



June 20, 2023

Mr. Douglass Adams, Director  
Department of Research & Development  
County of Hawai'i  
25 Aupuni St, Ste 1301  
Hilo, HI 96720  
[chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us](mailto:chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us)

Dear Director Adams:

Please accept The Kohala Center's Statement of Qualification & Expression of Interest regarding notice HRS 103D-304:

**RD.3) Community Planning (Community and Economic Development, Community Engagement, Strategic Planning, Sustainability Systems)**

1. The Kohala Center, Inc. (dba The Kohala Center). PO Box 437462, Kamuela, HI 96743.  
Principal place of business: Kamuela, Hawai'i.  
Location of offices: Kamuela, Hawai'i.
2. Age of the firm: 23 years old; estimating an average of 32 employees over the past five years.
3. Key management staff:

**Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, MBA, President & Chief Executive Officer**

Prior to joining The Kohala Center, Cheryl founded The Leader Project as a source for developing leadership capacity from both an indigenous and western worldview. Spanning multiple sectors such as transportation, education, health, human services, and public safety, her practice focuses on shared leadership where all group members carry a responsibility for leading and following. Over the course of her 30-year career, Lupenui has developed a multidisciplinary skillset that includes business and program development, systems-level policy making, capital improvement project planning and management, fund raising, community engagement, and strategy and leadership development.

As CEO for the YWCA of O'ahu, Cheryl developed several leadership initiatives for women and girls and was honored as one of "25 People Who Will Shape the Next 25 Years" by Hawai'i Business Magazine. While a member of the Hawai'i State Board of Education and Chair of the Student Achievement Committee, Cheryl worked with communities on key policy-making including the adoption of Hawai'i-based, system-wide learning outcomes and the establishment of the first Office of Hawaiian Education. She

holds a Masters of Business Administration with a concentration in marketing, management, and finance from Tulane University, and a Bachelor of Business Administration in international business from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

**Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy, BA, Director, Kahalu'u Bay Education Center**

Ms. Punihaole oversees all programs and activities of the Kahalu'u Bay Education Center (KBEC) and works with County, State, and Federal officials to facilitate the conservation and restoration of Kahalu'u Beach Park and its near shore environment. She also assists other communities around Hawaii to develop community-based education and conservation projects of this type. Ms. Punihaole holds a BA degree in sociology from Richard Stockton State College and has an 18-year history of successful community development and public education experience, having received the Kona Kohala Chamber of Commerce Pualu Award for outstanding work in Culture and Heritage.

**Liam Kernell, SHRM-CP, BA, Director of Community Experience**

Liam Kernell has 27 years of experience in the development and management of print, online, and multimedia communications for private industry, government, and not-for-profit service organizations, focusing on environmental, education, and public health issues. Mr. Kernell manages all community outreach and public relations activities for The Kohala Center and its clients and provides program planning, content development, marketing and publicity for events sponsored by The Kohala Center or other collaborating organizations and agencies. Mr. Kernell holds a BA degree in social sciences from the University of California, Berkeley.

4. List of Recent Projects and References

“Opportunities to Increase Farmworker Housing on Hawai'i Island”

Prepared for the Hawai'i County Department of Research and Development by The Kohala Center, December 31, 2022, revised February 2, 2023 Report to the County

Expand Producer Access to Labor and Processing Resources to Facilitate Economic Recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic for the County of Hawai'i, Department of Research and Development

Provision of Management Services to the County of Hawai'i Kahalu'u Beach Park, ongoing:

<https://kohalacenter.org/kbec>

Provision of Management Services to the Kohala Watershed Project, ongoing: <https://kohalacenter.org/ksp>

Health Impact Assessment of the proposed Mo'omomi Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area, March 2016: [https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/Moomomi\\_HIA\\_FullReport\\_Web\\_Final.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/Moomomi_HIA_FullReport_Web_Final.pdf)

Implementing the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in Hawai'i, September 2016:

[https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/2015\\_FFVP\\_Hawaii.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/2015_FFVP_Hawaii.pdf)

Local Foods in Hawai'i's Schools: A report on the challenges to local food procurement in Hawai'i and the opportunities to advance beyond them, September 2015:

[https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/2015\\_LocalFoodHawaiiSchools.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/2015_LocalFoodHawaiiSchools.pdf)

Kalāhuipua'a Fishpond Complex Feasibility Study, June 2015

Prepared for Group 70 International and the Mauna Lani Resort Association

[https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/20161606\\_Kalahuipuaa\\_Feasibility\\_Report.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/20161606_Kalahuipuaa_Feasibility_Report.pdf)

Hawai'i Cottage Food Business Working Group Report, January 2015 prepared for the Ulupono Initiative:

<https://kohalacenter.org/docs/reports/CottageFoodReport.pdf>

Expanding Transportation Opportunities on Hawai'i Island, February 2014:

[https://kohalacenter.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Research\\_Hawaii\\_Transit\\_Study\\_2014.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Research_Hawaii_Transit_Study_2014.pdf)

Growing Organics: Moving Hawai'i's Organic Industry Forward, January 2014 prepared for the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture:

[https://kohalacenter.org/archive/laulima/oiag/HiOrganicIndustry\\_FinalReport\\_2014.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/archive/laulima/oiag/HiOrganicIndustry_FinalReport_2014.pdf)

The Future of Ka'ū Farm Land: Ecological and Economic Analysis for Land Use Decision Making, January 2014: [https://kohalacenter.org/archive/pdf/Research\\_Future\\_of\\_Kau\\_Farmland\\_2014.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/archive/pdf/Research_Future_of_Kau_Farmland_2014.pdf)

County of Hawai'i Energy Sustainability Program Five-Year Roadmap, December 2012 prepared for County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development:

[https://kohalacenter.org/archive/pdf/energy/CoH\\_EnergySustainabilityProgram\\_Final.pdf](https://kohalacenter.org/archive/pdf/energy/CoH_EnergySustainabilityProgram_Final.pdf)

References:

Denise M. Salmeron

Acting State Director / Business Programs Director

Hawaii State | USDA, Rural Development

Rural Development Business Center

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5. Promotional literature: Please see The Kohala Center's website for a comprehensive list of our current programs and events at [kohalacenter.org](http://kohalacenter.org).

Mahalo for your consideration of The Kohala Center.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui  
President & Chief Executive Officer