



NATIVE HAWAIIAN LIBRARY SERVICES GRANTS

Sample Application NH-260909-OLS-26

Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$135,000
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The project will establish a new digital archive to preserve, organize, and expand access to Molokai's historical collection through community-based library and archival services. Funding will support staff-led processing and description of unprocessed photographs, newspaper clippings, historical records, and three-dimensional objects, as well as rehousing and organizing two significant collections. The project will also support the development of a public exhibit featuring interpretive labels, along with the purchase of archival preservation supplies and exhibit printing. Deliverables include a functional digital archive, processed and rehoused collections, and a completed interpretive exhibit. Expected outcomes include improved long-term stewardship, preservation, and public access to community historical resources, and strengthened partnerships that encourage residents and organizations to entrust additional materials for long-term care. Primary beneficiaries are the residents of the Moloka'i, who will gain increased opportunities to discover, engage with, and preserve their island's history.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Organizational profile
- Proposal narrative
- Schedule of completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Organizational Profile

Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center (KIM) (www.kaipumakanichc.org) is a grassroots, Native Hawaiian-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit on Molokaʻi, Hawaiʻi, governed by a 100% Native Hawaiian Board of Directors. KIM was incorporated in 2015 with the mission to foster awareness of cultural and natural resource management and heritage preservation across the island. The organization emphasizes community stewardship and the preservation of Molokaʻi's cultural and historical sites, landscapes, and materials, celebrating the island's natural richness, diversity, arts, language, sciences, history, and traditions. KIM's Board of Directors guides strategic priorities and ensures alignment with the organization's cultural preservation goals.

KIM serves the entire rural island of Molokaʻi, reaching a population of 7,345, of whom approximately 62% are of Native Hawaiian ancestry¹. KIM views the island itself as a living educational center and operates with a kūpuna (ancestor)-driven vision, underpinned by the philosophy, *Ola nā iwi, i nā iwi ola* ("the bones live, because of the bones that live"). This guiding principle ensures that the traditions of Molokaʻi's ancestors continue through active engagement with the present community.

To fulfill its mission, KIM focuses on three primary program areas: Restoration and Stewardship (RS), Cultural and ʻĀina Based Education (CABE), and Heritage Preservation (HP). The RS program reconnects Molokaʻi ʻohana with their wahi kūpuna (ancestral heritage sites and landscapes) and supports the community's kuleana to care for these places. The CABE program strengthens culture, ʻāina, and ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi literacy through curriculum development, research resources, internships, and community programs. The HP program provides community access to archival and primary resources, including collections, oral histories, land documents, and family records, to support local research and preserve Molokaʻi's historical record. The proposed Development Feasibility Project will be carried out under the HP program focus area.

KIM's Heritage Preservation initiatives include the Māpuna Leo o Molokaʻi Oral History Program, which captures and preserves the knowledge and lived experiences of Molokaʻi's kūpuna. KIM also stewards the Moaʻe Molokaʻi Digital Repository (www.moaemolokai.com), an online platform developed with support from IMLS that provides community access to digitized historical photographs, documents, and archival materials related to Molokaʻi. Building on these efforts, KIM is advancing the Molokaʻi Archives Project, an initiative establishing the island's first dedicated archival repository to ensure the long-term preservation of Molokaʻi's documentary heritage.

More recently, Ka Ipu Makani assumed stewardship of the Molokaʻi History Project, a community-driven initiative originally started by residents who sought to create a space where the island's history could be shared and remembered. Although the project operated for only a short period of time, the community response was immediate and overwhelming. Within roughly one and a half years, the initiative was able to gather a substantial collection of photographs, artifacts, documents, and historical objects contributed directly by community members eager to share their family histories and memories of the island. However, despite the strong community interest, the project ultimately struggled to sustain itself due to limited organizational capacity, technical expertise, and the lack of appropriate infrastructure for collections management and exhibition. When the project dissolved, stewardship of the collections and exhibit materials transitioned to Ka Ipu Makani. With the transition of these materials, Ka Ipu Makani has taken on an expanded role in preserving, interpreting, and making accessible Molokaʻi's historical record for the community.

¹https://qlt-trust.cdn.prismic.io/qlt-trust/534f3ee6-58e6-426d-b6bb-fd8305aeef82_Community+Profile+Molokai+Revised.pdf

Project Justification

Project Description

The Moloka'i Archives: Processing and Access Initiative will process, rehouse, and describe approximately 16 linear feet of priority archival collections, including materials from the Moloka'i History Project and the Curtis and Eminger Collections. By transforming currently unprocessed and under-processed materials into organized and accessible collections, the project will expand access for research, education, cultural practice, while strengthening public interpretation and community access through the Moloka'i History Project.

Community Need

Over the past year, Moloka'i has experienced a significant shift in its ability to care for and steward its historical and cultural materials. With support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center established the Moloka'i Archives, creating a dedicated, community-based archival program on the island and building the foundation for long-term stewardship of Moloka'i's historical records.

As a result of this new infrastructure, community members, organizations, and local initiatives are now actively bringing forward their collections, entrusting them to the archive for long-term care. This shift represents a critical opportunity, but also an immediate responsibility. The primary challenge is no longer the absence of an archive, but the need to properly process, preserve, and make accessible the growing body of materials that have already been entrusted to it.

This need was most clearly identified through Ka Ipu Makani's assumption of stewardship over the Moloka'i History Project in October 2025. The Moloka'i History Project is a community-driven exhibit and gathering space founded by Moloka'i residents to share the island's history through collections, stories, and locally contributed materials. The project operated independently for approximately a year and a half as a grassroots effort to make Moloka'i's history visible and accessible. During this time, it experienced rapid growth in both community engagement and the volume of donated materials, including both archival materials and objects. However, the project did not have the professional experience, systems, or capacity required to manage collections. As a result, stewardship of the project was formally transferred to Ka Ipu Makani to ensure the long-term preservation, care, and responsible management of these collections.

Through this transition, the organization inherited a growing body of community-donated materials that had been collected to support exhibits and public interpretation but had not been accessioned, processed, or stabilized. These materials include photographs, newspaper clippings, locally contributed historical records, and three-dimensional objects, and exist in varying

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conditions. Some are currently on display, while others remain in storage without appropriate housing, arrangement, or description. Notably, many materials currently on display lack labels or contextual information, limiting their interpretive value and making it difficult for visitors to understand their significance.

This direct assessment revealed an immediate need to establish archival and collections control to ensure preservation, intellectual organization, and responsible use. Because these materials are actively used to inform exhibits, the lack of processing limits Ka Ipu Makani's ability to develop accurate, well-supported, and community-grounded interpretation. Addressing these conditions is therefore essential not only for preservation, but for strengthening the quality, integrity, and accessibility of the Moloka'i History Project as a community-facing space.

In addition to the Moloka'i History Project legacy collection, the Curtis and Eminger Collections represent significant recent additions that have come into Ka Ipu Makani's care as a result of the development of the Moloka'i Archives. The D. Curtis Collection, totaling approximately 7 linear feet, is a substantial body of research compiled by Dorothe Curtis, an ethnographer and researcher whose work focused on documenting Moloka'i's historical and cultural landscape. The collection includes personal correspondence, research notes, reports, maps, archaeological documentation, newspapers, and records related to historic institutions across Moloka'i, including early documentation of churches, schools, and government and business sites. Much of this material reflects long-term, site-specific research on Moloka'i.

The S. Eminger Collection, totaling approximately 5 linear feet and reflects decades of personal collecting and documentation by Steve Eminger, a Moloka'i firefighter and archaeology enthusiast. The collection includes a wide range of materials such as administrative records from the Moloka'i Fire Department, local ephemera from businesses and community life, archaeological reports and field notes, and audiovisual materials. Of particular significance are cassette tapes and CDs containing oral histories conducted by Mary Kawena Pukui with kūpuna on Moloka'i in the early 1950s, representing rare and Hawaiian language resources that require careful preservation.

A direct physical assessment of collections currently in Ka Ipu Makani's care identified a defined and immediate body of work requiring intervention. The Moloka'i History Project Collection, totaling approximately 4 linear feet, remains unprocessed, while the Curtis and Eminger Collections, totaling approximately 12 linear feet, require rehousing and further organization. Together, these collections contain multi-generational, place-specific knowledge, including historical records, archaeological data, community ephemera, and oral histories tied directly to Moloka'i. However, materials remain in non-archival enclosures and are inconsistently organized across formats, with paper records, photographs, maps, and audiovisual materials often stored together without appropriate separation or stabilization. These conditions increase the risk of

deterioration, particularly for fragile formats such as magnetic media and aged paper, and limit the ability to access and use the materials effectively.

At present, these collections remain largely unknown and inaccessible to the community. Without processing, there is little visibility into what these materials contain, limiting their use and preventing their integration into education, research, and community knowledge sharing. The impact of inaction is twofold. Physically, materials remain vulnerable to degradation and potential loss. Intellectually, the knowledge contained within these collections remains hidden and underutilized. For Moloka'i's learners, educators, and broader community, this represents a significant missed opportunity to access and engage with place-based knowledge that is directly tied to the island's history, landscapes, and people.

Addressing these conditions is therefore both urgent and necessary. This project will not only stabilize and preserve materials, but will make them visible, understandable, and usable for the first time at scale. By doing so, it will unlock the value of these collections as active resources that support learning, cultural knowledge, and community connection.

Audience & Beneficiaries

The primary audience for this project is the Moloka'i community, who will directly benefit from improved preservation, organization, and access to archival collections that document the island's history, culture, and landscapes. This includes the island's population of approximately 7,345 residents, with particular relevance for the 4,527 Native Hawaiian individuals whose genealogical and cultural connections to Moloka'i are reflected in these materials. The project will benefit community members seeking to access records tied to family history and place, educators and students who require Moloka'i specific primary sources for place based learning, cultural practitioners who draw upon historical knowledge to inform practice, and local researchers and historians working to document and interpret the island's past and present. By ensuring that these materials are properly processed and accessible, the project will make it possible for these audiences to locate, understand, and meaningfully use information that is directly connected to their communities and lived experiences.

The project will also directly benefit visitors to the Moloka'i History Project, which has already served over 700 visitors within a three month period, including Moloka'i residents, Native Hawaiians, and visitors seeking to learn more about the island's history. Because many materials currently on display lack proper processing and contextual information, improving archival organization and description will strengthen the accuracy, clarity, and overall quality of interpretation available to the public.

The primary audience has directly shaped the development of this project through multiple forms of engagement. Feedback collected through visitor comment boxes at the Moloka'i History Project consistently identified a need for clearer labeling and contextual information for

materials on display, highlighting gaps in interpretation tied directly to the lack of processed archival content. Community members who have donated materials have also expressed expectations that their collections be properly cared for, organized, and made accessible. In addition, ongoing conversations with educators, cultural practitioners, and researchers have emphasized the need for reliable, Moloka'i specific primary sources to support teaching, cultural practice, and community based research.

Project Work Plan

Activity 1: Accessioning and Collection Assessment

The project will begin with accessioning and initial inventory of the Moloka'i History Project Collection, which remains unprocessed. This will include assigning accession numbers, documenting basic descriptive information, and establishing intellectual control. For the Curtis and Eminger Collections, which are already accessioned and have preliminary high level catalog records, staff will conduct a detailed survey and verification process to confirm existing records, assess current organization, and identify gaps in arrangement and description.

This activity will be led by the Archivist, with support from the Collections Technician for inventory and documentation. The Executive Director will provide oversight, and the Moloka'i History Project Coordinator will assist in identifying materials currently on display and their relationship to the broader collections.

Stakeholder engagement during this phase will include consultation with community members who contributed materials to clarify provenance, context, and appropriate handling of collections. This ensures that initial documentation reflects community knowledge and intent.

This activity will rely on existing accessioning workflows, preliminary catalog records, and established archival policies developed through prior IMLS support.

Activity 2: Sorting, Arrangement, and Rehousing

Following assessment, staff will organize materials by format, including paper records, photographs, maps, and audiovisual materials, to support proper preservation and processing. Materials will then be arranged into logical series based on provenance and original order where possible.

Rehousing and physical stabilization will occur concurrently. Materials will be transferred into archival quality enclosures, including acid free folders, boxes, and protective sleeves. Special attention will be given to fragile formats such as magnetic media and aging paper materials. For the Curtis and Eminger Collections, this phase will refine existing organization, while for the Moloka'i History Project Collection, arrangement and rehousing will occur as part of initial processing.

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The Archivist will oversee arrangement and preservation decisions, while the Collections Technician will carry out rehousing and physical processing tasks. The Moloka'i History Project Coordinator will support identification of materials used in exhibits to ensure continuity between collections and interpretation.

This activity will utilize archival supplies, processing space, and established workflows already in place at Ka Ipu Makani.

Activity 3: Description and Metadata Creation

Once materials are rehoused and arranged, staff will develop collection level and series level descriptions, and item level records where appropriate. Existing high level records for the Curtis and Eminger Collections will be expanded, while new records will be created for the Moloka'i History Project Collection. All metadata will follow standards established through the Moloka'i Archives program and will be integrated into Ka Ipu Makani's digital systems to support discovery and access.

The Archivist will lead metadata development and ensure quality control. The Collections Technician will assist with data entry and record creation. The Executive Director will ensure alignment with broader organizational data management practices. Stakeholder engagement will include incorporating community knowledge, names, and context into descriptive records where appropriate, particularly for culturally significant materials and oral histories. This activity will leverage existing metadata frameworks, digital repository infrastructure, and prior archival planning work.

Activity 4: Interpretation and Community Access

Processed materials will be applied to improve interpretation at the Moloka'i History Project. This includes developing accurate labels and contextual information for materials currently on display, directly responding to visitor feedback requesting clearer interpretation.

The Moloka'i History Project Coordinator will lead exhibit updates and interpretation, working closely with the Archivist to ensure accuracy and appropriate context. The Executive Director will support alignment with organizational messaging and community priorities. Engagement during this phase will include continued use of visitor comment boxes, as well as direct conversations with community members, educators, and cultural practitioners to refine interpretation and ensure it reflects community knowledge and perspectives.

Project Management, Personnel, and Additional Resources

The project will be led by a skilled and community rooted team with expertise in archival practice, cultural resource management, and public history. Together, they will ensure the successful processing, preservation, and application of collections in ways that meet professional standards while remaining grounded in the needs and values of the Moloka'i community.

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Dr. Cheney-Ann Pūlama Lima, Executive Director of Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center, will serve as Project Director. Dr. Lima holds a PhD in Anthropology with a specialization in Hawaiian Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management and brings over a decade of experience managing cultural preservation initiatives across Hawai'i. She will provide overall project oversight, including management of the project timeline, budget, and reporting, while ensuring alignment with organizational priorities and community grounded approaches to stewardship.

Genesis Melia Kalawe will serve as the Archivist and lead all archival components of the project. Born and raised on Moloka'i, Ms. Kalawe holds a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science and brings both professional training and deep community connection to her work. She will oversee all aspects of collection processing, including arrangement, rehousing, description, and metadata creation for the Moloka'i History Project Collection and the Curtis and Eminger Collections. She will also ensure that all work follows established archival standards and workflows developed through the Moloka'i Archives program, while incorporating appropriate cultural context and care in the handling of materials.

The Moloka'i History Project Coordinator (currently awaiting hire) will play a key role in connecting archival work to public interpretation. This position will support the integration of processed materials into exhibits, including the development of labels and contextual information, ensuring that collections are accurately and meaningfully presented to the public.

A Collections Technician (need to hire) will support the project through hands on processing activities, including inventory, rehousing, and data entry. Working under the supervision of the Archivist, this role will help ensure that processing work is completed efficiently and consistently.

Stakeholder engagement has been central to the development of this project and will continue throughout implementation. Through the transition of the Moloka'i History Project, Ka Ipu Makani has engaged directly with community members, educators, cultural practitioners, and researchers, whose input has shaped the project's focus on processing and access.

The project will leverage existing organizational resources and community assets developed through prior IMLS support. Ka Ipu Makani has established archival workflows, metadata standards, and a digital repository system that will support efficient processing and access. The organization maintains dedicated archival workspace, processing equipment, and storage, as well as existing knowledge of collections, including preliminary catalog records for the Curtis and Eminger Collections. The Moloka'i History Project serves as a key community facing asset, allowing processed materials to be immediately applied to exhibits and interpretation.

Project results and lessons learned will be shared regularly with the community through multiple platforms. Updates will be provided through Ka Ipu Makani's monthly newsletters and social

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media channels, increasing visibility and engagement with the archive's work. Additional sharing will also occur through ongoing updates at the Moloka'i History Project. These efforts will ensure transparency, maintain strong relationships with community contributors, and support broader awareness of the importance of archival stewardship on Moloka'i.

Project Results

The intended results of this project are the stabilization, organization, and activation of priority archival collections currently in the care of Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center. Through this work, materials that are currently unprocessed, inconsistently organized, or lacking context will be transformed into structured, described, and usable collections. This shift will move materials from limited or passive use into active application across multiple contexts, including research, education, cultural practice, and public interpretation. As a result, collections will be more navigable, better understood, and more readily integrated into community use, while also strengthening interpretation at the Moloka'i History Project through the development of accurate and contextualized exhibit content.

The primary products of this project include the processing of approximately 16 linear feet of archival materials, consisting of 4 linear feet from the Moloka'i History Project Collection and 12 linear feet from the Curtis and Eminger Collections. This will include full accessioning and processing of the Moloka'i History Project Collection, as well as rehousing, reorganization, and enhancement of existing records for the Curtis and Eminger Collections. The project will result in the creation and/or enhancement of a minimum of three collection level records and at least 10 series level descriptions, along with expanded metadata to support discovery and access.

In addition to archival processing outputs, the project will produce improvements in interpretation and access. This includes the development of a minimum of 25 new or updated exhibit labels and contextual descriptions informed by processed collections, directly addressing the lack of labeling and context identified through visitor feedback. Collections will also be integrated into Ka Ipu Makani's digital systems, increasing their accessibility for research and community use.

Success for this project is defined by both the completion of processing activities and the increased usability of collections. Quantitative measures of success include:

- Processing and rehousing of at least 16 linear feet of archival materials
- Creation or enhancement of at least 3 collection level records and 10 series level descriptions
- Development of at least 25 exhibit labels or interpretive elements
- Integration of 100 percent of processed collections into the organization's digital system

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Additional indicators of success will measure increased use and engagement with collections. These include:

- A minimum of 15 documented instances of collection use, including research requests, educational use, or staff facilitated access
- Collection of at least 50 visitor feedback responses through comment boxes at the Moloka‘i History Project, with improved feedback related to clarity and understanding of exhibits
- Engagement metrics from newsletters and social media, including at least 4 project related updates shared publicly during the project period

Evaluation will be conducted through ongoing internal tracking and documentation by project staff. The Archivist will maintain processing logs, metadata records, and completion benchmarks. The Executive Director will oversee progress toward project goals, ensuring activities remain on schedule and within scope. Regular staff check ins will be used to monitor progress, address challenges, and ensure alignment with project objectives.

The benefits of this project will be sustained beyond the period of performance through the continued use and maintenance of processed collections within the Moloka‘i Archives. Once processed, collections will remain organized, preserved, and accessible for long term use. Metadata and descriptive records created through this project will be maintained within existing systems and incorporated into ongoing archival operations.

This project also strengthens Ka Ipu Makani’s long term capacity to manage collections by reinforcing workflows, clarifying staff roles, and building upon infrastructure established through prior IMLS support. The integration of processed materials into the Moloka‘i History Project ensures that collections will remain in active use through exhibits and programming. Through these combined efforts, the project establishes a sustainable foundation for continued archival processing, access, and community engagement beyond the grant period.

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