



THE HAWAI'I ACADEMY OF RECORDING ARTS

Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards Submission Guidelines

Submission Deadline:

Wednesday, December 31, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. – HST

NO SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DEADLINE!

These are the official guidelines to submit albums, EPs, singles, music videos, and music DVDs for Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards consideration. **NOTE: there have been some changes effective for the 2025 Awards. Please read these guidelines carefully before going on to the Submission Forms. Please note: All submissions are expected to meet basic professional industry standards. See these basic professional industry guidelines at the bottom of this form.**

All submissions must be made on-line. Deposit materials (Audio and Video files, Liner Notes, Graphics, Haku Mele lyric sheets, etc.) will be uploaded. No hard copies will be accepted.

All submission fees will be paid online.

The new submission forms will be posted on **November 1, 2025 at 9am HST.**

Please note there will be separate forms for:

- Album of the Year
- EP Release of the Year
- Single of the Year
- Music Video of the Year
- Anthology Album of the Year
- International Album

Definition of Eligibility:

All recordings created, produced, engineered, and recorded by a Hawai'i resident artist(s), musician(s), or technician(s), released during the eligibility year, may be eligible for inclusion on the preliminary voting ballot provided that they are available for purchase through established retailers and/or distributors in the US. Proof of commercial availability, release date, the submission fee, and any other required materials as specified on the submission form must be received by the submission deadline.

VERY IMPORTANT!

All releases MUST be available for sale by December 31, 2025.

If your release is not available for sale online by the deadline of December 31, 2025 at 11:59pm it will NOT be eligible for the 2026 Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards.

NO EXCEPTIONS

Physical products such as CDs must be available for purchase at "brick-and-mortar" stores or established online retailers **by the above noted deadline** in order to be eligible.

Digital download-only releases must be available for purchase through established online services such as

iTunes, Amazon, etc. **by the above noted deadline** in order to be eligible.

Physical products (CDs) that are only available for sale on artist websites and/or at live performances are **NOT** eligible.

- ✓ For eligibility in the Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group, Most Promising Artist, and Favorite Entertainer of the Year, artist(s) must be **alive within** the eligibility year. Artists on compilations and anthologies are **NOT** eligible in these five (5) categories.
- ✓ In determining entry of performers in the Male and Female Vocalist categories, the individual performer may select the category that best reflects how they self-identify their gender.
- ✓ In determining placement of releases in Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group of the Year and Compilation categories primary consideration will be given to how the release is titled. Only named artists and named performing members of a group will be eligible to receive an award in any category except for compilations and anthologies, which are awarded to the producer(s), and for Album of the Year, which is awarded to the artist(s) and producer(s).
- ✓ The number of producers eligible for Album of the Year, Anthology of the Year, Compilation of the Year & Music Video of the Year is limited to no more than four (4) in number. **Maximum 4 Awards per any producer category on the ballot, unless otherwise specified.**
- ✓ Anthology Album of the year is **NOT** eligible for Album of the Year **OR** Engineer of the Year. Anthology Album of the Year submission form must be used to enter the Anthology category.
- ✓ **Recordings of groups with more than five (5) individuals will receive a maximum of five (5) Trophies. Groups may purchase trophies for the additional members who are officially credited in the specific award category.**
- ✓ Recordings that include a “Featured Artist” where the title states the words “Featuring...” or “With...” only the release’s main artist receives an award. Example: Bob Marley featuring the Wailers, only Bob Marley would get the award. Whereas, if the title includes the word “And... (&)” the other included artist would also receive an award. Example: Bob Marley & The Wailers, Both Bob Marley and The Wailers would receive awards.
- ✓ Residency requirements apply in certain General, Genre, Technical, and Adjudicated categories. Three distinct types of residencies are recognized for the purpose of determining eligibility 1) Hawai’i resident; 2) U.S. Mainland resident; and 3) Foreign resident. **Proof of residency** (e.g.

driver's license, state ID, utility bills, etc.) is required for any individual who lives in **any** location (Hawai'i, U.S. Mainland, or a foreign country) for less than six (6) months a year, but wishes to claim residency there.

In the General, Genre Categories, Technical and Adjudicated categories, only works by Hawai'i residents may be entered. U.S. Mainland residents are only allowed in the specific, Hawai'i-originating genres:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| – Hawaiian EP | – Hawaiian Single |
| – Hawaiian Album of the Year | – Island Music Album of the Year |
| – Slack Key Album of the Year | – 'Ukulele Album of the Year |
| – Haku Mele Award | – Hawaiian Language Performance Award |
| – Hawaiian Music Video of the Year | |

Foreign residents are only eligible for the International Album – Special Recognition Award.

- ✓ Recordings must be released between January 1 - December 31 (competition year) to be eligible for submission.
- ✓ Five (5) recordings must be released within the competition year in order to establish a new category (subject to approval by the Board of Governors).
- ✓ A minimum of three (3) recordings must be released within the competition year in order to maintain an award category.
- ✓ Releases must contain a minimum of nine (9) tracks **OR** (30) minutes playing time to qualify as an album, or for artists, producers and other contributors to qualify for any of the general, genre, technical or adjudicated categories. Identified bonus tracks will be counted towards the quantum in any category. Unidentified or ghost tracks will not be counted. See **General Categories** below for definitions of EP (extended play) and single releases.
- ✓ Releases must contain 75% of newly recorded or previously unreleased material by the artist to qualify for submission. Anthologies as albums of previously released material, are the only exception.
- ✓ If tracks that were released as singles are included in a new album or EP the tracks/singles must have been released in the same eligibility year as the album or EP to count toward the 75%

quantum of previously unreleased tracks.

- ✓ If tracks were released as singles are included in an anthology those tracks must have been released in a previous eligibility year in order to count toward the 75% quantum of previously released tracks.

Selection Procedure

- ✓ All eligible releases in the **General** and **Genre Categories** are included on the preliminary ballot and are voted on by current Regular and Associate members.
- ✓ The Submission Committee will vet the releases to determine their placement within the **Genre Categories**. The final arbiter will be the Submission Committee.
- ✓ For the **Adjudicated Awards**, a panel of Hawaiian language experts, composers, engineers, writers, graphic designers, and music specialists appointed by the Board of Governors selects the finalists and the winner.
- ✓ Those submitting membership applications or renewals within 30 days of the start of balloting are not guaranteed a ballot.
- ✓ The online digital voting site will tabulate the votes on the preliminary ballot, and forward the top five (5) for inclusion on the final ballot.
- ✓ In the event of a tie in the fifth position, six (6) submissions will advance to the final ballot. In the event that exactly six (6) submissions appear on the preliminary ballot, all six (6) names will advance to the final ballot.
- ✓ The online digital voting site will tabulate the votes on the final ballot, and the winners will be announced at the Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards ceremony.

- ✓ The public votes for the **Favorite Entertainer of the Year**. The vote for the Favorite Entertainer is conducted at the HARA website. Artists must have released an album in the eligibility year which appears on the final ballot, be residents of Hawai'i, and living within the eligibility year. Artists on compilations and anthologies are not eligible.

- ✓ The deadline for HARA to receive the **completed submission** - this includes the submission forms and submission material is **Wednesday, December 31, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. – HST**. There will be **NO** exceptions to the deadline.

- ✓ Submissions are not considered complete without the required submission form, deposit material, proof of commercial availability, and payment of submission fee as specified on the submission form. Please see the submission material guidelines for the correct file type to upload.

- ✓ Submissions will be online only. Submission fees will be paid online only. Required deposit materials will be uploaded to the site provided on the submission form.

- ✓ Submission fees will be non-refundable.

- ✓ Once the finalists are announced nominees will not be allowed to withdraw their names from competition.

- ✓ The Submission Committee reserves the right to review and adjudicate any release that falls outside these rules/guidelines.

General Categories:

Artists(s), producer(s) or composer(s) must be residents of the state of Hawai'i. See below for exceptions. In general categories where groups are eligible, and the group is comprised of both Hawai'i residents and residents outside of Hawai'i, the group is eligible provided that a majority (more than 50%) of the members are Hawai'i residents. Only the resident members will be eligible to receive the award.

Album of the Year

(Producer's and Artist's Award) Best produced album release of the year. U.S. Mainland producers are eligible provided the artist(s) is a Hawai'i resident, 75% of the album is recorded in Hawai'i, **contains a minimum of 9 songs including bonus tracks, or meets or exceeds 30 minutes of playing time.** To be eligible the producer must have produced a minimum of 51% of the album. The number of eligible producers is limited to four (4).

EP (Extended Play) Release of the Year

Best release of the year that contains at least three (3) but no more than eight (8) **separate tracks including bonus tracks, and less than 30 minutes of playing time**, identified bonus tracks will be counted towards the quantum on an EP. Unidentified or ghost tracks will not be counted.

75% or more of the tracks must be previously unreleased. Compilations meeting the song quantity requirement are eligible. Anthologies are not eligible in this category.

U.S. Mainland artists are eligible if 75% of the tracks feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in slack key, 'ukulele or Island Music styles. If a compilation, U.S. Mainland producers may be considered for the award if 75% of the EP is recorded in Hawai'i or if at least 75% of the tracks feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in slack key, 'ukulele or Island music styles.

Artists in this category are eligible for the Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group of the Year, and Favorite Entertainer of the Year categories. If an entry is an artist's first recorded effort, they are eligible for the Most Promising Artist category. New Compositions on the release are eligible for the Song of the Year, Instrumental Composition and/or Haku Mele categories. Graphic artists and liner annotators are eligible for consideration under the rules of the Technical Categories (see below). EPs featuring the same tracks as a nominated full album by the same artist are eligible in either category (EP or an album category) but not both.

Hawaiian EP (Extended Play) Release of the Year

Best release of the year that contains at least three (3) but no more than eight (8) separate tracks **and less than 30 minutes of playing time. Identified bonus tracks will be counted towards the quantum on an EP, unidentified or ghost tracks will not be counted.**

75% or more of the tracks must be in the Hawaiian Language, and must be previously unreleased. Compilations meeting the song quantity requirement are eligible. Anthologies are not eligible in this category.

U.S. Mainland artists are eligible if 75% of the tracks feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in slack key, 'ukulele or Island Music styles.

If a compilation, U.S. Mainland producers may be considered for the award if 75% of the EP is recorded in Hawai'i or if at least 75% of the tracks feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in slack key, 'ukulele or Island music styles.

Artists submitting entries are eligible for the Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group of the Year, and Favorite Entertainer of the Year categories. If an entry is an artist's first recorded effort, they are eligible for the Most Promising Artist category. New Compositions on the release are eligible for the Song of the Year, Instrumental Composition and/or Haku Mele categories. Graphic artists and liner annotators are eligible for consideration under the rules of the Technical Categories (see below).

EPs featuring the same tracks as a nominated full album by the same artist are eligible in either category (EP or an album category) but not both.

Please use this guide for EP's if you are unsure:

	Under 30 Minutes	30 Minutes or More
3-8 Tracks	EP	Album
9 or More Tracks	Album	Album

Single of the Year

Best-recorded performance of a song released as a single in either physical (CD) or digital format. The release may be of only one or two distinct tracks. If two tracks are included, an "A" side must be specified for consideration. The "B" side may be a different song or a different version (remix, karaoke, acoustic, etc.) of the "A" side.

There is no limit to the total playing time; **only one single per artist may be submitted.**

Artists may submit a different single in the Hawaiian Single of the Year category.

Artists may submit a different single in the Christmas Single of the Year category.

The track(s) may not be included on a physical CD or packaged and promoted as part of a digital "album" on any online service unless the release of the single **precedes** the CD/album release.

Artists submitting entries in this category **are not eligible** for the Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group, Favorite Entertainer, Most Promising Artist of the Year; **and are not eligible** for Technical, or Engineering Award categories. New compositions on the release **are** eligible for the Song of the Year, Instrumental

Composition and/or Haku Mele categories.

Hawaiian Single of the Year

Best-recorded performance of a song released as a single in either physical (CD) or digital format in the Hawaiian language.

While words or short phrases in other languages are allowed, the composition must be predominantly in the Hawaiian language.

The release may contain only one or two distinct tracks. If two tracks are included, an “A” side must be specified for consideration. The “B” side may be a different song or a different version (remix, karaoke, acoustic, etc.) of the “A” side. There is no limit to the total playing time.

The track(s) may not be included on a physical CD or packaged and promoted as part of a digital “album” on any online service unless the release of the single **precedes** the CD/album release.

U.S. Mainland artists are eligible if the track(s) feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in slack key, ‘ukulele or Island Music styles.

Artists submitting entries in this category are not eligible for Best Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group of the Year, Favorite Entertainer or Most Promising Artist; singles are not eligible for Technical, or Engineering Award categories. New compositions on the release are eligible for the Song of the Year, Instrumental Composition, and/or Haku Mele categories.

Only one single per artist shall be submitted. Artists may submit a different single in the Single of the Year and Christmas Single of the Year categories.

Christmas Single of the Year

Best-recorded performance of a song released as a single in either physical (CD) or digital format that is Christmas themed.

The single may not be included on a physical CD or packaged and promoted as part of a digital “album” on any online service unless the release of the single **precedes** the CD/album release. It must be a Christmas themed song.

Only one single per artist shall be submitted. Artists may submit a different single in the Single of the Year and Hawaiian Single of the Year categories.

Song of the Year

(Composer’s Award) Best achievement in creating a first-time recorded song containing both words and melody, **the song cannot include any portion of previously released material.** Only one song per release may be submitted. Collaborations between Hawai’i and those residing outside of Hawai’i are eligible for entry and

placement on the ballot, however only the resident composer(s) will be eligible to receive the award.

Instrumental Composition of the Year

(Composer's Award) Best achievement in creating a first-time recorded instrumental composition. Only one composition per release may be submitted. Non-resident composers (and/or co-composers) are not eligible. Collaborations between Hawai'i and those residing outside of Hawai'i are eligible for entry and placement on the ballot, however only the resident composer(s) will be eligible to receive the award.

Music Video of The Year

Best performance of music and video. At least 75% of the Video must contain musical performance.

May contain no more than two distinct music tracks. Videos that feature musical performance may include educational or scenic features provided the emphasis is on performance and not solely on instruction or scenery.

Nominees in this category are not eligible in the Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group, and Most Promising Artist categories; and not eligible for the Engineering, Graphics and Liner Notes Awards.

Up to (3) physical awards may be distributed: one (1) to the music producer, one (1) to the video director, and one (1) to the main artist. (No more than 5 for groups, & 4 each for video directors & music producers).

Please note: The Music Video of the year does not need to be monetized, only the music track (digital bed) needs to be a commercially released track.

The Video must be uploaded online in the qualifying year to be eligible.

Hawaiian Music Video of the Year

Best performance of music and video. At least 75% of the Video must contain musical performance or content in which the music of Hawai'i is the subject. While words or short phrases in other languages are allowed, the track(s) must be predominantly in the Hawaiian language.

May contain no more than two distinct music tracks. Videos that feature musical performance may include educational or scenic features provided the emphasis is on performance and not solely on instruction or scenery.

Nominees in this category are not eligible in the Male Vocalist, Female Vocalist, Group, and Most Promising Artist categories; and not eligible for the Engineering, Graphics and Liner Notes Awards.

Up to (3) physical awards may be distributed: one (1) to the music producer, one (1) to the video director, and one (1) to the main artist. (No more than 5 for groups, & 4 each for video directors & music producers).

Please note: Hawaiian Music Video of the year does not need to be monetized, only the music track (digital bed) **needs to be a commercially released track.**

The Video must be uploaded online in the qualifying year to be eligible.

Female Vocalist of the Year

Best performance by a female artist of newly recorded material, 75% of which must be of vocal content.

Groups that credit a single, featured female vocalist (*e.g. "Joan Jett and the Blackhearts"*) are considered groups and **may not** be entered in this category even if the group was previously allowed to define itself as being a female vocalist.

Duos may not be entered in this category, regardless of the vocal or instrumental contribution of the named members.

Spoken Word is not eligible.

Must be alive in the qualifying year.

Male Vocalist of the Year

Best performance by a male artist of newly recorded material, 75% of which must be of vocal content.

Groups that credit a single, featured male vocalist (*e.g. "Paul McCartney and Wings"*) are considered groups and **may not** be entered in this category even if the group was previously allowed to define itself as being a single male vocalist.

Duos may not be entered in this category, regardless of the vocal or instrumental contribution of the named members.

Spoken Word is not eligible.

Must be alive in the qualifying year.

Group of the Year

Best performance by a duo or group of newly recorded vocal or instrumental material.

Groups that credit a single, featured vocalist (*e.g. "Bill Haley and the Comets" or Siouxsie and the Banshees or Booker T and the MGs*) **must be** entered in this category even if the group was previously allowed to define itself as being a single male or female vocalist.

Duos must be entered in this category, regardless of the vocal or instrumental contribution of the named members.

Most Promising Artist(s) of the Year

Best first-recorded effort as a featured artist or group. First recorded effort shall be defined as **first commercially available Album or EP by an artist or group** and shall include retail sales worldwide. **Single releases are not eligible.**

First time participation on a compilation with other artists, and/or participation as a guest artist or previous release of a single shall **not** constitute a first recorded effort.

Artists who have previously recorded and who form new groups, or artists who have previously recorded as a member of a group who then release as a solo artist **are** ineligible for Most Promising Artist of the Year. Extenuating factors may be considered to determine eligibility including:

- total number of members in the new group
- number of recordings the member participated in, or the number of recordings the group recorded
- prominence of the member either as a solo artist or of the group, which recorded previously

The intent of the Most Promising Artist Award is to recognize and encourage new artists.

Favorite Entertainer of the Year

Best performance by an artist or group. Artists on compilations and anthologies are not eligible. Artists on singles and music videos are not eligible. An artist **must check the box on the submission form for Favorite Entertainer to be considered in the public vote.**

Only finalists will be considered for the award.

Genre Categories:

Albums by US Mainland residents are **ONLY** eligible in the Hawaiian, Island Music, Slack Key, Hawaiian EP, Hawaiian Single, Haku Mele, Hawaiian Language Performance, Hawaiian Music Video and `Ukulele categories. Non-U.S. residents are not eligible in any genre category. Singles and EPs (Extended Play releases) are ineligible in any genre category. Albums are artist awards, exceptions are noted below.

Entries that feature spoken voice (as opposed to sung) will be allowed in the thematic genre categories only – Christmas, Island Music, and Religious.

Alternative Album of the Year

“Alternative” is defined as music of a non-traditional form that retains an outsider and underground

perspective, and is mostly outside the mainstream music consciousness. Currently viewed as avant-garde in nature, the music and recordings may utilize new and vintage technology, innovative production techniques and could contain trace elements of mainstream punk, rock, pop, R&B, reggae, dance, folk classical, Hawaiian, and other musical forms.

Anthology of the Year

(Producer's Award) Best album of previously released material. At least 75% of the album must have previously released material from at least two (2) different releases. The album must also have a revised song order, be repackaged, or be substantively different from the original releases. Non-resident producers are eligible if at least 75% of the tracks feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in slack key, 'ukulele or Island music styles. **The number of eligible producers is limited to four (4).**

Re-mastering of original tracks is allowed, but no tracks may have new instrumental or vocal components added. The original instrumental and vocal tracks may not be remixed, nor is any other substantial change to the music content of the track(s) allowed. Tracks featuring such changes will not count toward the 75% requirement of previously released material.

Christmas Album of the Year

Best performance in a Christmas theme. At least 75% of the album must contain Christmas material.

Compilation Album of the Year

(Producer's Award) Best album of newly released material. The album must contain a minimum of three (3) distinct artists on distinct tracks. Non-resident producers are eligible if at least 75% of the tracks feature vocals in the Hawaiian language or are performed in the slack key, 'ukulele or Island music styles, or if 75% of the album is recorded in Hawai'i. **The number of eligible producers is limited to four (4).**

Contemporary Album of the Year

Best performance in a contemporary style and predominantly utilizing electric and/or electronic instruments.

Contemporary Acoustic Album of the Year

Best performance in a contemporary style and predominantly utilizing acoustic instruments.

Hawaiian Music Album of the Year

Best performance of Hawaiian music. At least 75% of the album must contain material in the Hawaiian Language.

Hip Hop Album of the Year

Best performance of music in a Hip Hop Style. At least 75% of the album must contain Hip Hop material.

Instrumental Album of the Year

Best instrumental performance. At least 75% of the album must contain non-vocal material.

Island Music Album of the Year

Best contemporary performance of music of or about Hawai'i. At least 50% of the album must contain material of or about Hawai'i.

Jazz Album of the Year

Best jazz performance. At least 75% of the album must contain jazz material.

Metal Album of the Year

Best metal performance. At least 75% of the album must contain metal material.

R&B Album of the Year

Best performance of music in an R&B style. At least 75% of the album must contain R&B material.

Reggae Album of the Year

Best reggae performance. At least 75% of the album must contain reggae material.

Religious Album of the Year

Best performance of religious material. At least 75% of the album must contain religious or inspirational material.

Rock Album of the Year

Best rock performance. At least 75% of the album must contain rock material.

Hawaiian Slack Key Album of the Year

Best performance of slack key or vocals with slack key accompaniment. Release can be 100% vocal with slack key accompaniment, 100% instrumental or any combination of the two, provided that 75% of the instrumental tracks and instrumental accompaniment to vocals must be in a slack key tuning and played in a slack key style; 75% of the vocal tracks must be in Hawaiian Language.

The selection committee may consult with acknowledged practitioners to determine the appropriateness of entries into this category.

Slack key guitar or kīkā kī hō‘alu is a uniquely Hawaiian approach to guitar playing that is unlike any other guitar style in the world. It gets its name from the way the guitar is tuned – some of the strings are loosened or slacked. It is usually characterized as having an alternating bass line while the melody is plucked on the higher pitched strings.

Techniques and ornamentations include slides, pull-offs, add-ons, hammers, slurs, and harmonics (sometimes referred to as chimes). The music sometimes reflects hula rhythms and is characterized by turnarounds or “vamps”, phrases, and chordal structure of the compositions. Just playing in an alternate tuning does NOT make it slack key. It's the dedication to the bass in support of the melody that differentiates it.

‘Ukulele Album of the Year

Best ‘ukulele performance. 75% of the tracks must feature the ‘ukulele predominately without vocals, and may feature ‘ukulele performance in any musical style; may contain up to 25% vocal tracks with ‘ukulele accompaniment, provided the ‘ukulele accompaniment is not subordinate to any other accompanying instrument.

Note:

Compilations of any genre (Comedy, Jazz, Slack Key etc.) are not eligible in that particular genre category, as all genre categories are artist awards (single artist or group). Compilations of any genre of music will be considered in the category of Compilation Album of the Year.

Adjudicated Categories:

Haku Mele Award

(Composer's Award) Best first-time released song or chant primarily in the Hawaiian language. **The mele cannot include any portion of previously released material.** Only one (1) composition per composer per

release is permitted. Compositions co-written with one or more composers may be submitted up to a total of three (3) distinct composer(s)/composer groups per release.

The text of the composition must be in an 'oki (through-composed), paukū (verse only) or, paukū/hui (verse/chorus) or other such musical structures associated with Hawaiian musical performance. Texts composed of monologues, dialogs, and other oratory forms are not eligible for this category. A panel of judges selects the Award based on:

1. Poetic style of the Hawaiian language where appropriate.
2. Proper wording (choice of words and/or phrases) of the Hawaiian Language.
3. Musical composition.

Entrants must submit lyrics, translations and kaona (if any) for each entry.

Hawaiian Language Performance Award

(Artist Award) Best performance in the Hawaiian language. Singles, EPs, anthologies and compilations are not eligible. At least 75% of the tracks must contain material in the Hawaiian language. Reviewing the release in its entirety, a panel of judges selects the award based on:

1. Proper pronunciation of the Hawaiian language.
2. Overall interpretation of the Hawaiian language in the musical performance.

General Engineering Award (Must be a resident of the State of Hawai'i)

Best technical achievement in a sound recording and mix-down for all genres of music other than Hawaiian music albums, slack key, and 'ukulele albums. Digital download-only releases are eligible in this category. Albums and EPs are eligible; Singles, Compilations and Anthologies are not.

Resident engineer(s) must have engineered a minimum of 51% of the album or EP to be eligible for consideration. The number of eligible engineers on any given album or EP is limited to four (4).

Hawaiian Engineering Award (Must be a resident of the State of Hawai'i)

Best technical achievement in a sound recording and mix-down for Hawaiian music albums, slack key, and 'ukulele albums. Digital download-only releases are eligible in this category. Albums and EPs are eligible; Singles, Compilations and Anthologies are not.

Resident engineer(s) must have engineered a minimum of 51% of the album or EP to be eligible for consideration. The number of eligible engineers on any given album or EP is limited to four (4).

Graphics Award (Must be a resident of the State of Hawai'i)

Award for the best total packaging – exterior (*cover*) and interior (*booklet/insert, disc art*) graphics – that artistically conveys the record's theme. **Thumbnails or cover art only are not eligible.**

Liner Notes Award (Must be a resident of the State of Hawai'i)

Award for best liner notes that enlightens the reader about the artist, the project's theme, and significance of song choices. Liner notes that are written in both Hawaiian and English may enter either liner note category, but not both.

Hawaiian Liner Notes Award (Must be a resident of the State of Hawai'i)

Award for best liner notes in the Hawaiian language, that enlightens the reader about the artist, the project's theme, and significance of song choices. Liner notes that are written in both Hawaiian and English may enter either liner note category, but not both.

International Album – Special Recognition Award

Award is restricted to non-US artists (those born in, and who reside in the country in which the submission originates). Eligible albums include those whose tracks are one of the following:

- 75% in the Hawaiian language, or
- 50% of or about Hawai'i, or
- Performed in slack key styles (**see eligibility rules above**), or
- Performed on the 'ukulele (see eligibility rules above), or
- Compilation albums (3 or more distinct artists on distinct tracks) must have 75% of the tracks in the Hawaiian language or 50% of the tracks of or about Hawai'i performed in slack key styles or on the 'ukulele.
- Anthologies are not eligible

Albums will be judged on a point system, 10 points being the highest number awarded and the sum of points will determine the award.

Albums with vocal content will be judged on:

- Musicality (10 points)

- Language/pronunciation (10 points)
- Production quality (10 points)

Slack key and 'ukulele albums will be judged on:

- Musicality (10 points)
- Instrumental performance (10 points)
- Production quality (10 points)

Five (5) additional points will be awarded to albums produced and recorded in the country of origin without participation of Hawai'i based artists/producers/engineers.

PLEASE NOTE:

ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE EXPECTED TO MEET BASIC PROFESSIONAL INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

Basic Professional Industry Standards Criteria

Basic professional industry standards for recordings encompass a set of practices and principles aimed at achieving high-quality/best audio recordings while maintaining professionalism and efficiency.

Basic Professional Industry Standards Criteria are as follows:

Criteria	Description
Vocal Quality	The overall tonal characteristics of the vocalist's voice, including clarity, richness, and consistency throughout the performance.
Vocal Pitch	The accuracy of the vocalist's pitch, ensuring that notes are sung in tune with the musical accompaniment and with proper intonation.
Harmony	The quality and precision of vocal harmonies, including blending, balance, and accuracy in relation to the lead vocal and instrumental parts.
Timing and Meter	The rhythmic accuracy and consistency of the performance, including adherence to the song's tempo, phrasing, and overall sense of groove.
Performance Quality	Skillful execution of musical performance, including instrumental proficiency, vocal clarity, and emotional expression.
Audio Quality	High-quality audio production, free from distortion, background noise, and other technical issues.
Technical Aspects	Correct Use of Microphones: Professional recordings use appropriate microphones and microphone techniques tailored to each instrument or voice. Consistency in Sound: Professional recordings undergo mixing and mastering to ensure consistent sound quality across different playback systems. Optimized Levels: Mastering in professional recordings optimizes volume levels for a competitive and balanced sound.

These standards serve as a foundation for professional recordings and technical excellence in the recording industry.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Wednesday December 31, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. – HST

If submitting on behalf of someone else, must have their permission to do so.

All submission forms, submission fee, proof of commercial sale, and deposit material - (Audio and Video files, Haku Mele lyric sheets, Liner notes, Graphics, etc) – must be submitted by the stated deadline, no exceptions will be made.

The names of every award-eligible contributor (artists, engineers, producers, liner note annotators, graphics) must be submitted with the form, and no additional names can be added once the submissions deadline has passed.

Please note: The submission fee is discounted for artists, composers, graphic designers, liner notes annotators, engineers or international artists who are current HARA members.

