



Director of Research & Development
County of Hawai'i
25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1301
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
chresdev@hawaiicounty.gov

Aloha,

Community First Hawai'i would like to be considered for Professional Services with the County of Hawai'i, under:

RD.9) General Education and Training

1. The name of the firm or person, contact information including email address, the principal place of business, and location of all of its offices.

Firm/Individual name:	Community First Inc.
Email address:	kchai@communityfirsthawaii.org
Principal place of business:	714 Kanoiehua Avenue, Suite 202 Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

2. The age of the firm and its average number of employees over the past five years;

Age of firm:	10 years old
Average # of employees:	4

3. The education, training, and qualifications of the individual, or if a firm, its key employees in accordance with hrs 103D-304 and/or the professional and scientific occupation series contained in the United States Office of Personnel Management's Qualifications Standards Handbook.

Randy Kurohara, Executive Director

Randy is the Executive Director of Community First and is responsible for carrying out our strategic vision and mission. He served for 8 years with Mayor Kenoi in various roles at the County of Hawai'i including Director of the Department of Research & Development, Deputy Managing Director, and Managing Director. He is a long time Hawai'i Island small business owner of Creative Arts Hawaii and Aloha Grown. He graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with a Bachelor's of Business Administration degree in Marketing. He is the current President of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce; member and past President of the Rotary Club of South Hilo; director and past President



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of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hawai'i; board member of the Hawai'i Health System Corporation's East Hawai'i Regional Board, the Salvation Army, Keahole Center for Sustainability, and emeritus board member of the Boys and Girls Club of the Big Island.

Krystle Chai, Business Manager

Krystle is the Business Manager for Community First, a 501(c)3 non-profit founded in East Hawai'i in 2014. She received her bachelors degree in Business Management from UH Hilo in 2018 and her masters degree in Human Resource Management from UH Manoa in 2019. Krystle is well rounded in the business world, and has held positions in administration, accounting, human resources, and safety. Krystle is an active community member and supports organizations such as Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce, Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Alzheimer's Association, and American Cancer Society. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, watching movies and spending time with her kids.

Latisha Nakata, Program Manager

Tish Nakata is a dedicated leader and lifelong learner who is passionate about community and committed to fostering connections and supporting others. Beyond work, Tish is pursuing a BS in Psychology with a concentration in social psychology, driven by a deep curiosity about human behavior and relationships. Tish has always been drawn to roles that encourage connection, learning, and meaningful support for others. Creativity is another key part of her life. Whether curating a zoom experience for the audience, coordinating an engaging event or finding innovative ways to engage volunteers and teams, Tish believes in the power of purpose to inspire and connect. When not working or studying, she enjoys spending time with loved ones, trying new foods and embracing the beauty of the 'Aina. Through both professional and personal passions, Tish is committed to making a meaningful impact, one connection at a time.

Clarysse Nunokawa, Program Consultant

Born and raised on Hawai'i Island, Clarysse Kami Nunokawa is a graduate of Hilo High School and earned a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. After 30 years in Honolulu working in the nonprofit and government sectors, she and her husband Randy returned home to Hawai'i Island in 2003. She is experienced in facilitating groups and managing private, state and federal grants.

4. A list of recent projects and the names of up to five clients who may be contacted, including at least two for whom services were rendered during the preceding year.



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Recent Projects

Project 1: Access to Care

Access to Care is a program by Community First that takes a systems-level approach to address healthcare access and affordability in Hawai'i. By elevating community voice and engaging key stakeholders, Access to Care seeks to make timely and affordable access to healthcare available to all communities - including rural communities - across Hawai'i Island.

Every three years, Access to Care conducts a community health needs assessment. This assessment has allowed us to gather information and survey data about the current state of healthcare in Hawai'i from healthcare providers, social service professionals, residents, and policymakers, and ensures that those who are historically underrepresented in this kind of research are heard. Findings contribute to better understand and grow our the healthcare delivery system in communities across Hawai'i, and are being used to inform statewide healthcare policies.

Project 2: Kuleana Health

Kuleana Health was a cornerstone of Community First's work from 2021 to June 2023. When federal funding to address disparities in minority health became available, Community First collaborated with County Research and Development to develop, plan and implement the grant. Kuleana Health served as a collaborative vehicle to identify and address one of the root causes of health disparities and inequities - health literacy. Working with individuals, organizations, and communities, we developed and delivered a three-pronged health literacy strategy that helped these targeted groups make good decisions to their overall health and provide the resources that people actually needed. We coordinated training to health care providers that expanded their knowledge of health literacy and developed and disseminated health education materials for our Social Media and community outreach campaigns. While this initial iteration of Kuleana Health is complete, our commitment to address access to healthcare for our most vulnerable populations on Hawai'i Island continues. Kuleana Health continues through our commitment to a community-based approach to improving health literacy, well-being, and addressing disparities in health outcomes.

Project 3: Know Your Numbers

Our annual blood pressure awareness campaign educates Hawai'i Island communities about the risks of high blood pressure. High blood pressure is the leading cause of heart disease and stroke. Our goal is to end high blood pressure on Hawai'i Island by increasing access to the care and support needed to treat this chronic but manageable condition.



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Project 4: Hawai'i Island Healthcare Conference

Hawai'i Island Healthcare Conference addresses healthcare access and equity on Hawai'i Island that requires long-term, cross-sector collaboration. Healthcare and social service professionals, policymakers, government officials, and community organizations are convened and are provided information on innovative projects being delivered on Hawai'i Island and beyond. To foster a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities ahead, we convene key stakeholders to develop collaborative strategies that will drive our work forward in improving healthcare access across our island.

Project 5: Kuleana Health Connect - Resource Directory

Kuleana Health Connect is a free, online resource directory that will be launched in the Fall of 2025. It is designed to support patient navigation, referrals, care coordination, and community empowerment.

Through our research and analysis, we found that patients and providers alike often face the same struggle: where do we turn when someone needs help, and how do we connect them quickly to the right resource. It became clear that what was missing was a clear, user-friendly way to navigate available services—a *modern, local resource directory that could help patients, caregivers, providers, and social workers alike* because that while there are directories out there, none quite matched the specific needs we were hearing—something easy to use, visually map-based, locally curated, and focused on Hawai'i Island's full spectrum of care.

Kuleana Health Connect is built in collaboration with key community stakeholders. Guided by our kuleana to care. Rooted in connection.

Clients

1. State Department of Health
2. Hilo Benioff Medical Center
3. Kipuka o ke Ola
4. Hawai'i Island Community Health Center
5. State of Hawaii, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health
6. County of Hawaii
7. Hilo Benioff Medical Center
8. HMSA
9. Hawaii State Rural Health Association

5. Any promotional or descriptive literature which the individual or firm desires to submit.



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