



Steps for Filing State Descendancy Recognition Claims to Burials in Hawai'i

Compiled for:

Ku'u Ēwe, Ku'u Piko, Ku'u Iwi, Ku'u Koko Workshop Series

An Online Community Empowerment Series for Those with Kuleana to Mālama i nā Iwi Kūpuna

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This guide is designed to assist you in the process for filing claims for **lineal and cultural** **descendancy to iwi kūpuna**.

Descendancy claims are filed when you want to establish your connection to a decedent as either:

- A **lineal descendant**– someone who can prove a “direct or collateral genealogical connection to certain native Hawaiian skeletal remains” (HAR § 13-300-2).
- A **cultural descendant**– someone who can prove they have “genealogical connections to Native Hawaiian ancestors who once resided or are buried or both, in the same ahupua‘a or district” in which the iwi are located or originated from (HAR § 13-300-2).

Descendancy claims may be filed on any of the following occasions:

- When public notices have been issued describing the discovery of iwi kūpuna, or the potential for the disturbance of iwi kūpuna
- At any point in time, independent of any construction project(s), for areas where burials are known

Note that filing a descendancy claim is different from filing a **burial registration**, which is done for the purpose of documenting a burial site, whereas descendancy claims are filed to establish recognition of your relationship to the kupuna/kūpuna buried at a burial site.

For more information on filing a burial registration, please see our guide,
“Registering Burials in the State of Hawai‘i.”



Step 1

Gather and Record Information on Burial Site on Descendancy Claim Application under Section II of the form

Information Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address (if any) • TMK # • 'Ili/Mo'o • Ahupua'a • Moku • Island • Burial Sites UTM/GPS coordinates (if available/accessible) 	Documents Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHPD Descendancy Application Form <p><i>*This application form will be used for each of the following steps in this guide.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps and photographs of burial where available
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Step 2

Cultural Descendancy

Gather Genealogy documents establishing genealogical connection to Native Hawaiian ancestors who once resided, are buried, or both, in the same ahupua'a where certain Native Hawaiian skeletal remains are located or originated from (for the area you are claiming descendancy to)

Lineal Descendancy

Gather Genealogy documents establishing direct or collateral genealogical connection to specific Native Hawaiian skeletal remains

Documents Needed	<p>Documents establishing genealogical ties. These may include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth Certificates • Death Certificates • Marriage Certificates • Census Records • Tax Records • Land Conveyance Documents • Oral Family History (written or recorded) • Family Genealogy
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Step 3

In Section I on the SHPD Descendancy Claim Application, check the boxes for the types of genealogy documents you are submitting. Attach these documents to the form before submitting (either as email attachments, or as print copies if mailing a printed form)



Step 4

Gather and record any pertinent information (if available) on the buried individual(s) in section III of the SHPD Descendancy Claim Application

Information Needed

- Name(s)
- Death date(s)
- Death Certificates
- Nūpepa Articles
- Probate/Will Documents
- Deeds

Step 5

Gather and record any pertinent information (if available) on the description of the burial in section III of the SHPD Descendancy Claim Application

Information Needed

Example information:

- What shape is the burial? (Circle, rectangular)
- Is it a casket, cave, canoe?
- Are there any associated burial good(s)?
- Is it marked by a rock? How big is the rock? Describe what the rock looks like.
- Are there any prominent features associated with the burial?
- What is the size of the burial?
- Describe the platform. (Stacked stones, headstone, unmarked, etc.)

Step 6

Record your relationship to the deceased in section III of the SHPD Descendancy Claim Application

Step 7

Record your personal/contact information, and type of descendancy applying for (lineal or cultural) in section I of the SHPD Descendancy Claim Application

Information Needed

- Name
- Physical/Mailing Address
- Email Address
- Phone Number
- Fax Number (optional)



Step 8

Sign and date one of the two options under the confidentiality statement in section IV of the SHPD Descendancy Claim Application

Step 9

Submit your SHPD Descendancy Claim Application and any attachments to the SHPD Burial Sites Specialist for your island, and ask them to agendize your claim for Burial Council Determination

Documents Needed

- Please refer to our [SHPD Contact List](#) to find the SHPD Burial Sites Specialist for your island. Submit your completed SHPD Descendancy Claim Application and attachments to the contact listed.
- We recommend labeling each attachment and submitting a cover letter that explains what each attachment is. This will help reviewers better follow the "story" you are trying to tell.

For example...

- Attachment 1- My pedigree
- Attachment 2- Birth certificate showing [X] is my Mother
- Attachment 3- Birth certificate showing [x] is my Mother's mother (aka, my grandmother)
- Attachment 4- Census showing [x] is my grandmother's father
- Attachment 5- Death Certificate showing where my great grandfather was buried.

Step 10

Be sure to attend the Island Burial Council (IBC) meeting for which your descendancy claim is agendized. IBCs will not grant descendancy recognition if you are not present