

## 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 OFFICE OF VP FOR B&F/CFO, SYSTEM ADMIN SERVICES, SW (Department/Campus) for exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, for the following goods and services:  
Digital media advertising campaign services including placement and management of targeted advertisements across YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, streaming TV, targeted display, streaming audio, and online gaming platforms, including performance reporting and analytics.

**Vendor/Contractor:** Gray Media Group, Inc. dba KHNL/KGMB LLC  
(If known)  
**Address:** 420 Waiakamilo Road; Suite 205; Honolulu, HI-96817

<b>Term of Contract:</b> (If known)	From: To Be Determined	To: May 31, 2026	Cost: 199,999.92
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<b>Direct any inquiries to:</b> Department: OFFICE OF VP FOR B&F/CFO, SYSTEM ADMIN SERVICES, SW  Contact Name/Title: Kholein Jan Tabulado/ Fiscal Spec  Address: 2444 Dole Street, Bachman Hall, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.	<b>Phone Number:</b> (808) 956-8970  <b>Fax Number:</b> (808) 956-9002
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Date Posted: 02/02/26

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

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

**To:** Sarah Jane Allen **Date:** November 17, 2025  
Chief Procurement Officer, University of Hawai'i

**Via:** Office of Procurement Management

**From:** UH Office of Communications  
(Campus & Department/Program)

**Vendor/Contractor:** Gray Media Group, Inc. dba KHNL/KGMB LLC

**Estimated Amount:** \$199,999.92

**Term of Contract, if applicable:** Execution to May 31, 2026 (Est. 5 Months)

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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:

Please 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:

Please see attached.

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

Please see attached.

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

Please 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:

Please see attached.

6. Direct questions to: Daniel Meisenzahl Email Address: dmeisenz@hawaii.edu

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

Daniel Meisenzahl

Full Name of Principal Investigator, Department Head, or Administrator

Signature

Date

Kariann Irei

Full Name of Fiscal Administrator

Signature

Date

APPROVED:

Sheri Ching

Full Name of Vice President or Chancellor

Sheri Ching

Digitally signed by Sheri Ching  
Date: 2026.01.08 20:38:40 -10'00'

Signature

Date

**FOR OPM USE ONLY**

**OPM COMMENTS:**

OPM finds this exemption justified because the specialized, targeted nature of digital media advertising cannot be clearly defined or fairly competed through standard procurement methods. Continuity with the incumbent vendor avoids delays that would adversely affect recruitment timelines and the Direct2UH initiative. The request aligns with the intent of HAR §3-120-4 and includes appropriate oversight and controls.

APPROVED  DENIED

CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

BONNIE ANDERSON, PHD

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT  
1400 LOWER CAMPUS ROAD, ROOM 15  
HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96822-2313**

2/10/2026  
DATE

## **Request for Exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS Digital Media Advertising Campaign**

### **1. Description of the goods or services:**

The University of Hawai'i is seeking to build on the momentum of generating statewide awareness among the general public about the 10-campus UH system, mission and how it serves the people of Hawai'i, as well as enhance its student recruitment efforts by promoting the Direct2UH initiative and the benefits of attending one of the 10 UH campuses through the continuation of a successful digital media campaign including Facebook/Instagram and YouTube advertisements. The vendor is expected to manage placement for various advertisements over a period effective from the execution of procurement to May 31, 2026, targeted to reach prospective student audiences in selected regions during the peak recruitment period. Monthly analytical reports should also be included as part of the overall quote. This comprehensive campaign will also include streaming TV, targeted display, video, gaming and streaming audio components.

### **Strategic details for GDM tactics:**

TV and streaming TV: Streaming TV advertising differs from traditional TV by offering precise data-driven targeting, interactivity, and multi-device reach (phones, tablets, smart TVs) via the internet, unlike linear TV's broad demographic approach tied to fixed schedules and limited devices, allowing for better ROI measurement and personalization. Traditional advertising broadcasts ads at set times to broad audiences, while streaming delivers ads programmatically to specific users based on detailed viewing habits.

Targeted display and video advertising: reaches high-intent audiences with precision, boosting brand awareness through visual appeal, improving ROI by reducing wasted spend, and driving conversions via retargeting and personalized messaging. This will allow UH to engage users at different funnel stages (awareness to conversion) by delivering relevant ads (images, video) based on demographics, interests, and behavior, with measurable results for optimization.

Streaming Audio: reaches students during "screen-free" time (commuting, gym, studying). This is a high-attention medium where ads can't be easily scrolled past.

Online Gaming: taps into the Gen Z digital HQ and builds brand authority with tech-savvy students on platforms like Twitch where traditional ads often fail to reach.

YouTube Ads: combines the storytelling power of TV with the accuracy of search data. It's the primary place students go to "visualize" campus life.

Facebook/Instagram Ads: Offers massive reach, precise demographic/interest targeting, diverse visual formats, real-time optimization, and strong ROI potential for driving brand awareness, website traffic, etc. especially when combined for broader impact.

Most students require at least 7 "touchpoints" before taking action. Using a combination of these tactics + streaming, targeted display and social media ensures that UH stays visible throughout the entire journey.

**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:**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms and website searches experienced increased traffic as people turned to virtual options to research, connect and seek information. This still holds true today. It is crucial to advertise digitally to ensure UH's messaging is received by multiple audiences, with a targeted focus on prospective students and to find a vendor who can provide UH with a comprehensive digital marketing plan. Advertising via YouTube ads taps into the popularity of this 2 billion monthly user platform to allow our spots to reach a large, relevant audience. Advertising via social media delivers our targeted marketing spots to over 2 billion active users across Facebook and Instagram platforms.

The goals of the digital media campaign are to:

- Build upon momentum from previous digital campaigns with Gray Media Group, Inc. dba KHNL/KGMB LLC
- Keep UH top of mind
- Increase in-state applications, resulting in higher enrollment
- Promote brand awareness of UH for both in-state and out-of-state residents
- Promote the Direct2UH initiative, a streamlined direct-admissions pathway for Hawai'i public high school seniors. This initiative aims to increase Hawai'i's college-going rate (currently about 50%) by simplifying the application process and generating excitement about college.
- Improve UH website search engine optimization (SEO)

The primary target demographic group is split into: prospective students' ages 18-24 years old and parents/guardians as well as non-traditional students' and those seeking a career change, ages 35-64 years old.

Based on the above specific target audience requirements, procurement by standard competitive means is not practicable nor advantageous as the University will be advertising in various digital platforms using narrowly defined audience demographics. This is consistent with Section 3-120-4, Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR), which identifies the purchase of radio and television airtime as a procurement that is exempt from Chapter 103D, HRS, when the selection is based on targeted audiences. Although advertising through digital media is not included as part of the aforementioned exemption, the premise is the same.

In addition to the above, due to the varying capabilities and/or limitations of each vendor, as well as the subjective nature of the recommendations requested involving strategic ad placement and timing, the Superquote process cannot be clearly stated so that all vendors are able to bid on exactly the same product, as each vendor is being asked to maximize their own campaigns across the three platforms (YouTube, Facebook and Instagram). Procurement by standard competitive means involving the preparation and advertising of a formal request for proposals will delay UH's ability to meet target recruitment dates that are pertinent to application deadlines and staying engaged with prospective students, as well as continuity in promoting the Direct2UH initiative, which was just launched in October 2025. Continuation with the same vendor used for the October 2022-March 2023, June-August 2023 "summer melt," October 2023-April 2024, May 2024 and January-May 2025 digital media campaigns is ideal since they already have our campaign in cue and can seamlessly execute our stated digital media plan within our budget.

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

The University researched several potential digital platforms and has identified YouTube, Facebook and Instagram as the most effective means of reaching our target audience and their influencers (parents, family, friends and community members). Selecting the vendor (Gray Media Group, Inc. dba KHNL/KGMB LLC) is imperative due to prior relevant experience, ability to meet the schedule set by UH, the proposed cost of services to be provided and the quality of the proposal and staying on top of a rapidly growing, fast paced digital marketing industry to provide its clients additional insights and new techniques, all of which were taken into consideration.

Gray Digital Media (GDM) is a digital agency that is a division of Gray Media Group, which serves 113 markets in the U.S., reaching approximately 36-37% of U.S. TV households. GDM is one of the largest full service digital agencies in the country. GDM launched a proprietary omnichannel solution called "GDM360" that unifies streaming TV, display, online video, audio, and gaming into one data-driven strategy. This means ads are placed intelligently based on how people consume media through the day. This allows for the creation of highly targeted and personalized marketing campaigns that resonate with our intended audience. Access to and expertise in leveraging unique data sets for digital campaign targeting will maximize our investment.

This approach helps:

- Boost brand recall
- Reduce ad fatigue by not over-saturating on one channel
- Drive conversion, with Gray claiming up to a 40% increase in conversions

The campaign with the previous vendor (Gray Media Group, Inc. dba KHNL/KGMB LLC) has proven results based on previous monthly reports which show a high percentage of completed views, click-thru rates, engagement and post clicks which demonstrates the vendor's ability to provide strategic ad placement and planning for all three requested platforms within the estimated budget targeting all requested Hawai'i prospective student audience demographics and regions. This multi-channel digital marketing campaign and leveraging a comprehensive set of marketing services is intended to create engagement and deliver efficient and tangible results in the form of more applications.

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

The vendor will provide access to a reporting dashboard and/or analytical reports on monthly basis, allowing UH Communications and the personnel listed below to monitor all aspects of the digital media campaign for YouTube, Facebook and Instagram ads to ensure that the University's goals are met and that all aspects of the campaign are covered. UH will have the opportunity to optimize the strategy on an ongoing basis through real-time analytics: impressions, clicks, engagement, conversions, ROI (return on investment).

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

Daniel Meisenzahl, UH Communications, Director  
Brent Suyama, UH Communications, Associate Director  
Dyan Kleckner, UH Communications, Communications Specialist  
Jon Burdios, UH Communications, Social Media Specialist