CONSTRUCTION						
EQUIPMENT						
<b>TOTAL:</b>						
<b>JUSTIFICATION/COMMENTS:</b>						

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, GRANTS, AND / OR GRANTS IN AID**

Applicant: HAWAII AG & CULINARY ALLIANCE

Contracts Total: \$ **1,643,964.00**

	<b>CONTRACT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATES</b>	<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT ENTITY (U.S./State/Hawaii/ Honolulu/ Kauai/ Maui County)</b>	<b>CONTRACT VALUE</b>
1	Grant in Aid FY '23	April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023	Office of Community Service	State	\$ 170,000.00
2	Non-Profit Recovery Grant Program	2023	Department of Community Services	City and County of Honolulu	\$ 67,964.00
3	HTA Contract, Signature Event	August 9, 2023 - December 31, 2023	Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau	State	\$ 350,000.00
4	Grant in Aid FY '24	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	Department of Agriculture	State	\$ 150,000.00
5	HTA Contract, Community Enrichment Program	January 1 - December 30, 2024	Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement	State	\$ 41,000.00
6	HTA Contract, Signature Event	January 1 - December 30, 2024	Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement	State	\$ 190,000.00
7	Grant in Aid FY '25	July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	Department of Agriculture	State	\$ 75,000.00
8	Maui OED FY '26	July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026	Office of Economic Development	Maui County	\$ 50,000.00
9	Grant in Aid FY '26	July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026	Department of Agriculture & Biosecurity	State	\$ 300,000.00
10	HTA Contract, Signature Event	July 15, 2025 - June 30, 2026	Council for Native Hawaiian	State	\$ 250,000.00
11					
12		10			Application for Grants

# \*GIA FY '27 Application Form\_COMBINED NOT SIGNED

Final Audit Report

2026-01-24

Created:	2026-01-24
By:	Denise Yamaguchi (info@hawaiifoodandwinefestival.com)
Status:	Signed
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