

Ho'opili 'Ai 2022-2025 Impact Report

Uniting Keiki and Hawai'i Food Crops

Ho'opili 'Ai - Hawai'i's Harvest of the Month Program – is a partnership between the Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative (HUC) and Hawai'i Farm to School Network, Hawai'i Public Health Institute, Chef Hui, and University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (UH CTahr), that provides students, teachers, school staff, and families with the resources needed to build lifelong relationships with Hawai'i-grown staple foods.

Ho'opili 'Ai utilizes experiential farm to school education to increase student connections to Hawai'i's kūpuna crops and their willingness to try new foods, while strengthening relationships between schools and agricultural communities. Free educational resources for schools include Farm to School Sampler Boxes, educational videos, and standards-aligned lesson plans, which are searchable by grade level, content area, etc. within the [Hawai'i Farm to School Toolkit](#).

Farm to School Sampler Boxes: These boxes were designed by project partners to increase access for schools to locally-grown, recipe-ready, and culturally-sustaining foods for sampling by students (outside of meal programs), as part of expanding farm to school educational experiences for all students. Crop types including 'ulu (breadfruit), kalo (taro), 'uala (sweet potato), and pala'ai (kabocha/pumpkin) were sourced from HUC's member network of over 160 local farms, and distributed directly to schools based on seasonal availability.

The sampler boxes were made available in two forms:

- **Classroom Boxes** (each containing 18.75 pounds of recipe-ready produce in take-home bags of 12 oz. each, reaching 25 students and families); and
- **Culinary Boxes** (each containing 25 pounds of recipe-ready produce for schools to prepare and portion into 2 oz. samples, reaching 200 students and school admin/faculty/staff). [Note: 'Ulu Culinary Boxes contain 30 pounds of product.]

Ho'opili Ai
UNITING KEIKI & HAWAII FOOD CROPS

Farm to School Classroom Tasting Boxes

Kalo (Taro), 'Uala (Sweet Potato), Pala'ai (Pumpkin) or 'Ulu (Breadfruit)

includes printed recipe cards

standards-aligned k-5 lesson plan

downloadable coloring pages

Twenty five 12-oz. packs for students and 'ohana to try at home

Free Shipping!
TO ALL HAWAII SCHOOLS

Ho'opili Ai
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Farm to School Culinary Tasting Boxes

Kalo (Taro), 'Uala (Sweet Potato), Pala'ai (Pumpkin) or 'Ulu (Breadfruit)

includes printed recipe cards

standards-aligned k-5 lesson plan

downloadable coloring pages

Minimal prep time
Recipe-ready!
Five 5 lb. bags

Free Shipping!
TO ALL HAWAII SCHOOLS

Metrics:

Since 2022, **approximately 49,500** students across Hawai'i have received one or more of these crops to taste and enjoy with their classmates or at home with their families. Farmer-members of the Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative (HUC) have provided more than **18,500 pounds** of locally grown staple foods to **over 200 PreK-12 public, public charter, and independent schools** on the islands of **Hawai'i, O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, and Kaua'i**. Since 2022, more than **\$123,800** has been invested in Hawai'i's agricultural economy through the Ho'opili 'Ai program.



Project funders have included: Atherton Family Foundation, County of Hawai'i, Chef Hui, Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation, Eat Pono, UH CTAHR, Individual Donors, School Purchase Orders, and other State and Federal Funds.

MAHALO NUI TO ALL SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE MADE THIS PROGRAM POSSIBLE!

	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25
Classroom Boxes	165	285	329
Culinary Boxes	18	63	69
Schools Served	52	88	95
Students Served	7,725	19,725	22,025
Pounds of Local Food Distributed	3543.75	7013.75	7,993.75
\$ Invested in the Local Agriculture Economy	\$21,149.45	\$47,925.00	\$54,765.00
% of Public Schools Reached That Are Title I	63.50%	56.00%	62.40%
Islands Reached	O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Maui	O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Maui, Kaua'i	O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Maui, Kaua'i, Moloka'i

Teacher Feedback:

Based on teacher feedback, the integration of Ho‘opili ‘Ai into their classrooms was overwhelmingly positive. Many expressed plans to incorporate collaborative cooking with local crops into their regular curriculum moving forward, and an interest in participating in the Ho‘opili ‘Ai program in the future. Here are some more teacher insights:

- “This program and materials were amazing, I will continue to teach this unit for years to come.”
- **Elementary School Teacher, Maui**
- “We have 311 sixth graders who all got to take a bag of kalo or ‘uala home. We have been learning about the story of Hāloa and we connected that to use the metaphor of kalo to ‘ohana. Each student created a project that reflects their own ‘ohana - 3D models, collages, dioramas, and many digital drawings. The fresh kalo was a perfect connection for the kids and the timing was impeccable. I got many emails from parents sharing what their family made with the kalo and how much they enjoyed it! Some kids ate it plain, some sliced it real thin and pan fried it, some made smoothies, puddings, donuts, and one boy made enchiladas! Not to mention, the ‘uala was passed out in the cafeteria to over 800 students, many coming back for seconds and thirds. It goes to show that our school cafeterias need to have more nutritious and wholesome food regularly, the kids love it and it’s good for them.” - **Middle School Teacher, Maui**
- “We had a short lesson plan about pala‘ai, different parts of the pala‘ai, life cycle of the pala‘ai, recipes we can make with pala‘ai. Had ‘ohana share pictures with the class of how they used their pala‘ai at home. In class, we prepared pala‘ai fries together and enjoyed a yummy & healthy snack.”
- **Elementary School Teacher, Hawai‘i Island**



How did teachers use their Farm to School Sampler Boxes?

- Hands on learning experiences during units about canoe crops and Hawaiian history
- Workshops for middle school students about cooking and eating on a budget
- Celebrations for school garden clean up and work days, revitalizing school gardens, and Hawaiian gardening unit
- Science classes on plant parts and energy transfer
- Sent bags home with students to enjoy with their families

Family Feedback:

For some families, “enjoying ‘ulu brought back memories.” Families appreciated being able to make the “connection with their family history and ‘āina foods for their keiki.” Many appreciated the ways in which cooking ‘ulu, ‘uala, pala‘ai, or kalo opened up conversations about the canoe crops, the importance of eating local foods, and giving thanks for the people who grow food.

- “I love the fact that schools and keiki are supporting local farmers and healthy foods!”
- **Parent, 5th Grade, O‘ahu**
- “I appreciated being able to allow my kids the opportunity to try something new.”
- **Parent, Kindergarten, O‘ahu**
- “Local foods are the answer!” - **Parent, Pre-K, Hawai‘i Island**
- “It was a great family activity and we enjoyed making a healthy meal together.”
- **Parent, 4th Grade, O‘ahu**

Popular Recipes Prepared by Families:

- Poi
- ‘Ulu chips
- Steamed ‘ulu, pala‘ai, ‘uala
- Fried ‘ulu with butter
- ‘Ulu waffles and pancakes
- ‘Uala smoothie



For more information about the Ho‘opili ‘Ai Program
and to get involved, visit ulu.coop/hoopiliai



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I at MĀNOA
COLLEGE of TROPICAL AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN RESILIENCE



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