Ola Maui Nui Grant Cycle 2 FAQ

Cycle 2 applications open November 16, 2026 and close January 31, 2027. Review the Cycle 2 Request for Proposals (RFP) and application instructions before submitting.

Eligibility and Program Alignment

1. Who is eligible to apply?

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or operate under an eligible fiscal sponsor, serve residents of Maui, Molokaʻi, or Lānaʻi, and, if previously funded by Maui United Way, be in good standing with no outstanding reports. Applicants must also meet the Hawaiʻi Attorney General charitable registration requirement described in the RFP.

2. Must a proposed program exclusively serve 2023 Maui wildfire survivors?

Programs may serve a broader population. Explain how the work responds to the impacts of the 2023 Maui wildfires or a more recent disaster, or addresses a service gap or community need that emerged or became more urgent after one of these disasters. Describe how the program will help the people or communities you serve recover, maintain stability, or better withstand future disasters.

3. Are programs serving Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, or Hāna eligible?

Yes. Programs serving Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, or Hāna may apply. Describe how the disaster affected the community or the people your program serves. For example, explain how your program addresses service gaps for displaced residents or helps a rural community maintain access to essential services during future disruptions.

4. Are current Māʻona Food Security Grant recipients eligible to apply?

Yes. The Māʻona Food Security and ʻOhana Mental Health grant programs now fall under the Ola Maui Nui Grant umbrella and will not be offered separately during this funding year. Current grantees may apply if they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements and are in good standing.

5. May a newly formed nonprofit apply?

Yes, if the organization has received its IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter and meets all other eligibility and application requirements. However, this is a competitive grant. Applicants with limited operating history should provide the strongest available evidence of leadership experience, community need, organizational readiness, partnerships, and capacity to carry out the proposed work.

6. Can an existing program qualify if it started before the disaster?

Yes. Explain how the disaster affected the people or communities your program serves or made an existing need more urgent. For example, an existing food distribution program could explain how displacement created transportation barriers and how new pickup locations would help affected households regain reliable access to food.

7. What if my program fits more than one funding focus area?

Choose the one focus area that best reflects the primary purpose of your proposed work. You can describe benefits that overlap with other focus areas in your narrative. For example, a program focused on helping households secure stable housing may fit best under Financial Security even if it also connects participants to recovery services.

8. What if our organization has an approved exemption from Hawai‘i charitable registration?

Contact Maui United Way at grants@mauiunitedway.org before submitting. Include the name of your organization or fiscal sponsor and identify the approved exemption so we can clarify how the grant's eligibility requirement applies.

Fiscal Sponsorship

9. Should a fiscally sponsored project apply through its own portal account or the fiscal sponsor's account?

The fiscally sponsored project should initially create or use its own account and submit the application for the proposed program. If the application is approved for funding, Maui United Way will coordinate the project and fiscal sponsor records in the grant portal.

10. What must be included in a fiscal sponsorship agreement?

A current, fully executed fiscal sponsorship agreement must be submitted with the application. It must identify both parties and the proposed project and describe financial oversight, reporting responsibilities, the sponsorship term, applicable fees, and authorized signatures. Applicants should review the RFP and the fiscal sponsorship question in the application for the complete requirements. You must also upload the fiscal sponsor's board resolution authorizing the sponsorship.

11. Does that fee count toward the grant's 15% administrative and indirect cost cap?

Yes. Fiscal sponsorship fees are considered administrative or indirect costs and count toward the grant's 15% administrative and indirect cost cap.

12. Whose operating budget should a fiscally sponsored project use?

Use your fiscal sponsor's budget for both operating budget fields. Enter the sponsor's total operating budget for its most recently completed fiscal year and upload its agency-wide operating budget for the current fiscal year. Use Maui United Way's Excel budget template to show how you would spend the funds requested for your proposed program.

Funding and Budget

13. How much may an organization request?

The maximum request is $100,000. Maui United Way may award less than the amount requested. All proposed expenses must be reasonable, necessary, tied to the proposed work, and incurred during the approved grant period.

14. May the request represent more than 20% of the total program budget?

Yes. The Ola Maui Nui Grant does not limit a request to 20% of the total program budget. The request may not exceed $100,000, and the budget must clearly show how the requested funds relate to the proposed activities.

15. Are contractors considered administrative expenses?

Not when the contracted services are directly associated with delivering the proposed program. Program-related contractors should be identified as a separate budget line item, with their role and connection to the program clearly explained. Contractors performing general organizational or administrative functions may be treated as administrative expenses.

16. How should personnel expenses be presented?

Personnel expenses must be directly tied to the proposed program. Identify each position, explain the person's role in the program, and state the portion of time or cost that will be charged to the grant.

17. What limits apply to event and administrative costs?

Administrative costs may not exceed 15% of the total request. Applicants are encouraged to apply for comprehensive programmatic work rather than primarily event-based funding. Event costs included within a broader program should be clearly justified and should not exceed 10% of the organization's total request or award.

18. What is the difference between the budget narrative and the financial sustainability strategy?

Use the budget narrative to explain how you would spend the requested grant funds, why the costs are needed, and whether the grant would add services or help maintain existing services. Use the financial sustainability strategy to explain how your organization supports its work through other sources, such as active grants, government funding, or efforts to diversify revenue.

Financial and Application Documents

19. Are audited financial statements required?

If an audit is unavailable, submit both a Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) and a Statement of Activities (income statement or profit-and-loss statement) for the most recently completed fiscal year. Combine both statements into one PDF up to 10 MB.

20. Must all required attachments be submitted by the deadline?

Yes. An application is complete only when the online application and all required attachments have been submitted through the portal by the deadline. Applicants should begin early and confirm that each file is current, complete, and uploaded in the correct section.

21. Which Certificate of Vendor Compliance should I upload?

Upload a Certificate of Vendor Compliance issued through Hawai'i Compliance Express within the past six months. A DCCA Certificate of Good Standing is a different document. If awarded, keep your Certificate of Vendor Compliance current throughout the grant period.

22. What are the file size limits for the budget proposal and financial documents?

Upload the program budget proposal as one Excel file up to 5 MB using Maui United Way's template. Upload the audit or financial statements as one PDF up to 10 MB. The IRS Form 990 upload limit is 10 MB. Submit your most recently filed return with all applicable schedules. Form 990-EZ filers should submit the complete return, and Form 990-N filers should submit the IRS filing confirmation.

Application Questions

23. What should I include in the implementation plan and timeline?

Outline when the main activities will begin, when participants will receive services, and when you expect to reach major milestones. You can organize your response by month or quarter within the Cycle 2 grant period, April 1, 2027 through March 31, 2028.

24. What counts as a measurable outcome?

An outcome describes a change for participants. For example, the number of households receiving housing navigation tells reviewers how many households you reached. The percentage of participating households that secured stable housing tells reviewers what changed. Provide two to four measurable outcomes. For an existing program, share results from the past year and include supporting data where available. For a new program, share projected outcomes and explain how you'll measure them.

25. What should I include in the community benefit and partnerships response?

Explain who benefits beyond the people who receive services directly. Describe what each partner contributes and how that contribution helps the program achieve its intended outcomes. A partner might provide a service location, coordinate referrals, or deliver part of the program.

Grant Portal

26. What should returning applicants do before creating a portal account?

Returning applicants and current grantees should contact Maui United Way before creating a new account. Your organization may already have an account in the new portal, and creating another account could result in duplicate organizational records.

27. Can more than one person work on an application?

Yes. Organizations may add users and use the portal's collaboration feature to provide view, edit, or submission access. Contact Maui United Way if you need help adding a user or managing access.

28. Can applicants preview the questions or save their work?

Yes. You can preview the questions in the Cycle 2 Application Guide and save your progress in the grant portal as you work.

Review and Reapplication

29. If an application is not funded, may the organization apply again?

Yes. An organization that is not selected may submit a new application in a future review cycle. Applicants will be able to refer to their prior submission, but should review and strengthen the application rather than resubmit it unchanged. Feedback is available upon request.

30. May an organization receive more than one Ola Maui Nui Grant award during FY27?

No. Organizations may submit one application per review cycle, but may receive only one Ola Maui Nui Grant award during FY27. Once funded, the organization is not eligible to apply in a later cycle during the same fiscal year.

31. What makes an application competitive?

Strong applications clearly connect the identified need, proposed activities, measurable outcomes, organizational capacity, and budget. Use plain language, explain organization- or field-specific terms, and provide enough detail for reviewers who may not be familiar with your work.

32. Will applicants receive reviewer feedback if they are not selected?

Feedback will not be sent automatically, but it will be available upon request after funding decisions are issued.

Special Circumstances

The following situations depend on an applicant's specific circumstances. Contact Maui United Way before submitting so the Impact Team can confirm the appropriate approach.

33. What should an organization submit if it is not required to file an IRS Form 990?

Contact Maui United Way and explain the organization's filing status. The Impact Team will confirm which documentation should be submitted in place of the Form 990.

34. May grant funds temporarily cover expenses that another reimbursement-based grant will later repay?

No. Ola Maui Nui Grant funds may not be used as bridge financing or as a temporary advance for expenses that are expected to be reimbursed by another grant or funding source. Proposed expenses must be charged only to the appropriate funding source and may not be paid or reimbursed twice.

35. How can an applicant ask whether a specific program or activity is eligible?

Email grants@mauiunitedway.org with a brief description of your organization, proposed activities, intended participants, and service area. Identify the disaster your program addresses and describe how it affected the people you serve or created or worsened a service gap. Maui United Way can clarify eligibility and alignment but cannot guarantee funding or develop an application on your behalf.

Contact and Resources

General grant questions	grants@mauiunitedway.org
Grant portal	https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=mauiunited
Reminder	Review the current RFP and portal instructions for complete requirements and deadlines.