

PlnG Report: Review and Recommendations Regarding the Stewardship Grant Rubric

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Background

The PlnG was formed at the PONC Regular Meeting of January 13, 2025. The PlnG's purpose is to review and revise the stewardship grant scoring sheet and rubric which was utilized in 2024 to assist PONC in its review of grant applications that were received in 2024. The PlnG members accomplished the review through numerous email exchanges.

Recommendations

Review and assessment of stewardship grant applications is one of the primary duties of the PONC Commission. Section 2-217(4) through (6) of the Hawai'i County Code **Duties and responsibilities of the Commission** identifies what should be considered when evaluating stewardship grant applications. Rather than a single, numerical score that is the outcome of the "2025 Grant Scoring Rubric," we are recommending the "2026 Stewardship Grant Review Worksheet," which (1) identifies the key characteristics to look for in an application and rates the application's covering of each characteristic; (2) places importance on progress reports from repeat applicants to assess whether they are or are not accomplishing their projects and why; and (3) does not result in a passing or failing grade but rather gives feedback and guidance on strengths and areas that need improvement and brings forth questions that may need to be answered. Applicants can use the worksheet to improve future applications and progress reports. Commissioners can use the worksheet to assess each application on its merits and recommend full or partial funding of the request, and also to help Commissioners form the necessary questions they have for the applicants (if applicable) in a timely manner.

Per the County Code and Charter, our Commission makes recommendations to the Director of Finance, but we do not make the final decisions. At times, stewardship applications lack details that are necessary to enable a proper assessment. In those few cases, the Commission has recommended that the Director of Finance obtain the missing information prior to its making the final decision. With time and experience, the PONC program will be able to improve its stewardship grant application process for both applicants and Commissioners. This recommended grant review worksheet is intended to advance our ability to perform this very important annual responsibility. The PONC lands, their hard-working, devoted stewards, and the public taxpayers deserve our best efforts in this regard.

Attached

- Attachment 1 is the 2025 Grant Scoring Rubric used in 2024.
- Attachment 2 is the 2026 Stewardship Grant Review Fill In Worksheet that is being recommended to replace the 2025 Grant Scoring Rubric.

2025 Grant Scoring Rubric

Program/Service Details

1. The organization's mission statement(s) is clear and relevant to the specific program/service seeking funding.

Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
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Notes:

2. The information provided by the applicant provided evidence of organizational experience, knowledge, and capacity to carry out the project within the project year, and within budget.

Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
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Notes:

3. The project for which funding is requested is described clearly and comprehensively, aligns with the objectives of the PONC Maintenance Fund Grant program, and demonstrates **direct** benefits to the preserved property.

Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (4)	Somewhat Disagree (8)	Somewhat Agree (12)	Agree (16)	Strongly Agree (20)
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Notes:

Program/Service Objectives and Performance

4. How the project will benefit and preserve the property has been clearly and comprehensively explained.

Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (6)	Agree (8)	Strongly Agree (10)
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Notes:

5. The activities are clearly outlined, feasible, and aligned with the purpose of the Fund.

Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (6)	Agree (8)	Strongly Agree (10)
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Notes:

2026 STEWARDSHIP GRANT REVIEW WORKSHEET

STU:

DATE:

Organization and Administration

1. The organization's mission statement is clear and the applicant provides evidence of organizational experience, knowledge, and capacity to carry out the project.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

2. The applicant is aware of permits that may be required, and which agency(ies) may need to be involved in the proposed activities.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

3. The project for which funding is requested aligns with the purposes of the PONC Maintenance Fund Grant program and with the Hawai'i County Charter, Sections 10-16.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

Program/Service Objectives and Performance

4. It is clearly and comprehensively stated how the project will directly benefit the property.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

5. The application clearly describes how the community, which the property falls within, and any lineal and cultural descendants will be included in the project.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

6. The identified consultants/collaborators and their roles/responsibilities are clearly defined and necessary.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

7. Each budgeted project activity includes a description that justifies the necessity of the cost.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

8. There are budgeted project activities that I have questions about:

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

9. The budget reflects a reasonable allocation of the requested funds, considering the scope and needs of the project.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

10. The overall application demonstrates that the project can be feasibly carried out with the proposed income and expenses.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

For Current Grant Recipients ONLY:

11. A completed PONC Stewardship Grant Progress Report for the period preceding the grant application period has been submitted. The clarity and completeness of the report is:

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

12. The current application builds on progress made in the prior funding period.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes:

13. Challenges to accomplishing the project are clearly described and feasible suggestions are made for managing those challenges.

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

14. Is the project following an existing management plan?

☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Notes or Questions:

Questions or added clarification needed from applicant:

Applicant's Overall Score: ☐ Below Average ☐ Average ☐ Above Average

Completed by: _____