



June 26, 2025

Ms. Kehaulani M. Costa, Administrator
Housing and Community Development
1990 Kino'ole Street, Suite 102
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

RE: Professional Services Statement of Interest

Aloha Administrator Costa,

On behalf of Vibrant Hawai'i I am submitting our statements of qualifications and interest to provide professional services for the following categories:

OH.1) Community Planning (Community Engagement, Strategic Planning)

OH.7) Instructional Systems (Design of Training, Facilitation and Evaluations Programs)

Contact Information

Janice Ikeda, Chief Executive Officer | Phone (808) 936-2268 | Email: janice@vibranthawaii.org
Vibrant Hawai'i | 305 Wailuku Drive, Suite 6A, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Organization Background

Vibrant Hawai'i is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, incorporated in 2021. Over the past (5) years, we employ an average of 6 full-time Hawai'i Island residents. Vibrant Hawai'i is a Hawai'i Island-based nonprofit organization with proven expertise in community-driven planning, and the design and delivery of culturally grounded training programs. We led the development of our own Hawai'i Island Economic Development Strategy (EDS), engaging over 300 residents and sector leaders to identify priority industries, co-create implementation plans, and launch community-led projects to advance digital literacy, food security, entrepreneurship, and launch scalable solutions for early childhood learning and workforce education. This process demonstrates our capacity to facilitate inclusive planning processes, synthesize community input into strategic frameworks, and guide cross-sector execution.

In parallel, our Resilience Training Center delivers a range of instructional programs that build local capacity to respond to emergencies, strengthen wellbeing, and advance economic opportunity. These include Psychological First Aid, First Aid/CPR/AED certification, Freeze-Dry Food Preservation, Chainsaw Safety, and a Youth Resilience Academy focused on leadership and systems thinking. Each training is designed using adult learning principles, facilitated by qualified instructors, and evaluated for impact. Together, our planning and instructional systems reflect a coordinated, community-first approach to building a more resilient and self-determined Hawai'i Island.

Qualifications Summary

Founding CEO Janice Ikeda brings over 20 years' experience in nonprofit administration, community organizing and facilitation, community based research, and program design, implementation, and evaluation. Janice received her MA in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University and was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws in 2023 from Gonzaga University. Since 2020, Janice has coordinated and provided technical assistance and training for a network of over 30 Resilience Hubs on Hawai'i Island and the Ko'olau region of O'ahu.

Chief Operating Officer Maurice Messina leads day-to-day operations and strengthens cross-sector collaboration to support community resilience initiatives across Hawai'i Island. He previously served as Director of the Hawai'i County Department of Parks and Recreation, where he managed emergency evacuation shelters in coordination with Civil Defense, the American Red Cross, and other partners during volcanic eruptions and severe weather events. A U.S. Navy veteran, Maurice brings extensive experience in operational leadership, crisis coordination, and community engagement.

West Hawai'i Director, Toni Symons brings over 20 years' experience in grassroots advocacy, community organizing and facilitation, and program design. Her completed coursework at UH Mānoa and the University of Phoenix includes Organization Management, Communications, and Sociology.

Communication and Events Coordinator, Raynn Dangan holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Oregon State University and brings strong qualifications in project coordination, event management, and public engagement. At Vibrant Hawai'i, she serves as Communications Coordinator, supporting the planning and execution of internal and community events while managing social media and marketing strategies. She also leads event production as Executive Director of Hānau Hou Arts & Fashion and has coordinated projects and campaigns for 'Āina Hou Workshops and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Recent Projects

Resilience Training Center – Project Summary

Vibrant Hawai'i's Resilience Training Center (RTC) serves as the backbone of our islandwide efforts to build local capacity, enhance disaster readiness, and strengthen the social fabric of our communities. Through hands-on training, network coordination, and culturally grounded approaches, the RTC equips individuals, families, and community-based organizations with the skills and strategies needed to respond to emergencies and sustain long-term resilience. Whether preparing neighborhood hubs to activate during a disaster or offering wellness-based approaches to community care, our programs are rooted in trust, collaboration, and aloha 'āina.

Hui Hānai Ka Moku – Freeze-Dry Training

As part of a growing food resilience strategy, the RTC launched Hui Hānai Ka Moku to train residents from nine communities in freeze-drying techniques. This initiative provides practical skills in food

preservation, enabling communities to reduce waste, store emergency supplies, and support mutual aid networks using locally grown and harvested food.

Resilience Hub Summit

The Resilience Hub Summit brings together hub leaders, emergency managers, government partners, and grassroots organizers from across Hawai'i Island. Designed as a space for skill-building and cross-sector collaboration, the summit strengthens coordination protocols, showcases successful practices, and activates new leaders to support neighborhood-level disaster response and recovery.

Kaukau 4 Keiki – Food Distribution Drill

Kaukau 4 Keiki not only addresses food insecurity during the summer months but also functions as a large-scale emergency food distribution drill. In 2025, the program will serve over 5,000 keiki through a network of over 400 volunteers. By engaging hub partners, logistics teams, and community volunteers in real-time operations, the program reinforces critical capabilities for mass feeding, communication, and supply management across the island.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) Training

To strengthen emotional resilience, the RTC offered Psychological First Aid Instructor training to hub leaders, health professionals, and community volunteers. These Instructors are committed to holding certification workshops free of charge over the next 2-years, increasing our island's capacity to recognize stress responses, offer compassionate support, and connect individuals to appropriate resources in the aftermath of a disaster or crisis.

First Aid, CPR, and AED Certification

Through partnerships with certified instructors, the RTC coordinates First Aid, CPR, Hands Only CPR, and AED training across Hawai'i Island. These life-saving courses are prioritized for resilience hub teams, youth leaders, and community members most likely to respond in the early moments of an emergency—often before professional responders arrive. Over the past 12 months,

Chainsaw Safety Training

Recognizing the need for safe and effective debris removal after storms and other disasters, the RTC offers Chainsaw Safety Training for hub members and community volunteers. This certification-based training covers personal protective equipment, operational safety, maintenance, and situational awareness—empowering residents to support post-disaster recovery while minimizing risk.

Youth Resilience Academy

The Youth Resilience Academy prepares the next generation of community leaders by offering summer workshops focused on leadership, preparedness, mental wellness, and practical response skills. The Academy weaves together cultural values, peer support, and hands-on learning to engage youth in building stronger, more connected, and better-prepared communities.

No Nā Pua – Community-Based Research through Cross-Sector Collaboration

No Nā Pua is a community-based research initiative led by Vibrant Hawai'i to explore the impact of culturally rooted practices on mental health, resilience, and social connection. Designed and implemented in collaboration with local cultural practitioners, mental health professionals, academic researchers, and first responders, the project exemplifies our commitment to cross-sector partnership as a foundation for meaningful inquiry. Rather than positioning community members as subjects, *No Nā Pua* centers their lived experience and expertise—ensuring that the research process is participatory, relational, and grounded in local values. Findings from the study are actively informing the design of resilience training, systems of care, and public health strategies that reflect the realities and strengths of Hawai'i Island communities. Through this work, Vibrant Hawai'i demonstrates its ability to convene diverse sectors, translate qualitative insight into action, and advance equity through culturally responsive research.

KōCreate – Advancing Community Capacity for Civic Planning and Leadership

KōCreate is a civic engagement initiative developed by Vibrant Hawai'i to equip community members with the skills, tools, and confidence to lead local planning processes related to housing, economic development, energy resilience, and emergency preparedness. At its core, KōCreate invests in people—providing a structured learning journey that develops competencies in visionary communication, relational leadership, strategic planning, and organizing for collective action. Participants gain practical experience in areas such as group facilitation, systems thinking, public speaking, grant writing, and adaptive strategy—ensuring they are prepared not only to contribute to planning efforts, but to lead them.

The initiative emphasizes reflection, cultural grounding, and sustained engagement, enabling residents to design initiatives rooted in community values and responsive to local complexity. Through KōCreate, Vibrant Hawai'i is cultivating a new generation of civic leaders who can navigate tension, mobilize resources, and build trust across systems—ensuring that community voices drive the decisions that shape their futures.

Summary

Together, these initiatives reflect Vibrant Hawai'i's commitment to advancing community-led solutions through strategic planning, skill-building, and authentic partnership. Whether through training programs that equip residents with life-saving competencies or engagement processes that elevate local leadership in planning and decision-making, our work centers the knowledge, capacity, and aspirations of Hawai'i Island communities. We are prepared to continue delivering high-impact services that are locally informed, culturally grounded, and designed for long-term resilience.

Client References

- Ashley Kierkiewicz, President, Nā Leo TV. Email: akierkiewicz@naleo.tv
- Marisa Hayase, Managing Director, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. Email: mhayase@hjweinberg.org

- Ben Trevino, Network Coordinator, Omidyar Fellows Hawai'i. Email: bentrevino@omidyarfellows.org

Mahalo nui for your review of our interest and qualifications. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the information provided above.

Na'u me ka 'oia'i'o,



Na Janice Ikeda
Chief Executive Officer
Vibrant Hawai'i