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David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

March 20, 2025

Ms. Kate Blystone, Director  
Department of Planning  
County of Maui  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Ms. Blystone:

**SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET** (BFED-1) (PL-01)

May I please request you submit your response to the following questions by **March 31, 2025**. This will enable the Committee to comprehensively review the FY 2026 Budget.

1. Please outline the major changes in your Department's budget from FY 2025 to FY 2026. If your budget will decrease, how will this impact your Department's operations and ability to serve the public?
2. How many vacant positions currently exist within your Department?
  - a. Please include the job titles for the vacancies and indicate how long the positions have been vacant.
  - b. What is the anticipated timeline for filling these vacancies?
  - c. What are the consequences, if any, for removing funding for these vacant positions from the FY 2026 Budget?
3. If your Department had expansion positions in the FY 2025 Budget, how many of those positions were filled? If they have not been filled, are they included in the FY 2026 Budget? How many months of funding are being requested?

4. If your Department is proposing expansion positions in the FY 2026 Budget, how do you plan to fill those positions?
5. How many positions were filled in FY 2025 that were not expansion positions?
6. Describe your recruitment process.
  - a. How did your Department recruit to fill vacancies and what were the most effective methods for attracting candidates?
  - b. Does your Department take an active role in recruitment or is recruitment handled primarily by the Department of Personnel Services? Please explain.
7. The following questions are related to overtime payments:
  - a. How much in overtime has been paid to date in FY 2025 and what was the reason for the overtime?
  - b. Were any of these overtime costs attributed to the number of vacant positions in your Department?
  - c. Do you anticipate that overtime costs in FY 2026 will increase or decrease and what are the reasons for your assumption?
8. The following questions are related to your Department's program and activities for FY 2026:
  - a. Identify the programs and activities conducted by your Department because of a Federal or State mandate. Indicate for each program and activity the amount of Federal or State funding your Department anticipates receiving and the amount of County funding your Department is requesting.
  - b. Identify the programs and activities conducted solely because of a Maui County Code mandate and indicate the amount your Department is requesting.
9. If your Department had Capital Improvement Projects in FY 2025:

- a. Provide the current status of each CIP, if different from the information provided in the Fiscal Year 2025 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter CIP Report.
  - b. Provide information on how much funding has been encumbered or expended to date for each project.
10. If your Department has proposed CIPs for FY 2026:
  - a. Rank your proposed CIPs, by priority.
  - b. Will CIP funding included in the FY 2026 Budget be encumbered by June 30, 2026? If not, how much do you anticipate will be encumbered by that date?
11. If your Department manages a revolving fund:
  - a. Explain whether the revolving fund is still needed and why.
  - b. Provide the current balance.
12. If your Department manages grants:
  - a. For each grant line-item not designated for a specific recipient (e.g., Small Business Promotion; Youth Programs), provide a breakdown of the grants that will be funded by the line item.
  - b. Provide a breakdown of all grants that will be funded by your Department under Sub-object Code 6317, County grant subsidy.
  - c. Did your Department apply for any grant funding in FY 2025? If yes, how much grant funding was received?
13. Provide details on your Department's Carryover/Savings that were included in the FY 2026 Budget.
14. What are your top three Department priorities for FY 2026 and how does your Department's budget reflect that?

15. How much has your Department spent on Professional Services in FY 2025, and what projects and consultants were funded under this line item?
16. How much of your Department's expenditures in FY 2025 will be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in relation to the wildfires? What amount of FY 2026 expenditures are expected to be reimbursed?
17. If your Department is receiving Federal grants, including pass-through grants:
  - a. What amount is your Department receiving for routine operations?
  - b. What amount is your Department receiving for August 2023 Maui Wildfires disaster recovery?
  - c. Explain any factors that could jeopardize your receipt of Federal grants, including Federal policy changes, compliance requirements, or expiration dates.
  - d. Explain how your Department will adjust if it does not receive the anticipated Federal grant funding.
18. If your Department received funding to repair or replace equipment, locations, and structures destroyed in the wildfires, provide the current status for each. If there are items still pending repair or replacement, provide the estimated cost and timeline for the repair or replacement.

The Department is scheduled to present on **April 7, 2025**. The schedule is subject to change and Committee staff will reach out if there are any changes to the schedule.

Please be prepared to provide a ten-minute presentation on the changes in your Department's budget from FY 2025 to FY 2026, addressing the following:

- Operations
- CIPs, if any
- Grants awarded by the Department, if any

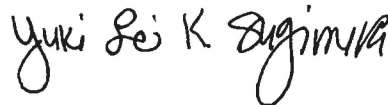
Ms. Kate Blystone  
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- Grants received by the Department, if any
- Revolving funds, if any
- Rates and fees, including any estimated increase or decrease in revenue as a result of the changes

Please transmit your response to [bfed.committee@mauicounty.us](mailto:bfed.committee@mauicounty.us) by **March 31, 2025**. To ensure efficient processing, please include the Committee item number in the subject line. Please use a font size of at least 12 points for the response. This formatting allows Committee members and the community to clearly read the document once posted.

Should you have any questions, please contact me or the Committee staff (Kirsten Szabo at ext. 7662, James Krueger at ext. 7761, or Pauline Martins at ext. 8039).

Sincerely,



YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA, Chair  
Budget, Finance, and Economic  
Development Committee

bfed:2026bgt:253019apl01:kes

cc: Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.  
Budget Director

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor


**KATE L. K. BLYSTONE**  
Director

**ANA LILLIS**  
Deputy Director



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
ONE MAIN PLAZA  
2200 MAIN STREET, SUITE 315  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793

March 31, 2025

Lesley Milner   
Budget Director, County of Maui  
200 South High Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Honorable Richard T. Bissen Jr.  
Mayor, County of Maui  
200 South High Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

**APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL**

 4-2-25  
**Mayor** **Date**

For Transmittal to:

Honorable Yuki Lei Sugimura, Chair  
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee  
Maui County Council  
200 South High Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Chair Sugimura:

**SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR (“FY”) 2026 BUDGET (BFED-1) (PL-01)**

Thank you for your March 20, 2025 letter. We offer the following responses to your questions.

- Please outline the major changes in your Department’s budget from FY 2025 to FY 2026. If your budget will decrease, how will this impact your Department’s operations and ability to serve the public?***

The Department of Planning (Department) made very few changes to how we intend to allocate funds in our FY 2026 budget. The changes we did make, however, aim to support staff retention and maintain essential services. Our FY 2026 budget reflects a 14.5% increase—equivalent to \$1,315,799—compared to last year’s budget. This amount may seem significant, but with this budget we are investing in our staff and committing to improving service. This increase is primarily due to the following:

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL

*[Faint signature]*

Date

Mayor

- Premium pay adjustments: Traditionally, we have used savings from vacant positions to cover these costs, however, we think it is a better practice to show our intended expenditures where they belong, especially as we work to fill vacancies.
- Supplemental agreements and shortage differential initiatives: The Department is in the process of drafting several agreements to address retention, recruitment incentives, and staff shortages.
- Travel and training: Investing in our people with training and conferences inspires and motivates them to stay with the County while exposing them to new ideas we could adjust to fit Maui County.
- Additional professional services: Examples include initiatives for housing, community plan updates, cultural resources and smart growth studies.

2. ***How many vacant positions currently exist within your Department?***

- a. ***Please include the job titles for the vacancies and indicate how long the positions have been vacant.***

As of this letter, the Department has twenty-four vacancies. They are distributed across the Department and duration of each vacancy is listed in the table below.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Number of Vacancies</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Duration of Vacancy</b>
Planner VI	1	CPD	Less than six months
Planner V	7	CPD (4), LRD (2), PID (1)	Less than six months (4) More than six months (3)
Planner IV	1	ZAED	More than six months
Planner III	1	CPD	Less than six months
Planner II	1	CPD	Less than six months
Planner I	1	ZAED	Less than six months
GIS Analyst V	1	PID	More than six months
Zoning Inspector II	2	ZAED	More than six months (1) Less than six months (1)
Zoning Inspector Trainee	1	ZAED	More than six months
Land Use and Building Plans Examiner	1	ZAED	Less than six months
Information & Education Specialist	1	LRD	Less than six months
Secretary to Boards and Commissions I	1	CPD	Less than six months



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Secretary to Boards and Commissions II	1	ZAED	Less than six months
Office Ops Assistant II	2	CPD (1), ZAED (1)	More than six months (2)
Secretary I	1	ZAED	Less than six months
Planning Program Administrator	1	ZAED	Less than six months
<b>TOTAL VACANCIES</b>	<b>24</b>		

***b. What is the anticipated timeline for filling these vacancies?***

We are aiming to fill more than half of these vacancies within the next six months. We are attempting to fill the remaining vacancies within 12 months; however, this is largely affected by current salary rates and housing challenges in Maui County. We are hopeful that our supplemental agreement initiatives will entice applicants to accept employment with the Department.

***c. What are the consequences, if any, for removing funding for these vacant positions from the FY 2026 Budget?***

The major consequence of removing position funding from the Department is a significantly reduced ability to meet public service needs. The Department has several staff working overtime to meet the needs of our community, and we are seeing signs of fatigue and burnout. Our budget is modest and appropriate given the kuleana we carry regarding wildfire recovery in addition to providing comprehensive service to all of Maui County.

***3. If your Department had expansion positions in the FY 2025 Budget, how many of those positions were filled? If they have not been filled, are they included in the FY 2026 Budget? How many months of funding are being requested?***

The Department had no proposed expansion positions in FY 2025.

***4. If your Department is proposing expansion positions in the FY 2026 Budget, how do you plan to fill those positions?***

The Department is proposing a Grants Specialist II and an additional Information and Education Specialist I that we plan to fill via open Department of Personnel Services (DPS) recruitment in conjunction with internal targeted recruitment strategies.

**5. *How many positions were filled in FY 2025 that were not expansion positions?***

Fifteen positions were filled in FY 2025 that were not expansion positions.

**6. *Describe your recruitment process.***

**a. *How did your Department recruit to fill vacancies and what were the most effective methods for attracting candidates?***

**b. *Does your Department take an active role in recruitment or is recruitment handled primarily by the Department of Personnel Services? Please explain.***

The Department recruits to fill vacancies in conjunction with DPS online postings as well as participating in job fairs on Maui and on O'ahu. The Department is actively working on posting position vacancies with the American Planning Association's (APA) online job board, posting vacancies on the County of Maui (COM) social media pages in collaboration with the COM Communications team, and on targeted radio ads to be aired on local stations. In addition, the Department is consistently recruiting when asked to speak to college classes or leadership groups like the Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows Program. The most effective method of attracting candidates continues to be word-of-mouth engagement.

In collaborating with the Department of Land and Natural Resources the Department is hopeful to bring onboard a Kupu 'Āina Corps intern at no cost to the County. In establishing this initiative, the Department hopes to educate and transition these interns into future permanent staff.

**7. *The following questions are related to overtime payments:***

**a. *How much in overtime has been paid to date in FY 2025 and what was the reason for the overtime?***

Approximately \$45,250 has been paid in overtime through March 15. Overtime hours were directed at community meetings, after-hours commission meetings, burn zone permitting, and addressing the backlog of permits and meetings minutes.

**b. *Were any of these overtime costs attributed to the number of vacant positions in your Department?***

Yes. High turnover and vacant positions within the Department has led to several backlogs causing the need for overtime.

**c. *Do you anticipate that overtime costs in FY 2026 will increase or decrease and what are the reasons for your assumption?***

Our intention is to decrease overtime costs in FY 2026 by filling vacant positions, but it is likely the overtime amounts will remain the same or increase in this fiscal year. Overtime costs related to evening meetings and assisting with wildfire recovery will continue.

**8. *The following questions are related to your Department's program and activities for FY 2026:***

**a. *Identify the programs and activities conducted by your Department because of a Federal or State mandate. Indicate for each program and activity the amount of Federal or State funding your Department anticipates receiving and the amount of County funding your Department is requesting.***

Hawai'i Revised Statutes 205A is derived from the Coastal Zone Management Act. We anticipate receiving \$504,658 from the State Coastal Zone Management Program. The proposed budget includes the required 50% match.

**b. *Identify the programs and activities conducted solely because of a Maui County Code mandate and indicate the amount for each the County expends.***

Most of the Department's programs and activities are mandated by Maui County Code. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Title 19, accounts for the majority of the Department's expenses. Due to overlapping responsibilities of staff throughout these programs and activities it is difficult to provide a line-item amount for each mandate. Beyond Title 19, other Maui County Code mandates include:

- Chapter 2.26, Urban Design Review Board
- Chapter 2.28, Planning Commissions
- Chapter 2.80B, General Plan and Community Plans
- Chapter 2.88, Cultural Resources Commission



- Chapter 3.49, Special Management Area Revolving Fund
- Chapter 16.12A, Noncommercial Signs
- Chapter 16.13 Commercial Signs

**9. *If your Department had Capital Improvement Projects (“CIPs”) in FY 2025:***

- a. *Provide the current status of each CIP project, if different from the information provided in the Fiscal Year 2025 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter CIP Report.***

Not applicable.

- b. *Provide information on how much funding has been encumbered or expended to date for each project.***

Not applicable.

**10. *If your Department has proposed CIPs for FY 2026:***

- a. *Rank your proposed CIPs, by priority.***

Not applicable.

- b. *Will CIP funding included in the FY 2026 Budget be encumbered by June 30, 2026? If not, how much do you anticipate will be encumbered by that date?***

Not applicable.

**11. *If your Department manages a revolving fund:***

- a. *Explain whether the revolving fund is still needed and why.***

The Department contributes to the Special Management Area Revolving Fund. This fund is beneficial to the County by providing the ability to advance projects generally relating to the Special Management Area.

The County Council must authorize expenditure of this fund on a case-by-case basis. The most recent example was Council’s approval of a grant to Mālama Kakanilua for a restoration project via Ordinance 5717.

**b. Provide the current balance.**

The estimated balance as of June 30, 2025 will be \$1,449,613.00.

**12. If your Department manages grants:**

**a. For each grant line-item not designated for a specific recipient (e.g., Small Business Promotion; Youth Programs), provide a breakdown of the grants that will be funded by the line item.**

Not applicable.

**b. Provide a breakdown of all grants that will be funded by your Department under Sub-object Code 6317, County grant subsidy.**

Sub-object Code 6317 grants include the following:

- University of Hawai'i Sea Grant, County of Maui Coastal Hazards Extension Program: \$156,664.00.
  - Cost-share agreement with UH Sea Grant to pay for Maui County's Coastal Hazards Specialist.
- University of Hawai'i Sea Grant, Dune and Shoreline Management Coordinator: \$124,980.00.
  - Cost-share agreement with UH Sea Grant to pay for Maui County's Coastal Dune Restoration and Management Coordinator.

**c. Did your Department apply for any grant funding in FY 2025? If yes, how much grant funding was received?**

Not applicable.

**13. Provide details on your Department's Carryover/Savings that were included in the FY 2026 Budget.**

The carryover savings included in the FY 2026 Budget are from the unrestricted fund balance for FY 2024 reflected in the County's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) along with anticipated additional revenues based on the funds collected in the first half of FY 2025. Any carryover savings from FY 2025 will be recognized in the FY 2027 Budget.

**14. *What are your top three Department priorities for FY 2026 and how does your Department's budget reflect that?***

The Department's top three priorities are filling vacant positions and addressing related morale/burnout issues, wildfire recovery, and the Title 19 rewrite. These goals are similar to FY 2025. We intend to build more momentum toward achieving our goals in FY 2026.

Our budget addresses these priorities by fully funding our vacant positions and adding staffing where we need it most including grants management and outreach. This budget properly allocates overtime and funding for supplemental agreements that will promote retention and recruitment. It also includes funding for training to improve effectiveness, innovation and morale.

**15. *How much has your Department spent on Professional Services in FY 2025, and what projects and consultants were funded under this line item?***

Projects and consultant contracts funded under this line item include the following:

- Orion Planning and Design – Title 19 Zoning Code Rewrite
- Anthology Marketing Group – Quality of Life Survey
- Triple HS Inc. dba H.T. Harvey & Associates – Wetlands Overlay Map
- Raimi and Associates Inc. – Central Maui Community Plan Update

Additional services funded through this line item include hearing officer services, mediation services, audio transcription of commission meetings, and specialized audiovisual contractors.

Fiscal Year to Date, total expenditures under this line item are approximately \$213,602.00.

**16. *How much of your Department's expenditures in FY 2025 will be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in relation to the wildfires? What amount of FY 2026 expenditures are expected to be reimbursed?***

We do not expect any reimbursements for our work in either FY 2025 or 2026 at this time.

**17. *If your Department is receiving Federal grants, including pass through grants:***

**a. *What amount is your Department receiving for routine operations?***

Federal grants include the following:

- Department of Health MOA No. PAN 24-07 – MOA 24-07 Maui County Capacity Building is a pass through grant (\$75,000)
- Coastal Zone Management Program is a pass through grant (\$497,110)
- The Department is currently awaiting the execution and disbursement of the subaward agreement for the *Aina Restoration Through Community Governance to Advance Climate Resilience in the Hawaiian Islands* project. This funding is provided by the NOAA Department of Commerce and passed through the University of Hawai'i. The subaward will support the implementation of Year 1 activities, including initiating the land purchase and beginning community planning and outreach efforts, as outlined in the project scope. (\$129,761.00)

**b. *What amount is your Department receiving for August 2023 Maui Wildfires disaster recovery?***

The Department is not currently receiving any specific funds for wildfire recovery.

**c. *Explain any factors that could jeopardize your receipt of Federal grants, including Federal policy changes, compliance requirements, or expiration dates.***

Because our federal funding is connected to coastal zone management, there is a possibility that this funding could be removed by the Federal government. We are working closely with our partners at University of Hawai'i and in other counties to advocate for the continuation of this funding and we are hopeful the funding will remain in place. We have not been made aware of any official indications that this funding is at risk at this time.



Honorable Richard T. Bissen Jr  
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**d. Explain how your Department will adjust if it does not receive the anticipated Federal grant funding.**

Four of our CZM planners are funded by federal funds and all of these positions are filled. If federal funding is extinguished, we will fund these positions with savings from vacant positions until we can identify a new funding source.

**18. If your Department received funding to repair or replace equipment, locations, and structures destroyed in the wildfires, provide the current status for each. If there are items still pending repair or replacement, provide the estimated cost and timeline for the repair or replacement.**

Not applicable.

Mahalo for allowing us to respond to your requests.

Sincerely,



KATE L. K. BLYSTONE  
Director of Planning



## BFED Committee

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**From:** Janina E. Agapay <Janina.E.Agapay@co.maui.hi.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 2, 2025 2:02 PM  
**To:** BFED Committee  
**Cc:** Lesley J. Milner; Katie L. Blystone; Ana L. Lillis  
**Subject:** (BFED-1)(PL-01)  
**Attachments:** (BFED-1)(PL-01).pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hello,

Please see attached correspondence (BFED-1)(PL-01)

Thank you,

***Janina Agapay***

County of Maui | Budget Office

Phone: (808) 270-7836

Email: Janina.E.Agapay@co.maui.hi.us