Cooke Foundation, Limited
Grant Application Guidelines
Fiscal Year 2027
(effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)

Mission
The Cooke Foundation supports worthy endeavors in the community that the family feels will make a significant difference in the betterment and welfare of the people of Hawai'i.

The Foundation's priority interests are arts, culture, and humanities; education; environment; and human services. However, for the Fiscal Year 2027, the Foundation will focus solely on arts organizations and programs.

Celebrating the Arts in Fiscal Year 2027
The Cooke Foundation, Limited, and the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) have shared a unique bond for more than a century through the generosity and enduring legacy of their founder, Anna Rice Cooke. A visionary and progressive philanthropist, Mrs. Cooke believed that art should be accessible to everyone in Hawai'i, particularly children who might never have the opportunity to travel abroad and experience other cultures firsthand. She donated her family home, surrounding property, and remarkable art collection to establish the Honolulu Academy of Arts—today's Honolulu Museum of Art—which opened to the public on April 12, 1927.

Seven years earlier, Anna and her husband, Charles Montague Cooke, had consolidated their assets to establish the Charles M. and Anna C. Cooke Trust, the predecessor of the Cooke Foundation, Limited. In creating the Trust, they sought "*to assure in some measure the continuance of, and also to extend and expand, all worthy endeavors for the betterment and welfare of this community*." That enduring commitment to the people of Hawai'i continues to guide the Foundation's work today.

In 2027, the Honolulu Museum of Art will celebrate its Centennial—a historic milestone marking 100 years of enriching the cultural life of Hawai'i. As the Museum reflects on its first century while charting an ambitious course for its second, the Cooke Foundation is pleased to commemorate this occasion through a special, one-time arts-focused grant initiative.

The Foundation will suspend its regular cycle of responsive grantmaking during Fiscal Year 2027 and instead conduct a single grantmaking round dedicated to supporting arts organizations, arts education, cultural arts, and arts-based programming throughout the State of Hawai'i. By investing in the broader arts community, the Foundation seeks to honor HoMA's extraordinary legacy as the premier fine arts museum of the Pacific while advancing Anna Rice Cooke's enduring commitment to the betterment and welfare of the people of Hawai'i through the arts.

The Foundation expects to resume its regular responsive grantmaking program in fiscal year 2028 and looks forward to continuing its long-standing support of charitable organizations serving the people of Hawai'i.

Eligibility and Priorities

- Throughout the grant application guidelines, "the arts" refers to programs related to any art form (including performing, visual, culinary, etc.), art education opportunity, or cultural art practice.

- Eligible applicants are organizations or programs where the arts are central to the mission and/or core activities. The request should be for an arts program or capital project related to the arts.

- The Foundation welcomes applications from programs in a wide variety of art forms, art education opportunities, and cultural art practices.

- Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) public charity. Organizations that are not a 501(c)(3) public charity must apply through a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) status public charity. Public charities that are further classified as a 509(a)(3) supporting organization are eligible to apply except for Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organizations.

- The Foundation does not generally fund loans; endowments; funds for re-granting; conferences, festivals, and similar one-time events; religious programs; activities that have already occurred; scholarships; and grants or direct cash payments to individuals or for the benefit of identified individuals.

- Applications from a unit of the University of Hawai'i must be submitted through the University of Hawai'i Foundation.

- A grantee may not receive more than one grant in any fiscal year (July through June), except that a grantee serving as the fiscal sponsor for another organization may receive a second grant for its own project. Fiscal sponsors are eligible to sponsor multiple projects at a time, including their own; however, the Foundation's guidelines below, regarding ongoing funding and support for two consecutive fiscal years, will apply to fiscally sponsored organizations, as well as organizations serving as a fiscal sponsor.

- The Foundation encourages Hawai'i non-profit organizations to build their long-term sustainability through support from diverse funding sources such as foundation grants, public grants and contracts, individual donations, and earned income. The Foundation generally does not provide ongoing funding, support any one program for more than two consecutive fiscal years, or fund any one organization for more than two consecutive fiscal years.

- The Foundation may choose to fund over a number of years. In the case of a multi-year pledge, payments are released in twelve-month intervals, and each payment is contingent on receipt of a satisfactory progress report.

- The Foundation generally awards grants up to $20,000. The Foundation will accept applications for more than this amount; however, **awards over $20,000 are rare**. The Foundation no longer requires Trustee sponsorship for applications. In FY 2026, the Foundation awarded funding to 30% of applications submitted. Six grants were awarded above $20,000, and the average award for the remaining grantees was ~$9,200.

- Requests for more than $5,000 should demonstrate that the Cooke Foundation portion of the budget does not exceed 30% of the total project budget.

- To further celebrate and promote funding for the arts, the Cooke Foundation may have the opportunity to share applicant Letters of Interest and/or full applications with other funders, such as donor advised fund holders and foundations. Shared information could include application narratives, program budgets, and organization financial or Board of Director information. A statement affirming the release of this information is included in the final Certification step of the application. Please contact Elizabeth Lentz-Hill at elentzhill@hcf-hawaii.org if you have any questions.

The Foundation does not accept incomplete applications or applications from organizations with overdue reports. All previous grants must be completed with the submission of a final report through the Grants Portal before an organization may receive a new grant.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The Foundation will accept a "Letter of Interest (LOI)" (a short form application) from any organization that aligns with its funding eligibility and priorities, listed on page 1. After reviewing the LOIs, the Board of Trustees will invite select organizations to submit a full application for the project. The full applications will then be considered for funding.

Please note:

- The Foundation adopted this two-step process because the number of applications increased significantly in recent years. The two-step process is intended to allow organizations to present their program briefly at first, rather than spending time on a lengthy application at the early stage. It will also enable faster communication with programs that are not a fit for Foundation funding at this time.
- There is no guarantee of funding if an organization's LOI is selected to move forward to the full application step.
- Applicants invited to submit a full application will receive notification and have 3 weeks to submit the full application. Late applications will not be accepted. The LOI questions and the full application questions are intentionally aligned to help applicants prepare.
- A new or updated Organization Profile (see page 3) is due at the time of LOI submission. This includes all financial documents and a current list of Board of Directors. If documents are outdated, or if the organization or application do not fit the funding eligibility or priorities listed on page 1, the LOI or full application will be administratively denied.
- Fiscal sponsor paperwork is due at the time of LOI submission. Missing, incomplete, or inaccurate fiscal sponsor paperwork will result in the LOI being administratively denied.
- All previous grants must be completed with the submission of a final report through the Grants Portal before an organization may receive a new grant.
- Organizations may submit one LOI with the exception of organizations serving as fiscal sponsors.
- Organizations may not change their budget requests between the LOI and full application.

See below for details on the LOI and full application.

For both "Letter of Interest (LOI)" (Short Form Application) and Full Application

Applications must be submitted online through Hawai'i Community Foundation's Grants Portal. New users may register for an account here: https://Hawaiicf.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp. Registered users may log in to their account to submit an application. Please give yourself adequate time before the submission deadline to access the system and familiarize yourself with the application process and requirements. For assistance with the online application process, please submit a support ticket at http://hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/ticket.

Instructions

- Only complete and timely applications will be accepted.
- The online application has fillable boxes with character limits. The character counts in MS Word may not match the character counts in the application. If you cut and paste your work into the application, please be sure your text fits the space provided.
- The online application accepts diacritical markings in written 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

Instructions for Sponsored Organizations with a Fiscal Sponsor

- The sponsored organization, that is not a 501(c)(3) public charity, must submit the application.
- Sponsored organizations that do not have an account, should register, and select "Other Organization". Complete and submit the Organization Profile (see more information below).
- The fiscal sponsor, that is a 501(c)(3) public charity, must also have an account. Fiscal sponsor organizations that do not have an account, should register, and select "501(c)(3) Charity". Complete and submit the Organization Profile, including the required financial documents.
- In the application "Program Overview" section, the applicant (sponsored organization) must select yes to the question *Do you have a fiscal sponsor?* Then select your fiscal sponsor from the list. If you cannot find your fiscal sponsor, please ask the fiscal sponsor organization to register in the system.
- In the application "Supporting Documents & Certification" section, the applicant (sponsored organization) must upload the completed Resolution and Agreement forms. See page 4 for more information. Please upload only the required forms.
- Fiscal sponsors are also required to certify the application before it can be submitted by the applicant (sponsored organization). To do so, the applicant (sponsored organization) must invite the fiscal sponsor to collaborate on the draft application. Please reference this **video** and the **External User Guide** on how to invite collaborators. The fiscal sponsor as a collaborator can then check the Fiscal Sponsor certification box under Supporting Documents & Certification.

Organization Profile

As part of the online application, your organization profile (and fiscal sponsor organization profile, if applicable) must be certified prior to submission of grant applications and must be certified every six months. Information needed to complete your organization profile (and fiscal sponsor organization profile, if applicable) includes, but is not limited to the following:

- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter (not required if previously applied to the Foundation or if applying through a fiscal sponsor)
- Number of full-time staff, part-time staff, regular volunteers
- Organization mission
- Service location(s)
- Types of services provided (including age, gender, and target populations served)
- Financial statements
  - Annual operating budget for the current fiscal year, showing both income and expenses
  - Income statement (or profit/loss statement) for the most recently completed fiscal year
  - Balance sheet for the most recently completed fiscal year
  - Audited financial statements are preferred but not required
  - Local units of national organizations must submit local unit financial information
  - **Your organization's updated financial documents must be submitted in the Organization Profile prior to submitting the Letter of Interest. If the financial documents are not up to date, the application will be administratively denied.**
- Board of Directors list for current fiscal year

"Letter of Interest (LOI)" (Short Form Application)

The "Letter of Interest (LOI)" is a short form application and is submitted through fillable boxes on the Hawaii Community Foundation Grants Portal. The LOI consists of 4 sections. Information needed to complete your LOI includes the following:

LOI Program Overview

- Provide general information and characteristics about the program including, but not limited to, program title, duration, area of interest, program location(s), and ages and genders served.
- If you have a fiscal sponsor, you will be asked to identify your fiscal sponsor. Please note, your fiscal sponsor must be registered in the Grants Portal prior to submitting your application.

LOI Program Information

Note: Website links and supplemental materials are not accepted due to the volume of applications received. Include any quotes or information for the Trustees to consider within the narrative responses.

Organization Description: Describe your organization and key elements of your work. How are the arts central to the organization's mission and/or core activities? Include where your office and work are located. *(Maximum 1,000 characters, including spaces)*

Problem or Opportunity: Why is your proposed arts program or capital project needed? Include any key data or information. (*Maximum 1,250 characters, including spaces)*

Project Overview: Describe your proposed arts program or capital request. Include what actions you will take, key dates or time frame, and personnel involved (ie-staff, volunteers). *(Maximum 1,250 characters, including spaces)*

Expected Results: Define the impact you anticipate your arts program or capital project will have on the community you serve. Give key projected numbers that show impact (ie- number of participants, number of tickets sold) and/or expected qualitative measures of that impact, such as changes to behaviors, knowledge, skills, etc. *(Maximum 500 characters, including spaces)*

LOI Budget

Applicants are **required** to use the Cooke Foundation Program Budget Template, found in the Grants Portal's Resources section and on the Cooke Foundation website.

Upload a PDF of the Cooke Foundation Program Budget Template, complete with:

- Total program budget
- Amount requested through this application
- Anticipated expenses (overall expenses, and expenses for which Cooke Foundation grant funds will be used)
- Anticipated income (source, amount, restrictions, and whether secured, pending, or in-kind)

LOI Supporting Documents and Certification

If a fiscal sponsor is involved, please upload the following additional files as PDFs:

- Fiscal Sponsor's Board of Directors Resolution authorizing project fiscal sponsorship

- Fiscal Sponsor's Agreement

  The fiscal sponsor documents can be found here: https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/grants/fiscal-sponsor-materials (please update the documents to show the agreement is between the Cooke Foundation and the organization, not Hawaii Community Foundation and the organization). Please note, your fiscal sponsor must be registered in the Grants Portal and certify the application prior to submitting your application.

Full Application (by invitation only)

The application consists of 4 sections. Information needed to complete your application includes the following:

Program Overview

- Provide general information and characteristics about the program including, but not limited to program title, duration, area of interest, program location(s), and ages and genders served.
- If you have a fiscal sponsor, you will be asked to identify your fiscal sponsor. Please note, your fiscal sponsor must be registered in the Grants Portal prior to submitting your application.

Program Information

Note: Website links and supplemental materials are not accepted due to the volume of applications received. Include any quotes or information for the Trustees to consider within the narrative responses.

Organization Description: Describe the history and mission of the organization/program. How are the arts central to the organization's mission and/or core activities? What is the experience of Board, staff, and program leaders involved with the proposed program, and what is the organization's capacity to conduct the proposed work? (*Maximum 2,500 characters, including spaces)*

Problem or Opportunity: Describe the problem, need, or opportunity to be addressed by the program. The Cooke Foundation recognizes the inherent and essential need for the arts in supporting thriving individuals and communities. Please use this section to describe the specific need or opportunity for the proposed program, such as the population to be served, geographic need, opportunity for artistic growth or economic stability, development of new audiences or participants, etc. Support your statements with relevant data (quantitative or qualitative) or key information. (*Maximum 5,000 characters, including spaces)*

Project Overview: Provide an overview of the project. Explain why you chose this approach to address the need, problem, or opportunity stated above. Include anticipated numbers of participants and/or audience members, and key partners, if any. If this program is ongoing, provide past results or achievements that show the program's impact; if a new or innovative approach, explain similar projects that point to the likelihood of success for this new approach. (*Maximum 4,500 characters, including spaces)*

Activities and Expected Results: Provide details about the project activities, such as when and where they will take place, activity leaders, etc. Provide a timeline for the project and its activities. What is the expected impact of this arts project (may include outputs, such as number of people served, number of tickets sold, etc., and/or outcomes, such as changes in behaviors, knowledge, skills, etc.)? How will you measure or track the impact? (*Maximum 3,500 characters, including spaces)*

Funding plan: Explain the project budget, including adjustments to be made if not all anticipated funding is received. Describe the plan, if any, to continue funding the project after the grant period ends. Requests to

the Foundation over $5,000 may not exceed 30% of the project budget. (*Maximum 3,000 characters, including spaces)*

Addendum for capital requests:
Please include the following information on the Program Overview section if you are submitting a capital request:

- *Capital campaign*: Describe how the capital campaign is being conducted and the experience of board members and staff with capital campaigns. Identify how much funding has been secured as of the date of the proposal.
- *Construction*: Describe the form of site control, including relevant terms of long-term leases or purchase agreements if not under ownership. Describe the status and timeline for design and engineering work and the status of required permits. Provide the source for cost estimates. Describe who will manage the design and construction phases and their experience in this work. -

Budget

Applicants are **required** to use the Cooke Foundation Program Budget Template, found in the Grant Portal's Resources section and on the Cooke Foundation website.

Upload a PDF of the Cooke Foundation Budget Template, complete with:

- Total program budget
- Amount requested through this application
- Anticipated expenses (overall expenses, and expenses for which Cooke Foundaiton grant funds will be used)
- Anticipated income (source, amount, restrictions, and whether secured, pending, or in-kind)

Supporting Documents & Certification

If a fiscal sponsor is involved, please upload the following additional files as PDFs:

- Fiscal sponsor's Board of Directors Resolution authorizing project fiscal sponsorship
- Fiscal Sponsor's Agreement
  The fiscal sponsor documents can be found here: https://www.Hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/grants/fiscal-sponsor-materials. Please update the documents to show the agreement is between the Cooke Foundation and the organization, not Hawaii Community Foundation and the organization. *Fiscal sponsors must also certify the application before submission.*

Key Dates and Timeline

Description	**Date**
Grants Portal opens for "Letters of Interest" (Short Form Applications)	Monday, November 16, 2026
Letter of Interest deadline	Friday, January 15, 2027 4:00 pm HST
Applicants Notified about Letter of Interest decision	by Friday, February 26
Full application deadline (by invitation only)	Friday, March 19 4:00 pm HST
Trustee Meeting for Funding Decisions	May 2027

Contact Information
If you have questions about the guidelines or the application process, please contact Elizabeth Lentz-Hill at elentzhill@hcf-hawaii.org or (808) 566-5543.

For technical assistance with the online application process, please submit a support ticket at https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/web/support-tickets.

Note: Hawai'i Community Foundation is committed to integrity, transparency, and responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. HCF may use artificial intelligence and other technology tools in support of our work. The use of such technologies is subject to appropriate human oversight and is guided by HCF's commitment to ethical practices, privacy, security, accuracy, transparency, and accountability.