

**Call for Filmmakers  
Documentary Film Production**

**1978 Hawai'i Constitutional Convention:  
The Event That Shaped Modern Hawai'i**

**Issued by:** Hawai'i Institute for Public Affairs (HIPA)

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## **I. Introduction and Purpose**

The Hawai'i Institute for Public Affairs (HIPA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, independent research and educational organization founded in 2000. HIPA operates three program centers, including the Center for Hawai'i's Constitution, which advances constitutional literacy and civic engagement. For over two decades, HIPA has served as Hawai'i's trusted source for objective policy analysis and civic education.

HIPA is seeking interest from qualified filmmakers and production companies to produce a broadcast-quality documentary tentatively titled "1978 Hawai'i Constitutional Convention: The Event That Shaped Modern Hawai'i". The documentary will chronicle the 1978 Hawai'i Constitutional Convention, during which 102 delegates reviewed and revised the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i, producing thirty-four amendments that defined the state's political trajectory into the present day and reshaped governance, culture, and rights in Hawai'i. The project is timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Convention's work in 2028. This legislative session, HIPA secured a \$100k grant-in-aid from the Hawaii State Legislature to pursue this project and intends to conduct additional fundraising efforts.

## **II. Project Background and Public Purpose**

The 1978 Hawai'i Constitutional Convention stands as one of the most consequential civic events in Hawai'i's history. Its amendments established constitutional protections for Native Hawaiian rights and traditional practices, created the framework for land use and water resource management, reformed the functions of all branches of state government, mandated ethics and transparency in government, and strengthened commitments to public education and cultural preservation. These provisions shape daily life in Hawai'i—from shoreline access to water allocation, from Hawaiian language immersion programs to campaign finance laws.

Despite the profound importance of the convention, no comprehensive, publicly accessible account of the convention's work exists. As surviving delegates age, their firsthand knowledge of the debates, compromises, and aspirations that shaped these constitutional choices grows increasingly fragile. More than half of Hawai'i's population was not alive during the 1978 Constitutional Convention, and a majority of residents do not know the political history of contemporary Hawai'i.

The documentary project serves the public interest through civic education, historical preservation, cultural understanding, and democratic participation. This project is also timed to educate the public prior to the November 2028 constitutional convention vote, when Hawaii residents will be asked on their general election ballots if the state should hold another constitutional convention.

### III. Project Objectives

**Objective 1: Document and Contextualize the 1978 Convention.** The project will create a definitive historical record of Hawai'i's Constitutional Convention, including its political dynamics, procedural design, delegate experiences, and social climate—preserving institutional memory before it is lost.

**Objective 2: Illuminate Key Constitutional Issues and Their Translation into Law.** The project will explain how the Convention's seminal debates—Native Hawaiian rights, land and water stewardship, government ethics and transparency, education and cultural preservation—were translated into constitutional amendments and institutional structures that continue to govern Hawai'i today.

**Objective 3: Evaluate 50-Year Impact and Inform Future Civic Choices.** The project will assess the Convention's long-term effects on Hawai'i's political, legal, and social landscape, connecting constitutional text to lived outcomes in policy, court decisions, community life, and cultural identity—and providing context for informed participation in ongoing constitutional conversations.

### IV. Envisioned Scope of Work

A selected filmmaker will be responsible for the research, creative development, and film production component of this project, working under the direction of HIPA's Executive Producers. The scope of work includes the following:

#### A. Research and Creative Development

- Conduct archival research cataloging footage, documents, and audio from 1978.
- Identify and secure interviews with surviving delegates, scholars, and community leaders.
- Develop narrative structure, treatment, and script.

#### B. Pre-Production

- Execute pre-production planning including location scouting and crew assembly.
- Secure permissions, scheduling, and archive/location access coordination.

#### C. Principal Photography

- Complete principal photography across throughout the state
- Document sites emblematic of issues debated in 1978, including water sources, coastal access points, cultural institutions, and government facilities.
- Conduct interviews with delegates, scholars, and community leaders.

#### D. Post-Production

- Manage post-production including editing, archival restoration, motion graphics, and original score.
- Ensure broadcast-quality production meeting broadcast and film technical specifications.
- Complete legal clearances for all archival and third-party materials.

#### E. Educational and Companion Materials

- Archive interview footage for permanent public access.

## V. Intended Deliverables

1. One (1) feature-length broadcast-quality documentary of approximately 60 minutes.
2. Preservation, cataloging and archival of interviews and footage.
3. Educational and marketing companion materials for publicity and promotion.

## VI. Project Timeline

The anticipated production timeline is as follows:

Phase	Period	Key Milestones
Research & Development / Pre-Production	July–September 2026	Begin research process; finalize interview list and initiate delegate outreach; secure archive access agreements and legal clearances; initiate pre-production.
Pre-Production / Early Production	October–December 2026	Complete pre-production; begin principal photography; conduct initial delegate interviews; conduct inter-island travel; crew and equipment fully recruited.
Principal Photography	January–March 2027	Continue principal photography across islands; complete majority of interviews; begin assembly edit; archival integration.
Late Production / Post-Production	April–June 2027	Complete principal photography; advance post-production; begin educational materials development and community outreach.
Completion and Premiere	July 2027–January 2028	Complete post-production (editing, graphics, scoring); finalize educational companion materials; execute distribution strategy; premiere documentary coinciding with the advent of the 50th anniversary.

## VII. HIPA Quality Assurance Standards

HIPA intends to pursue the following quality assurance standards to ensure the historical accuracy and internal research consistency:

- **Executive Producer Approval:** All drafts and the final product shall be approved by HIPA Executive Producers.
- **Advisory Committee:** HIPA will convene a board of advisors including policy experts, constitutional law scholars, Native Hawaiian cultural experts, archivists, and documentary professionals to review narrative accuracy and cultural appropriateness at key milestones.
- **Technical Standards:** The filmmaker shall ensure broadcast-quality production meeting film/television industry technical specifications.

## VIII. Distribution Plan

All deliverables are intended to be distributed through public television networks, public schools, universities, libraries, community institutions statewide, and various local and nation film festivals. Specifically, distribution channels may include PBS Hawai'i, streaming platforms, the Hawai'i Department of Education, University of Hawai'i system, public libraries, and community organizations. The documentary and educational materials will be freely accessible through the internet on websites such as hipa.org, YouTube, social media platforms, public television, educational institutions, and cultural organizations throughout Hawai'i.

## IX. Expressions of Interest

Filmmakers and production companies interested in this project, please reply to HIPA in writing with the following information:

1. **Cover Letter.** A letter of interest signed by an authorized representative of the proposing entity.
2. **Qualifications and Experience.** A description of the proposer's relevant experience in documentary filmmaking, with emphasis on historical documentaries, oral history projects, and work involving Hawai'i or Pacific Island communities. Include a portfolio or reel of prior work.
3. **References.** At least three professional references from prior documentary or media production clients.
4. **Compliance.** Evidence of applicable business licenses, insurance, and any other relevant credentials.

## XI. Terms and Conditions

- Following this opportunity, HIPA intends to select a filmmaker to pursue the projects described herein.
- All intellectual property produced under this project shall be owned by HIPA.
- Prospective filmmakers must comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Prospective filmmakers must agree not to use project funds for entertainment or lobbying activities.
- HIPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate modifications to the selected proposal prior to contract execution.

- All final products of the film and related products, footage and archival materials shall be approved by the Executive Producers of HIPA.

## **XII. Submission Instructions**

Interest should be expressed to must be submitted to HIPA as soon as possible. Submissions should be directed to:

Hawai'i Institute for Public Affairs

Attn: Perry Arrasmith, President, HIPA @ [perry.arrasmith@hipa.org](mailto:perry.arrasmith@hipa.org)

HIPA is open to further engagement with interested parties as part of this exploratory process, including meetings and follow-up communication. This is an exploratory and consultative process, and a submission of interest represents no commitment or obligation on the part of submitter at this time.