

Project Title: Ka Wai Hāpai: Co-Creating Controlled Vocabularies For Social Justice

Summary: A cooperative of faculty from (4) libraries across the 10-campus University of Hawai'i System, working in collaboration with Kanaka (Indigenous Hawaiian) communities, requests \$249,999 from the IMLS National Leadership Grant to support this proposal for a 3-year project grant that aligns with the Community Catalysts project category. *Ka Wai Hāpai: Co-Creating Controlled Vocabularies for Social Justice* will ground (Phase 1), co-create (Phase 2), apply (Phase 3), and evaluate (Phase 4) an Indigenous theoretical framework and Indigenous language controlled vocabularies, with a specific focus on Kanaka communities.

Statement of National Need: Our nation needs to address social justice issues and empower those who have historically been unable to exercise autonomy, self-expression, and self-determination. Libraries, as sites of meaning making, have a responsibility and opportunity to align, support, and advance the social justice efforts of their communities. One significant area for libraries to engage in this work is our creation and application of descriptive metadata, as current dominant systems (e.g. Library of Congress Subject Headings) disenfranchise and harm marginalized communities. Adler (2016) notes that libraries committed to social justice work must "actively seek ways to remedy the inequities in access to and production of knowledge through categories developed in the guise of a neutral, objective point of view." Previous examples of this type of work include Ngā Upoko Tukutuku Māori Subject Headings and the BC First Nations Subject Headings.

By leveraging the outcomes of a previous project, *Lau Ā Lau Ka 'Ike: Knowledge Overflowing* (funded from an IMLS Native Hawaiian Library Services Grant in 2019), *Ka Wai Hāpai* will empower our communities by co-creating a uniquely Indigenous theoretical framework that reflects the relationships, cultural protocols, and worldviews of Kanaka communities. *Ka Wai Hāpai* will co-create controlled vocabularies that reduce harm and reflect said communities' identities and values. Controlled vocabularies, like subject headings, are sets of collectively agreed-upon terms with defined relationships used to describe ourselves and our world. These culturally appropriate, community-focused controlled vocabularies will increase public access to cultural heritage materials and position these institutions as "trusted spaces for community engagement," (Goal 2, Objective 4 of the IMLS strategic plan). The outcomes of our project will be far-reaching, as any cultural heritage institution - e.g. public library, school library, academic library, special collection, archive - can improve community access by applying the theoretical framework and controlled vocabularies.

Project Design: The *Ka Wai Hāpai* team includes: UH Maui College Library, Shavonn Matsuda (Kanaka); Leeward Community College Library, Annemarie Paikai (Kanaka); UH Mānoa Laka Me Lono Resource Center, Keahiahi Long (Kanaka); UH Mānoa Library: Margaret Joyce, Sadie Rosen, and Eleanor Kleiber (all non-Kanaka).

Ka Wai Hāpai is designed to co-create a community catalyst hub. The long-term vision is to build this work up and out into multiple project spokes. While face-to-face connection with community partners is preferred, due to covid, we have built flexibility into the project design by making it possible to conduct community engagement activities remotely.

This hub project is split into four phases:



- Phase 1: **Ground** the project by researching Kanaka methodologies, consulting with cultural and information professional experts, and developing a theoretical framework and conceptual foundation.
- Phase 2: **Co-create** Kanaka language controlled vocabularies, expanding work of the IMLS-supported *Lau Ā Lau Ka 'Ike: Knowledge Overflowing* project. Develop scope notes.
- Phase 3: **Apply** the controlled vocabularies to >100 representative items from relevant collections.
- Phase 4: **Evaluate** the system by testing its functionality and performance. Identify processes to upscale this project, including potential partners outside of the University of Hawai'i system.

Diversity Plan: The design, implementation, and intended impact of this project is powerfully and unreservedly Indigenous and Kanaka. The process of this project will be inclusive of people with a diverse range of experiences and expertises, including librarians, cultural practitioners, students, and researchers. This Indigenous system of knowledge will directly meet our field's commitment to "Invest in policies and partnerships that address barriers to accessing museum and library collections, programs, and information," (Goal 3, Objective 3 of the IMLS strategic plan).

National Impact: This project at once directly empowers Kanaka communities and informs national discussions about social justice within the library profession. Our project design ensures the project deliverables are widely adaptable and socially responsible via collaboration with experts in Kanaka worldviews and Knowledge Organization at every phase of the project. Conversations with these experts will take place in virtual public forums (e.g. webinars), and then the recordings of those conversations will be hosted on our project website. We will maintain a project blog, where project findings and activities will be regularly communicated by our project team throughout the life of the project. At the conclusion of our project, all project outcomes (e.g. theoretical framework, workflows, and the controlled vocabularies) will be publicly available on our project website. Additionally, we will share project findings at relevant professional conferences and convenings, either in-person or virtually. The University of Hawai'i strives to be the world's leading Indigenous-serving institution, and as such we are uniquely positioned to model ethical, inclusive, collaborative relationships for other academic and public-service institutions.

Budget Summary: We are requesting an estimated total of \$249,999 from this grant program for a period of 3 years for the following expenses: \$160,465 for project personnel (including salaries and fringe); \$3,000 for cultural and technical consultants; \$10,500 for software, equipment, and supplies; \$76,034 for indirect costs.