

**STATE OF HAWAII
GRANT-IN-AID APPLICATION
FY 2026–2027**

Project Title

Keau'ohana Native Rainforest Restoration and Environmental Education

Applicant Organization

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration (HER)
501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

Project Location

Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve
Puna District, Hawai'i Island

Funding Requested

\$128,000

Fiscal Year(s)

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

Funding Program

State of Hawai'i Grant-In-Aid (GIA)

Primary Contact

Cindy J. Dupuis, M.S.
President & Project Director
Hawai'i Environmental Restoration
Email: dupuis@hawaii.edu
Phone: (808) 937-8867

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



Cindy J. Dupuis

1/15/2026

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME AND TITLE

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 ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION

DBA/Trade Name: Hawaii Environmental Restoration

Issue Date: 01/01/2026

Status: Compliant

Hawaii Tax#:

New Hawaii Tax#:

FEIN/SSN#:

UI#:

XXXXXX9356

DCCA FILE#:

300649

Status of Compliance for this Vendor on issue date:

Form	Department(s)	Status
A-6	Hawaii Department of Taxation	Compliant
8821	Internal Revenue Service	Waived
COGS	Hawaii Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs	Exempt
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, HAWAII REVISIED 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, Hawaii 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, Hawaii 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, Hawaii 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, Hawaii 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 Environmental Restoration

(Typed Name of Individual or Organization)

(Signature) *C. Alpeui*

1-15-2026
(Date)

(Typed Name) Cindy J. Alpeui

President / Project Director
(Title)



Hawaii Environmental Restoration (HER) 501(c)(3)
PO Box 1028, Pahoa, HI. 96778 USA
hawaiienvironmentalrestoration.org

Date: 1.15.2025

Aloha Representative,

As president of *Hawaii Environmental Restoration (HER) 501(c)(3)*, I hereby verify that any Grant-In-Aid awarded by the State Legislature in response to this application shall be used for a public purpose.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

President of HER and Project Director – Cindy J. Dupuis
Contact: dupuis@hawaii.edu Cell phone: 808 937 8867

Final Hawaii State Gia Application 2026–2027

Project Title: Keau‘ohana Native Rainforest Restoration and Environmental Education

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.

- View merged attachment above

2. Declaration Statement

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

- View merged attachment above

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](#).

- View merged attachment above

II. Background and Summary

1. Applicant Background

Hawai‘i Environmental Restoration (HER) is a Hawai‘i-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2019 after five years of successful work under Mālama O Puna in Pāhoa. HER’s mission is to preserve Hawai‘i’s unique cultural and biological resources through environmental restoration and education. Spiritually and culturally,

HER is guided by a commitment to cultivate a sacred rapport with the land—honoring Hawai'i's native people, perpetuating Hawaiian cultural values, and protecting native ecosystems for future generations.

HER's flagship project is the long-term restoration of Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve, the largest and most intact native lowland wet forest remaining below 1,000ft elevation in the State of Hawai'i. Restoration efforts have been consistent since the project began in 2014, integrating invasive species control, native species outplanting, endangered species protection, trail maintenance, and extensive community engagement.

Since inception, HER and its predecessor organization have facilitated more than 168 volunteer events, engaged over 1,360 individuals, logged over 8,400 volunteer hours, and planted more than 3,700 native seedlings. In recent years, HER has expanded its stewardship footprint to approximately 196 acres across the Puna District through partnerships and cooperative land management, while maintaining Keau'ohana as its core demonstration and education site.

HER is led by President and Project Director Cindy J. Dupuis, M.S., a tropical conservation biologist with over 35 years of experience in sustainable development, native forest restoration, and community-based conservation in Hawai'i.

2. Goals and Objectives Related to the Request

The impacts of HER's work are measured in both ecological recovery and human engagement. The primary goal of this request is to continue and strengthen the long-term restoration and stewardship of Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve during fiscal years 2026–2027. Specific objectives include:

- Maintaining and improving native forest dominance across the 20-acre core restoration area through systematic invasive species control.
- Conducting repeated follow-up treatments to suppress invasive seed banks and prevent reinvasion.
- Continuing strategic outplanting of native canopy, sub-canopy, and understory species to rebuild forest structure and resilience, due to invasive species, and the impacts of Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) (which began in 2015, one year following damages sustained by Hurricane Iselle).
- Protecting and enhancing habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered native species, including ha'iwale (*Cyrtandra nanawalenis*).
- Maintaining and improving trails and volunteer access areas to support safe restoration work and educational use.
- Expanding environmental education and community engagement through volunteer events, school visits, workshops, and public outreach.

By the close of FY 2026–27, we expect to complete the 11th systematic pass of the 20-acre Keau'ohana core site, with several follow-up sweeps to protect new plantings. Each pass builds upon the last, steadily reducing invasive dominance and allowing

native species to consolidate their hold. The broader outcomes lie in resilience. As shade returns and invasive regrowth slows, the workload is gradually reduced, signaling that ecological stability is taking root, offering hope despite canopy loss to ROD and other pressures.

HER's restoration approach instills a deepened understanding of plant dynamics, ecological relationships, and the direct consequences of human choices. Through hands-on work and educational programming, community members begin to connect the dots between forest systems, food systems, and the choices made in daily life, from landscaping decisions to consumption patterns. Our outreach teaches principles that are both locally rooted and globally transferable, such as distinguishing native from invasive species, the fundamentals of composting and soil regeneration, and the importance of working together across cultures and communities to improve the health of our shared environment.

3. Public Purpose and Need

Lowland wet forests are among the most endangered ecosystems in Hawai'i and globally. Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve represents the last significant reservoir of native lowland wet forest biodiversity in the state. Its protection serves a critical public purpose by conserving endangered species habitat, providing a seed bank for lowland native species, safeguarding watershed function, supporting climate resilience, and preserving cultural and educational values on public land.

Keau'ohana is state-owned land managed for public benefit. HER's stewardship directly supports the State of Hawai'i's mandate to preserve natural resources for present and future generations. Without continued active management, invasive species, and canopy loss from ROD would rapidly degrade the forest beyond recovery.

The work being done in Keau'ohana ripples far beyond the forest floor. It not only safeguards one of Hawai'i's last native lowland wet forests, but offers a vital learning environment and living example of what grassroots conservation can achieve. HER's long-term impact lies in both ecological recovery and the growing community of stewards who are learning to care for this land and, by extension, the world around them. The forest stands as a model of active restoration in a time of climate disruption and habitat collapse.

4. Target Population

The project serves multiple overlapping populations:

- The general public, who benefit from the preservation of a rare and irreplaceable ecosystem on public land.

- Community volunteers, students, and educators who participate directly in hands-on restoration and environmental education.
- Researchers and conservation professionals who utilize Keau'ohana as a living laboratory for lowland wet forest restoration.

While ecological impact is central to our work, our community engagement goals are equally vital. We view volunteerism as a pathway to stewardship, and each forest workday or educational presentation helps deepen public understanding of Hawai'i's native ecosystems. Annually, HER engages approximately 150 volunteers through 12–20 restoration and outreach events, while reaching thousands more through community events, presentations, and digital outreach.

In parallel, we continue to grow our online presence, now reaching over 1,000 subscribers via email, with even larger audiences through Facebook and Instagram. These platforms allow us to share restoration updates, celebrate milestones, and offer ongoing education to a broader community. A full record of our activities, including photos and event recaps, can be found at:

<https://hawaiienvironmentalrestoration.org/blog>.

5. Geographic Coverage

The project is situated within the Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve in the Puna District of Hawai'i Island. Restoration efforts are focused on a consolidated 20-acre core site encompassing the most biologically diverse portions of the reserve on the makai side of Highway 130. Adjacent buffer areas and access trails are maintained as needed to protect the ecological integrity of this core restoration zone.

A significant milestone in this long-term restoration effort is the upcoming fencing project, scheduled to begin this spring and funded through state watershed programs administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DLNR/DOFAW). This investment reflects the State's recognition of sustained, on-the-ground stewardship and demonstrated restoration outcomes at Keau'ohana over more than a decade of active management. Installation of ungulate fencing is critical to the project's long-term success, as feral pigs continue to undermine restoration efforts by disturbing soils, uprooting seedlings, and trampling the fragile native understory. As part of this effort, approximately three acres of the core site located on the opposite side of Highway 130—representing some of the most biologically rich habitat within the project area and containing a thriving cluster of the endangered ha'iwale—will be secured and protected, helping to redefine and strengthen the ecological focus of the restoration site.

III. Service Summary and Outcomes

1. Scope of Work, Tasks, and Responsibilities

HER will continue to employ an integrated restoration strategy combining manual, mechanical, and targeted chemical control of invasive plant species, including but not limited to *Clidemia hirta*, *Paederia foetida*, the few remaining *Psidium cattleianum* (strawberry guava), and other emerging threats. Early detection and rapid response protocols are used to address new invasions.

Native species outplanting will continue during optimal seasonal windows, using locally sourced plant material grown by partner nurseries. In recent years, we have responded to significant shade loss by broadening our plant palette to include more native species, including select introductions not originally found at Keau'ohana. This strategy aims to build ecological diversity and resilience in the face of climate change and emerging pests and pathogens. Many of these experimental species are now thriving, offering encouraging signs for a biodiverse and layered native forest community.

Every year, hundreds of seedlings feed directly into restoration efforts, ensuring a diverse and steady supply of locally adapted stock. Outplants are watered, mulched, fertilized, flagged, and regularly maintained for maximize survival. Propagation efforts include direct seeding of locally collected seeds, and scattering of fast-growing shade-producing native species. Out-planting of the endangered ha'iwale (*Cyrtandran nanawalensis*) is also conducted under a threatened and endangered permit from the DLNR/DOFAW. Trails and access routes will be maintained to support restoration efficiency, volunteer safety, and educational use.

Community engagement remains a central pillar of HER's approach. Our work aligns with the growing recognition of biocultural restoration: efforts that merge cultural practice with ecological restoration for long-term success. Seasonal Volunteer Events are held in celebration of the Solstices and Equinoxes, and special events are scheduled with local and international volunteer students and community groups to learn about native forest restoration, and about general Hawai'i plant issues and solutions. Visits begin with Hawaiian protocol at the forest's ahu, followed by introductions, historical context, and discussions about Keau'ohana's cultural and ecological importance. Participants then engage in guided restoration activities, gaining hands-on learning while contributing to the healing of the forest.

Outside of the forest, HER maintains an active community presence through events such as Earth Day, Revitalize Puna, and the 'Ōhi'a Love Fest, as well as school presentations and Community workshops. Her educational program has reached thousands of local residents and visitors wishing for a more meaningful experience, contributing essential knowledge for the protection and improvement of Hawaii's fragile and compromised lowland environment, while learning to make wise plant choices for sustainable living in their own lives.

Each season builds upon the last, creating a steady, regenerative process that continues to strengthen over time. With a committed team, a grounded and adaptable approach, strong cultural foundations, and deep community roots, HER is well-positioned to continue guiding Keau'ohana toward recovery and resilience.

2. Projected Timeline

Restoration and stewardship activities at Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve occur year-round and follow a cyclical, adaptive management schedule refined through more than a decade of continuous fieldwork. All sections of the 20-acre core restoration area receive systematic treatment at least once annually, with priority areas receiving multiple follow-up passes to suppress invasive regrowth, protect new outplantings, and respond to changing site conditions.

During each fiscal year quarter, field crews conduct weekly restoration days focused on invasive species control, native outplanting, and trail and access maintenance. Follow-up sweeps are strategically timed to address invasive seed banks and secondary regrowth. Native species are outplanted throughout the year during favorable moisture and temperature conditions, with an emphasis on wetter periods to maximize survival. Newly planted areas are revisited regularly for protective maintenance.

Volunteer engagement and environmental education are integrated across all quarters. Community workdays, school visits, and educational events are scheduled throughout the year, with increased activity aligned with school calendars and seasonal observances. Documentation and reporting occur continuously through weekly field logs, photographic records, and spatial tracking, supporting adaptive management and required State reporting.

By the end of FY 2026–2027, HER anticipates completing the 11th full systematic pass of the Keau'ohana core restoration site, with multiple targeted follow-up treatments to reduce invasive dominance, strengthen native regeneration, and advance long-term forest resilience. This phased, long-term timeline reflects the ecological reality of lowland rainforest restoration and ensures that State investment results in sustained, measurable progress rather than short-term intervention.

3. Quality Assurance and Evaluation

All restoration and outreach activities are recorded in detail, forming the basis of our evaluation, grant reporting, and communication efforts. Weekly field logs document the date of each restoration day, crew and volunteer names, hours worked, site conditions, dominant invasive species, control strategies used, areas treated, outplanting details, and observations made. These records are supported by photographic documentation, qualitative observations, and spatial data GPS/mapping. Similar records are kept for community and school events, including participant lists, affiliation purpose and intention, event summaries, and photographs. Annual reports synthesize these data to track year to year progress and emerging trends.

The HER project director and long-standing crew members contribute consistent on-the-ground observations that guide adaptive decision-making. Weekly field efforts are guided by continual assessment of invasive species behavior, outplant success, and landscape change. Together, quantitative and qualitative measures show ecological recovery through measures such as numbers of seedlings and frequency of passes, while also capturing the intangible but critical outcomes of community stewardship and cultural connection. HER records are not only for compliance, but for reflection, growth, and the ongoing refinement of strategies to protect one of Hawai'i's last lowland rainforests.

HER collaborates with university researchers, DOFAW staff, and forest ecologists to inform adaptive management and ensure best practices. HER is a key collaborator in the Lowland Wet Forest Working Group (LWFWG) with leading researchers, including Dr. Becky Ostertag (UHH) and Dr. Susan Cordell (IPIF), contributing to forest planning across East Hawai'i and strengthening peer-led learning around restoration strategy.

4. Measures of Effectiveness

Weekly logs include the following data:

- Date of forest restoration activity
- Names of workers and volunteers
- Volunteer participation names, numbers and hours
- Number of restoration passes completed
- Number of acres maintained and restored
- Names and number of native species planted
- Weather and environmental conditions
- Geographic area covered
- General vegetation observations
- Type of restoration work conducted
- Dominant invasive species, ranked by severity
- Herbicide treatment notes and application details
- Number of educational and outreach events
- Descriptions of special volunteer events
- Noteworthy observations of restoration challenges and successes

HER also compiles annual reports with a focus on both field progress and outreach achievements:

- Narrative summaries of forest restoration accomplishments
- Descriptions and documentation of all special events
- List and count of recruited volunteers for each event
- Total number of volunteers and hours contributed for each year/ and since 2014
- Total average of volunteers and hours contributed since 2014
- Total native and endangered species outplants and in-kind value
- E-mail subscriber totals and social media follower metrics

- Annual planning and adaptation for upcoming cycles
- Private donor counts and online donation totals (Global Giving, Give Big)
- Fiscal oversight and reporting for grants, budgets, and tax filings
- Internal financial statements and reconciliation reports (monthly)

Supporting documentation includes:

- HER website and blog
- Six-minute video overview of the project, and other supplemental videos
- Project and vegetation education PowerPoint presentations
- Educational outreach materials (poster boards, brochures, native vs. invasive card deck)
- *Hawai'i Plant World Essentials* picture identification guidebook for sustainable landscaping in Hawai'i.
- Keau'ohana Restoration Site Map
- Photographic records of crew work, volunteer events, and community outreach

This combination of narrative, photographic, observational, and quantitative data allows HER to measure success, document challenges, and guide future action while maintaining transparency and community connection.

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 (See table below)
 - b. Personnel salaries and wages (See table below)
 - c. Equipment and motor vehicles: N/A
 - d. Capital project details: N/A
 - e. Government contracts, grants, and grants in aid (See table below)

BUDGET REQUEST BY SOURCE OF FUNDS

Period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Applicant: Hawaii Environmental Restoration

BUDGET CATEGORIES		Total State Funds Requested (a)	Total Federal Funds Requested (b)	Total County Funds Requested (c)	Total Private/Other Funds Requested (d)
A.	PERSONNEL COST				
	1. Salaries	100,000	0	35,500	24,500
	2. Payroll Taxes & Assessments	15,000	0	5,000	1,000
	3. Fringe Benefits	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL PERSONNEL COST	115,000		40,500	25,500
B.	OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES				
	1. Airfare, Inter-Island	0	0	0	0
	2. Insurance	2,000	0	2,000	0
	3. Lease/Rental of Equipment	0	0	0	0
	4. Lease/Rental of Space	1,200	0	1,200	0
	5. Staff Training	0	0	0	1,000
	6. Supplies	2,500	0	9,400	10,400
	7. Telecommunication	800	0	0	0
	8. Utilities	0	0	0	0
	9. Contract Workers	0	0	0	0
	10. Office supplies	2,000	0	0	1,000
	11. Transportation	1,200	0	0	0
	12. Other Admin (fees, prof svcs, marketing)	3,300	0	1,900	2,100
	13.				
	14.				
	15.				
	16.				
	17.				
	18.				
	19.				
	20.				
	TOTAL OTHER CURRENT EXPENSES	13,000	0	14,500	14,500
C.	EQUIPMENT PURCHASES	0	0	0	0
D.	MOTOR VEHICLE PURCHASES	0	0	0	0
E.	CAPITAL	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (A+B+C+D+E)		128,000	0	55,000	40,000
SOURCES OF FUNDING			Budget Prepared By:		
	(a) Total State Funds Requested	128,000	Cindy Dupuis (608) 937-8867		
	(b) Total Federal Funds Requested	0	Name (Please type or print) Phone		
	(c) Total County Funds Requested	55,000			
	(d) Total Private/Other Funds Requested	40,000	Signature of Authorized Official Date		
TOTAL BUDGET		223,000	Cindy J. Dupuis Name and Title (Please type or print) <i>President / Project Director</i>		

Applicant _Hawaii Environmental Restoration (HER) 501(C)(3)

Period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Applicant: Hawaii Environmental Restoration

POSITION TITLE	FULL TIME EQUIVALENT	ANNUAL SALARY A	% OF TIME ALLOCATED TO GRANT REQUEST B	TOTAL STATE FUNDS REQUESTED (A x B)
Field Biologist/Forest Ecologist		\$24,000.00	50.00%	\$ 12,000.00
Senior Field Tech		\$15,000.00	100.00%	\$ 15,000.00
Senior Field Tech		\$15,000.00	100.00%	\$ 15,000.00
Field Tech II		\$14,500.00	100.00%	\$ 14,500.00
Field Tech I & Pesticide Sprayer		\$17,500.00	100.00%	\$ 17,500.00
Field Tech I		\$12,000.00	100.00%	\$ 12,000.00
Field Tech I		\$12,000.00	100.00%	\$ 12,000.00
Field Tech I		\$12,000.00	5.00%	\$ 600.00
Field Tech I		\$12,000.00	0.00%	\$ -
Field Tech I		\$12,000.00	0.00%	\$ -
Community Outreach / Office Assistant		\$14,000.00	10.00%	\$ 1,400.00
				\$ -
				\$ -
TOTAL:				100,000.00
JUSTIFICATION/COMMENTS:				

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, GRANTS, AND / OR GRANTS IN AID

Applicant: Hawaii Environmental Restoration

Contracts Total: 223,000

	CONTRACT DESCRIPTION	EFFECTIVE DATES	AGENCY	GOVERNMENT ENTITY (U.S./State/Hawaii/ Honolulu/ Kauai/ Maui County)	CONTRACT VALUE
1	HI State GIA	7/1/26-6/30/27	HI State	State	128,000
2	Hawaii County Waiwai GIA	pending	Hawaii County	Hawaii County	45,000
3	Hawaii County Contingency Fund Grant	pending	Hawaii County	Hawaii County	10,000
4	Private Non-Profit Grant	pending			30,000
5	Small private business & individual contribution	7/1/26-6/30/27			10,000

Budget Request Justification/comments:

HER respectfully requests \$128,000 in State Grant-In-Aid funding for FY 2026–2027, to be disbursed quarterly. This request represents a modest, inflation-adjusted increase from HER’s most recent State GIA award in 2017 (\$118,000) and reflects the current cost of sustaining essential restoration, stewardship, and public access activities on

State land. The request supports continued implementation of an established program and does not represent an expansion in scope.

Increased operational costs reflect both inflationary pressures and the unforeseen impacts of Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) within the Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve, which have extended the duration and intensity of restoration needs. Ongoing management has resulted in measurable indicators of recovery, including natural 'ōhi'a recruitment, successful outplantings, and increasing native canopy cover. These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of sustained, community-based stewardship and the importance of maintaining consistent support during this critical recovery period.

The 2026/27 operating budget for HER's Keau'ohana Native Forest Restoration and Education Project is expected to total approximately \$233,000 which includes \$10,000 for in-kind donations. However, projected expenses specific to the Keau'ohana Native Forest Restoration and Education Project total \$150,000. State GIA funding is intended to serve as the project's primary source of stable operational support, covering core personnel and program costs, while complementary funding from private non-profit foundation grants, County sources, private small business & individual donors, and in-kind contributions to help leverage and strengthen the State's investment.

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
\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$128,000

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

For fiscal year 2027, HER is seeking and/or has secured support from a diversified mix of public, private, and community-based sources consistent with the attached budget. Pending funding includes \$128,000 from the Hawai'i State Grants-in-Aid program and up to \$55,000 in County support through Hawai'i County Grants-in-Aid and/or other County funding mechanisms. County funding requests are not assumed to be awarded concurrently and will be finalized in alignment with the approved project budget and scope. Additional pending support includes \$30,000 from the Kosasa Foundation. An application to the Atherton Family Foundation and/or Hawai'i County Contingency Funds may be submitted if additional support is needed.

Volunteer labor and in-kind support remain essential components of HER's operating model and help maximize the impact of public investment. Committed funding includes

approximately \$10,000 in small private donations and \$10,000 in in-kind contributions, as reflected in the Private/Other funds category of the budget. HER also participates in GlobalGiving, Give Big Hawai'i, and the Mālama Hawai'i program to support ongoing fundraising and community engagement.

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 No tax credits received in past three years nor anticipated

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.

HER operates with modest yet diversified funding. Within the prior three fiscal years, HER has received and managed the following federal, state, and county government grants and grants-in-aid in support of its programs. For FY 2023–2024, HER received \$2,500 in Hawai'i County Contingency Funds and \$35,000 from the Hawai'i County Grants-in-Aid program. For FY 2024–2025, HER received \$6,000 in Hawai'i County Contingency Funds. For FY 2025–2026, HER received \$10,000 in Hawai'i County Contingency Funds.

For fiscal year 2026–2027, HER is seeking and/or anticipates \$128,000 from the Hawai'i State Grants-in-Aid program and/or \$45,000 from the Hawai'i County Grants-in-Aid program, and may be requesting \$10,000 in County Contingency Funds as reflected in the attached budget. No federal program funding is included in the operating budget for FY 2026–2027.

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

Unrestricted net assets as of 12/31/2025 was \$48,623.98.

V. Experience and Capability

1. Necessary Skills and Experience

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration (HER) has the technical expertise, institutional knowledge, and proven administrative capacity to successfully deliver the proposed restoration and stewardship services at Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve. The project is led by President and Project Director Cindy Jaya Dupuis, M.S., a tropical conservation biologist with over 35 years of experience in sustainable development and conservation in Hawai'i. Jaya began her involvement at Keau'ohana as a volunteer and conducted her graduate thesis research at the site before founding HER, providing rare continuity of scientific, cultural, and place-based knowledge. She serves as lead administrator, restoration planner, educator, and community outreach coordinator for the project.

Between 2014 and 2018, the Keau'ohana restoration project was supported almost entirely through State Grant-In-Aid funding administered under Mālama O Puna, HER's predecessor organization. These GIA awards enabled the project to launch, stabilize, and establish a long-term restoration framework. All awarded funds were fully expended in compliance with State requirements and resulted in measurable ecological gains, strong volunteer engagement, and a durable stewardship model that continues today.

HER has demonstrated resilience and fiscal responsibility during funding interruptions. In 2019, following the 2018 Kīlauea lava event and the absence of State GIA funding, HER successfully secured alternative support from private foundations, County contingency funds, and individual donors, allowing uninterrupted stewardship of Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve. Over the past three years, HER has continued restoration activities through diversified funding and significant in-kind and volunteer contributions, supported by a skilled team that includes part-time forest technicians, a CPA, outreach assistance, and technical support. Many team members contribute volunteer time beyond paid hours out of personal kuleana to the forest.

Building on this foundation, HER now stewards 196 acres in the Puna District, including 20 acres in Halepua'a Forest Reserve and 156 acres of Wai'ele PONC lands. This expansion, together with our partnership with the Koa'e Native Plant Nursery, amplifies our landscape-scale restoration impact.

2. Facilities

HER utilizes field-based operational facilities and equipment appropriate for native forest restoration on State land, including secure tool storage, restoration supplies and equipment, and established access to work areas within Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve. These facilities adequately support invasive species control, native species

outplanting, site maintenance, monitoring, and volunteer coordination. In addition, HER maintains office space necessary to carry out administrative, fiscal, reporting, and coordination duties required for nonprofit operations and State grant compliance.

VI. Personnel: Project Organization and Staffing

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

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration (HER) operates with a lean, experienced staffing structure designed to efficiently deliver long-term forest restoration and community education on State land. The Keau'ohana Native Rainforest Restoration and Environmental Education Project is overseen by HER's President and Project Director, who provides overall leadership, technical direction, fiscal oversight, and compliance with State Grant-In-Aid requirements.

Field implementation is carried out by a small team of trained field technicians responsible for invasive species control, native species outplanting, trail maintenance, and volunteer support. Field staff are selected based on prior experience in native forest restoration, invasive species management, and outdoor fieldwork in Hawai'i's lowland wet forest environments.

Staff receive ongoing supervision and training in site-specific restoration protocols, safety procedures, tool and herbicide use, and culturally appropriate engagement with volunteers and partners. Volunteer coordination and community education are integrated into staff responsibilities, with training provided in volunteer safety, task instruction, and public engagement.

Administrative functions, including scheduling, documentation, reporting, and financial tracking, are managed internally by the Project Director, ensuring continuity, accountability, and consistency across project years. HER's staffing model emphasizes continuity, institutional knowledge, and adaptive learning, enabling the organization to respond effectively to changing site conditions, emerging threats such as Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death, and evolving restoration best practices while delivering measurable outcomes.

2. Organization Chart

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration operates under a nonprofit governance structure with clear lines of responsibility and supervision for the proposed project.

- **Board of Directors**
Provides governance, fiduciary oversight, and organizational policy direction.

- **President / Project Director**
Overall project leadership; program design and implementation; staff supervision; volunteer oversight; fiscal management; grant compliance and reporting; partner coordination.
- **Field Technicians / Restoration Staff**
Implement restoration activities; invasive species control; native outplanting; trail maintenance; volunteer support; field documentation.
- **Volunteers and Community Participants**
Support restoration, education, and stewardship activities under staff supervision.

The Keau'ohana Native Rainforest Restoration and Environmental Education Project is a core program of HER and is managed directly within this structure.

3. Compensation

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration maintains modest compensation levels consistent with its size and nonprofit mission. The annual salary ranges for the three highest-paid positions are as follows (by position title only):

- **Project Director/ Field Biologist and Forest Ecologist** \$24,000/Year
- **Senior Field Technician Assistant / Herbicidal Spray Technician:** \$15,000/Year
- **Herbicide spray Technician :** \$17,500/Year

Compensation reflects part-time and full-time equivalents as applicable and is reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors to ensure fiscal responsibility and organizational sustainability.

VII. Other

1. Litigation

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration is not a party to any pending litigation and has no outstanding judgments.

2. Licensure or Accreditation

Hawai'i Environmental Restoration is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in good standing with the State of Hawai'i. Project leadership possesses advanced

academic training and extensive professional experience in tropical conservation biology, native forest restoration, and community-based environmental stewardship in Hawai'i. Restoration activities involving threatened and endangered species are conducted under applicable permits issued by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DLNR/DOFAW).

3. Private Educational Institutions

This grant will not be used to support or benefit any sectarian or non-sectarian private educational institution. Educational activities supported by this project are provided as public environmental education and community outreach on State land and are open to the general public, schools, and community groups.

4. Future Sustainability Plan

HER's approach to sustainability is grounded in diversified funding, long-term stewardship planning, and strong community engagement. If State Grant-In-Aid funding is received for FY 2026–2027, HER will continue to leverage this support as the stable financial backbone of the Keau'ohana restoration program while pursuing complementary funding from foundations, County sources, and individual donors.

If State GIA funding is not received beyond FY 2027, HER will prioritize sustaining core stewardship activities at Keau'ohana through a combination of private foundation support, County funding, individual donations, and sustained volunteer labor. The organization's long history of operating through funding fluctuations—including periods without State support—demonstrates its ability to adapt while maintaining continuity of care for the forest.

HER's emphasis on systematic restoration passes, reduced long-term maintenance needs as native canopy recovers, and a growing base of trained volunteers contributes to long-term cost efficiency. Continued community investment, strong partnerships, and demonstrated ecological results position the project to endure beyond the term of State funding, ensuring that public investments made to date continue to yield lasting ecological and social benefits.



Hawaii Environmental Restoration (HER) 501(c)(3)
PO Box 1028, Pahoā, HI. 96778 USA
hawaiienvironmentalrestoration.org

1.19.2026

To the Honorable Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature and GIA Review Committees:

On behalf of Hawai'i Environmental Restoration (HER), we respectfully submit this Grant-In-Aid application for continued stewardship of Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve in the Puna District of Hawai'i Island.

Between 2014 and 2018, under the umbrella of Mālama O Puna, this project was made possible almost entirely through State Grant-In-Aid support. Those formative investments allowed the restoration of Keau'ohana's remaining lowland wet forest to take root, establish momentum, and demonstrate measurable success. All awarded funds were responsibly expended, resulting in lasting ecological gains and a strong foundation for community-based stewardship on State land.

In 2019, State GIA awards were suspended due to the economic impacts of the 2018 Kīlauea lava event. During that period, and in the years since, HER sought alternative funding to ensure that stewardship of Keau'ohana continued uninterrupted. While this diversification allowed the work to persist, it also underscored the importance of stable State support for the long-term care of State Forest Reserves.

Today, as the project enters its twelfth year, Keau'ohana is showing clear signs of recovery and resilience. Native regeneration is occurring, long-established plantings are thriving, and invasive dominance has declined in managed areas. The State's current efforts to fence the reserve further strengthen the outlook for long-term restoration success and amplify the value of continued stewardship.

Because Keau'ohana is a State Forest Reserve, HER believes that State Grant-In-Aid funding is an appropriate and effective means of supporting this work. We respectfully request consideration for a **\$128,000 GIA award for FY 2026–2027** to provide core support for this proven program, protect prior State investment, and help secure the ecological future of one of Hawai'i's most endangered ecosystems.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to Hawai'i's natural resources and for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully submitted,

President of HER and Project Director – Cindy J. Dupuis

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