

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I NOTICE OF EXEMPTION CHAPTER 103D, HRS

The Chief Procurement Officer, University of Hawai'i, is in the process of reviewing the request from
Division of Student Affairs, University of Hawaii at Hilo (Department/Campus)

for exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, for the following goods and services:

Consulting services to provide assistance with the implementation of the UH Hilo Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan. University of Hawaii at Hilo is seeking consultation in the implementation of the time-sensitive and high-impact work to address immediate enrollment needs.

Vendor/Contractor: Clark/Nikel Inc dba Echo Delta
(If known)

Address:
62 4th Street NW
Winter Haven, Florida 338811

Term of Contract: (If known)	From:	To:	Cost: \$1,300,000.00
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Direct any inquiries to:
Department: Division of Student Affairs, University of Hawaii at Hilo

Contact Name/Title: Lei Kapono, Interim Vice Chancellor

Address: 200 W. Kawili Street, SSCW-304
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Phone Number:
808-932-7445

Fax Number:
808-932-7471

Date Posted: September 2, 2025

Submit written objections to this notice to issue an exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, within seven (7) calendar days from the date posted to:

Office of Procurement Management
1400 Lower Campus Road, Room 15
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
email: OPM@hawaii.edu

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I
REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER 103D, HRS

To: Kalbert Young **Date:** 08/11/2025
Chief Procurement Officer, University of Hawai'i

Via: Office of Procurement Management

From: UH Hilo
(Campus & Department/Program)

Vendor/Contractor: Clark/Nikdel, Inc dba Echo Delta

Estimated Amount: \$1,300,00

Term of Contract, if applicable: September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026

Pursuant to University Administrative Procedure 8.220, and consistent with Hawaii Revised Statutes §103D-102(b)(4) and Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 3-120, the department requests a procurement exemption to purchase the following (attach additional sheets if necessary):

1. Description of the goods or services:

see attached

2. Explain in detail, why it is not practicable or not advantageous for the University to procure by standard competitive means when multiple sources are available, or by other standard methods of source selection:

see attached

3. Explain in detail, the process that will be or was utilized in selecting the vendor/contractor:

see attached

4. Provide a description of the department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempt procurement:

see attached

5. Provide a list of department personnel, by position title, who will be involved in the approval process and administration of the contract:

Donnette Lei Kapono, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Kalei Rapoza, Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs
Amy Kalili Interim Director of University Relations
Chelsey Grant, Fiscal Specialist, Division of Student Affairs

6. Direct questions to: Lei Kapono Email Address: donnette@hawaii.edu

Certification: I certify that the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Lei Kapono
Full Name of Principal Investigator, Department Head, or Administrator

D Lei Kapono

Signature

Date

Chelsey Grant
Full Name of Fiscal Administrator

Chelsey Grant

Digitally signed by Chelsey Grant
Date: 2025.08.12 09:37:09 -10'00'

Signature

Date

APPROVED:

Bonnie Irwin
Full Name of Vice President or Chancellor

Bonnie Irwin
Signature

8/12/2025
Date

FOR OPM USE ONLY

OPM COMMENTS:



APPROVED



DENIED

Sarah Allen

Digitally signed by Sarah Allen
Date: 2025.09.15 16:23:42 -10'00'

9/15/25

CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

DATE

1. Description of the goods or services:

Consulting services for enrollment management to provide assistance with the implementation of the UH Hilo Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan that was created in SY 24-25. The consultant's role will be to work with UH Hilo departments to implement specific focus areas of the SEM plan by conducting: 1) Discovery and Market Research; 2) Strategy and Campaign Development; 3) Inquiry and Application Generation Campaign; 4) Name Buy Strategy and Execution; 5) Enrollment Management Support; 6) Website Redesign and Content Development; 7) Campus Visit Audit.

This new procurement focuses on executing high-impact implementation work in SEM Focus Areas 1, 3, 4, and 5. For Focus Area 1 (Identity and Mission Alignment), Echo Delta will develop and execute brand storytelling, student-centered campaigns, and outreach strategies aimed at high-yield groups. For Focus Area 3 (Campus Environment and Infrastructure), Echo Delta will conduct a campus visit experience audit focused specifically on prospective student perception and its impact on recruitment. For Focus Area 4 (Operational Efficiency and Tech Integration), Echo Delta will help identify immediate and transitional technology solutions and provide enrollment management coaching during UH Hilo's current leadership gap. For Focus Area 5 (Branding, Marketing, Recruitment), Echo Delta will provide full-service campaign implementation, including content creation, name buys, digital asset development, and media optimization.

This new procurement is distinct from UH Hilo's existing contract with Echo Delta, which runs through May 2026. Under the existing contract, Echo Delta provides strategic consultation, plan refinement, implementation advising, stakeholder work group engagement, and assessment. The new proposal centers on doing the work—specifically implementing action items in the identified focus areas rather than providing general guidance and strategic oversight.

2. Explain in detail, why it is not practicable or not advantageous for the University to procure by standard competitive means when multiple sources are available, or by other standard methods of source selection:

Echo Delta has built a strong relationship with UH Hilo, having developed the current SEM plan for the campus over the past two years. Echo Delta has become a trusted partner throughout the SEM development process, developing strong knowledge of the UH Hilo campus and its needs. The exemption is requested because procurement by standard competitive means will not permit the campus to take immediate action and enter into a contract timely enough to impact Fall 2026 enrollment numbers since the admissions cycle begins in Fall 2025.

Enrollment at UH Hilo has been in steady decline, with Fall enrollment for Fall 2022, 2023, and 2024 dropping 8.2%, 6.6%, and 4.1% respectively. UH Hilo faces specific capacity constraints that necessitate external implementation support: UH Hilo has never had a functioning integrated marketing communications (IMC) department, with University Relations just beginning to build this capacity. No in-house team exists to design or implement targeted campaigns grounded in a unified messaging strategy. UH System-level CRM decisions are pending, and Admissions has struggled for nearly 2 years with securing technology and building an integrated tech stack. UH Hilo is currently in a leadership transition period, with key enrollment management positions requiring permanent appointments, creating operational gaps during this critical implementation phase. No in-house media planning, campaign execution, or performance tracking systems currently exist. Time is of the essence to entering into the consulting contract now to allow UH Hilo to positively impact recruitment and retention rates for Fall 2026.

Echo Delta is being engaged not to revisit strategy, but to implement urgent and high-impact work while the university continues building long-term, sustainable internal capacity. While other vendors may offer similar services, Echo Delta's direct involvement in developing UH Hilo's SEM plan over the past two years uniquely positions them to act without delay. Their familiarity with the plan's structure, goals, context, and stakeholder dynamics eliminates the need for a lengthy onboarding process—something UH Hilo cannot afford given the urgency of turning the corner on enrollment and retention. Engaging a new firm would introduce delays and redundancies that directly undermine momentum during this critical window.

3. Explain in detail, the process that will be or was utilized in selecting the vendor/contractor:

Echo Delta was originally selected for the current SEM planning contract after a comprehensive evaluation process that reviewed multiple vendors in the enrollment consulting space, including AACRAO, RNL, and RHB. Echo Delta was chosen based on their specialized focus on higher education enrollment management and their alignment with UH Hilo's specific needs.

Echo Delta has extensive experience in higher education and has successfully executed enrollment marketing campaigns, campus visit audits, and CRM optimization projects at peer institutions, with references from regional-serving public universities confirming their capacity for implementation, not just planning. Echo Delta is not a generalist planning firm—they specialize in full-cycle SEM strategy and execution, with a structure built to scale from planning through activation. Their holistic approach, combining veteran enrollment leaders with seasoned marketers, enables institutions to develop cohesive strategies, improve digital presence, and effectively target "right-fit" students—all crucial for UH Hilo given its challenges with declining applications and out-of-state yield.

Echo Delta's demonstrated expertise directly aligns with UH Hilo's identified capacity gaps across the SEM focus areas requiring external implementation support. Their proven ability to provide full-service campaign implementation, conduct specialized audits, and deliver enrollment management coaching addresses UH Hilo's immediate operational needs while building internal capacity.

This new contract represents the logical next phase—moving from planning to execution—leveraging Echo Delta's established understanding of UH Hilo's context to implement the very strategies they helped develop.

4. Provide a description of the department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempt procurement:

The UH Hilo Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs, and Interim Director of University Relations will oversee the work of Echo Delta and all expenditures under this contract. They will be responsible for review, approval and processing of contract terms, deliverables and line items within the parameters of UH procurement policies and procedures.

UH Office of Procurement Management will review the contracts for services with Echo Delta to ensure terms best meet the needs of UH Hilo. All contract deliverables will be monitored against the approved scope of work to ensure services remain focused on execution and

implementation activities within SEM Focus Areas 1, 3, 4, and 5, and do not duplicate the strategic planning and assessment functions covered under the existing contract.






OPRPRM Form 150 - Req for Exemption, Echo Delta FY 2026 v1

Final Audit Report

2025-08-12

Created:	2025-08-12
By:	Chelsey Grant (cnishiok@hawaii.edu)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAZVNPm1FOMhzDHmXs2AaxV4DhkEy-EUSg

"OPRPRM Form 150 - Req for Exemption, Echo Delta FY 2026 v1" History

-  Document created by Chelsey Grant (cnishiok@hawaii.edu)
2025-08-12 - 1:17:18 AM GMT
-  Document emailed to Donnette Kaponon (donnette@hawaii.edu) for signature
2025-08-12 - 1:17:57 AM GMT
-  Email viewed by Donnette Kaponon (donnette@hawaii.edu)
2025-08-12 - 1:18:13 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Donnette Kaponon (donnette@hawaii.edu)
Signature Date: 2025-08-12 - 7:28:42 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2025-08-12 - 7:28:42 PM GMT