

BFED Committee

From: County Clerk
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 7:37 AM
To: BFED Committee
Subject: FW: Testimony - FY 2027 Budget
Attachments: Letter of Support - Maui County Council 4-1-26.pdf

From: Cheryl Vasconcellos <cvasconcellos@hanahealth.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 6:28 PM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Testimony - FY 2027 Budget

You don't often get email from cvasconcellos@hanahealth.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

In support of MEDB Health Care Partnership.

Cheryl Vasconcellos
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OUR MISSION IS YOUR HEALTH!



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April 1, 2026

Chair and Members of the Council
County of Maui
200 South High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

RE: Testimony in Support of Maui Economic Development Board Funding –
Maui County Healthcare Partnership

Aloha Chair and Members of the Council:

My name is Cheryl Vasconcellos, and I serve as Executive Director of Hana Health. I am writing in strong support of funding for the Maui Economic Development Board's (MEDB) Maui County Healthcare Partnership in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

The Healthcare Partnership plays a vital role in strengthening Maui County's healthcare system by bringing together providers, educators, and community organizations in a collaborative, place-based approach. It offers a neutral and trusted space where stakeholders can align on shared priorities such as workforce development, housing, and preventative care—issues that are especially critical for rural and underserved communities like Hana.

Hana Health has directly benefited from MEDB's leadership and coordination. Through the Healthcare Partnership, we have been able to connect with peers across the county, share best practices, and participate in initiatives that support the development of our local healthcare workforce. We are hopeful to host two Hana-grown interns this summer through the Healthcare Student Placement Program—an important step toward creating meaningful, paid career pathways for local students interested in healthcare professions.

Additionally, MEDB's coordination of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been important to our planning efforts, particularly the direct staff assistance provided to Hana Health. The data and strategic alignment from this effort are actively strengthening our current grant application and ensuring that our work aligns with a broader, countywide vision for resilience and economic stability.

For Hana Health, the impact of this partnership is tangible. It supports our ability to recruit and retain local talent, expand services, and ultimately improve access to care for our community. Continued funding will ensure that this collaborative infrastructure remains in place and continues to deliver meaningful outcomes for Maui County.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued commitment to strengthening healthcare across our island communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Vasconcellos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl Vasconcellos
Executive Director

Kīpahulu Community Association Resource Center presentation

Theo:

Background

The Kīpahulu Community Association (KCA) was established in 1993 to support the needs and advance the collective well-being of the Kīpahulu community. In partnership with another local nonprofit organization, a community center was developed in the decade following KCA's founding through a combination of grant funding and extensive volunteer labor.

In recent years, however, changes in access and use have resulted in this facility no longer being available for KCA's gatherings and programming. As a result, KCA has relocated its meetings, community events, and celebrations to Kīpahulu Point County Park. While this has allowed continuity, it has also underscored the urgent need for a dedicated, permanent space—a true “home”—to support the full range of community-building activities envisioned for this rural and geographically isolated area.

Need for a Community Resource Center

Over the past year, a grassroots group of more than 40 Kīpahulu residents and their keiki—including both long-standing Native Hawaiian families and other local residents—has gathered weekly on Saturday mornings. These gatherings, currently held in the parking lot of Palapala Ho'omau Church, focus on strengthening community relationships, deepening cultural and spiritual connection, and advancing local food security initiatives.

Despite the limitations of meeting in an improvised outdoor space, this group has already contributed significantly to the community through:

Roadside cleanup efforts

Harvesting bamboo for a traditional fishing boat launching structure

Volunteer work in lo'i restoration and maintenance

Cultural enrichment programs, including Hawaiian craft workshops

The acquisition and stewardship of dedicated KCA land would provide a stable and culturally appropriate gathering place. It would also support the development of a community garden and food forest, creating a reliable source of fresh food for local distribution.

Planned features include essential community resources such as an automated external defibrillator (AED), a helicopter emergency landing site, produce distribution systems, and a plant nursery for propagation and sharing.

Land Acquisition Opportunity

KCA established a Land Search Committee to identify a suitable site for a permanent community resource center, and an ideal 2.64-acre parcel adjacent to the Palapala Ho'omau Church gathering area has been discovered.

This parcel is being offered to KCA at a reduced price of \$50,000, representing a rare and time-sensitive opportunity. Securing this land would provide a long-term foundation for community resilience, cultural revitalization, and food sovereignty in Kīpahulu.

To ensure the long-term protection of this resource, KCA will establish a legally recorded land covenant at the time of purchase. This covenant will guarantee that the land remains under KCA ownership and is used in perpetuity for community benefit, cultural practice, and resource development. It will safeguard the property from privatization, misuse, or transfer outside of its intended purpose.

Governance & Stewardship

KCA is committed to stewarding this land through both strong community governance and alignment with 'ike Hawai'i.

The organization operates through a Board of Directors and a membership-based structure, with regular public meetings that

ensure transparency and accountability. Stewardship of the Resource Center will be guided by kūpuna and community leaders.

This work is grounded in core Hawaiian values:

Mālama 'Āina – caring for and restoring the land

Kuleana – shared responsibility across the community

Laulima – collective effort and cooperation

Aloha 'Āina – deep respect and love for the land

Together, these values create a framework where land stewardship is reciprocal, intergenerational, and community-led.

Project Overview

KCA's vision includes:

Purchase and protection of the 2.64-acre parcel

Installation of a safety fence along the coastal cliff

Removal of invasive vegetation and ecological restoration

Construction of a 20' x 30' traditional hale

Development of a kalo patch and vegetable garden

Installation of a rainwater catchment system

This process will itself strengthen community bonds through shared labor and stewardship.

Budget Summary

Total Funding Requested: \$109,000

Total In-Kind Labor Contribution: \$117,500

Detailed Budget

Phase 1: Land Acquisition

Purchase & closing costs: \$55,000

Legal services (in-kind): \$2,500

Phase 2: Safety & Clearing

Fence installation: \$7,500

Labor (in-kind): \$14,000

Phase 3: Pavilion Construction

Materials: \$30,000

Labor (in-kind): \$42,000

Phase 4: Land Restoration

Equipment: \$5,000

Labor (in-kind): \$42,000

Phase 5: Garden Development

Equipment/materials: \$2,000

Labor (in-kind): \$10,000

Phase 6: Water System

Tank & plumbing: \$10,000

Labor (in-kind): \$7,000

Closing Statement

This project represents a critical investment in the future of Kīpahulu. By securing and stewarding this land, KCA will establish a permanent, community-held space for cultural practice, food security, and connection.

The inclusion of a land covenant ensures that this resource remains protected in perpetuity. Combined with strong governance and deep community commitment, this effort will create a lasting legacy for future generations.