



NATIVE HAWAIIAN LIBRARY SERVICES GRANTS

Sample Application NH-260935-OLS-26

Hi'ipaka, LLC

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$150,000
Amount of cost share:	\$0

This project will document, preserve, and expand access to oral histories that capture the lived experience, cultural knowledge, and community contributions connected to Waimea Valley. Funding will support the development of an oral history initiative that addresses the long-time staff, cultural practitioners, and community members who have worked to protect, restore, and sustain the valley. Project activities include staff-led coordination, collection of video oral histories, development of internal capacity to manage and use oral history resources, and partnership with the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa for technical guidance and project support. Deliverables include recorded oral histories, preserved archival materials, and resources to support future educational programming, public interpretation, and publication. Expected outcomes include increased representation of community voices in historical records, strengthened organizational capacity to steward and share oral history collections, and expanded access to culturally significant resources. Primary beneficiaries include the Waimea Valley community, cultural practitioners, educators, researchers, and the public.

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: Hi‘ipaka, LLC

Mission Statement: E mālama a e ho‘omau i nā waiwai kānaka, mo‘omeheu, a kūlohelohe o Waimea no kēia hanauna a me nā hanauna e hiki mai ai i loko o ka ho‘onaauao ‘ana a me ka ho‘okahu ‘ana.

Preserve and perpetuate the human, cultural, and natural resources of Waimea for generations through education and stewardship.

Hi‘ipaka, LLC is the managing entity responsible for Waimea Valley, a 1,700-acre ahupua‘a located on O‘ahu’s North Shore. The Valley is a site of profound cultural, historical, and ecological significance, containing ancient archaeological sites, botanical gardens, and diverse native and endangered species. Formerly known as Waimea Falls Park, the property is now managed as a living cultural and educational landscape that integrates preservation, stewardship, and public access. Hi‘ipaka LLC was established in December 2007 through Hi‘ilei Aloha LLC as a nonprofit entity to manage Waimea Valley. Today, Hi‘ipaka LLC holds title to the property and oversees all daily operations, including cultural programming, environmental stewardship, education, visitor services, and research initiatives. The organization employs over 70 staff members across multiple departments and functions. Waimea Valley serves a broad and diverse audience, with approximately 1,000 to 2,000 visitors per day and an estimated 500,000 annual visitors, with peak visitation reaching up to 2,600 people per day. The surrounding communities of Waialua, Wahiawā, Hale‘iwa, and Kahuku include high concentrations of Native Hawaiian residents and families experiencing economic hardship. These communities are among the primary populations served by Hi‘ipaka’s programs and outreach efforts.

Hi‘ipaka is guided by an organizational goal to increase local access and use of Waimea Valley through community events, volunteer opportunities, research initiatives, and partnerships with Hawaiian cultural practitioners. The organization is committed to ensuring that Waimea remains a place where local communities, especially Native Hawaiians and lineal descendants, can actively engage with and benefit from the Valley’s cultural and natural resources. The Valley’s audience is broad and includes: visitors from Hawai‘i and around the world; Native Hawaiian communities and lineal descendants; adjacent landowners and North Shore residents and businesses; military and veteran communities; environmental and preservation partners; educators and students; funding and research partners; as well as organizational stakeholders such as Office of Hawaiian Affairs Trustees, Hi‘ipaka management, and community advisory groups. The work of Hi‘ipaka also recognizes ancestors and future generations as part of its enduring responsibility to place.

Today, Waimea Valley functions as a dynamic center for cultural preservation and education, offering school programs, cultural demonstrations, workshops, guided experiences, and research opportunities that connect people to place. Through these efforts, Hi‘ipaka continues to steward

Waimea Valley as a living landscape where culture, education, and natural resources are preserved and shared for generations to come.

Project Justification

Waimea Valley is a culturally and historically significant place in Hawai‘i, with deep connections to Native Hawaiian history, land stewardship, and community life. Despite decades of restoration and preservation efforts, there is a critical gap in how this history is documented and shared. While the Valley has been the focus of extensive academic research in areas such as botany, archaeology, and anthropology, these materials largely reflect institutional perspectives and do not capture the lived experiences of the people who have worked to protect, restore, and sustain the Valley.

This project addresses the need to document and preserve oral histories—recorded interviews that capture personal stories and firsthand experiences—from long-time staff, cultural practitioners, and community members connected to Waimea Valley. These narratives are essential for understanding the Valley’s more recent history, including community-led efforts to protect the land and maintain its cultural significance. This need has been identified through internal reviews of Waimea Valley’s archival collections, which currently lack oral history materials, as well as through feedback from staff, educators, and community partners who have emphasized the urgency of preserving these stories before they are lost.

In partnership with the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Waimea Valley will conduct ten professionally recorded video oral history interviews with individuals who have played key roles in the Valley’s preservation, restoration, and educational programming. In addition to creating a publicly accessible archival resource, these interviews will serve as foundational research for an in-progress book on the history of Waimea Valley. By documenting firsthand accounts, the project will contribute essential primary source material that strengthens the accuracy, depth, and community representation of this forthcoming publication.

This project directly aligns with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Native Hawaiian Library Services program goal to develop, enhance, and disseminate practices, programs, and tools that strengthen library and archival services with Native Hawaiian organizations. The creation of a video-based oral history collection—developed in partnership with an established oral history program—represents a replicable model for community-based documentation, archival development, and culturally grounded storytelling. The project will also build internal capacity at Waimea Valley by establishing workflows and practices for conducting, preserving, and utilizing oral histories within its archival and educational programs.

The project most directly supports IMLS Objective 1: serving the learning needs and interests of the community. The oral histories will be integrated into programming at Pu‘ukua, Waimea Valley’s new educational space, which includes a traditional-style Hawaiian structure (hale). This space will serve as the primary site for educational programming for K–12 students, as well as college and graduate-level learners. By incorporating oral histories into this setting, the project

creates opportunities for place-based education that connects students directly to the people and stories behind the Valley's history. More broadly, Waimea Valley's mission and programming also align with the full range of IMLS objectives, including expanding access to information, strengthening institutional capacity, and supporting lifelong learning through culturally relevant education.

In addition to addressing an institutional gap, this project responds to a broader need within Native Hawaiian and community-based archival practice for more place-based, community-driven documentation efforts. Many existing archival collections in Hawai'i and across the Pacific remain limited in their representation of lived experience, particularly from individuals whose knowledge is grounded in long-term stewardship, cultural practice, and community engagement. By prioritizing oral histories and partnering with an established program, this project contributes to a growing movement to center community voices in archival collections and educational resources. It also provides a practical model for how small to mid-sized cultural organizations can develop sustainable oral history initiatives that both preserve knowledge and activate it through education and public interpretation. In doing so, the project strengthens not only Waimea Valley's internal capacity but also contributes to broader conversations around community-based archives, access, and the role of storytelling in preserving cultural and historical knowledge.

The primary audience for this project includes K–12 students—particularly those from underserved and Title I schools—along with college and graduate students, educators, and the broader Waimea Valley community. These audiences have been involved in the planning process through existing school programs, educator feedback, and ongoing collaboration with staff and community partners. Educators and community members have consistently identified the need for more accessible, locally grounded educational materials that reflect the history and lived experiences of the communities connected to Waimea Valley. By documenting and sharing these oral histories, the project will produce a lasting archival resource, support the development of a comprehensive history of Waimea Valley, and provide meaningful, place-based educational materials. Ultimately, the project strengthens both archival practice and community engagement, ensuring that the stories of those who have shaped Waimea Valley are preserved and shared for future generations.

Project Work Plan

Waimea Valley will carry out a series of coordinated activities to document, preserve, and activate oral histories connected to the Valley's recent history. The project will begin with planning and coordination, including identifying interview participants, developing interview questions and protocols, and establishing consent and recording procedures. This work will be done in close collaboration with the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Staff from the Center for Oral History may conduct the interviews, working alongside

Waimea Valley's team to ensure adherence to professional standards and best practices in oral history methodology. Following collection, interviews will be processed, organized, and prepared for archival preservation, including the creation of metadata and formatting for long-term access. Selected excerpts will then be developed into educational materials and interpretive content, which will be integrated into programming at Pu'ukua and into displays throughout the Valley. The project will conclude with evaluation, refinement of materials, and dissemination of results and lessons learned.

The project will be led by Waimea Valley's Director of Research and Training, who will oversee all aspects of project design, coordination, and implementation. This includes working in conjunction with the Center for Oral History to develop interview questions, guide the overall direction of the project, and ensure that the oral histories align with both archival standards and educational goals. Executive Director Richard Pezzulo will provide overall leadership, strategic oversight, and institutional support. Waimea Valley's photographer/videographer specialist will support the technical recording and production of the interviews, ensuring high-quality video documentation. Staff from the Center for Oral History will serve as key collaborators, contributing their expertise in conducting interviews, advising on methodology, and supporting archival best practices, drawing on their experience managing a collection of over 800 oral histories.

Stakeholders have been integral to the planning and development of this project and will continue to shape its implementation. Long-time staff, cultural practitioners, and community members have helped identify the need for documenting these histories and will participate as interviewees and informal advisors. Educators and school partners have contributed input on the types of materials that best support student learning, particularly for K–12 audiences. Throughout the project, feedback will be incorporated through ongoing consultation with participants, educators, and project partners to ensure that the content remains relevant, respectful, and responsive to community priorities.

Waimea Valley will leverage a range of existing organizational resources and community assets to ensure project success. These include established educational programs serving over 6,000 students annually, existing archival materials, and the development of Pu'ukua as a dedicated educational space for integrating project outcomes. The Valley's strong relationships with local schools, educators, and community members further support the project's reach and impact. The partnership with the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is a critical asset, providing a proven model for oral history collection and ensuring adherence to professional standards. Internal staff expertise, combined with this external partnership, positions the project for both high-quality implementation and long-term sustainability.

The results of this project will be shared with multiple audiences through both on-site and digital dissemination. Oral history excerpts will be incorporated into educational programming at

Pu‘ukua and into interpretive displays throughout Waimea Valley, reaching both students and the Valley’s approximately 500,000 annual visitors. Select content may also be shared through Waimea Valley’s digital platforms to expand access beyond on-site audiences. Lessons learned, including effective practices for community-based oral history collection and integration into educational programming, will be shared with project partners and may inform future collaborations and presentations. Through this multi-faceted approach, the project ensures broad access to its results while contributing to the strengthening of archival and educational practices within Native Hawaiian-serving organizations.

Project Results

The primary result of this project will be the creation of a high-quality oral history collection documenting the lived experiences of individuals who have contributed to the history, preservation, and stewardship of Waimea Valley over the past century. In partnership with the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, the project will produce ten professionally recorded video interviews with long-time staff, cultural practitioners, and community members. These recordings will be preserved as part of Waimea Valley’s archival holdings and will represent a significant expansion of its currently limited oral history resources. Original and existing copies of these recordings will be housed in Waimea Valley’s Library.

In addition to the oral history collection, the project will produce educational materials that integrate excerpts from the interviews into place-based learning experiences at Pu‘ukua, Waimea Valley’s educational space. These materials will support programming for the more than 6,000 students who visit Waimea Valley annually, including K–12 school groups, as well as college and graduate-level learners. The oral histories will provide students with direct access to personal narratives that deepen their understanding of the Valley’s history, making learning more engaging, relevant, and grounded in lived experience.

Beyond structured educational programming, the oral histories will also be incorporated into interpretive displays throughout Waimea Valley, which receives approximately 500,000 visitors each year. By presenting excerpts of these interviews within the landscape itself, the project will expand public access to these stories and create meaningful points of connection for a broad and diverse audience, including local residents, families, and visitors. This approach ensures that the voices captured through the project are not only preserved in an archive but are actively shared in ways that enhance visitor experience and understanding of the Valley’s history.

The interviews will also serve as critical primary source material for an in-progress comprehensive history book on Waimea Valley. By incorporating firsthand accounts, the project strengthens the depth, accuracy, and community representation of this publication, ensuring that it reflects not only institutional history but also the voices of those directly connected to the Valley.

Success for this project will be defined through both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitatively, success will include the completion of ten oral history interviews, the development of at least two to three educational modules incorporating this content, the integration of these materials into programs serving over 6,000 students annually, and the installation of interpretive displays reaching approximately 500,000 annual visitors. Qualitatively, success will be evaluated through feedback from students, educators, and visitors, as well as through internal assessment of how effectively the oral histories enhance educational programming, visitor engagement, and archival resources. Additional evaluation will include consultation with project partners to ensure that the interviews meet professional standards for oral history collection, preservation, and accessibility.

The results of this project will be disseminated through multiple channels to reach the primary audience. Oral history excerpts will be incorporated into on-site educational programming at Pu‘ukua and into interpretive displays across the Valley. Select interviews or clips may also be shared through Waimea Valley’s digital platforms, expanding access to educators and community members beyond those who visit in person. Lessons learned from the project—including approaches to community-based oral history collection and integration into both educational and visitor-facing programming—will be shared with partner organizations and may inform future collaborations.

The long-term sustainability of this project is supported by both institutional commitment and strategic partnerships. The oral histories will be preserved as part of Waimea Valley’s permanent archival collection and will continue to be used in educational programming and visitor interpretation beyond the grant period. The partnership with the Center for Oral History, an established center with a collection of over 800 oral histories, ensures that the project follows best practices and builds internal capacity for future oral history work. Additionally, the integration of these materials into ongoing school programs, interpretive displays, and the development of the Waimea Valley history book will extend the impact of the project well beyond its initial implementation period.

Through the creation, use, and public presentation of these oral histories, the project will produce lasting educational and archival resources that strengthen community connections, enhance visitor experiences, and ensure that the stories of Waimea Valley are preserved and shared for generations to come.

This project will be implemented over an 18-month period, allowing sufficient time for thoughtful planning, community engagement, high-quality oral history collection, and meaningful integration into educational and public programming.

Months 1–3: Planning and Project Coordination

During the first three months, Waimea Valley will focus on project planning and coordination. This will include confirming the partnership and workflow with the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, identifying and securing commitments from interview participants, and developing interview questions and protocols. This phase will also include establishing consent procedures, scheduling interviews, and ensuring that all technical and archival standards are in place. Stakeholder input—including that of staff, educators, and community members—will be incorporated to ensure that the project reflects shared priorities and perspectives.

Months 4–6: Interview Preparation and Initial Recording

In months four through six, the project will move into active implementation with the preparation and initiation of oral history interviews. This includes finalizing interview logistics, confirming schedules with participants, and beginning the first round of video-recorded interviews. Waimea Valley’s videographer will work alongside project staff to ensure high-quality recordings, while guidance from the Center for Oral History will help maintain professional standards in interview methodology and documentation.

Months 7–10: Continued Oral History Collection

During this phase, Waimea Valley will complete the remaining oral history interviews, reaching the project goal of ten total recordings. This extended timeline allows for flexibility in scheduling and ensures that each interview is conducted with care and attention to detail. Throughout this period, the project team will continue to engage with participants and incorporate feedback as needed.

Months 9–12: Processing and Archival Preparation

As interviews are completed, the project will move into processing and archival preparation. This includes organizing video files, developing metadata, and preparing transcripts or summaries as appropriate. These materials will be formatted for long-term preservation within Waimea Valley’s archival system and for accessibility in educational and interpretive contexts. This phase ensures that the oral histories are not only recorded but also usable and sustainable as archival resources.

Months 11–14: Educational Materials Development

Building on the completed interviews, Waimea Valley will develop educational materials that integrate oral history content into its programming at Pu‘ukūa. This includes creating lesson components, identifying key excerpts, and aligning materials with existing curricula for K–12,

college, and graduate-level audiences. These resources will be designed to enhance place-based learning and provide students with direct engagement with personal narratives connected to Waimea Valley.

Months 13–16: Program Integration and Public Interpretation

During this phase, oral history content will be actively integrated into both educational programming and the visitor experience. Materials will be incorporated into programs serving more than 6,000 students annually, and selected excerpts will be featured in interpretive displays throughout Waimea Valley. With approximately 500,000 visitors each year, this step significantly expands the reach of the project, making these stories accessible to a broad and diverse public audience.

Months 15–17: Book Research and Content Integration

The oral history interviews will also be reviewed and incorporated as primary source material for an in-progress comprehensive history book on Waimea Valley. This phase will involve organizing key themes, identifying relevant excerpts, and integrating these narratives into the broader historical framework of the publication.

Months 17–18: Evaluation and Dissemination

In the final phase, Waimea Valley will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the project, including feedback from participants, educators, and visitors. The project team will assess the effectiveness of the oral histories in enhancing educational programming and visitor engagement. Final materials will be prepared for ongoing use, and key findings and lessons learned will be shared with project partners and the broader community. This phase ensures that the project's impact is documented and that its outcomes can inform future work.