



Chef Eric Koyama Student Scholarship Sponsored by KING'S HAWAIIAN®

Chef Eric Koyama made a lasting impact at King's Hawaiian as one of the first chefs in innovation and was instrumental in new product development. He designed the King's Hawaiian test kitchens and built out their first innovation process. Always willing to share and lend a hand to others, Chef Eric was most enthusiastic about helping to develop the next generation of chefs and took time out of his busy schedule to speak at culinary schools across the country.

Chef Eric leaves a legacy of generosity, hard work and undeniable passion that lives on through this generous scholarship sponsored by King's Hawaiian for students enrolled in Research Chefs Association (RCA)-approved Culinology® degree programs at Kapi'olani Community College and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. His legacy of continued education and vision of developing the next generation continues by helping students attend the 2027 RCA Annual Conference and Culinology Expo in Dallas, Texas. At the conference, students will experience enriching breakout sessions and keynote speakers while creating strong networks with other students and leaders in the industry.

Eligibility Details

- Students must be enrolled at Kapi'olani Community College and/or the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa pursuing Culinology, Food Science, or Food Product Development.
- Candidates must be RCA members to apply. [Student Membership is \\$35 annually.](#)
- Students must be prepared to share their School, Major, Year in School and Cumulative GPA.

Timeline:

- **Application Opens:** Thursday, October 1, 2026
- **Deadline to Apply:** Monday, November 2, 2026
- **Applicants Notified:** Tuesday, December 1, 2026
- **RCA Annual Conference & Culinology Expo:** March 23-25, 2027

Short Answer/Essay Questions

The application will contain short answer/essay questions. All questions are required and should be answered in 350 words or less.

Your essay is where we hear your unique voice, expression and perspective. Submitting unedited AI-generated work is strongly discouraged.

- Tell us about yourself, including your hobbies, interests, and future goals related to food, culinary arts, culinary science, or the food industry.
- Why did you choose your major, and how has your experience in the program influenced your educational or career goals so far?
- Describe your involvement in your department and/or extracurricular activities (such as clubs, tutoring, scholarships, honors, awards, research, leadership, etc.). What has been the most meaningful experience during your time in school, and why?
- The Research Chefs Association (RCA) Conference focuses on food innovation, product development, and culinary science. How do you think attending the RCA Conference would contribute to your education and career development? What specific topics, skills, or experiences are you hoping to gain?
- Choose one challenge in food, cooking, or product development that interests you (examples include shelf life, sustainability, sensory quality, cost control, clean label, scaling recipes, reducing food waste, etc.). Why does this challenge interest you, and how would you approach learning more about it as a student?
- How important is exposure beyond Hawai'i (including travel, mainland experiences, or industry networking opportunities) to your growth as a student in the food industry? Please provide a specific example or reason to support your answer.
- Describe a situation in school, work, or a group project where you had to work through a challenge, disagreement, or stressful situation with others. What did you learn from the experience, and how did it shape your approach to teamwork or professionalism?
- How would receiving this scholarship impact your education and future career in the food industry? What would this opportunity mean to you personally and professionally?
- Please briefly describe any tools, including AI tools, used in preparing your application responses.

Scholarship Deliverables

Students receiving the scholarship are required to complete a 3–5 minute reflection on their experience at the Research Chefs Association (RCA) Conference, presented either as a video or recorded PowerPoint. The reflection should include an introduction with the student's name and program, their initial expectations, and a brief acknowledgment of King's Hawaiian. Students should highlight key conference experiences such as

sessions, speakers, or trends that stood out, and identify 2–3 food innovation insights with explanation of their significance. The reflection should also address personal and career impact, including how the experience influenced their thinking, interests, and future skill development. Visual elements such as photos or clips are encouraged. The presentation should conclude with a thank-you to King's Hawaiian and a brief reflection on the value of attending industry conferences.

What Scholarship Winners will Receive

Winners of the 2027 Chef Eric Koyama Student Scholarship will receive a scholarship in the form of a reimbursable stipend of up to \$3,000 to attend the 2027 RCA Annual Conference and Culinology Expo in Dallas, Texas, March 23-25, 2027.

Expenses eligible for reimbursement include the following:

- RCA conference registration (\$170 student rate)
- Round trip airfare to and from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) or Dallas Love Field (DAL)
- Transportation to and from the Dallas airport and conference hotel (Uber, Taxi, Lyft)
- Lodging at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel (approx. 3 days, 4 nights)
- Meals (approx. 2 lunches and 2 dinners; other meals are provided as part of conference registration)

About the Culinology Scholarship Foundation

This scholarship is administered by the [Culinology Scholarship Foundation](#) (CSF). CSF is the charitable and educational arm of the Research Chefs Association. The foundation's mission is to provide scholarships and educational opportunities for individuals pursuing careers in Culinology, culinary arts, and food science. Our work is funded through donations from generous supporters of the CSF mission.