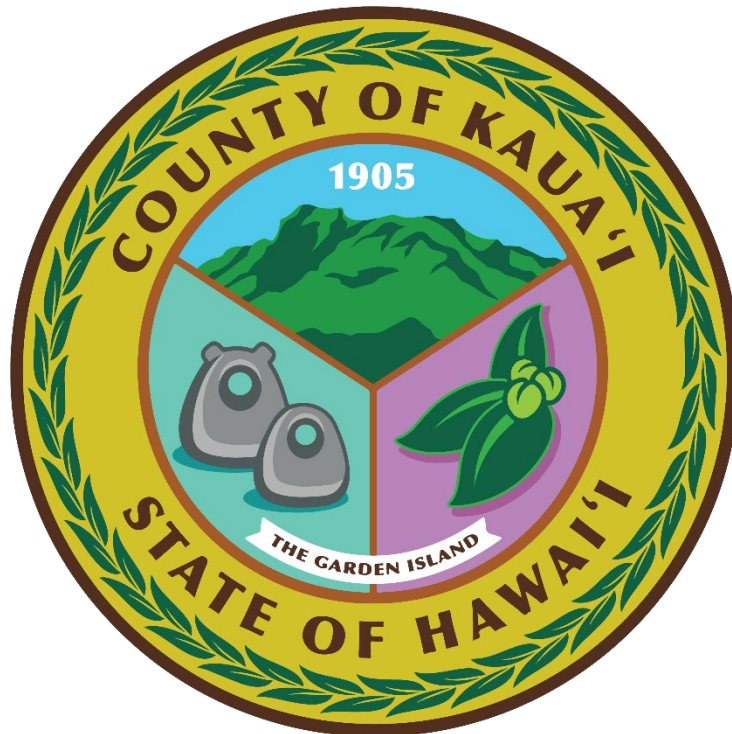


**County of Kauai  
Office of Economic Development  
4444 Rice Street, Suite 200  
Lihue, HI 96766**



**Request for Proposals  
Innovation Grants for Fiscal Year 2025-2026**

RFP ISSUANCE/APPLICATION OPEN DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 2025  
*Project Funding period: Full execution of the Grant Agreement to October 30, 2026*

**DEADLINE TO APPLY TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2025, AT 4:00PM**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (“RFP”)  
COUNTY OF KAUAI OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
INNOVATION GRANTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026**

APPLICATIONS for funding for the County of Kauai Innovation Grants will be available at 8am HST on **Friday, August 1, 2025**, for the County of Kaua’i Innovation Grants for Fiscal Year **2025-2026**. Applications must be received on or before 4:00 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time on **Tuesday, September 2, 2025**, via the SMAApply System. Applicants will be notified of funding during the week of **October 13, 2025**. The weblink to the application at SMAApply can be found here:

[https://cok-oedgrants.smaply.us/prog/innovation\\_grant/](https://cok-oedgrants.smaply.us/prog/innovation_grant/)

We do not accept proposals through US Mail, hand delivery, email or by fax. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. The County reserves the right to reject any proposal.

The project funding period will be upon full execution of the Grant Agreement through October 30, 2026. The intent of the grant program is to deploy innovation on-island in the areas of small business, technology, transportation, energy, agriculture, local manufacturing, creative industries, workforce development, circular economies, tourism destination management and product development. Proposals must identify a known deficiency, problem, or need within the Kauai community and deploy an innovative community project that will be or has been successful in other contexts. Proposals submitted shall be reviewed and considered for the receipt of funding, to applicant organizations.

A zoom meeting to discuss the RFP will be held on **Thursday, August 14, 2025**, at 04:00p.m. at the following link: [Registration Link](#)

We will be posting the recorded webinar on <http://www.kauaiforward.com> by **Tuesday, August 19, 2025**. The deadline for submitting written questions is **Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.** via [oedgrants@kauai.gov](mailto:oedgrants@kauai.gov).

Notification of OED’s approval and recommendation for funding will be made the week of **October 13, 2025**.

If you need an auxiliary aid/service or other accommodation due to a disability, please contact Therilynn Martin-Haumea at 808-241-4299 or [tmhaumea@kauai.gov](mailto:tmhaumea@kauai.gov) no later than **Wednesday, August 13, 2025**. Requests made as early as possible will allow adequate time to fulfill your request.

Upon request, this notice is available in alternate formats such as large print, Braille, or electronic copy.

Nalani Kaauwai-Brun  
Director, Office of Economic Development

The Garden Island  
Publication Date: **Friday, August 1, 2025**

**COUNTY OF KAUAI OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
INNOVATION GRANTS  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

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## SECTION 1: ADMINISTRATION

The County of Kauaʻi's Office of Economic Development ("OED") is requesting proposals from qualified not-for-profit organizations incorporated under the laws of the State of Hawaii, non-profit organizations exempt from the federal income tax by the Internal Revenue Service (must be in current compliance with the IRS) or a Kauai-based businesses with a non-profit fiscal sponsor that they have previously worked with (In the case of a non-profit organization, members of its governing board shall have served without compensation and have no material conflict of interest) for its **Innovation Grant for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. *We will be accepting applications for innovative community projects that identify and solve local problems that will aid Kauai's economy to generate short-term and long-term economic growth and diversification.***

### 1.01 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES

Eligible proposals include innovative new programs, or innovative new projects that advance innovation in the program areas of small business, technology, transportation, energy, sustainability, agriculture, local manufacturing, creative industries, workforce development, circular economy, and tourism. Programs or projects currently funded by other County Grants will not be considered.

### 1.02 AWARD AMOUNT

OED intends to award grants of **\$5,000-\$50,000** each for different initiatives that align with RFP Project Specifications (see Section 2). Total funding will be no more than **\$468,200**.

### 1.03 ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

To be eligible for award through this RFP, the proposer shall:

- Be or have a sponsor that is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Hawaii and exempt from the federal income tax by the Internal Revenue Service (must be in compliance with the IRS at all times during the application and grant agreement period). Non-profit organization governing board members shall have served without compensation and have no material conflict of interest. Non-Profit organizations must be in current compliance with the IRS Non-Profit tax-exempt status; be a Hawaii based business with a Kauai Non-Profit fiscal sponsor and propose a project that is based 100% on Kauai.
- Both Businesses and Non-Profits must have bylaws or policies that describe the way business is conducted including management, fiscal policies, and procedures (including a clear statement on who is allowed to sign documents on behalf of the organization), and policies on nepotism and the management of potential conflicts of interest.
- Have at least one (1) year of experience with the project or in the program area being offered. The Director may grant an exception to this requirement if the proposer has demonstrated the necessary experience in the program area.
- Have staff or authorized representatives adequately trained to administer and provide the project described.
- Have current signed By-Laws that state clearly who in the Organization is allowed to apply for and execute Grant Agreements.
- Is or can become compliant under the Hawaii Compliance Express system prior to funding. You do not need to be HCE compliant at the time of application, but it is highly recommended that you start the process now.

## 1.04 TIMETABLE

The timetable set forth below represents OED's best estimate of the schedule that will be followed in the RFP process. Proposers will be advised by addendum via OED's website of any changes to the timetable.

ACTIVITY	SCHEDULED DATE (Tentative)
RFP issued – Applications open	Friday, August 1, 2025, at 8:00am
Zoom Meeting/Webinar to discuss the grant and how to apply. Link is here: <a href="#">25-26 Innovation Grant Webinar Registration Link</a>  Please register in advance!	Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 04:00pm.
Closing Date for Receipt of Questions	Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 4:00pm
Department's Response to Proposers' Questions –Final Amendments (if any) to RFP	Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 4:00pm
Proposal Due Date	Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 4:00pm
Public Comment Review Opens:	Monday, September 9, 2025 at 8:00am
Public Comment Review Closes:	Friday, September 23, 2025 at 4:00pm
Selection / Award Notification	Week of October 13, 2025
Grant Agreement Execution Period	October 13, 2025, to October 31, 2026
Tentative Agreement Commencement Date	Full Grant Agreement Execution thru October 31, 2026

## 1.05 CONTACT FOR INFORMATION

If the proposer requires additional information, requests for additional information shall be made in writing via email at [oadgrants@kauai.gov](mailto:oadgrants@kauai.gov). Please note that the final day for receipt of questions is **Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 4:00pm**.

## 1.06 SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

Notwithstanding any other provisions, if there is any doubt as to the interpretation of any of the provisions herein, the proposer shall submit an inquiry in writing on or before **4:00pm Wednesday, August 20, 2025**, to qualify for an official response from OED. Responses will be posted under the same listing and become addenda to the RFP. OED will respond to questions through addenda only. All other means of communication, whether oral or written, shall not be considered official responses, and may not be relied upon. A ZOOM Meeting to discuss the proposal and the SMAApply application system will be held at **04:00pm on Thursday, August 14, 2025**. Click here to register for the Zoom meeting:

[25-26 Innovation Grant Webinar Registration Link](#) - Please register in advance!

Any questions regarding the interpretation of any provision after proposals have been opened shall be subject to a ruling by the Director of OED, whose decisions shall be final. In addition, the Director shall have the sole power to decide and resolve matters which may arise in the future and / or which may not be covered in the proposal.

### **1.07 AMENDMENT, ADDENDA, OR BULLETINS**

Any proposer who discovers any ambiguities, conflicts, discrepancies, omissions, or other errors in the RFP shall notify OED in writing on or before **4:00pm on Wednesday, August 20, 2025**. Modifications of the RFP shall be made by issuing an addendum, and a written notice of such modifications shall be sent to all persons who have submitted written questions to OED as described above. If a proposer fails to notify OED on or before **4:00pm on Wednesday, August 20, 2025** of any errors in the RFP known to the proposer, the proposer shall submit a proposal at its own risk. If the proposer is selected by OED, the proposer shall not be entitled to additional compensation or time by reason of such errors or their later correction.

Applicants should monitor the posting web site for any addendum necessitated by a modification of the RFP which will be posted on [www.kauaiforward.com](http://www.kauaiforward.com) by **Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 4:00pm** deadline. Any addendum issued during the time of proposal submission and forming a part of the documents shall be made a part of this Solicitation and shall become a part of the award contract.

### **1.08 WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS**

A proposer may withdraw its proposal by submitting a written request to the Director of OED any time prior to the proposal being scheduled for review and evaluation.

### **1.09 CANCELLATION OF RFP**

This RFP may be cancelled and any or all proposals rejected in whole or in part, without liability to OED or the County of Kaua'i, when it is determined to be in the best interest of OED or the County of Kaua'i.

### **1.10 CONTRACT PERIOD**

Upon award, the contract period will commence upon full execution of the Grant Agreement through October 31, 2026.

### **1.11 MULTIPLE PROPOSALS**

Multiple proposals from an organization for different and separate projects will be accepted and considered independently from each other.

### **1.12 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

All Proposals must be submitted via the online SMAApply System. Proposals via mail, hand delivery, email or FAX will not be accepted.

### **1.13 PROPOSAL BUDGET**

The Applicant is required to submit a proposed budget explaining how any grant funds will be utilized. If the Applicant is awarded less than what was requested in their RFP proposal, they will need to re-submit an updated proposal and budget showing how the money will be distributed before an agreement can be executed.

## SECTION 2: PROJECT PLAN, PROPOSALS & SPECIFICATIONS

Eligible proposals include innovative on-island projects in the areas of small business, technology, transportation, energy, sustainability, agriculture, local manufacturing, creative industries, workforce development, circular economies and tourism destination management and product development that contribute toward economic development and to support the County's vision for more economically diverse and sustainable future generating long term economic growth and diversification in Kauai County.

### 2.01 PROJECT LOCATION

This program is intended to support projects that occur 100% in the County of Kaua'i.

### 2.02 PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The purpose of this RFP seeks to deploy innovation on-island in the areas of small business, technology, transportation, energy, sustainability, agriculture, local manufacturing, creative industries, workforce development, circular economies and tourism destination management and product development. Applicants must demonstrate the potential for their projects to offer short or long-term *economic development* and to support the community in conjunction with the County's vision for a more economically diverse and sustainable future. Emphasis will be on local deployment of proven innovative practices, technologies, and policies that identify and solve local problems, and not on research and development into new or unproven products or ideas. Areas of focus include small business, technology, transportation, energy, sustainability, agriculture, local manufacturing, creative industries, workforce development, circular economies and tourism destination management and product development.

All projects, regardless of type, must clearly demonstrate their potential to generate *economic benefit* to Kauai residents via business income, employment, reduced expense or efficiency, resident improved experience, or other means. It is not required that projects result in immediate or direct economic benefit if they can demonstrate significant movement toward those outcomes. Proposals must identify a known deficiency, problem, or need within the Kauai Community and deploy an innovative community project that will be or has been successful in other contexts.

Proposals that include new partnerships or collaborations and include diverse organizations or groups that contribute uniquely to the overall strength of the proposal will be given extra consideration.

Successful proposals will clearly show a public or community nexus to the stated project objective of the proposal. Funds may not be used for: purchase of alcohol; business or organizational start-up plans; fundraising; or costs associated with proposal production and submission. Proposals shall be subject to the provisions and stipulations of this RFP.

Grants will be given out by Economic Sector as follows:



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**AGRICULTURE****Total Funding Available \$175,000****The minimum funding request is \$5,000. The maximum funding request allowed is \$50,000.**

The Department awards funding for agricultural projects that support agricultural industries with a special focus on:

- improved crop production,
- addressing or improving crop protection from pests, diseases, and invasive species,
- value-added products,
- utilization of new farming/ranching techniques and technology that strengthen agricultural competitiveness.
- improved conservation of soil, water, energy, natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat.
- programs that help move Kauai to a more sustainable food source.
- job creation.
- supporting local food producers towards obtaining FSMA certification.

Projects should address one or several of these areas this funding year:

- Job creation.
- Improved farming/ranching practices and products.
- Improved marketing, sales, and business practices.
- FSMA or GAP training and assistance towards compliance and certification.
- Utilizing modern technologies and food distribution practices.
- Creation of regional agricultural parks, community commercial kitchens, not currently existing and/or food-hub distribution centers.
- Increasing participation of farmers, ranchers and producers and connecting them with wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, and chefs.
- Creating demand for products, through marketing on web-based social media and other platforms.
- Marketing and information sharing of agriculture initiatives.

**CREATIVE INDUSTRIES****Total Funding Available – \$50,000****The minimum funding request is \$5,000. The maximum funding request allowed is \$50,000.**

The Department believes in the power of creativity to inspire human connections, create social change, and support economic vibrancy of Kauai.

Funding is available for activities representing a broad spectrum of creative practices, including (but not limited to) traditional, hybrid, and expanded genres and forms of storytelling, artistic expression, and performance through film, cinema, audio, broadcast, creative code and computation, interactive media, and emergent practices at the intersection of arts and digital technology.

Project types:

- Programs intended to support professional careers or build pathways into the film and media arts field through creation-based and exhibition opportunities, access to equipment and technical facilities, training, industry mentorship and networking, project incubation and development labs, apprenticeships and creative workforce development initiatives.
- Public engagement programs intended to directly connect audiences with local artists or artistic processes, such as curated festivals, exhibitions, or event series with presentations, workshops, lectures, panels and other distribution-based activities intended to deepen appreciation for film and media arts and provide arts learning and exposure projects for people of all ages.
- Services to the field intended to improve the overall capacity and capabilities of artists, arts workers, and arts organizations within the film and media arts sector, such as field studies and reports, leadership training, mentorships, and other professional development opportunities

#### **NEW INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS INNOVATION**

**Total Funding Available - \$50,000**

**The minimum funding request is \$5,000. The maximum funding request is \$50,000.**

The Department's primary focus is on helping existing businesses become globally competitive and to facilitate new and emerging business opportunities in technology and innovation sectors. Technology and innovation interact in all industries and facets of business. Kauai must keep pace with the burgeoning industry. The following types of projects that foster the community-based economic development initiatives will be considered:

- Programs that expand talent and career readiness in technology and innovation.
- Community economic development projects that support entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Support for business efforts to utilize technology to assist in workforce issues.

#### **TOURISM DESTINATION MGMT & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

**Total Funding Available - \$68,200**

The Tourism Program's work is guided by the goals and objectives of the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan](#), the [Kauai General Plan](#) and the [Kauai Destination Management Action Plan](#).

Project proposals should be based around the concept of economic, social, and environmental balance. A healthy visitor industry and a population that enjoys a good quality of life are inextricably linked. There are six objectives to achieve the goals and vision of the [Kauai DMAP](#):

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Create positive contributions to the quality of life for Kauai's residents.
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Support the maintenance, enhancement, and protection of Kauai's natural resources.

- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Ensure the authentic Hawaiian culture is perpetuated and accurately presented in experiences for residents and visitors, materials, and marketing efforts.
- **OBJECTIVE 4:** Maintain and improve visitor satisfaction of their experience on Kauai.
- **OBJECTIVE 5:** Strengthen the economic contribution of Kauai's visitor industry.
- **OBJECTIVE 6:** Increase communication and understanding between the residents and the visitor industry.

Programs who will receive support through any of the Hawaii Tourism Authority's funding programs or other County of Kaua'i grants for the same programs submitted to this RFP will not be considered without a written exemption from the Office of Economic Development.

## **ENERGY/TRANSPORTATION SECTOR**

**Total Funding Available - \$50,000**

**Local, Equitable Solutions to the Climate Crisis:** Climate change is already impacting Kauai today and will do so increasingly into the foreseeable future. As we prepare and respond to these impacts, we face a parallel crisis in terms of our housing shortage and the already high cost of living. By addressing these issues together instead of in silos, we can improve our economic well-being, become more resilient, and reduce our global impacts at the same time.

The County seeks proposals for programs that (1) raise community awareness of climate change, (2) trigger community actions to reduce GHG emissions and (3) help prepare for climate change impacts on an individual, household, business/organizational, or community-wide level. Approaches that focus on the needs of low- and moderate-income households and specifically disadvantaged communities on the island will be prioritized. General areas of focus for proposals include:

- **Renewable energy:** Projects that incorporate renewable energy in innovative ways, encouraging overlap with other grant areas, such as a means to make agriculture operations more energy independent.
- **Energy efficiency:** Projects that enable or support cost savings through increased energy efficiency. Programs may include outreach, education, and services provided directly to households or businesses to reduce energy use and cost. Projects which seek to build local community capacity for delivering energy efficiency while reducing direct costs for implementation (such as community-based direct installation of LED bulbs or low-flow showerheads) will be prioritized.
- **Vehicle electrification, multi-modal transportation, and shared use mobility:** Projects that support the adoption of electric vehicles and related infrastructure, multi-modal transportation, and shared use mobility solutions for the Island. This may include awareness and education such as ride & drive events, infrastructure planning, repairing, or replacing existing infrastructure, development of pilot projects, and other efforts to accelerate the adoption of alternative transportation solutions on-island. Electric vehicles include light duty automobiles as well as e-bikes and other electrified mobility devices. Multi-modal transportation and shared use mobility solutions include car sharing, biking, scooters, micro mobility-share, and shuttles.
- **Electricity and transportation data:** Projects that establish or support improvements to data

collection, access, and use for electricity and ground transportation systems on Island. This includes partnerships to set-up new or innovative means of collecting and reporting data, projects to increase access to existing datasets, and projects that educate on the use of existing data, such as energy benchmarking that reports on electricity usage and results in electricity savings, or tracking transportation patterns and first/last mile connections, to accelerate action towards energy, clean transportation, and climate goals.

- **Community lead climate action:** Projects may focus on locally relevant climate change issues, challenges, or opportunities and assist to engage families, businesses, and community organizations to take positive actions to reduce GHG emissions and prepare for climate change on Kauai. Projects may utilize the existing “[Kauai Aloha+ Challenge](#)” online engagement platform located at [Kauai Challenge](#) and incorporate it into community outreach through schools or other groups to increase community participation and action. Projects may include locally driven marketing efforts and campaigns to promote existing solutions connected to the [Aloha Plus Challenge](#) and statewide sustainability goals in the areas of clean energy, natural resources conservation, smart sustainable communities, waste reduction, green jobs, and local food production.

## **SUSTAINABILITY SECTOR**

**Total Funding Available - \$55,000**

The County’s General Plan defines sustainability as the, “means of growing responsibly to meet the needs of current and future generations without depleting important resources.” Project proposals should balance the urgency to address the climate crisis with the everyday realities of high living costs and housing shortages. The Department seeks to fund projects that address:

- **Resilience Hubs:** Projects that seek to establish community-serving facilities or planning efforts to support residents before, during, and after a natural hazard event.
- **Circular Economy:** Projects that support reduced disposal of organic waste in the County landfill and promotion of zero waste practices.
- **Natural Resource Management:** Projects that focus on coastal ecosystem restoration (coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds) and protection against invasive species.
- **Nature Based Solutions:** Projects that support natural cycles and biodiversity to address various environmental and societal challenges such as green infrastructure, agroforestry, and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction.
- **Green Workforce:** Projects that promote green career pathways by investing in skills training, certification programs, and experiences that align with sustainable industries, such as green buildings.
- **Outreach, Education, & Data:** Projects that creatively educate and spread awareness about the concept of sustainability and impacts of climate change while urging residents, visitors, and specifically youth, to act. This also includes local data dashboards for sustainability related data that are specific to the County of Kauai and enables tracking of progress in established statewide sustainability goals such as clean energy, natural resources conservation, smart sustainable communities, waste reduction, green jobs, and local food production.

The County of Kauai Office of Economic Development (OED) is pleased to announce the availability of \$20,000.00 in Workforce Innovation Grant funding to support projects that address critical workforce gaps and strengthen Kauai's economic resilience. This funding is intended to catalyze new approaches, pilot programs, and collaborative efforts that can fill unmet needs in our local workforce. Although this isn't an exhaustive list and we will look at all applications, Kauai's current workforce development critical needs are as follows:

- **Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training: Creative** solutions that expand access to CDL certification on the island, address barriers to entry (such as equipment or instructor shortages), or develop fast-track programs to meet urgent transportation and logistics needs.
  - **Kupuna Care Workforce Development: Creative** solutions to build capacity in caregiving for our aging population, including training pipelines for CNAs, home health aides and culturally rooted caregiving practices that keep our kupuna cared for with dignity.
  - **Other High-Need Workforce areas: Innovative** initiatives that address workforce shortages on Kauai, such as skilled trades (e.g., plumbing, electrical, construction, etc.) and hospitality management upskilling.
- 

### 2.03. PROJECT MATCH REQUIREMENT

There is a match requirement (10% cash match and a 10% in-kind match) for funds awarded under this program. The grant may not cover more than 80% of the total costs of the project being funded. The applicant must identify and verify the source of the match. The match must be a percentage of the total budgeted project costs, and the budget must state how match funds will be used. (Match is restricted to the same uses of funds as allowed for the county funds). The more partnerships identified; the more points will be awarded to the project.

### 2.04. PROJECT GRANT ADMINISTRATION FEE CAP

Funding for the Innovation grant encompasses overhead and administrative costs for approved projects. A maximum of 15% of the total project budget can be allotted for administrative costs. Administrative costs encompass grant expenses associated with administering the grant. These costs can be both personnel and non-personnel, and both direct and indirect. Therefore, the limitation applies to the combined claims for indirect costs and direct administration costs. Generally, direct administrative costs differ from indirect charges in that the latter are considered organization-wide costs. Examples of direct administrative costs are salaries, benefits, and other expenses of the recipient's staff that perform the following functions: – Overall program management, program coordination, and office management functions including the salaries and related costs of the executive director, project director and/or project evaluator; – Preparing program plans, budgets schedules, and related amendments; – Monitoring of programs, projects, subrecipients and related systems and processes; – Developing systems and procedures, including management information systems, for assuring compliance with program requirements; – Preparing reports and other documents related to the program requirements; – Evaluating program results against stated objectives; and – Divisional level administrative services such as program specific accounting, auditing or legal activities.

## **2.05 PROPOSAL PREPARATION**

The proposer shall prepare a proposal in accordance with the requirements of this Section and provide the proposal to OED via the SMAApply system. The proposers shall submit all the data and information specified and requested in the system to qualify its proposal for evaluation and consideration for the award. Noncompliance shall be deemed sufficient cause for disqualification of the proposal without further notice. OED will not pay any costs incurred by the Proposer in preparing or submitting their proposal.

## **2.06 DISQUALIFICATION OF PROPOSALS**

OED reserves the right to consider acceptable only those proposals submitted in accordance with all requirements set forth in this RFP and that demonstrate alignment with Project Specifications. Any proposal offering terms and conditions contradictory to those included, requested, or required by this RFP, shall be disqualified without further notice. OED reserves the right to ask for clarification at any time of any item in the proposal.

A Proposer will be disqualified, and the proposal automatically rejected for any one or more of the following reasons:

- The non-profit and/or business is not in good standing with the DCCA, County of Kaua'i or the BBB.
- The Proposer's lack of responsibility or cooperation as shown by past work, projects, or services.
- The proposal is conditional, incomplete, or irregular in such a way as to make the proposal incomplete, indefinite, or ambiguous as to its meaning.
- The proposal has provision reserving the right to accept or reject an award, or to enter a contract pursuant to an award, or provisions contrary to those required in this RFP.
- The proposal shows any noncompliance with applicable law.

## **2.07 PUBLIC INSPECTION & INPUT**

Proposal Specification information shall be subject to Public Inspection and comment via consider.it. A link to the initially selected proposals will be posted at The Kauai Forward Website and the County of Kaua'i Office of Economic Development website. The Public will be allowed to view and offer constructive comments and score each initially qualified project for a period of two (2) weeks. Names of the Applicants or Fiscal Sponsor will not be named to encourage objectivity and provide focus on the project itself. Selection or rejection of the proposal does not affect this right. At the conclusion of the process, resulting in either a contract award or rejection of all proposals, all material except that marked proprietary shall become public information. The public is encouraged to review the proposed projects through our Consider.It is a tool to provide substantive and constructive comments.

## **2.08 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION**

The proposer shall designate in writing those portions of the proposal that contain trade secrets or other proprietary data that are to remain confidential, so that the material designated as confidential shall be readily separable from the proposal to facilitate inspection of the nonconfidential portion of the proposal.

## 2.09 PROJECT PROPOSAL INFORMATION REQUIRED:

We will consider whether the project is doable and whether it uses resources in a way that is likely to lead to success. We are looking for thoughtful consideration of how change can happen. Who is affected? Who has power? How will key stakeholders be engaged along the way? We will favor proposals that are truly inclusive and collaborative.

### A. PROJECT OVERVIEW–

- 1 **Project Title** – (Maximum 200 Characters)
- 2 **Economic Sector** – You must state what economic sector you are applying to.
- 3 **Funding Summary** – State the total project amount and break it down between what you are requesting here and cash, in-kind and any other grant funds secured for this project.
- 4 **Project Overview** Describe a brief high-level summary of your project and what it intends to accomplish.
- 5 **Project Purpose** Describe the specific issue, problem or need that the project will address, including the community that the project will impact.
- 6 **Project Workplace** – Where will your proposed work take place?
- 7 **Project Research** Describe the research you have done for the proposed project and how you came up with the proposed solution. Describe the background of the communities affected by your project in terms of their history, culture, politics, and society.
- 8 **Project Innovation** How is this project new, different, and innovative compared to past or current projects? If your idea works, how would it be transformative?
- 9 **Project Goals** Provide the overall objectives that you are trying to achieve with your project and how you will ensure participation of community members impacted by your project.
- 10 **Project Workplan** Describe the project's major milestones (checkpoints that help you measure progress and ensure you are still on track to reach your goals) including all the significant activities that you will need to complete to achieve the impacts described in your proposal. Provide metrics to track the participation of groups and underserved community members that will be affected by your project. Please keep task descriptions short and concise. Include information for the entire project for the full grant term. If there are elements of your proposed project that will use funding other than the Innovation Grant, please indicate them in the work plan and budget. Example:

Task Number	Project Activities	Who will complete task?	Timeframe (Quarter)
1	Example: Prepare Project Site	Joe Schmoe, Project Planner	Q1

- 11 **Evaluation of Project Impacts:** Project Impact is how your project affects the matters which it encounters. By giving a project impact appraisal, you define effects, both positive and negative, which the project is expected to produce upon environment, organization, community, people, etc.?
- 12 **Dependencies and External Factors:** Explain the external key factors that will influence whether this project is successful and how you intend to address them. For each, indicate whether the activity/task/approval/etc. has been completed, or if not, your plan for completing it.
- Example: Securing all required permits/authorizations/approvals; staff or contractor availability, shipping issues, etc.*
- 13 **Project Alignment with County Goals:** Describe how your project aligns with any of the County goals listed in the plans below. This is not necessary, but you will be given extra points for tying your project into one or more of these plans.
- 14 **Matching Funds:** Describe any matching and in-kind funds you have secured for the project and verify the award and/or receipt of funds.
- 15 **Project Sustainability:** Describe how your project will be sustained beyond the one-year grant period.
- 16 **Project budget.** List all income sources of cash, cash matches and in-kind contributions. Indicate the dollar value in the Budget column.

***Expenses:*** Project expense estimates must be reasonable, directly related to the proposed project, and clearly described and justified in the budget narrative. The following list includes examples of some common expenses allowable in this Grant program:

- Advertising
- Brochures
- Collateral materials
- Equipment rental
- Facility rental
- Postage
- Posters
- Printing
- Products
- Public relations
- Salary and wages (at prevailing wages for work that is done on or on behalf of the project)
- Security
- Shipping
- Some consultants service.
- Supplies and materials



- Website Development or enhancement

**NOTE: *Personnel costs should not be the primary use of grant funds.*** To demonstrate financial sustainability, projects will not rely on grant funding for critical operating expenses, including most salaries.

***Ineligible*** uses of grant funding include the following expenses:

- Fundraising expenses.
- Equipment purchases that are not directly related to this project.
- Organizational start up plans.
- Purchase of alcohol.
- Proposal preparation expenses (Grant writing, etc.).
- Purchase of Real Estate
- Purchase of automobiles
- Most Travel Expenses
- Real Estate Expenses

**B. PROJECT SUMMARY STATEMENT.** Write a project summary of 500 words or less suitable for dissemination to the public. A project summary is a document or part of a larger document that's comprehensive but concise in providing an overview of the proposed project, including key details. It also outlines the project's objectives, background information to place it in context, requirements, problems, analysis and ends with a conclusion.

**C. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION:** Application Information will include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Organizational Information including mission.
- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
- DCCA COGS Certificate (Certificate of Good Standing)
- Most recent copy of IRS Form 990 filing
- Financials – including most recent financial statement (or profit/loss statement) and annual operating budget for the current year.
- HCE Compliance Notice (not required to apply but must be compliant prior to funding)
- List of Applicant's Board of Directors and/or leadership including names, titles and affiliations.
- Applicants Articles of Incorporation (preferred), or other documentation such as Bylaws that are SIGNED and verify the stated person(s) authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the organization.
- Verification of 10% Cash match
- Letters of Recommendation and Support (not required).

## **2.10 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

Applicants are required to submit their proposals through the SMAppl System. Proposals must be received **on or before 4:00 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time on Tuesday, September 2, 2025**. Proposals received after the deadline or not via the SMAppl system will not be considered. After the award, all proposals shall be public information.

## SECTION 3: EVALUATION CRITERIA

This RFP shall be evaluated and awarded through a Four (4) phase process. A scoring system will be utilized to maximize the objectivity of the evaluation. Scoring is intended to help the committees sort and assess proposals to assist committee deliberation process, but scores do not solely determine the final funding recommendations. Final funding recommendations are made through deliberations as a group.

### 3.01 EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Director of OED shall select an evaluation committee with knowledge of the program objectives to provide initial review and ranking of the proposals. Such a committee shall include at least three governmental employees with sufficient qualifications to assess each application (H.A.R. 3-122-45.01). Proposals shall be evaluated based on the Proposal Evaluation Criteria listed below. Any committee member with a potential conflict of interest with a proposer shall recuse themselves from the review of that proposer's submission.

### 3.02: EVALUATION PHASES

Evaluation phases will be conducted as follows:

- Phase 1: Screening
- Phase 2: Initial Proposal Evaluation
- Phase 3: Community Engagement
- Phase 4: Final Proposal Evaluation

### PHASE 1 – SCREENING, INITIAL COMMITTEE REVIEW AND INITIAL SCORING

An initial screening shall take place immediately after the proposals are downloaded by the Office of Economic Development. The initial screening involves reviewing all submitted proposals for eligibility and completeness. Incomplete proposals or proposals not meeting these minimum requirements may be rejected and dropped from further consideration.

### PHASE 2 – INITIAL PROPOSAL GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Phase 2 of the evaluation process: The Grant review committee will review proposals based on the following criteria. Scoring is intended to help the committee sort and assess proposals to assist the committee deliberation process, but scores do not solely determine the final funding recommendations. Final funding recommendations are made through the committee's deliberations as a group.

Proposal Review Criteria	Possible Points
<b>Organizational Capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organization mission – do they have a clear, well-defined and achievable mission? Who comprises the board of directors and senior leadership responsible for building the mission? Is the organization's leadership diverse and represent the community they are serving? Are the organizations' general structure and program aligned with its mission?</li><li>Organization Finances – Does the organization have a consistent and reliable funding stream to carry out its work? How diversified is the revenue stream? How much does the organization have in liabilities? Do they track funds in a detailed way that meets modern accounting practices? Have they filed their Form 990? Have they been audited recently?</li></ul>	10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization impact – Is the organization making a measurable difference in the community and in people’s lives? Does the organization exhibit a rigorous interest in self-evaluation and self-improvement? Is the organization engaged in policy and advocacy efforts to bring about long-term change?</li> </ul>	
<b>Applicant Readiness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates sufficient planning, management experience and staff/volunteer resources to ensure that the project is likely to succeed. Experience could include successful completion of past projects utilizing external funding.</li> <li>Demonstrates financial viability of the applicant organization such that there is high likelihood that the project would be completed within the grant term.</li> <li>Innovation: Demonstrates enhancement and/or innovation of an existing or new project.</li> <li>Community Support and Involvement: Evidence of partnerships with outside organizations. Project has broad based community support and is in line with community values and community resources.</li> </ul>	10
<b>Special Focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project directly aligns with one or more of the specific Economic Sector requests outlined in the RFP</li> <li>Project directly aligns with one or more of Kauai County Goals outlined in links to attachments in the RFP.</li> </ul>	5
<b>Project, Work Plan and Dependencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides complete descriptions and time estimates of the project activities, milestones, and deliverables necessary to achieve desired outcomes.</li> <li>The work plan is well-aligned with the scale of effort and timeframe necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.</li> <li>Provides information on completed tasks/dependencies that ensure the project will be ready to begin when the grant contract is executed and will be completed on time, including secured permits, approvals, agreements, materials, etc.</li> <li>Provides information on in-progress tasks/dependencies that need to be completed before the grant-funded project begins, and a plan for their completion.</li> </ul>	50
<b>Project budget</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All funding has been secured to complete the proposed project, including grant and match amounts for all activities in the work plan</li> <li>Describes the total project cost and how the grant request fits within the complete project financing strategy</li> <li>Includes supporting documentation including quotes, bids and estimate details</li> <li>The cost elements of the project appear to be complete, consistent with the work plan, and reasonable (the amount requested is proportional with the outcome achieved)</li> <li>Valid sources of revenue</li> </ul>	25

### PHASE 3 – PUBLIC SCORING & COMMENT

Public Input & Engagement of these proposals is important to the Project & OED. Each Proposal’s public scoring and comments will be given to OED and the selection committee for review for consideration for Phase 4 Final Evaluation. The opportunity to review and score/comment on the Priority Listed Proposers will be available via link online at the [Kauai Forward website](#) for a period of two weeks. Scoring from 1-

10 points will be allowed. After the Public review period is over, the scores will be included in each Priority Listed Proposals and subject to Phase 4 evaluation. The Selection Committee will consider the public comments and how or why they feel this project deserves consideration and will use it in the final committee proposal evaluation meeting.

## **PHASE 4 – FINAL PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

In Phase 4, a final evaluation of all projects will commence and shall be based on the secondary review of each proposal using the criteria mentioned in this Section and include scoring from Phase 2 & 3 – Public Engagement based on scoring matrix above. Scoring is intended to help the committees sort and assess proposals to assist committee deliberation process, but scores do not solely determine the final funding recommendations. Final funding recommendations are made through deliberations as a group.

OED reserves the right to make an award based only upon proposals as submitted or may require the submission of additional information, or oral presentation, or both.

OED may conduct discussions with proposal contacts to facilitate arriving at an agreement that will provide the best value to the County, taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth in this RFP. Discussion shall be coordinated by OED and all information regarding date, place, purpose, and attendance shall be recorded. Priority listed proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussions and revision of proposals. OED also reserves the right to discuss with one or more proposers and request best and final offers provided that no proposer's proposal or information regarding its negotiation with OED shall be public information or shared with any other proposer until after an award is made. Upon award, the existing contract file, including but not limited to a copy of all successful and unsuccessful proposals, shall be made available for public inspection.

The Director of OED shall assist the committee in the final selection of the proposals, which will best accomplish the needs of the County and in accordance with the availability of funds.

### **3.03 RECOMMENDATION FOR CONTRACT AWARD**

The evaluation committee shall prepare a report summarizing proposal evaluation rankings and provide recommendations for award of contracts. The awards shall be made to the Proposers submitting the top proposals as determined by the evaluation committee with final evaluation assistance from the Director of OED. The award recommendation shall be based on the proposal deemed to best meet the Proposal Objective and not necessarily on the lowest cost.

### **3.04 REJECTION OF PROPOSALS**

The Director of OED reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive any defects in said RFP if deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

## **SECTION 4: AWARD OF CONTRACT**

### **4.01 AWARD OF CONTRACT**

The Proposer, upon being selected for grant funding, will be notified of the award by OED by email. Said notices shall not be construed to be authorized to proceed with the performance of any program. Any services performed by the Proposer prior to execution of the grant contract shall be at the Proposer's own risk and expense.

### **4.02 EXECUTION OF CONTRACT**

A contract document shall be executed by OED and the selected Proposer via digital signature and will take effect on the date all signatures have been received. This document will serve as the official and legal contractual instrument between both parties. This document ("Contract") will incorporate (by attachments or reference) the terms of this RFP, with all addendums; and the Proposer's proposal; all of which becomes part and whole of the "contract." Upon receipt of the Letter of Award and contract documents, the Proposer shall have five (5) business days to digitally execute and return the contract documents digitally to the County of Kauai. The award of contract may be withdrawn by OED if successful Proposer is unable to meet contract execution requirements. This Contract shall not be binding or of any force until said Contract has been fully and properly signed by all the parties thereto. Completed sets of the fully executed contract will be digitally sent to the Proposer. A copy of the contract provisions is attached hereto for reference as Exhibit A.

### **4.03 FUNDING**

Funding for this grant will occur as follows:

- **80%** of the awarded amount listed in Paragraph 1 will be paid upon receipt of the final executed copy of the Contract, a written request for payment is received and HCE Compliance is confirmed by OED.
- **20%** of the awarded amount will be made upon satisfactory completion of the project and submission and approval of the Final Written and Budget Report via the SMA Apply system and confirmation of current HCE Compliance.

Funding can be made sooner or later should the project exceed or be delayed from its anticipated timeline and deliverables. The Proposer must communicate with their OED Project Manager for any variances to the budget, timeline, and deliverables.

### **4.03 INDEMNIFICATION**

If selected, the Proposer shall perform the contract as an independent contractor and shall indemnify and save the County and its officers and employees harmless from any and all deaths, injuries, losses and damages to persons or property, and any and all claims, demands, suits, action and liability therefore, caused by error, omissions or negligence in the performance of the contract by the Contractor or the Contractor's subcontractors, agents and/or employees, until such time as action against the Contractor for

death, injuries, losses and damages is barred by the provisions of Chapter 657, HRS, as amended, relating to limitations of action.

#### **4.04 REPORTING REQUIREMENT**

If selected, the Proposer shall be required to provide quarterly progress reports, including a final report of the funded project to OED. Department funding must be acknowledged in this report and in all other publications based on the project results. Interim reports will be required by the contractual agreement. All project reports and results are considered public property and cannot be patented, copyrighted, or restricted in any manner unless specifically agreed to by both parties. You will be assigned a Sector Manager. You will be required to turn in reports on time and to communicate with your sector manager on a regular basis. Site visits will be held to ensure the reporting is accurate. Any projects that are not on schedule (based on the timeline provided), must contact their sector manager and turn in an updated timeline and explain the timeline difference. During the project period, the sector manager may require that you keep impact data that will be specific to your project. At the end of the contract, you will be required to turn in the Final Report, Final Budget, and any data requirement as set up by your OED Sector Manager. Failure to complete reports on time are reported in the next grant cycle and points can possibly be deducted for organizational capacity.

#### **4.05 CONTRACT PROVISIONS**

Please see Exhibit "A" for sample contract.