

From: [Kondo, Wendy L](#)
To: [Kaaa, Iwalani HR](#)
Subject: CWRM Applicant - DOKANO
Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 10:29:20 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Wendy L. Kondo | Boards & Commissions
[Office of the Governor | Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina](#)
State of Hawai'i
Direct Line: (808) [REDACTED]
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From: Boards and Commissions Application <noreply@ehawaii.gov>
Sent: Saturday, September 28, 2024 4:17 PM
To: Gov.Boards.Commissions <Boards.Commissions@hawaii.gov>; Deptula, Cameron S
[REDACTED] Kondo, Wendy L <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Boards and Commissions Application [#13363]

Legal Name	Dana Okano
Maiden or other names, including dates of use:	Miller, 1972-2003
Please check preferred title:	Dr.
U.S. Citizen	Yes
Residential Address	[REDACTED] Mililani, HI 96789 United States
Mailing Address (if other than your residence)	United States
Island of Residence	O'ahu
Residency in Hawai'i (Years)	30
Have You Lived in Hawaii For the Past 12 Months?	Yes
Name of Spouse	[REDACTED]
Daytime Phone:	(808) [REDACTED]
Mobile Phone	(808) [REDACTED]

Primary Email Address	[REDACTED]
Current Profession/Occupation	Nonprofit/philanthropy Director
Name	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	(808) [REDACTED]
Name	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	(808) [REDACTED]
Name	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	(808) [REDACTED]
Are you a member of a union?	No
Have you been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor?	No
Have you ever been convicted of any act, attempt or conspiracy to overthrow the state or the federal government by force or violence?	No
Please attach Letter of Interest:	[REDACTED]
Please attach Resume:	[REDACTED]
First choice board name	Commission on Water Resource Management
For Applications Completed With Assistance	

Acknowledgement of the State Ethics Commission Annual Disclosure of Financial Interests Under the State Ethics Law, Hawaii Revised Statutes Ch. 84, members of state boards and commissions who are appointed to terms of more than one year and whose functions are not "solely advisory" must file a financial disclosure statement with the State Ethics Commission. Statements, other than those of members of boards that head a state department as well as 15 boards and commissions affected by [Act 230, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014 \(Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Board of Agriculture, State Ethics Commission, Hawaii Community Development Authority, Hawaiian Homes Commission, Board of Directors of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Board of Land and Natural Resources, Land Use Commission, Legacy Land Conservation Commission, Natural Area Reserves System Commission, Board of Directors of the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii](#)

- I have read and understand the above statement

Authority, Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, Public Utilities Commission and Commission on Water Resource Management), will be maintained confidential and neither published nor disclosed by the Ethics Commission without the member's permission, during the member's term, and for six years thereafter whereupon they will all be destroyed. Questions as to whether the members of a particular board must file a disclosure statement, or whether statements filed by the members of a particular board are subject to disclosure should be posed directly to the State Ethics Commission.

Authorization To Release/Disclose Information To Whom It May Concern:
In conjunction with the background check being conducted by the Office of the Governor for my possible appointment to a state board or commission, I hereby authorize the representative of the Office of the Governor, State of Hawaii, bearing this release, or copy thereof, to obtain information about me that you may have pertaining to my employment, military service, or education, including but not limited to academic, achievement, attendance, personal history, disciplinary actions, awards, and request of the bearer. This authorization to release is executed with my full knowledge and understanding that the information will be used in connection with my application for possible appointment to a state board or commission. **Name**

Dana Okano

Signature (Type Your Name in Below)

Dana Okano

Date

Sep 28, 2024

DANA OKANO, PhD, AICP

████████████████████ | 808.██████████ | Oahu, HI (home) | [LinkedIn](#)

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Program Leader with Unique Expertise in Strategic Planning, Policy and Community Focus

Community-based nonprofit leadership experience with visioning, building, and directing development and funding of high-quality, programs and community grant initiatives.

Bring integrity, insight, expertise, and thoughtfulness to advance mission and values. Energized by challenge and commended for outstanding competence, confidence, persistence, thoroughness, and objectivity.

- **Relationship builder and connector** with success cultivating mission-advancing partnerships, convening diverse stakeholders and communities, and facilitating productive dialogues to find common ground and reach agreement.
- **Collaborative and inclusive leader** with passion to inspire commitment and democratic style to collectively brainstorm, problem solve, and drive progress on high-impact initiatives—with every voice valued and a loyal following of talent.
- **Evidence-driven program strategist** with ingenuity to identify untapped opportunities, build new partnerships, and facilitate connections across multiple parties while applying brave new approaches to overcome obstacles.
- **Deep multicultural insight and experience** working across geographies with diverse communities, variety of cultural norms and expectations —from Peace Corps volunteer in Benin West Africa, then technical trainer in Haiti to NOAA Coral Management Liaison in CNMI Micronesia; BIPOC woman applying a lived multi-cultural experience.

CAREER PATH

Hawaii Community Foundation (HCF) | Honolulu, HI

Program Director, Natural Environment Sector Jul 2017 – present

Director, Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFC) (concurrent) Jan 2023 – present

Lead the Natural environment sector that functions as an independent entity under the HCF umbrella. Work with communities statewide to strengthen their capacity through fundraising, communications, and advocacy. Manage community-based Advisory Councils to set strategy and priorities based on their needs. Provide direct Technical Assistance services to communities and partners with contracted support and grantmaking. Grew budget from ~\$1.5M to over \$6M annually.

- **Hawaii Fresh Water Initiative:** Expanded partnerships with government and private organizations to implement the actions identified in the Blueprint for Action for water conservation, reuse and recharge. Convene a 16-member Fresh Water Advisory Council of multisector stakeholders, and solidified Council’s long-term commitment to water goals within their agencies. Work on state, county and federal policy actions to further Initiative goals, including passage of two state bills and one resolution related to water reuse. Helped secure over \$7.4M in federal Congressionally Directed Spending Requests for five state and county agencies for various water infrastructure projects.
- **Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center:** Identified and secured \$3.3M over 5 years (2023-2028) to establish the EPA-funded Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFFC) with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding to provide a resource for identifying, applying for and managing federal funding for water infrastructure across Hawai’i. Since the official launch in January 2024, the HIEFC has a pipeline of assistance to 40+ community-based nonprofit organizations and government agencies with project scoping, funding identification and application assistance.
 - Assisted four county government agencies and nonprofit organizations apply for and be awarded \$16M+ in 2024, providing more than 650 hours of technical assistance to these partners.
 - Established partnerships with University of Hawai’i and Urban Sustainability Directors Network to address water workforce challenges in Hawai’i to improve university to water agency career pipelines and by creating the equity focused Hawai’i Water Workforce Fellowship Program. Recruitment for the first cohort is in progress.
- **Holomua Marine Initiative:** Negotiated a public-private partnership with State of Hawai’i, HCF and Resources Legacy Fund to support the statewide Holomua Marine Initiative. Facilitated negotiations among government partners and

communities statewide, breaking down silos, mediating conflict, bringing vision and bandwidth, and finding mutual ground and operational areas of overlap. Provide technical assistance services and trainings to community and government partners to grow their capacity for topics such as organizational development and leadership, facilitation and communication, evaluation and assessment, data collection and management, etc. Formed 10-member, multistakeholder, community-based Advisory Committee to collectively identify funding priorities and strategies for philanthropic support. Launched and grew a pooled, field-of-interest fund to implement Holomua Marine Initiative, including grants to augment state capacity and build Marine Managed Areas (MMA) program. Raised over \$15M since 2020.

- **Hawai'i Environmental Funders Group:** Co-chair and fiscally manage a member network of Hawai'i environmental funders, developing funder learning opportunities, site visits with community partners, and coordinating co-funding of priority efforts such as the [Aloha+ Dashboard](#) and the He Lono Moku: State of the Environment Reports.
- **Grants Programs:** Administer grant programs for various types of philanthropic fund(er)s—building partnerships, making grants, engaging in community convenings and supporting community capacity building.

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) | Saipan, CNMI

Jun 2010 – Jul 2017

Coral Reef Management Liaison & Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Specialist (concurrent)

Provided funding and technical assistance to CNMI's science-driven management initiatives to support Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and tri-agency Coral Reef Conservation programs with \$1.5M in annual funding. Appointed Non-Federal Program Officer for program cooperative agreements. Regularly engaged with elected and politically appointed officials. Built program connections at federal, state/territory, and local levels. Mentored 6 Coral and Coastal fellows.

- **Organizational Technical Assistance:** Helped build leadership capacity by training leaders in Territorial agencies to advance programmatic imperatives, increase collaboration, and improve outreach.
- **CNMI Coral Reef Conservation Program:** Identified staff capacity needs, secured local training resources, advised local agencies in developing Conservation Action Plans for priority sites, identified science needs to inform conservation action, helped implement various projects, and participated in education and outreach initiatives.
- **CNMI Coastal Zone Management Program:** Directed agency on long-range strategies, including development of Climate Change Working Group and Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment that propelled CNMI to the forefront in the Pacific Region. Assisted with agency regulation changes to protect sea grass fisheries; corrected long-term staffing shortages; coordinated design and execution of multiple programs; co-prepared reports for CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality; served as lead author of peer-reviewed publication.
- **Expanded Funding:** Secured additional funding for CZM and Coral programs through non-federal funding opportunities and internal NOAA grant programs—identifying priorities for funding and guiding project design, deliverables, and scope, including \$376K for 4 local issue-driven resource management projects as Principal Investigator.
- **NOAA Representative:** Served on various working groups representing NOAA including the US Coral Reef Task Force Watershed Working Group and the Micronesia Challenge Terrestrial Working Group.
- **Grant Awards:** In addition to grants management, also provided technical assistance for review of grant proposals for several federal agencies and programs as Micronesia-based technical expert.

County of Hawaii Planning Department | Hilo, HI

Oct 2007 – Jun 2010

Planner, Coastal Zone Management (CZM)

Managed activities and issued permits related to Coastal Zone Management program and served as CZM point of contact for County of Hawaii, handling all reporting-related requirements for submission at the State and NOAA levels. Collaborated with partners such as Hawaii Trail and Access System (Na Ala Hele) and Federal National Park Service on key projects.

- **Revised marine life and coastal water quality monitoring requirements** for Special Management Area major permit holders on the west coast of Hawaii Island, capturing statistical significance of impacts to nearshore areas.
- **Represented statewide working groups.** Ocean Resource Management Plan intergovernmental collaboration, served as Planning Director proxy at Kona Water Roundtable Policy Committee and liaison to several community groups.
- **Assisted community partners in grant applications** with 2 grants awarded from Ocean Resource Management Plan.

University of Hawaii at Manoa | Honolulu, HI

2002 – 2007

Research Assistant (2003 – 2007) / **Education Programming Assistant** (2002 – 2003)

Conducted special projects and research within Natural Resources and Environmental Management while completing PhD: Watershed Management to Protect Coastal Areas of Hawaii Demonstration, funded by NOAA, and N-SPECT research.

Peace Corps Haiti | Port-au-Prince, Haiti

2000 – 2001

Technical Training Coordinator

Directed technical training programs for environmental, small business development, and rural health education. Prepared \$50K budget. Supervised 80 volunteer trainees; coordinated with 12 language and operational staff. Managed 1 direct.

- **Designed and authored the first rural health education project plan for Peace Corps Haiti.**

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Lecturer, Marine Sciences, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO, HI, spring 2010

Donor Relations Specialist, CARE INTERNATIONAL, Atlanta, GA, 2000

Recruiter, PEACE CORPS ATLANTA, GA, 1999

National Environmental Education Volunteer Coordinator, PEACE CORPS BENIN, Cotonou, Benin, 1997 – 1999

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Member, Board of Directors, Hale Kipa, January 2024 – present, community-based program to serve at-risk youth

Stakeholder Advisory Group Member, Storm Water Utility O'ahu, 2021 – present, collaborate with dozens of stakeholders

Community Advisory Committee Member, Climate Ready O'ahu, 2020 – 2023, developed climate policy for Oahu

Sustainability Business Forum Representative, 2018 – 2022, helped Hawai'i businesses set sustainability targets

Chair, Board of Directors, Whispering Palms School, 2015 – 2018, Saipan, CNMI: Elected to turn around challenging situation to revitalize staff, elevate communication, create transparency, and open funding opportunities.

President, Board of Directors, 2014 – 2017 | **Board Member and Women's Team Coach**, 2013 – 2017, Marianas Pacific Paddlers, Saipan, CNMI

President, Board Member, and Paddler, Hoe Lokahi Canoe Club, 2011 – 2012, Saipan, CNMI

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATION

PhD, Natural Resources & Environmental Management | Certificate in Planning Studies, Dept. of Urban & Regional Planning, University of Hawaii at Manoa, HI, 2009

MA, Religion, Claremont School of Theology, Academic Achievement Award, Claremont, CA, 1997

BA, History, Creighton University, Omaha, NE, 1994

American Institute of Certified Planners (**AICP**), American Planning Association, 2012-present

Public Trust Security Clearance, 2010

Dana Okano

Mililani, HI 96789

Nominating Committee
Commission on Water Resource Management
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 227
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

March 6, 2025

Aloha Nominating Committee,

It is with great honor and humility that I submit this letter of interest to serve on the State Commission on Water Resource Management.

I grew up in Hilo on the Island of Hawaii and like many people in Hawai'i, I took for granted this precious resource that was abundant to us. It was while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Benin, West Africa, living in a subsistence-based community that was heavily impacted by slight variations in the annual rainfall cycles, that I began to truly understand and appreciate the need to effectively manage our water resources.

I returned home to attend the University of Hawaii at Manoa, earning a doctorate degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Management and a Certificate in Planning Studies. My coursework and research reflected my interest in water management and community planning, analyzing watershed models and their applicability as a tool to engage community in the practices of natural resource management and planning.

In my professional career I have continued to have water management as a core component of my work. While a graduate student, I also worked in the County of Hawaii Planning Department as a Coastal Zone Management Planner, where I was responsible for regulatory aspects of the program in Hawaii County. This experience gave me an understanding of the strengths and limitations of our adopted policies and systems of implementing and enforcing those policies. Upon graduation from UH, I accepted a position as a contractor with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) working as a liaison for their Coral Reef Conservation Program and Coastal Zone Management Program to the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In this role I provided funding and technical support to the CNMI government agencies and nonprofits on a range of projects and programs such as watershed management, climate resilience, and submarine groundwater discharge.

In 2017 I returned home to Hawaii again, this time accepting a position with Hawaii Community Foundation where I lead their statewide Fresh Water Initiative, with a goal of improving water security across Hawaii by creating an additional 100 million gallons per day (mgd) of water supply by 2030. To

accomplish this goal Hawaii will need to increase water conservation, recharge and reuse. Through this work I have partnered across sectors (private commercial, agriculture, nonprofit, academic, government) to identify and implement policy solutions to achieve these goals. Examples include participation in the State Department of Health 2018 Water Reuse Task Force, the City & County of Honolulu's Department of Facilities Maintenance 2019-2020 feasibility study for a Storm Water Utility, and the 2020 Environmental Protection Agency's Hawaii Water Funding Forum. This work involves a significant effort around identifying gaps and barriers to effective water management, and finding solutions to those barriers. Examples include funding support for research at the University of Hawaii to assess the economic value of watershed restoration measures for groundwater recharge protection, and grant funding to agricultural producers for water efficiency upgrades to their irrigation systems. It is from this work that I have acquired a deep and broad understanding of the complexities of our water systems and management here in Hawaii.

In 2021, in recognition that the needed changes to our water systems for long-term sustainability required more funding than we have available at the state and county level, I began working with government, utility and nonprofit partners to start exploring federal funding opportunities. As a result of this work, in 2023 I was awarded a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to open the [Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center](#) (HIEFC) to assist agencies and communities across Hawai'i with identifying and applying for federal funds to meet their water needs. Through this work I collaborate closely with partners from EPA at the federal level to State of Hawai'i Department of Health, County water utilities, and local communities across Hawai'i providing technical assistance on applying for federal funds, and also with the University of Hawai'i and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network to assist agencies in Hawai'i with improving water career pathways and strengthening water workforce recruitment and retention. To date we have assisted eight water agencies and nonprofit organizations across the state secure \$28 million in federal funding.

My interest in serving on the Water Commission is to bring my knowledge and experience in both water resource management and planning to help guide the policies and uses of Hawaii's water resources. This is an important time to join the Commission on Water Resource Management with the recent water issues like Red Hill and the Maui fires both highlighting the importance of water resources to our communities' health. I am interested in supporting an approach to water that creates and implements the policies to be innovative and forward-thinking for Hawaii's water future, and that accounts for our changing climate and its impacts to our water resources by building Hawaii's water resilience.

It would be my honor to serve the people and water resources of Hawaii. I look forward to your favorable consideration.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dana Okano', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dana Okano, PhD, AICP