

RFP – DRAFT: Hawai‘i Competitiveness Scorekeeper

Design, build, and maintain a public dashboard tracking Hawai‘i's climb from 50th

Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i

Issue date: October 6, 2026 | Due date: December 1, 2026

1. Purpose

In July 2026, CNBC ranked Hawai‘i the worst state in the country to do business, 50th, for the first time in the study's twenty years, last in Infrastructure and last in Cost of Doing Business. The Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i has said publicly that the ranking validates the priorities in its 2030 Blueprint. The Blueprint's July 2026 update recommends that the Chamber take on a new role as Hawai‘i's Competitiveness Scorekeeper; the organization that measures, explains, and reports progress on the State's business climate through a best-in-class public resource.

This RFP seeks a qualified consultant or team to design, build, launch, and maintain that resource. The Scorekeeper is a public website that shows, month by month and county by county, whether Hawai‘i is moving off the bottom, starting with the numbers behind the ranking, then the specific measures the Chamber and its partners are working to change, beginning with how long it takes to get a building permit in each county.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE: *A single public page that a business owner, a legislator, a reporter, or a mayor can open and see, without explanation, where Hawai‘i stands, what is being done about it, and what changed this month.*

The Chamber will own the content, the editorial decisions, and the relationships with data providers. The consultant will own the design, the data pipeline, the build, the hosting, and the monthly refresh. The Scorekeeper is not a research project or a one-time report; the Chamber's requirement is a living product with a maintenance commitment, and proposals will be evaluated on the credibility of that commitment as much as on the launch.

2. Background

CNBC's America's Top States for Business scores all fifty states on 138 metrics in ten weighted categories. Hawai‘i's 2026 results: 50th overall; 50th Infrastructure (CNBC's top-weighted category in 2026); 50th Cost of Doing Business; 49th Technology and Innovation; 47th Cost of Living; 44th Business Friendliness; 42nd Education; 29th Workforce; 24th Economy; 6th Quality of Life. Several categories improved from 2025 (Economy from 39th,

Education from 42nd, Access to Capital from 48th). The Chamber's position is that the ranking is a fair scorecard of things the State can change, and that the public should be able to see them change.

Act 104, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2026 (SB 2673), requires each county to host on its website a publicly accessible, machine-readable dataset of all building and civil-engineering permit applications, updated at least monthly, in a statewide standard set by the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, beginning no later than January 1, 2027. The standard specifies thirty-two fields following the Building & Land Development Specification (BLDS) schema, including PermitNum, AppliedDate, IssuedDate, CompletedDate, StatusCurrent, PermitType, WorkClass, EstProjectCost, HousingUnits, Latitude, and Longitude. The Act does not create a statewide portal; each county publishes separately. The Scorekeeper will be the first place those four datasets are brought together and read side by side.

The Scorekeeper is one of four elements of Chamber in Action, the Chamber's 2027 operating plan. The other three are legislative priorities: a permitting shot clock (a statutory completeness-screening period, decision period, and correction standard for county building permits), implementation of the State's 2026 micro-lending program with a workforce and childcare track, and support for expanded county use of the general excise tax surcharge for resilient infrastructure. The Scorekeeper is how the Chamber shows members, sponsors, and the Legislature what each of those produced.

3. Scope of work

The consultant will deliver the Scorekeeper in four modules, in the sequence below. Module specifications describe minimum content; proposers are encouraged to recommend improvements.

Module 1: The Ranking ("From 50th")

Hawai'i's CNBC position, overall and in each of the ten categories, with the 2024–2026 trend and a plain-language note on each category explaining what CNBC measures and what would move it. Alongside CNBC, a curated set of the underlying public indicators that drive the categories Hawai'i ranks worst in, drawn from the Blueprint update and its sources, including the Tax Foundation business tax climate index, U.S. News infrastructure ranking, share of households cost-burdened by housing, typical home value, infant childcare cost as a share of median income, labor-force participation, business formation rate, and startup early survival. Each indicator cites its source, the date of the data, the update cadence, and a one-sentence definition.

- Refresh: Annually on CNBC's release (July), with individual indicators refreshed on their own cadence.
- Design requirement: a single view that answers "where does Hawai'i stand," and a second view that answers "why."

Module 2: The Clock (county permitting performance)

Using the Act 104 datasets from all four counties, compute and display, by county and by permit type: applications received per month; median and 75th-percentile days from Applied Date to Issued Date; share of permits issued within 30, 60, and 90 days; count and age of applications pending more than 90 and 180 days; and a data-completeness indicator showing, for each county and month, whether the dataset was published, on time, and with all required fields populated. Where a county provides supplementary data under a data-sharing agreement (e.g., days in county control versus applicant control, number of review cycles), the module displays it and labels the county accordingly.

- Refresh: monthly, within ten business days of the counties' publication.
- Design requirement: a county-comparison view framed as progress and improvement, not ranking or blame; a per-county panel suitable for embedding on a county's or legislator's own site; and an explicit, dated display of any county whose data is missing or incomplete.
- Technical note: Act 104 fields support elapsed-time metrics but not shot-clock metrics (completeness date, review cycles). The consultant will specify the supplementary fields the Chamber should request from counties and build the module to accept them when provided.

Module 3: The Build (infrastructure delivery)

Per county: General Excise Tax surcharge revenue collected, appropriated, and expended by authorized use, from county budgets and annual audited financial reports (ACFRs) and State Department of Budget and Finance reports; and, as data become available, a project register showing named infrastructure projects funded by the surcharge with location, authorized use, estimated cost, current phase, and anticipated completion. Before legislation expanding the surcharge's uses is enacted, the module shows the December 31, 2030 expiration and current uses; after, it tracks resilience and housing projects and the county reporting the legislation requires.

- Refresh: quarterly, or on publication of county budgets and ACFRs.
- Design requirement: a clear distinction between money authorized, money spent, and infrastructure completed.

Module 4: The Ledger

A public record of the Chamber's 2027 work: each policy issue, the Board's adopted position, the bill or administrative action, hearing dates and testimony, agency commitments recorded, and what changed for businesses. Also the member-evidence count: issues submitted, verified, and acted on. The Ledger is populated by Chamber staff through a simple content interface the consultant provides; the consultant designs the structure and display.

- Refresh: as events occur; summarized quarterly.
- Design requirement: an activity, an administrative result, an enacted law, and a measured business outcome are visually and editorially distinct.

Cross-cutting requirements

- **"What changed this month."** A dated change log at the top of every module, written by Chamber staff, displayed by the consultant's build.
- **County and island filters** on every module where data are county-level.
- **Plain-language definitions** on every metric, on hover or tap, with source and date.
- **Missing data shown, not hidden.** A gap is displayed as a gap with a date; nothing is imputed or estimated.
- **Embeddable components.** Any county panel or the Module 1 summary can be embedded on another site with a single snippet, with attribution and a link back.
- **Sponsor recognition by module,** configurable by Chamber staff without consultant involvement.
- **Accessibility:** WCAG 2.1 AA, including a data-table alternative for every chart.
- **Mobile-first.** A legislator will open this on a phone in a hearing room.
- **Performance and hosting:** static or lightly dynamic site, hosted on infrastructure the Chamber can own or transfer; no vendor lock-in to a proprietary dashboard platform without an exit path.
- **Open data.** Every dataset the Scorekeeper displays is downloadable in CSV, with a documented schema.

4. Deliverables and timeline

Phase	Deliverables	Target
Discovery and specification	Stakeholder interviews (Chamber staff, Board committee, 2–4 county permitting and finance contacts, OPSD, Economic Leadership); data audit of Act 104 county publications and Module 1 sources; metric definitions document; wireframes; technical architecture; content-management approach; maintenance plan and cost model.	Weeks 1–5 (Oct–Nov 2026)
Module 1 build and soft launch	Module 1 live for Board and sponsor preview; brand and design system applied; analytics instrumented.	Week 8 (late Nov 2026)
Module 2 build	Data pipeline ingesting all four county Act 104 datasets; metric computation validated against a sample with each county; county-comparison and per-county views; data-completeness indicator; embeddable panels.	Weeks 9–14 (Dec 2026–early Jan 2027)
Public launch	Modules 1, 2, and 4 public; Module 3 in initial state (2030 cliff and current uses); launch timed to the opening of the 2027 legislative session; press and member materials supported.	Week 15 (Jan 20, 2027 target)
Module 3 build	Surcharge revenue and project register views; ACFR ingestion; ready for county reporting if legislation passes.	Weeks 16–24 (Feb–Apr 2027)
Maintenance and refresh	Monthly Module 2 refresh; quarterly Module 3 refresh; annual Module 1 refresh; Ledger support; issue resolution; quarterly report to the Chamber on usage, data quality, and recommended changes. Twelve months from public launch, renewable.	Jan 2027–Jan 2028

Consultant qualifications

Proposers may be a single firm or a team. The Chamber expects the winning proposal to demonstrate all of the following, in-house or through named subcontractors:

- Public-facing data product design: dashboards, scorecards, or open-data sites that non-technical audiences actually use. Portfolio required; live links preferred.
- Data engineering: ingesting, cleaning, and reconciling recurring datasets from multiple government sources with inconsistent quality; experience with BLDS or comparable open permitting standards is an advantage.
- Civic or economic data literacy: the ability to read a county budget, an ACFR, a CNBC methodology note, and a Census table, and to explain each to a Board member.
- Editorial and information design: the discipline to make a page say one thing clearly.
- Hawai'i presence or partnership: a local firm or a mainland firm with a named Hawai'i partner. Meetings with county staff and legislators happen in person.
- A maintenance track record: evidence that a product the proposer built two or more years ago is still live and current. The Chamber will check.

5. Proposal contents

1. Cover letter and firm or team overview, including any Hawai'i presence.
2. Understanding of the assignment: in no more than two pages, what the proposer believes the Scorekeeper must do to change how Hawai'i's business climate is discussed, and the biggest risk to that.
3. Approach and methodology for each phase in Section 4, including how the proposer will handle a county whose Act 104 data are late, incomplete, or malformed.
4. Proposed technical architecture, hosting, content-management approach, and exit plan (how the Chamber would take over or migrate the product if the engagement ends).
5. Three portfolio examples with live links, each with a note on who uses it and how it is maintained today.
6. Team, roles, and résumés; named subcontractors.
7. Timeline against Section 4.
8. Fee proposal: fixed fee for Phases 1–5 by phase; monthly or annual fee for Phase 6; hosting and third-party costs itemized; hourly rates for out-of-scope work.
9. Three references, at least one from a public-sector or nonprofit client.
10. Conflict disclosure: any current engagement with a county, a state agency, a legislator, or an organization taking a public position on the Chamber's 2027 legislative priorities.

6. Evaluation

Criterion	Weight
Quality and clarity of portfolio examples	25%
Approach to data quality, missing data, and county relationships	20%
Understanding of the assignment and of Hawai'i's context	15%
Maintenance plan and cost: credibility of a twelve-month commitment	15%
Technical architecture, ownership, and exit plan	10%
Fee	10%
Team and references	5%

Finalists will be asked to present a clickable prototype of one Module 1 view using real 2026 data, and to walk through how they would compute one Module 2 metric from a sample county Act 104 file the Chamber provides.

7. Budget guidance

The Chamber has not set a fixed budget and will evaluate fee against scope and maintenance credibility. For proposers' calibration: comparable civic dashboards of this scope with four modules, four data sources, monthly refresh, embeddable components have been delivered by regional firms in the range of \$90,000–\$180,000 for design and build, with annual maintenance and hosting of \$30,000–\$60,000 depending on the degree of automation in the data pipeline. Proposals materially above or below that range should explain why. The Chamber anticipates module-level sponsorship and will share sponsor recognition requirements with the selected consultant.

8. Administrative

- Issue date: October 6, 2026
- Questions due: November 1, 2026 / Answers posted: November 16, 2026
- Proposals due: December 1, 2026
- Finalist presentations: December 7, 2026
- Award: / Contract start: January 4, 2027
- Submit to: Tricia Fetui, Chief Operating Officer, tfetui@cochawaii.org. Format: PDF, no more than 25 pages excluding résumés and portfolio links.
- The Chamber reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to negotiate with one or more proposers, and to award in phases.
- All work product, data pipelines, code, and content are the property of the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i. Open-source components are welcome and should be identified.
- Proposers are responsible for their own costs.

Appendix A | Reference examples

The Chamber offers these as calibration for proposers and for its own Board. None is a template; each shows one thing the Scorekeeper needs to do well, and two show what happens when maintenance is not funded.

Permitting performance

- **Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections: Construction Permit Performance.** It reports, by permit category, total calendar days to issue and "days in City control," separating the city's time from the applicant's. It shows median and 75th percentile, review cycles, and performance against a stated goal (e.g., Middle Housing at 117 days versus a 60-day target). Built in Power BI with a table alternative. This is the model for Module 2 and for the shot-clock distinction the Chamber's legislation would create.
seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/construction-permit-performance
- **Douglas County, Colorado: Red Tape Reduction Action Plan.** A county government plan, not a dashboard, but its baseline-and-report structure (measure first, set targets after the baseline, publish quarterly) is the discipline the Chamber has adopted. Useful for the conversation with county partners about what "most improved" looks like.

Competitiveness scorecards

- **Rhode Island Senate Policy Office / RIPEC: Moving the Needle (2013).** A cautionary example. A well-designed report that tracked CNBC, Tax Foundation, Forbes, and other rankings, identified the underlying metrics the state could move, and displayed each on a 50th-to-1st color meter. It promised annual updates and did not deliver them; Rhode Island was 48th in CNBC's 2026 ranking. The lesson for Section 4, Phase 6: a scorecard that is not refreshed becomes evidence against its author.
- **Connecticut Business & Industry Association: annual CNBC response.** CBIA publishes a category-by-category analysis of Connecticut's CNBC result each July, in plain language, naming what improved and what did not. Not a dashboard, but the editorial voice, a business organization owning the ranking rather than disputing it - is the tone the Chamber wants for Module 1.
- **Greater Houston Partnership: Houston Data / Economy at a Glance.** A chamber-run regional data hub with monthly indicator updates, a consistent format, and a long track record of maintenance. Broader in scope than the Scorekeeper, and useful mainly as proof that a chamber can sustain a monthly data product for years.

Open permitting data

- **Building & Land Development Specification (BLDS).** The open schema Act 104 adopts. Proposers should be familiar with it; cities publishing in BLDS include Seattle, San Diego, and Austin, and their open-data portals are examples of the raw material Module 2 will ingest.

Appendix B — Metric definitions (initial)

The consultant will finalize these in Phase 1. They are provided so proposers can scope the data work.

Module	Metric	Definition	Source
1	CNBC overall and category ranks	As published by CNBC each July; 2024, 2025, 2026 shown	CNBC Top States for Business
1	Underlying indicators	Per the Blueprint update, July 2026, pp. 8–16, with each indicator's own source and date	Tax Foundation; U.S. News; Census ACS; BLS; Zillow; Childcare Aware; Kauffman
2	Applications received	Count of records with AppliedDate in the month, by county and PermitTypeMapped	County Act 104 datasets
2	Days to issue (median, p75)	IssuedDate minus AppliedDate, calendar days, for permits issued in the month; excludes records with either date null	County Act 104 datasets
2	Share issued within 30 / 60 / 90 days	Of permits issued in the month, share with days-to-issue $\leq$ threshold	County Act 104 datasets
2	Pending > 90 / > 180 days	Count of records with StatusCurrentMapped = pending and AppliedDate older than threshold at month end	County Act 104 datasets
2	Data completeness	Per county-month: dataset published (Y/N), published within Act 104 timing (Y/N), share of required fields non-null	Consultant's pipeline
2 (supplementary)	Days in county control; review cycles	As defined in a county data-sharing agreement; displayed only for counties providing them	County agreement
3	Surcharge collected / appropriated / expended	By county and fiscal year, by authorized use	B&F reports; county budgets; county ACFRs
3	Project register	Name, location, use, estimated cost, phase, anticipated completion	County reports (statutory if legislation passes)
4	Ledger entries	Issue; Board position; vehicle; status; hearings; commitments; outcome	Chamber staff
4	Member evidence	Submitted; verified; acted on	Chamber staff via form



Chamber of Commerce
HAWAII

Sources for this RFP: CNBC, America's Top States for Business 2026 (July 9, 2026); Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i, "Recent CNBC Ranking Reinforces the Need for Bold Action" (July 14, 2026); 2030 Blueprint for Hawai'i Competitiveness Update, Economic Leadership (July 2026); SB 2673 CD1 / Act 104 (2026); Seattle SDCI Construction Permit Performance; Rhode Island Senate Policy Office and RIPEC, Moving the Needle (Jan. 2013); CBIA 2026 CNBC analysis; Greater Houston Partnership Houston Data. Draft prepared by KKL Collective for Chamber review; budget guidance is KKL's estimate for calibration only and should be validated by the Chamber before issue.