



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY  
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# Request for Proposals (RFP)

## Holomua Marine Initiative

Contract: Communications and Public Relations Support for the Holomua Marine Initiative

### Summary

A 12-month contract to assist the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) with effective communications and public relations to support the Holomua Marine Initiative. DAR is leading the Holomua Marine Initiative, with a vision of healthy marine ecosystems and abundant nearshore resources that allow the people of Hawai'i to enjoy coastal waters, support livelihoods, and feed our families. To achieve this vision, the Holomua Marine Initiative is implementing a comprehensive strategy focused on effectively managing nearshore marine areas around each main Hawaiian island by developing and carrying out management frameworks that place an emphasis on community participation, cultural relevance, and maximized effectiveness in all stages of management, including development, implementation, evaluation, and adaptation. DAR requires assistance with updating and implementing a cohesive communications strategic plan, including developing and implementing effective public relations strategies, and crisis communications monitoring and support. The budget for this work is up to a maximum of \$125,000 total. Interested firms are encouraged to propose an approach to this work that is most strategic and achievable within the budget maximum. The contract may be renewed for a second year based on satisfactory performance and funding availability.

**Proposals Due: Friday, April 19, 2024 by 4 p.m. HST**

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### Project Background

In 2016, the State launched the Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative, a multi-pronged effort to ensure a healthy environment and economy for Hawai'i's people. As part of this effort, the Department of Land and Natural Resources committed to effectively manage Hawai'i's nearshore waters.

The Holomua Marine Initiative carries forward commitments made by the public and private organizations that launched the [Aloha+Challenge](#), a statewide commitment to achieve Hawai'i's sustainability goals and framework to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and by partners who issued the [Promise to Pae'āina](#), which is a collective commitment for measurable change in Hawai'i's ocean. The Holomua Marine Initiative is a call to action for



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communities to come together to design an island-based management strategy in partnership with the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to ensure healthy reefs and abundant resources for future generations.

Created by the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF), the CHANGE Framework strives to create a shared movement to solve Hawai'i's greatest challenges. Through a common set of data, the Framework identifies Hawai'i's strengths, gaps, and opportunities so that efforts can be aligned to take collective action. HCF puts the Framework into action by supporting networks that encompass a broad range of partners who are working to achieve a shared goal and have a commitment to equity. HCF supports the efforts of the Holomua Marine Initiative through this lens of the CHANGE Framework.

### **PURPOSE**

DAR works with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for future generations. DAR does this through programs in ecosystem management, place-based management, and fisheries management. DAR leads the Holomua Marine Initiative as part of a comprehensive strategy focused on developing and strengthening essential components of effective marine management including: a regional or island-based management actions; outreach and enforcement strategies; monitoring; and restoration of nearshore ecosystems. The Holomua Marine Initiative seeks to effectively manage nearshore waters around each main Hawaiian island through a collaborative community engagement process. The success of The Holomua Marine Initiative will be determined by active support and participation from the people of Hawai'i to achieve both place-based and island-wide management goals.

HCF seeks a qualified contractor to update and lead implementation of a strategic communications plan and public relations strategies for the Holomua Marine Initiative. The contractor will enhance DAR's capacity to effectively communicate the Holomua Marine Initiative by revisiting, updating, and leading execution of a strategic communications plan, developing public relations strategies, and providing crisis communication monitoring and support.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

*Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF):* HCF is in a partnership with the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for implementation of the Holomua Marine Initiative. Through a pooled fund of committed philanthropists, HCF is supporting this important work of ensuring DAR effectively engages the community on this initiative by providing the funding for this communications contract. HCF is



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the contracting authority responsible for issuing and managing the contract, promoting effective collaboration between DAR and the contractor, verifying deliverables and products, and making payments.

*State DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR):* DAR is committed to the implementation of The Holomua Marine Initiative that is based in engagement and partnership with community. The aim of this project is to help DAR gain public awareness and support for the Initiative to encourage active participation and collaboration from communities across the State. DAR will coordinate with the contractor to ensure alignment with DAR goals. DAR will provide the staffing, resources, and leadership to support the contractor's work and ensure success of their process. DAR will provide accurate and transparent information to the contractor. DAR will also share information and ensure coordination of efforts with other contractors working on this topic when appropriate.

*Selected Contractor:* The contractor selected for this project will be responsible for developing and leading implementation of a strategy and workplan that results in the objectives listed below. DAR is the beneficiary of this contract and as such, the selected contractor will be directly coordinating with the DAR Holomua Marine Initiative team and reporting to the DAR Holomua Marine Initiative team leadership as well as HCF to ensure the process outlined in this contract aligns with the goals and needs of the Holomua Marine Initiative program. The contractor will coordinate with DAR and HCF to develop an agreed workplan as well as keep HCF abreast of all key decision points and DAR timelines on an ongoing basis.

**Contract Objectives:**

**1. In collaboration with the DAR Holomua Marine Team, review, update, and lead implementation of the Strategic Communications Plan for The Holomua Marine Initiative, which will include addressing the following priorities:**

- Ensure the communications plan includes information and design that enhances use-friendliness, such as a section with translation of common technical jargon to terms and phrases easily understood by the general public.
- Establish a Key Communications Network with a clearly stated purpose, objectives, members and agreed member roles, responsibilities, and protocols for collaborating effectively to support the implementation of the communications plan and the goals of the Holomua Marine Initiative.
- Develop a media strategy.
- Develop materials needed for successful implementation of the communications plan as well as a digital library of communications resources including images and graphics.



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- Coordinate effectively with the Holomua Marine Initiative Communications Team to help ensure the team has a firm grasp and clear understanding of the various audiences DAR and the Holomua Marine Initiative Team is engaging, and further ensure that DAR, the Holomua Marine Initiative Team, and the communications team are aligned in messaging, particularly with regard to socio-cultural contexts, issues, topics, and sensitivities when engaging with Native Hawaiian communities.
- Due to the complex nature of implementation, collaborate with the DAR Holomua Marine Team to establish agreed protocols, processes, and approvals for messaging, language, and how the communications team supports and works with one another.
- Ensure DAR's communications team and strategies aligns with the phases of the Holomua Marine Initiative and helps set the pace, target audiences, and messaging based on activities and priorities in real time. This should include identifying best practices for timing, scope, and messaging for:
  - Outreach and education activities that are ongoing, current, and planned;
  - Promoting events where the public are encouraged to participate;
  - Communications with state, county, and local officials to keep informed and proactively updated on Holomua Marine's progress, process, and FAQs;
  - Crisis communications or opposition management; and,
  - Rallying and strengthening support as the Holomua Marine process moves forward.

**2. Develop and coordinate implementation of effective public relations strategies in collaboration with DAR and the Holomua Marine Initiative team.**

- Develop and include strategies for effective public relations and communications with target communities as well as influential and highly visible decision-makers (such as elected/appointed officials, corporate, sector, and community leaders, etc.) that includes best practices and timing for proactive and responsive communications that effectively reduce contention and constructively addresses concerns.
- Develop and lead implementation of robust damage control and crisis management strategies (as public relations crises may arise) that includes engaging key partners as well as a range of communications tools as strategically needed. This would include:
  - leading implementation of crisis management strategies; and,
  - providing step-by-step incident-specific guidance to the Holomua Marine Initiative team if/when situations arise that precipitate the need for public relations crisis management.



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- Provide ongoing expert public relations guidance to DAR, the Key Communications Network, and Holomua Marine Initiative partners (when called upon) to proactively promote positive messaging, accurate information-sharing, and community engagement and support for the Holomua Marine Initiative.

**Contract Deliverables:**

1. The review, updating, revision as needed, and successful implementation of the Strategic Communications Plan, including media strategy, for the DAR Holomua Marine Initiative that aligns with the community engagement process.
2. Development, formalization, and implementation of a Holomua Marine Initiative Key Communications Network, with regular updates and clearly communicated opportunities for action.
3. Development of communications materials to support implementation of the communications plan and a digital library of communications materials and resources including images and graphics.
4. Regular meetings and coordination with DAR and the Holomua Marine Initiative Team to ensure alignment with Holomua Marine goals, facilitation processes, and timelines.
5. Development and tracking of key metrics to assess the efficacy of implementation of the strategic communications plan and media strategy.
6. Development and implementation of coordinated public relations strategies, including communications with key policymakers, sector leaders, and communities statewide.
7. Tracking and addressing needs related to crisis communications and public relations damage control, and providing real-time support to DAR and community partners during active situations requiring crisis communication.

**Evaluation of Proposals**

The following will be taken into consideration in the final proposal selection process:

- Previous experience including capability and proficiency at designing and implementing strategic communications plans, public relations strategies, media relations, and effective public relations damage control and crisis management.
- Proposal approach and strategy.
- Experience working with multi-sector collaborations with a variety of agendas.
- Knowledge of local community issues in Hawai'i and experience working with grassroots community organizations.
- Experience developing tailored messaging that resonates with specific targeted audiences particularly with regard to socio-cultural contexts, issues, topics, and sensitivities when engaging with Native Hawaiian communities
- Identify members of the project team.
- Proposal budget.



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Top candidates may be invited to interview with HCF and DAR as part of the selection process.

**Desired Qualifications**

- Previous experience working in partnership with state government agencies as well as community groups, NGOs, policymakers, scientists, and research organizations.
- Knowledge and experience with regard to local marine or natural resource issues in Hawai'i, particularly within the context of use, management, and governance
- Strongest candidates will be based in Hawai'i.

**Project Timeline**

The project will commence immediately, and the contract will be set for 12 months, with option to renew based on satisfactory performance and available funding.

**Proposal Submittal Instructions**

Complete proposals must be emailed to Dana Okano, Program Director, at DOkano@hcf-hawaii.org by no later than **4 p.m. HST on Friday, April 19, 2024.** For proposal submittal questions please contact DOkano@hcf-hawaii.org no later than Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Proposals must be submitted in a single PDF file and limited to 12 pages (not including resumes and samples of previous work).

Proposals must include the following components:

- A. Organization Information: Name, address, and lead contact phone number and email address.
- B. Experience and Capabilities: Including examples of prior work projects related to this RFP.
- C. Project Timeline: Including tasks and deliverables, and anticipated costs and timing. This proposed project schedule will be revisited and finalized together with HCF and DAR upon contract award. A simple sample project table is shown below for use if needed.

Task/ Deliverable	Cost	Date

- D. Scope of Work Narrative: Discuss your team's strategy and timeline to formulate the deliverables discussed in this RFP. Include what you are going to do as outlined in the project timeline, how you will accomplish it, and how you will measure effectiveness.
- E. Budget Narrative: A one-year contract budget with narrative explanation.
- F. Project Team: Include applicable past experience as appropriate. Include any subcontracts that you may require to fulfil this project.
- G. Client List: Provide a client list including references we may contact.



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Mahalo for your interest in the Holomua Marine Initiative.



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**APPENDIX I: Useful Resources/ References for Proposal Teams**

- A. DAR Holomua: Holomua Marine Initiative: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/>
- B. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF HAWAI'I'S Holomua Marine INITIATIVE:  
[https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2020/04/Hawaii\\_Marine\\_30x30\\_MOU.pdf](https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2020/04/Hawaii_Marine_30x30_MOU.pdf)
- C. Hawai'i Community Foundation Holomua Marine Initiative:  
<https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/strengthening/marine-30x30>
- D. Holomua Marine Initiative Communications Plan 2022-2024 (*available upon request*)