



NATIVE HAWAIIAN LIBRARY SERVICES GRANTS

Sample Application NH-260955-OLS-26

Maui Historical Society

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$147,200
Amount of cost share:	\$0

This project will preserve and expand access to Maui's photographic collections through a comprehensive digitization and metadata enhancement initiative that strengthens library and archival services. Funding will support the creation of high-quality digital masters for thousands of photographic items, including outsourced digitization of a portion of the collection and in-house digitization of remaining materials, and acquisition of scanning equipment and archival supplies. Project activities include staff-led project oversight and metadata enhancement and implementation of digital storage and backup infrastructure. The organization will collaborate with the University of Hawai'i Museum Consortium to improve collections care practices, shared data management standards, and student engagement. Deliverables include preserved digital surrogates, enhanced collection records, and improved systems for long-term access and stewardship. Expected outcomes include increased discoverability and responsible sharing of these collections, reduced barriers to accessing cultural resources, and strengthened preservation of fragile original materials. Primary beneficiaries include Maui researchers, educators, students, cultural practitioners, community members, and the broader native Hawaiian diaspora.

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.

Maui Historical Society

Mission

Maui Historical Society (MHS) is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and sharing the history and cultural heritage of Maui County through cultural roots. According to the organization's Amended and Restated By-Laws of the Maui Historical Society, Article I, Section 1.2, the Society's purpose is to "collect, study, and preserve materials pertaining to the history and ancient culture of Hawai'i, specifically of Maui County," and to "secure and preserve materials and documents pertaining to genealogies and biographies of Hawai'i." The bylaws further direct MHS to preserve the historical traditions, maintain the Bailey House Museum and grounds, and promote interest in the history, folklore, customs, natural history, and ancient culture of Hawai'i.

Governance Structure

MHS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors consisting of five to seven members elected by the membership. Directors serve staggered three-year terms and represent a range of community expertise aligned with the organization's mission. The Board meets at least quarterly and provides oversight of organizational strategy, finances, and operations through standing committees including Executive, Budget and Finance, Development, Historic Preservation, and Programs. The museum's daily operations (including archives management, exhibitions, visitor services, and educational programming) are carried out by staff and supported by a dedicated volunteer team.

Service Area

MHS serves residents and visitors throughout Maui County, including the islands of Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i. The museum welcomes approximately 5,000 visitors annually, including students, kūpuna (elders), educators, researchers, and community members seeking to connect with the island's cultural and historical resources. The museum's collections and educational programming support Native Hawaiian cultural knowledge, local families researching genealogy and place-based history, and broader audiences interested in Hawai'i's social, political, and cultural development. As Maui's only general history museum, MHS plays a unique role in preserving and interpreting the island's collective heritage.

Organizational History

Maui Historical Society was founded on November 23, 1951, following efforts by the Maui Women's Club to establish the island's first historical organization. The Society opened Hale Hō'ike'ike at the Bailey House museum on July 6, 1957, located within the former Wailuku Female Seminary originally established by missionary Edward Bailey. In 1991, the property was purchased by Masaru "Pundy" Yokouchi and gifted to MHS, securing the museum's permanent home.

For more than seventy years, MHS has stewarded historical collections documenting Maui's cultural, social, and political history, including Native Hawaiian cultural objects, photographs, archival manuscripts, and community records. The museum maintains archival collections containing more than 10,000 historic photographs and numerous cultural artifacts representing pre-contact Hawaiian history, the Hawaiian Kingdom period, plantation-era communities, and contemporary island life. The archives program serves researchers, educators, and community members seeking to better understand Maui's past while preserving knowledge for future generations.

Maui in Focus

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Inspire Objective 2 – Collections Stewardship and Access

Maui Historical Society (MHS) seeks to preserve and strengthen its historic photographic collection through a comprehensive digitization and metadata enhancement initiative, called Maui in Focus: Digitizing the Island's Historic Photographs. This project directly advances Inspire Objective 2 by strengthening the care, management, and responsible stewardship of MHS's photographic collections while expanding their long-term availability and use. By digitizing fragile photographic materials, MHS will both reduce handling of original artifacts and extend the useful life and reach of these irreplaceable historical resources.

MHS stewards approximately 10,000+ photographic prints documenting Maui and the neighboring islands from the late 1800s through the late twentieth century, including a rare print of one of the first maps of Maui created by Edward Bailey, whose former seminary building now houses the museum. The collection includes images of historic sites, community life, cultural practices, prominent families, plantation-era landscapes, and significant events that shaped Maui's social and cultural history. Among the museum's most distinctive archival holdings are the notes and oral history records of Inez Ashdown, a respected cultural historian and early preservation advocate who worked alongside the Maui Women's Club and the Lahaina Hawaiian Civic Club to safeguard historic sites across the island. Ashdown's recollections include firsthand memories of Queen Lili'uokalani (explain who she is) and reflections on the cultural values, language, and stewardship traditions she learned from kūpuna (elders) during the early twentieth century. These materials preserve rare intergenerational knowledge about Hawaiian culture, history, and place-based identity that exists in few other archival repositories.

As a museum located in geographically remote Maui (one of the most isolated population centers in the US), MHS serves a community whose history extends far beyond the island itself. Families, researchers, and cultural practitioners with deep ties to Maui reside across Hawai'i, the continental US, and internationally. By creating high-quality digital masters supported by structured metadata, MHS will ensure that the island's visual record can be identified, studied, and responsibly shared across distance, reducing geographic barriers while safeguarding fragile originals for future generations.

Additionally, as Maui's only general-history museum, MHS plays a critical role in safeguarding visual documentation of the island's past. Following the 2023 Maui wildfires, which resulted in the loss or damage of multiple cultural heritage sites across the island, the urgency for digital preservation of Maui's visual history is acute. The Maui in Focus Initiative directly advances MHS's strategic priority to strengthen collections stewardship, expand digital capacity, and build institutional resilience in the wake of the devastating cultural losses across Maui.

The primary audience includes Maui-based researchers, educators, students, cultural practitioners, and community members who rely on access to historical imagery for research, interpretation, and cultural continuity. Approximately 1,500 annual researchers, students, and visitors engage with archival materials in person or through inquiry. Broader, long-term beneficiaries are Maui residents and the la hui (global

diaspora with ties to the island) as well as future generations who will have access to, historically significant digital images. This project was identified through internal collections assessment and ongoing archives team review, which revealed inconsistent metadata practices and a lack of digital surrogates for an estimated 75% of the collection. Strengthening both digitization output and metadata quality is essential for responsible long-term stewardship and future research use.

MHS will seek to collaborate with the University of Hawai'i Museum Consortium (UHMC), a network of collections-based institutions within the University of Hawai'i (UH) system that promotes improved collections care practices, shared data management standards, and student engagement in museum work. Through this partnership, MHS anticipates opportunities to connect with museum studies faculty, researchers, and student interns who can contribute to digitization workflows, metadata development, and long-term collections stewardship. This collaboration will strengthen professional alignment with statewide collections initiatives while helping build the next generation of museum professionals in Hawai'i.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

The Maui in Focus Initiative will be implemented over a 24-month period and organized into three coordinated phases: preparation, digitization, and metadata standardization with quality control.

Preparation and Infrastructure (Months 1–3)

Given the size and scope of the collection and current staff roles, MHS has determined that outsourcing digitization services will be vital to the project. MHS will advance its digitization readiness through a two-pronged approach: outsourcing high-priority fragile materials to a professional vendor while simultaneously building in-house scanning capacity for the remaining collection. Staff will identify priority photographs based on condition, historical significance, and research demand. Priority images showing early fading or physical wear will also be prioritized for digitization.

During this phase, MHS will:

- Advance its digitization readiness by:
 - Purchasing upgraded scanning equipment and calibration tools for in-house digitization.
 - Selecting a vendor for outsourced digitization of particularly valuable and fragile collection pieces.
- Develop a standardized digitization workflow manual with guidance/consultation from Hawaii-based sister museums
- Establish metadata standards aligned with PastPerfect best practices, including consistent naming conventions, subject headings, geographic identifiers, and authority control for personal and place names.
- Initiate outreach to UH programs to establish a structured internship pathway supporting digitization and metadata enhancement activities beginning later in Year 1.
- Conduct training sessions for a team of 6-10 digitizing volunteers and a UH intern to ensure consistency in scanning procedures and metadata entry.

The Archives Manager and Project Director will oversee vendor coordination, workflow development, and volunteer training.

Digitization Implementation (Months 4–18)

Digitization will occur through a blended approach:

Outsourced Digitization

Approximately 4,000–5,000 high-priority photographs will be professionally scanned at archival-quality resolution (minimum 600 dpi TIFF master files). The vendor will provide color-corrected master files and access derivatives according to project specifications. Secure inter-island transport procedures will be followed.

In-House Digitization

Approximately 3,000–4,000 photographs will be digitized in-house using trained volunteers and an intern under staff supervision. Volunteers will follow the standardized workflow and quality control checklist to ensure file consistency and preservation standards.

Digital master files will be stored on secure local servers and backed up to encrypted external hard drives stored off-site. MHS will also evaluate secure cloud-based backup solutions to ensure geographic redundancy.

Metadata Enhancement and Quality Control (Months 6–24)

As images are digitized, staff, trained volunteers, and an intern will standardize and enhance existing PastPerfect records to meet the full potential and capability of the software. Activities will include:

- Aligning subject headings and keywords using controlled vocabulary.
- Standardizing geographic references.
- Verifying dates and contextual descriptions where documentation exists.
- Linking digital files to existing catalog records.
- Conducting quarterly quality control audits of 10% of records to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Developing workflow documentation.
- Sharing documentation with peer institutions

During the metadata enhancement phase, MHS will formalize a written digitization and metadata workflow manual documenting standards, procedures, and quality control protocols. Completed workflow documentation may be shared with peer cultural institutions on Maui to support regional collections stewardship efforts.

The goal is to ensure that all digitized images are fully integrated into the collections management system in a format that readily integrates into future public-facing digital access.

Staffing and Management

Resources

IMLS funds will support:

- Approximately \$40,000 in professional digitization services
- Scanning equipment and archival supplies
- Estimated 1000+ hours in staff time over two years dedicated to project oversight and metadata enhancement
- Data storage and backup infrastructure

Existing institutional resources include PastPerfect collections management software, archival storage space, and an established volunteer archives team of three people contributing 100 hours each year.

Goals

By the end of the 24-month project period, MHS will:

1. Digitize approximately 9,000 historic photographic prints (minimum 600 dpi TIFF master files) through a blended outsourced and in-house approach
 - a. Averaging approximately 2,000 images every three months once production is fully operational (Months 4–24).
2. Enhance and standardize metadata for 100% of digitized images within PastPerfect, including structured fields for title, geographic identifiers, controlled vocabulary keywords, estimated date, contextual description, and accessibility-focused alternative text.
3. Conduct quarterly quality control audits reviewing at least 10% of newly digitized records, with documented findings and workflow adjustments as needed to ensure consistency and completeness.
4. Establish, finalize, and formally adopt a written Digitization and Metadata Workflow Manual by Month 22, institutionalizing standards for file naming, scanning procedures, metadata conventions, and quality control protocols.
5. Implement redundant digital storage protocols by Month 6, including secure local server storage and off-site backup systems, to safeguard newly created digital assets.
6. Within 12 months following project completion, achieve:
 - a. At least 200 documented internal or research-driven uses of newly digitized photographs (tracked through access logs and inquiry records).
 - b. A measurable reduction in physical handling requests for digitized prints compared to baseline year data.

Risks and Mitigation

As a small museum undertaking a collections-scale digitization effort, MHS recognizes several manageable risks and has established clear mitigation strategies to ensure project success.

- **Metadata Consistency:**
Because multiple staff members and volunteers will contribute to metadata entry, there is a risk of inconsistency in terminology, formatting, or descriptive standards. To mitigate this, MHS will develop a written Digitization and Metadata Workflow Manual aligned with PastPerfect best practices and controlled vocabulary conventions. All volunteers and the intern will receive structured training prior to working independently, and staff will conduct quarterly quality control audits reviewing a minimum of 10% of newly created or edited records to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- **Volunteer Turnover:**
MHS relies in part on dedicated community volunteers, including seasonal residents (“snowbirds”) whose availability fluctuates throughout the year. This seasonal turnover may impact workflow continuity. To address this, MHS will train multiple volunteers simultaneously, stagger assignments, and document all digitization and metadata procedures in a written Digitization and Metadata Workflow Manual. Moreover, MHS seeks to provide internship opportunities to UH students and potentially, local High School students who may seek museum collections experience. Cross-training will ensure that institutional knowledge is retained even if volunteer availability shifts seasonally.
- **Data Security and Digital Preservation:**
Digitization increases reliance on digital infrastructure, and data loss poses a potential risk. MHS will implement redundant storage protocols, including secure local server storage and external backup systems in accordance with institutional data management policies. File naming conventions and version control procedures will further protect against misplacement or duplication of digital assets.
- These mitigation strategies will ensure that the project remains stable, efficient, and aligned with professional collections stewardship standards through and beyond the grant period.

Progress Tracking

Progress will be monitored through:

- Monthly digitization logs (number of images scanned)
 - Aiming for a total of 2500 digitized, meta-data attached images per six months
- Vendor production reports
- Quarterly metadata audit reviews
- Timeline benchmarks reviewed during monthly staff meetings
- Access logs reviewed for final grant report

Adjustments to workflow will be made as needed to maintain efficiency and ensure quality.

PROJECT RESULTS

This project will significantly improve the preservation, management, and future accessibility of the Maui Historical Society’s historic photographic collection.

By the conclusion of the 24-month project period, MHS will:

- Digitize approximately 9,000 historic photographs through a blended professional and in-house approach.
- Create archival-quality master TIFF files and access derivatives for each digitized image.
- Standardize and enhance metadata for 100% of digitized records within PastPerfect.
- Establish a written Digitization and Metadata Workflow Manual for long-term institutional use.
- Implement a sustainable digital storage and backup protocol to protect newly created files.
- Initiate at least one formal engagement with UH programs to establish a pathway for student involvement in future collections work.

Improvements to Collections Care and Management

The project will improve collections stewardship in several measurable ways:

- **Preservation:** Digital surrogates will reduce handling of fragile and fading photographic prints, slowing physical deterioration and protecting original materials.
- **Documentation Quality:** Standardized metadata, controlled vocabulary alignment, and authority records will improve catalog accuracy, searchability, and internal data integrity.
- **Operational Capacity:** Staff and volunteers will gain training in digitization standards and metadata practices, increasing institutional expertise.
- **Disaster Resilience:** Redundant digital storage will reduce risk of catastrophic loss and strengthen institutional preparedness.

Changes for the Primary Audience

The primary audience (researchers, and educators) will experience measurable improvements in knowledge, efficiency, and access. As a result of the project:

- Staff and volunteers will increase their knowledge of digitization standards and metadata best practices through structured training and hands-on implementation.
- Researchers will benefit from improved catalog records and digitized images that reduce retrieval time and handling requests.
- Educators and community members will have improved future access to historically significant imagery as MHS prepares for expanded digital access initiatives.
- Improved metadata quality and digital surrogates will enable researchers to identify relevant materials remotely, reducing search time and improving the accuracy and depth of historical interpretation.

Products and Access

The primary products of this project will include:

- A large-scale (9,000 image) digital photographic archive integrated into PastPerfect.
- Standardized metadata records aligned with professional collections standards.
- A documented digitization and metadata manual to guide future work.

While this project focuses on preservation and internal access preparation, the enhanced metadata structure will position MHS to implement future public-facing digital access initiatives, online exhibitions, and research tools.

Sustainability

The benefits of this project will extend well beyond the grant period. Digitization equipment, trained volunteers, and standardized workflows will remain in place, allowing MHS to continue digitizing remaining images after the grant concludes. The metadata framework established during this initiative will become institutional policy, ensuring long-term consistency in cataloging practices and strengthening responsible collections stewardship.

To build sustainable capacity, MHS will pursue collaboration with the UH library, archives, or history programs to create a student internship pathway supporting ongoing metadata enhancement and digital collections work. This partnership will provide students with hands-on experience in community-based archives while expanding MHS's technical capacity and strengthening the local cultural heritage workforce.

In addition, MHS will develop a written Digitization and Metadata Workflow Manual during the project period. This documentation will not only guide future internal work but may also be shared with peer cultural institutions across Maui to support small-museum digitization efforts and promote consistent stewardship practices. By documenting and sharing practical workflows tailored to small, volunteer-supported museums, MHS contributes to broader field learning and regional preservation resilience in a region where geographic isolation presents professional challenges to museums like MHS and its peers.

Digital files will remain integrated within PastPerfect and safeguarded through redundant backup systems, ensuring long-term preservation and future public access readiness.

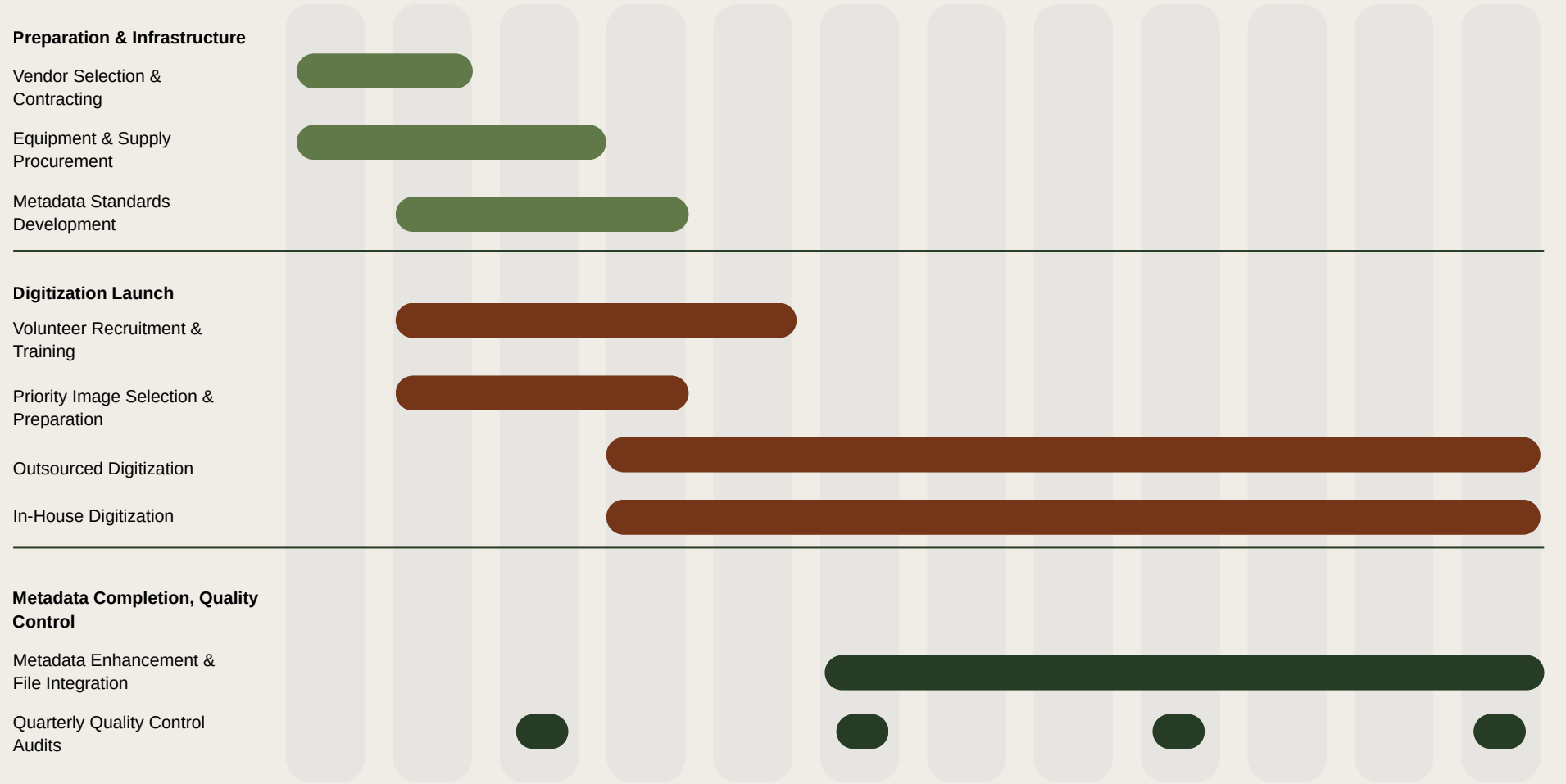
Through this initiative, MHS will establish both a strengthened digital photographic archive and a sustainable institutional framework for continued preservation and access development.

MHS MAUI IN FOCUS TIMELINE

During the first year of the project, Maui Historical Society will establish the technical and procedural foundation necessary to support large-scale photographic digitization. This phase includes vendor selection, equipment acquisition, metadata standards development, and volunteer training, followed by the launch of both outsourced and in-house digitization workflows. By the end of Month 12, digitization production will be fully operational and supported by standardized metadata practices and initial quality control reviews.

ACTIVITIES

Oct 1 2026 Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep 30 2027



MHS MAUI IN FOCUS TIMELINE

During the second year, MHS will focus on completing in-house digitization, strengthening metadata consistency, and conducting ongoing quality audits to ensure long-term collections stewardship. This phase includes finalizing the written workflow manual, formalizing sustainability practices, and initiating engagement with the University of Hawai'i to support continued digital collections work. By the end of Month 24, the project will culminate in a fully integrated, preservation-ready digital photographic archive supported by documented standards and institutionalized practices.

ACTIVITIES

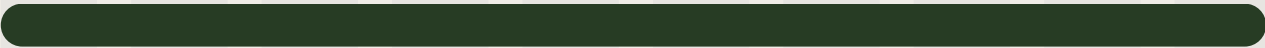
Oct 2027 Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun July Aug Sep 30 2028

Metadata Completion, Quality Control

In-House Digitization (Completion Phase)



Metadata Enhancement & File Integration



Quarterly Quality Control Audits



Partnerships and Finalization

Workflow Manual Drafting & Refinement



University of Hawai'i Engagement



Final Metadata Review & Cleanup



Analysis & Reporting

Project Evaluation & Data Analysis



Sustainability Planning & Internal Policy Adoption



Final Reporting to IMLS

