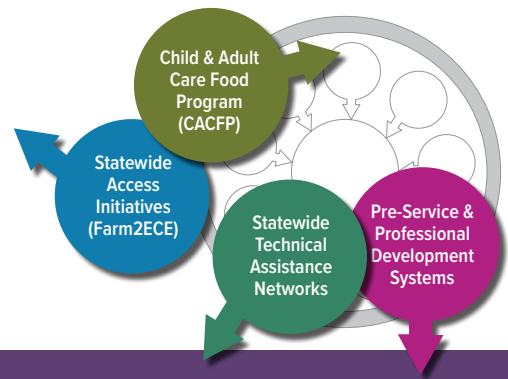


# Garden to Grindz: Kaua'i Farm to ECE Local Food Incentive Program



## Purpose

The purpose of this project is to support the Mālama Kaua'i food hub to address systemic barriers to local food procurement in early childhood care and education (ECE) programs through providing local food access, nutrition education resources, training, and technical assistance. The project worked with center based and family child care programs to address identified barriers to local procurement, increase the readiness and success of ECE programs on Kaua'i to procure and serve local foods, and inform the development of an ECE local procurement best practices and key learnings webinar available for ECE providers and food hubs/ producers.

## Desired Impacts

- Increased procurement and serving of local food in meals and snacks
- Increased connection between local producers and ECE programs
- Pilot realistic solutions to identified barriers to local procurement in ECE for both providers and local producers

## Project Highlight

13 ECE programs on Kaua'i participated in the pilot program! Collectively these programs serve more than 500 young children, including children from families making less than 200% of the federal poverty level and children in Hawaiian immersion programs.

## Goals

- Create a keiki tested, Hawai'i-centric local food recipe guidebook with CACFP reimbursable recipes
- Provide technical assistance and training to ECE providers to increase self-efficacy to procure and serve local food in meals and snacks
- Identify best practices and lessons learned to be able to sustain and expand local procurement in ECE programs

## Key Activities / Timeline

- **June 2021 - August 2022:** Develop breakfast, lunch, and snack recipe guidebook that features local food and recipes that are reimbursable by the USDA's CACFP program.
- **May 2022 - February 2023:** Identify, recruit, and select participating ECE sites based on:
  - » Need and Equity; Sites serving high numbers of low-income children shall be prioritized
  - » Commitment to receiving technical assistance and procuring and serving local food;
  - » Readiness/Capacity; and
  - » Previous experience with local procurement
- **May 2022 - Present:** Work with Mālama Kaua'i's Farmer Liaison and Farm to ECE Coordinator to coordinate supply chain activities, deliver desired foods to ECE programs, and provide technical assistance and training to ECE programs.

## Success Story

Pūnana Leo 'o Kaua'i has been an exemplary ECE provider, spending their credits within months of receiving and taking the time to devise lesson plans around the fresh, local food that they were purchasing and serving to the keiki. We have heard many "success stories" from them, including many keiki going from always refusing fruit and vegetables, to asking their parents for lettuce, apples, and other produce at home.

"Having a relationship with a program like Mālama Kaua'i allows Pūnana Leo to provide THE freshest fruits, veggies, and poi to our growing keiki on a daily basis. Mālama Kaua'i offers native produce as well as some exotic fruits that we may pass at the grocery store because of the high price. It exposes our keiki and expands their palettes to better healthier options. It also teaches our keiki how to support local and what "Farm to table" means and it's importance."

Waialohaokalani Fernandez,  
Pūnana Leo 'o Kaua'i

"You guys are awesome. Ordering is so easy and delivery is such a big help. I don't mind paying for local produce, but this grant is the icing on the cake for our experience. The incentives helped so much."

U'ilani Corr-Yorkman,  
Hāloalaunuiākea Early Learning Center



Stormy Soza, [stormy@malamakauai.org](mailto:stormy@malamakauai.org)  
Kaylee Brau, [kaylee@malamakauai.org](mailto:kaylee@malamakauai.org)

