



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@Hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Vice Chair*
Jill Tamura, Tamura Super Market, *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *President and Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
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Made in Hawai'i Festival Operations Manager RFP

1. Festival Overview

Since its debut in 1995, the Made in Hawai'i Festival (MIHF) has served as Hawai'i's premier showcase for locally made crafts, foods, art, jewelry, clothing, and more. Every product featured at the Festival must be genuinely made in Hawai'i, meaning that at least 51% of its value is added within the state.

More than just a craft show, the Festival was designed as a small business incubator—providing local artisans, crafters, bakers, and entrepreneurs with opportunities to reach new customers, connect with retail buyers, and build the relationships needed to expand their businesses. Each year, MIHF hosts approximately 500 vendors occupying over 700 booth spaces and attracts around 70,000 attendees.

The Hawai'i Food Industry Association (HFIA) proudly produces the Made in Hawai'i Festival. Founded in 1972, HFIA is a 501(c)(6) non-profit trade association whose mission is to promote the interests of Hawai'i's food and beverage retailers and suppliers through effective advocacy, education, and community engagement. HFIA is committed to strengthening the local food and beverage industry and ensuring that Made in Hawai'i businesses continue to thrive.

Contractors supporting the 2026 Festival will be joining a long-standing tradition of service to our community—helping to grow Hawai'i's economy, support local 'ohana, and celebrate the creativity and resilience that define our islands.

2. Festival Manager RFP Objective

The objective of this RFP is to ascertain capabilities and execution of Operations Management agencies.

It is important to HFIA to find a partner who will meet or exceed the service requirements (listed in Section 3) while finding avenues to improve Operations Management for the Festival.



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3. Service Requirements

HFIA is seeking an established leader with expertise in large event operations management relevant to this event, to provide the following services:

a) Strategy and planning for the 2026 Made in Hawai'i Festival (Contract to likely run from 11/22/25 - 12/31/26) to include but not be limited to:

1. Provide overall management and leadership of the Operations side of the Festival. Areas that will be in the purview of the Operations Manager will include:

a) Vendor Management:

- Analyze price structure and determine appropriate price increases for various booth types.
- Complete vendor application setup with price on all booths. Suggested for vendor application to go out by January 1, 2026 and that at least 2-3 individuals be available to respond to emails and phone calls from vendors.
- Add all booths and promotion options for selection in the vendor portal.
- Work with HFIA to update and confirm valuation form determinations for 2026. Create verbiage about which vendors would qualify for "Designed in Hawaii" section or signage, and which vendors would qualify for "Manufactured/Made in Hawaii" section or signage.
- Create new vendor packet materials. If any written materials are reused from 2025, they must be thoroughly proofed and updated.
- Create live valuation forms that enable data to be searched and collected. This can be done via Microsoft Outlook or our CRM.
- Work to recruit new high-quality vendors – preference for vendors who source local ingredients/materials and manufacture locally.
- Collect and review all necessary documents from vendors. This includes but is not limited to applications, valuation forms, COIs and other insurance documents. Insurance documents must be audited and vetted by your team to ensure all requirements are met and stored in a secure SharePoint folder to be provided to insurance companies upon request. All documents should be reviewed and approved before a vendor is able to secure a space on the show floor.



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- Secure a parking option for vendors close to the venue and coordinate vendor reservation process with the parking venue. Work with a potential sponsor or promoted shuttle bus.
 - Work with HFIA to determine vendor groupings in different areas of the venue. Vendors who have no element of local manufacturing but are designed in Hawaii and are locally owned, may be placed upstairs and have a different designation or “Designed in Hawaii”.
 - Work with the Sponsorship Team to place Sponsors.
 - Complete floor map for entire venue (upstairs and downstairs) with recommended vendor placement based on 2025 experience and necessary changes. Taking into considering and appropriately managing any returning vendors who want to expand, new vendors, line size likelihood, proximity of food vendors with intense smells to other vendors, proximity of similar vendors, cohorts, HFIA membership, and other necessary considerations. Deadline: March. 12th, 2026. Send it to HFIA for approval.
 - Create way finding signage for inside the Festival.
 - Create layout and manage for interior of Festival including guest rest areas, volunteer areas, etc.
 - Create signage for vendors to display that denotes if they are an HFIA Member, a Kanaka Owned Business, or a Woman Owned Business. Create matching designations on map.
 - Once vendors are placed, ensure vendors are securing their selected space with payments. Three team members must take part in this effort. March 15, 2026, or earlier, allow returning vendors no more than 2 business weeks to make payment and select their saved booth space, giving priority in outreach to HFIA members. After the vendor has had two weeks to select and pay and has not done so, their space will be available for purchase by approved vendors who do not have a booth, this process can be done individually or in batches. The process of selling all booths must be completed no later than July 1, 2026. If vendors need to be replaced or added after this date, we can try to accommodate as needed.
 - Work with HFIA and venue concessions company to determine insurance requirements and concessions costs for food vendors.
 - Collect documents and concessions payments from food vendors



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- Conduct 2 live recorded virtual meetings for vendors, explaining in detail the information in the vendor handbook and any additional information that sponsors would like to provide for educational purposes about how to have a successful festival.
 - Coordinate communication schedule for emails to vendors with the Sponsorship Team.
 - Inform vendors that attending or viewing the session is mandatory – have a quiz the vendors must complete to show they watch the video.
 - Manage vendors during the festival:
 - ensure they are only selling items they filled out valuation forms for,
 - ensure no lines are blocking other vendors' booths,
 - have a team member check in with each vendor during the 3-day festival.
 - Staff and manage the vendor Kokua Booth.
 - Organize and manage vendor load in and load out. Vendors must be assigned specific times for load in and load out to ensure a safe flow. Vendors and all sponsors that require it must be assigned a loading dock appointment by the Operations Manager team, if alternate times are requested this should be accommodated to the best of our abilities.
 - Send out post event survey to vendors and ensure vendors complete it.
- c) Create and manage Festival Operations Team. In order to ensure operational success, team members' names', qualifications, contact information, and budget must be submitted to HFIA when the RFP is submitted. Approval of the team will be part of the RFP response approval and contract. Team members, budget and assigned responsibilities outlined in the RFP response are not subject to change. HFIA must be notified in advance and provide approval before any team member change is made. All team members who need access to emails must have their own named email – which will be used to access the external shared emails and have specific SharePoint settings. This list of names and dates that team members need emails must be communicated to HITech support by January of 2026.
- d) Manage Subcontractors including but not limited to those responsible for: Rigging, Online Vendor Management, AV, Cleaning, Facility, Security, Parking, Decor.



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- 1) Secure subcontractor bids from multiple competing subcontractors.
 - 2) Present bids to HFIA no later than 60 days (about 2 months) prior to the festival. Provide HFIA with a spreadsheet including all contractors' prices and duties. Spreadsheet must include all necessary bids to be procured for the festival including an overview of what services are provided for easy review.
 - 3) Coordinate and manage subcontractors prior to and during the festival.
- e) Recruit, coordinate, and manage Operations Volunteer Team.
2. Work closely with the Festival Manager. The Operations Manager and Festival Manager will both report to HFIA. The Festival Manager will be responsible for: Sponsorship Coordination, Entertainment, External Volunteer Coordination, and Front of House Management.
 3. Work closely with PR and Social Media Management.
 4. Oversee areas Festival Budget related to Operations.
 5. Create schedule of Operations Management tasks in line with criteria in this RFP and present to HFIA for approval. Any timeline changes must be approved by HFIA in advance.
 6. Manage Operations of the Festival during the Festival hours. Operations Manager is expected to be at the Festival during Festival hours.

4. Metrics and KPIs

- a) Provide anticipated and actual data related to exhibitors.
- b) Provide recommended KPIs.

5. Questionnaire

- a) Organization
 1. Please provide key contacts who will be supporting HFIA and identify the people who are authorized to contractually obligate your agency.



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2. Is your agency going through or anticipating going through any changes during the time frame of the Festival that would impact this RFP?
3. Do you have any other events you plan on working on in 2026 – what are the dates of these events?
4. Do these events inhibit your ability to complete MIHF RFP requirements on time?

b) Expertise and Experience

1. How does your agency provide an operational competitive advantage over your competitors?
2. Describe any significant relationships your agency can offer regionally with reference to the scope of this RFP.
3. Describe your agency's significant strengths as it pertains to the details set forth in this RFP.
4. Please describe your philosophy and approach to PR campaign, planning and posting.
5. Does your creative team have experience relevant to this event and target demographics?

c) Implementation Process and Timeline

1. Please describe the end-to-end implementation process including an implementation timeline.

6. Timeline

Work on the Operations may begin as soon as the RFP is accepted. The initial phases of Operations Management will begin several months prior to the Festival date.

7. Terms and Conditions

a) This RFP is for discussion and evaluation purposes of the contemplated transaction only. Submission of a response to this RFP is expressly conditioned upon the agency's agreement to the terms set forth herein. For clarity, this RFP or any response from HFIA to this RFP shall not constitute a binding agreement until the agency and HFIA have duly executed one or more definitive agreements. HFIA and the agency shall be bound



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by the terms of the mutual confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement entered between the parties.

b) HFIA reserves the right to accept other than the apparent lowest priced proposal and to accept or reject any proposal in whole or in part or reject all proposals with or without notice or reasons. HFIA may amend, supplement, or withdraw the RFP at any time.

c) All answers to this proposal must be numbered as per the corresponding number of each question and must follow the same format as this RFP.

d) Quantities stated in this RFP are for informational purposes only and shall not be binding on HFIA. Such information supplied by HFIA is for the convenience of the respondents only and HFIA makes no warranty regarding the accuracy of any data or information provided.

e) Any costs incurred by a respondent to this RFP in connection with the preparation or submission of a response or any other expenses attendant thereto are the sole responsibility of that respondent and neither HFIA nor any of its business units, affiliates or subsidiaries has any obligation, under any circumstances, to reimburse or otherwise compensate the respondent for expenses so incurred.

f) Respondent shall not issue or cause the issuance of any press release or other publication of the existence of this RFP without the prior consent of HFIA.

g) Respondent shall not publish photographs or articles, make speeches about, or publicize the existence or scope of any agreement resulting from this RFP without first obtaining prior written consent from HFIA.

h) The preparation of a response to this RFP shall serve as evidence of the respondent's acceptance of the terms contained herein.

i) If a respondent should decline to offer a proposal, all materials and information received pursuant to this RFP shall be promptly returned to HFIA and any copies made thereof shall be immediately destroyed.



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j) This RFP, all information contained herein, and all HFIA specifications and samples provided herewith shall be considered HFIA confidential information and subject to the mutual confidential disclosure agreement by and between respondent and HFIA.

k) All suppliers receiving such documents shall use them solely for responding to this RFP.

l) The information contained or referred to in the RFP is not to be used, disclosed or released for any other use or purpose and must be returned to HFIA or destroyed when requested.