



# DA BUX

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

# 2020-2021 OUTCOMES REPORT

Establishing Hawai'i's Statewide Healthy Food Incentive Program

**Design by MK Design Marketing**

**Cover photo provided by MA'O Organic Farms**

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**The Food Basket Inc. serves as the sole food bank for Hawai'i Island. We were founded in 1989 with a powerful mission to "end hunger." We continue to advance our mission by supporting statewide initiatives that strengthen community food systems and improve access to healthy affordable food for all. To learn more about our programs and services, please visit [www.hawaiifoodbasket.org](http://www.hawaiifoodbasket.org).**

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# OVERVIEW

## How DA BUX Works

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks (also known as “DA BUX”) partners with food retailers across the state to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for low-income recipients of federal food benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

When SNAP shoppers use their SNAP food dollars to purchase qualifying local produce at participating DA BUX food retailers, they receive a 50% discount on those items. As the DA BUX program administrator, The Food Basket reimburses participating food retailers for the local produce discounts issued.



## A TRIPLE WIN For Hawai'i!

DA BUX is a triple win for Hawai'i because it supports families, farmers and the local economy. Low-income SNAP households are able to afford more healthy local produce; local farmers increase their sales to food retailers; and more federal SNAP dollars stay circulating in our state's economy.

Each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1. This means each program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawai'i's economy. Additionally, if DA BUX was further scaled to food retail locations statewide, the potential economic contribution would be \$14-\$22 million in one year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dawn Thilmany et al., “The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives” (Fair Food Network, January 2021), <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/from-the-field/incentives-impact/>.

## Who We Are

The Food Basket administers DA BUX in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance. DA BUX program staff are based out of Hilo town on Hawai'i Island (known by locals as “The Big Island”).



The success of DA BUX would not be possible without the support of our key statewide partners providing outreach, implementation and advocacy (see page 16).

The major funding used to establish DA BUX as a statewide program came from a USDA award from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in 2019 and funders providing federally-required matching funds. All past and current funders are listed on page 15; they include healthcare organizations, foundations, financial institutions and other community-based organizations.



# HISTORY

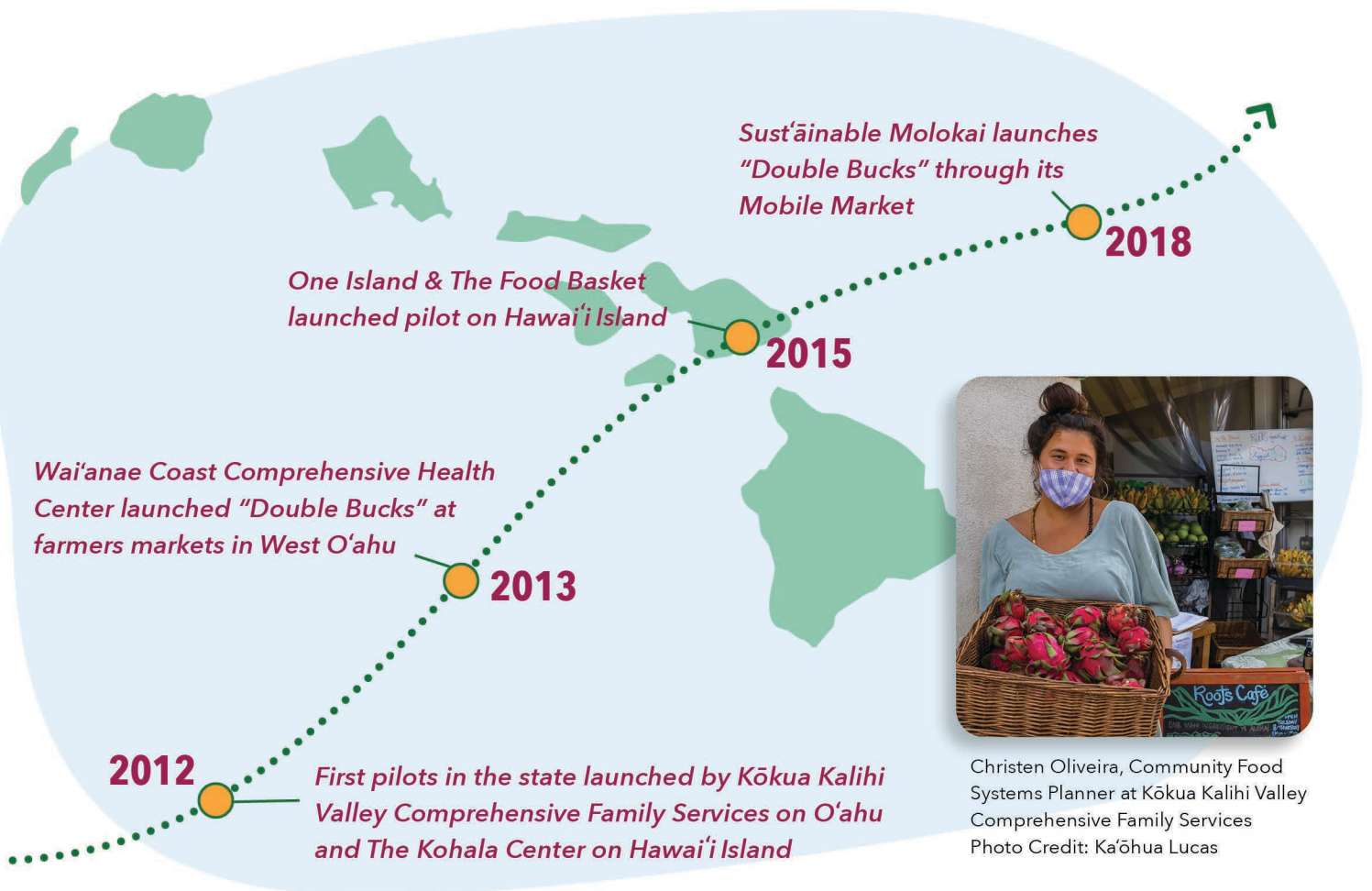
## A Decade of SNAP Nutrition Incentives in Hawai'i

Hawai'i's statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program was established based on the early work of local non-profits pioneering nutrition incentives for low-income SNAP households. Their nutrition incentive offerings were generally referred to as "double bucks" or "double dollars."

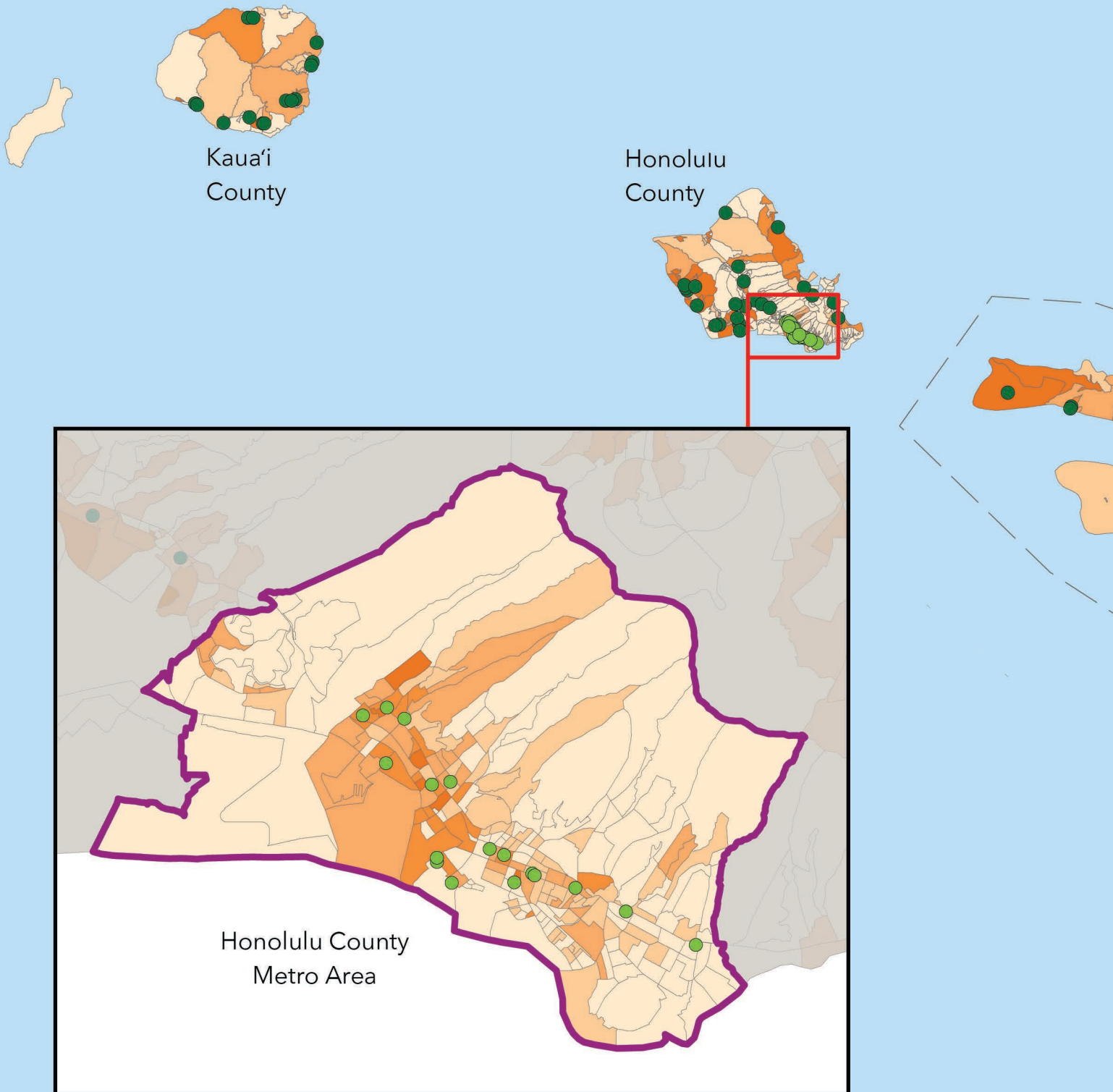
The idea for a united statewide nutrition incentive program grew out of the early convenings of the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HGFA). Members voiced the success of SNAP nutrition incentive programs in their communities and the need for sustained funding.

With the support of HGFA, The Food Basket (one of the founding members) successfully applied for federal funding through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) to unify all SNAP nutrition incentive programs under the statewide brand "DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks" and to expand access to nutrition incentives throughout the state.

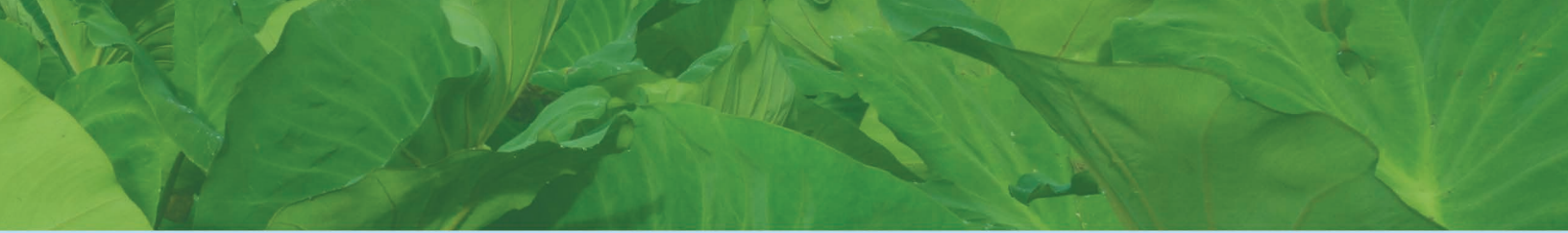
**In Sept 2019, a total of \$985,652 in federal GusNIP funds were awarded to The Food Basket. Statewide partners, including members of HGFA, fully matched this award with both cash and in-kind contributions.**



# PARTICIPATING FOOD RETAILERS



Data retrieved from U.S. Census Bureau "2018 American Communities Survey 5-year estimates detailed tables: Public assistance/income or food stamps/SNAP in past 12 months for households" (Census.data.gov.). Map created by Stacey Torigoe.



**By the end of 2021, DA BUX was available at 57 food retailers across 98 market sites and pick-up locations.**

**43**

**GROCERY STORES**

**5**

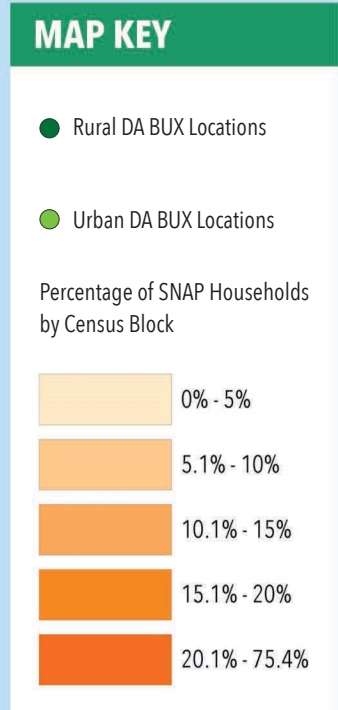
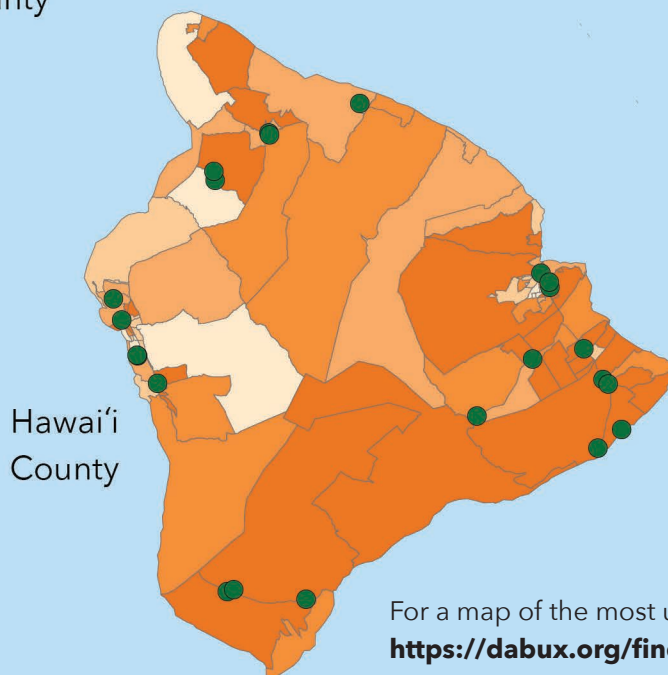
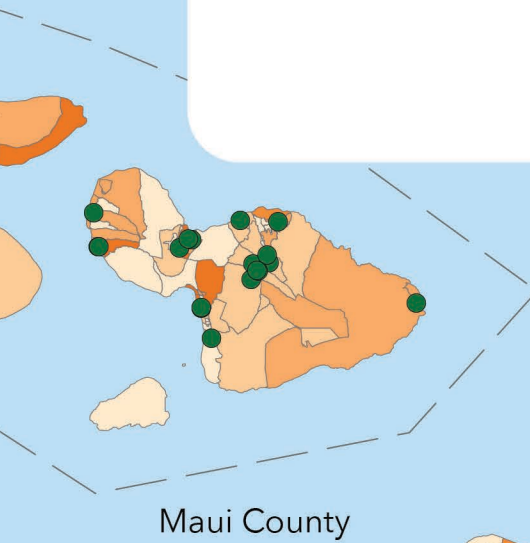
**FARMERS  
MARKETS**

**4**

**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORTED  
AGRICULTURE  
PROGRAMS**

**5**

**OTHER FARM DIRECT  
RETAILERS**

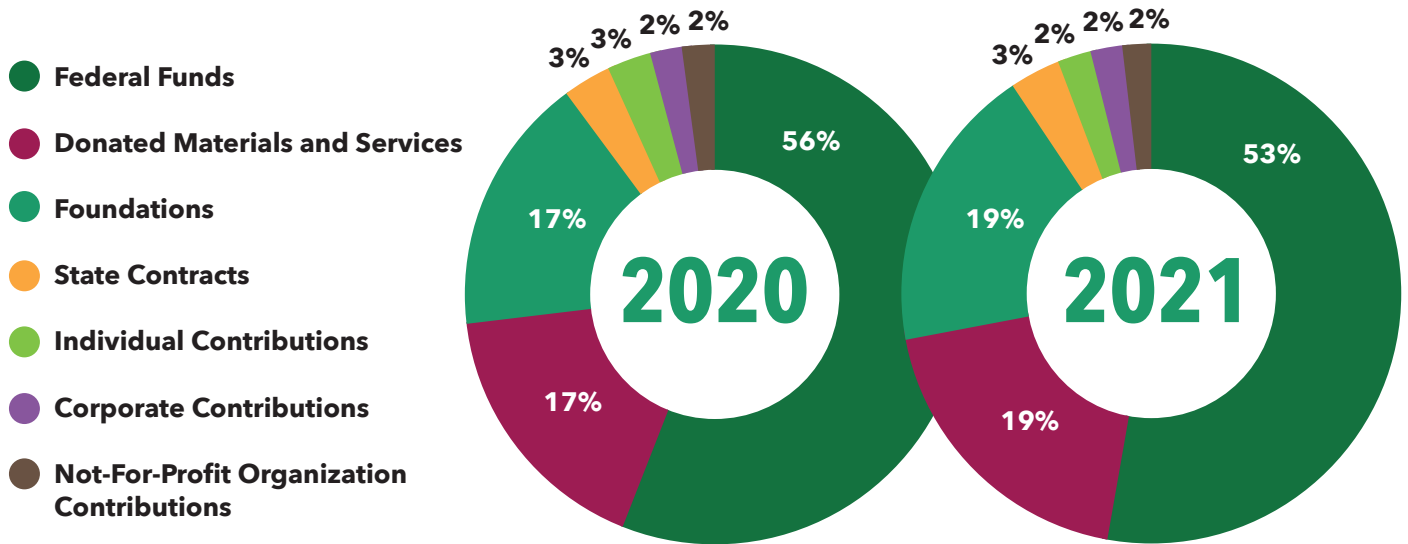


For a map of the most up-to-date locations, visit:  
<https://dabux.org/find-a-retailer>

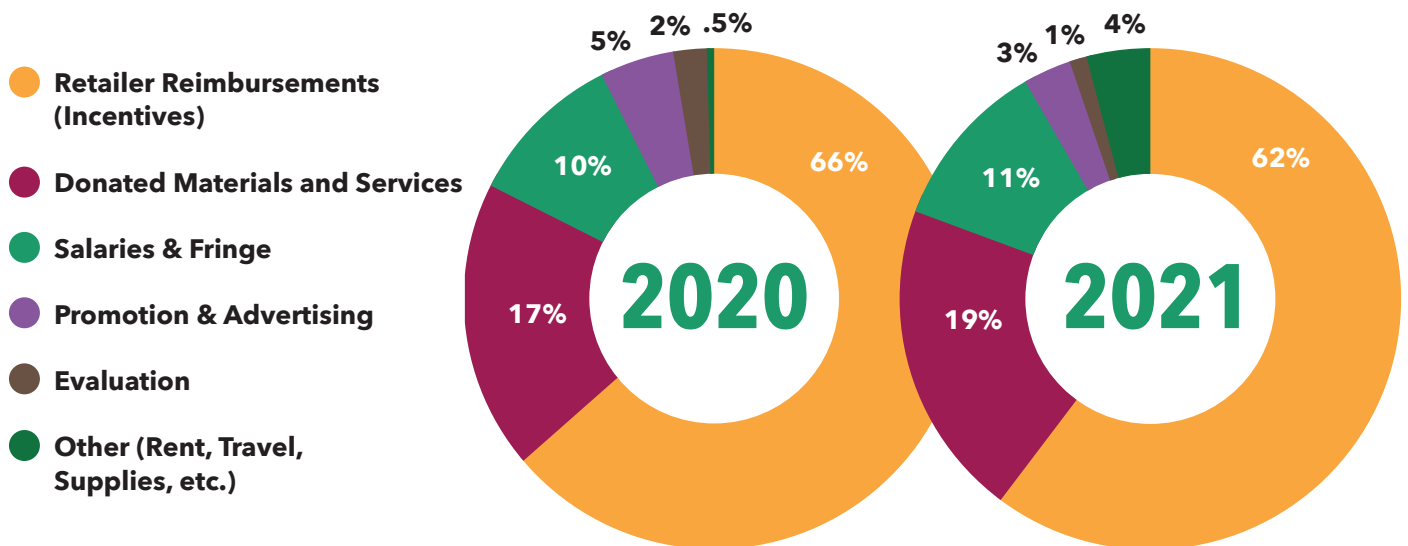
# FINANCIALS

In years 2020 and 2021, DA BUX program expenditures totaled \$1.48 and \$2.69 million respectively. Both cash and donated materials and services were included in these totals. Figure 1 is a breakdown of these expenditures by funding source, and Figure 2 is a breakdown by expense type.<sup>2</sup> Note that an average of 64% of expenses were reimbursements to partner food retailers for their DA BUX discounts issued to SNAP shoppers each year.

**Figure 1. Expenses by Funding Source**



**Figure 2. Expenses by Expense Type**



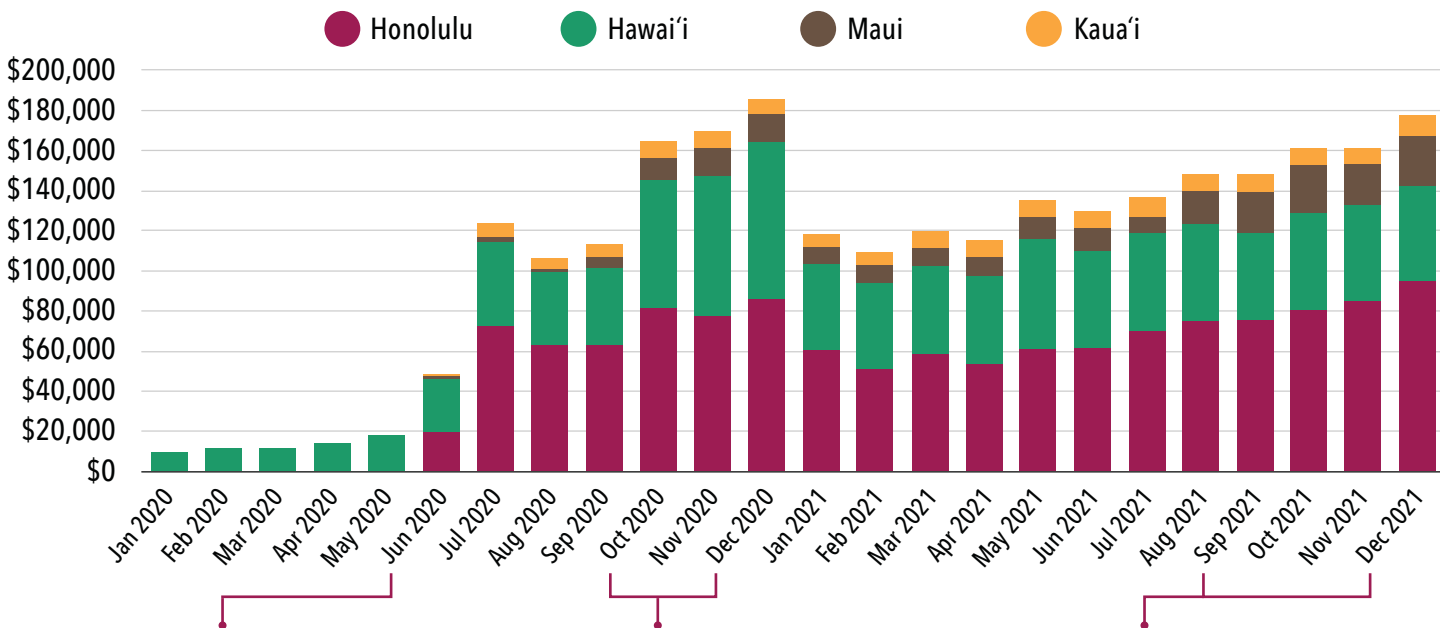
<sup>2</sup>The Food Basket will omit donations from audited financial statements to meet GAAP guidelines.



# DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

In 2020 and 2021 respectively, participating food retailers issued a total of \$978,467 and \$1,662,900 of DA BUX discounts to SNAP shoppers (Figure 3). As the program administrator, The Food Basket reimbursed retailers on a monthly basis for the full amount of discounts issued.

**Figure 3. DA BUX Discounts Issued by County**



## June 2020 Expansion

On June 24, 2020, DA BUX launched across 23 grocery stores operated by QSI, Inc on the islands of O’ahu, Kaua’i and Maui, including Times Supermarkets and Big Save Markets.

## DA BUX Temporarily Adds Local Proteins

A spike in discounts occurred from Oct-Dec 2020 due to the temporary allowance of locally-sourced ground beef, eggs and seafood as eligible items and the temporary increased discount cap from \$20 per day to \$50 per day. These special promotions were funded with federal CARES Act funds awarded by Governor Ige and matching contributions from philanthropy. The protein promotions and the increased discount cap expired Dec 29, 2020.

## Fall 2021 Expansion

On Sept 1, 2021, the former \$20 daily discount cap was removed, allowing SNAP shoppers to receive full discounts on their qualifying local produce purchases. Soon after, DA BUX expanded to 11 grocery stores and 1 farmers market.

In mid-Nov 2021, the State Department of Human Services (DHS) announced the cap removal and new retailers in a mass mailer to all active SNAP households in the state. Unfortunately, thousands of SNAP-eligible households did not receive the mailer as they were waiting for their SNAP benefits to be renewed. DHS experienced a backlog on eligibility reviews after pandemic-induced federal waivers for these reviews expired.



# SNAP SHOPPER IMPACTS

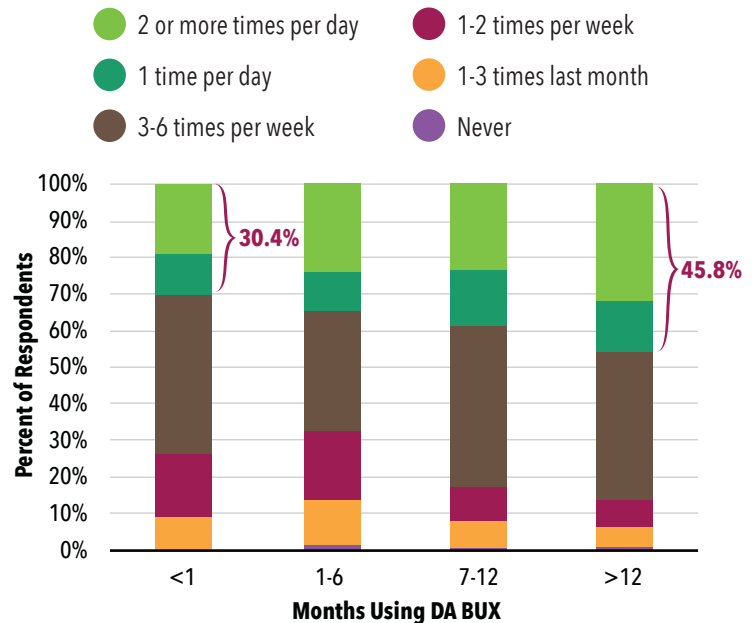
## SNAP Shoppers with Longer DA BUX Usage Eat More Fruits and Vegetables

DA BUX participant surveys collected from October 2021-January 2022 suggest length of time participating in DA BUX positively impacts fruit and vegetable consumption. Data was collected using select questions from the National Cancer Institute’s Dietary Screener Questionnaire (DSQ), which evaluated DA BUX participants’ frequency of consuming fruits and vegetables within the month prior to taking the survey.

Participants who reported utilizing DA BUX for more than 12 months had a higher rate of respondents who ate fruits at least 1 time per day compared with participants who utilized DA BUX for less than a month (45.8% vs. 30.4% respectively; Figure 4).

There are only slight differences in vegetable consumption rates across groups varying in their length of time utilizing DA BUX; however, a similar trend appears as in their fruit consumption results. Participants who reported utilizing DA BUX for more than 12 months had a slightly higher rate of respondents who ate vegetables at least 1 time per day compared with participants who utilized DA BUX for less than a month (29.0% vs. 25.5% respectively, Figure 5).

**Figure 4. DA BUX Participants’ Fruit Consumption (n=503)**



**Figure 5. DA BUX Participants’ Vegetable Consumption (n=503)**

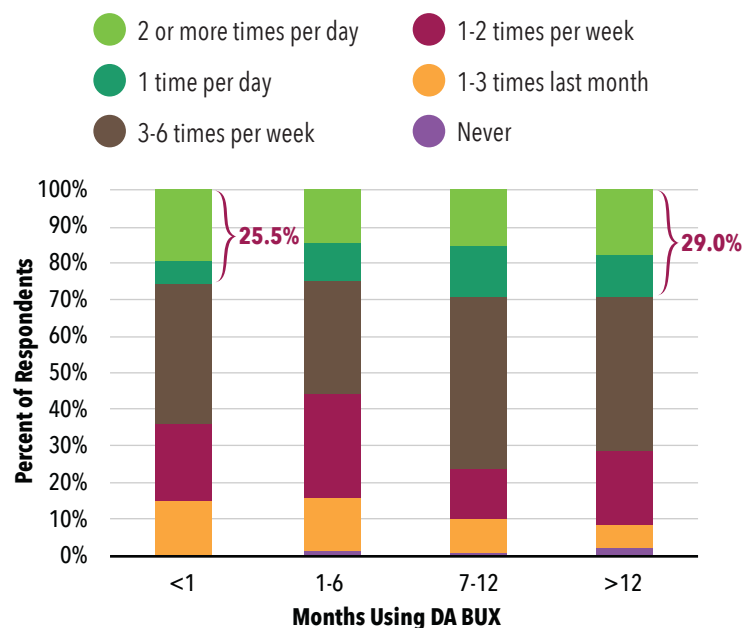
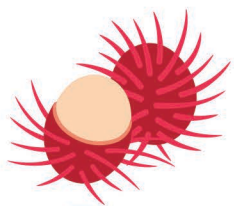


Photo Credit: The Food Basket



Survey data revealed that 47% of DA BUX participants agreed that the Sept 1, 2021 removal of the former \$20 daily discount cap impacted how they or others in the household purchase and consume fruits and vegetables. Figure 6 captures specific impacts experienced among respondents. We plan to target the 42% of DA BUX participants who did not know about the cap removal so that they may also experience these benefits.

**Figure 6. How has the cap removal changed how you or others in your household purchase and eat fruits and vegetables? (n=178)**

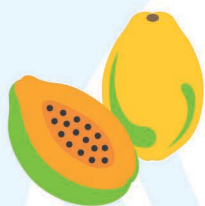


**35%**

**OF DA BUX PARTICIPANTS AGREED:**  
**"I now can purchase more fruits and vegetables per store visit or online order."**

**28%**

**OF DA BUX PARTICIPANTS AGREED:**  
**"I feel a greater peace of mind I can afford healthy foods for my household."**



**18%**

**OF DA BUX PARTICIPANTS AGREED:**  
**"Members of my household are now generally eating more fruits and vegetables per day."**

**13%**

**OF DA BUX PARTICIPANTS AGREED:**  
**"I now can purchase more fruits and vegetables that are higher-priced."**

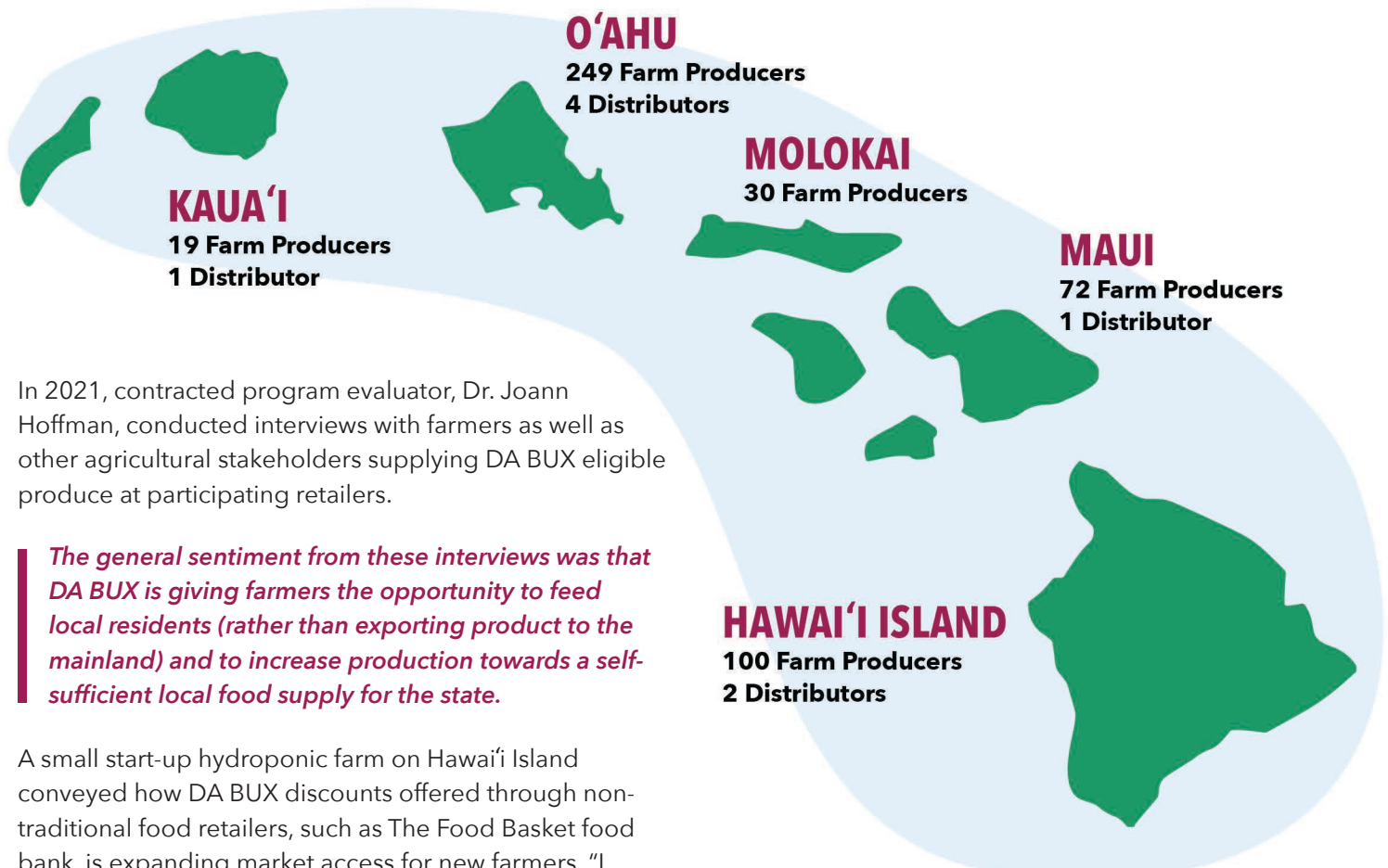


# FARMER IMPACTS

## DA BUX Supports Local Farmers

From 2020-2021, **DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors** by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers (Figure 7). Given the highly sensitive nature of supplier data within the grocery industry, we were unable to collect local produce vendor data from the grocery stores participating in DA BUX.

**Figure 7. Distribution of Farms Supported by DA BUX**



In 2021, contracted program evaluator, Dr. Joann Hoffman, conducted interviews with farmers as well as other agricultural stakeholders supplying DA BUX eligible produce at participating retailers.

*The general sentiment from these interviews was that DA BUX is giving farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting product to the mainland) and to increase production towards a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.*

A small start-up hydroponic farm on Hawai'i Island conveyed how DA BUX discounts offered through non-traditional food retailers, such as The Food Basket food bank, is expanding market access for new farmers. "I just finished the beginning farmer program at Leeward Community College and did not have access to traditional markets due to the pandemic and absence of tourists and restaurants. I originally reached out to The Food Basket to donate my produce but found instead they were a valuable market outlet. This program could be a potential bridge for beginner farmers when they graduate. Working and connecting with programs who are supporting new farmers is critical to change the food system and to help a new generation of farmers succeed."



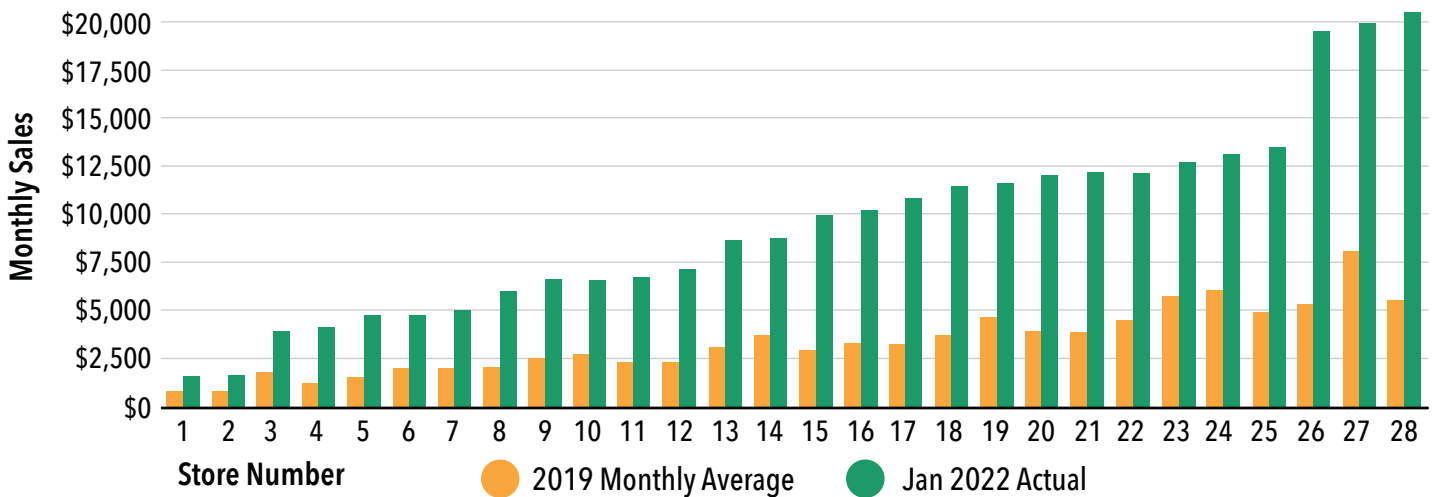
Photo Credit: The Food Basket

# FOOD RETAILER IMPACTS

## SNAP Shoppers are Buying More Local Produce with DA BUX

In Jan 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating grocery stores on average increased 180% from 2019 (increases ranged from 94%-268%; Figure 8). One grocery store could not be displayed in Figure 8 because it far surpassed the sales of all other grocery stores. Analysis excludes grocery stores that are unable to retrieve historical data back to 2019. Year 2019 was used as a baseline because it represents a “normal” pre-pandemic economy.

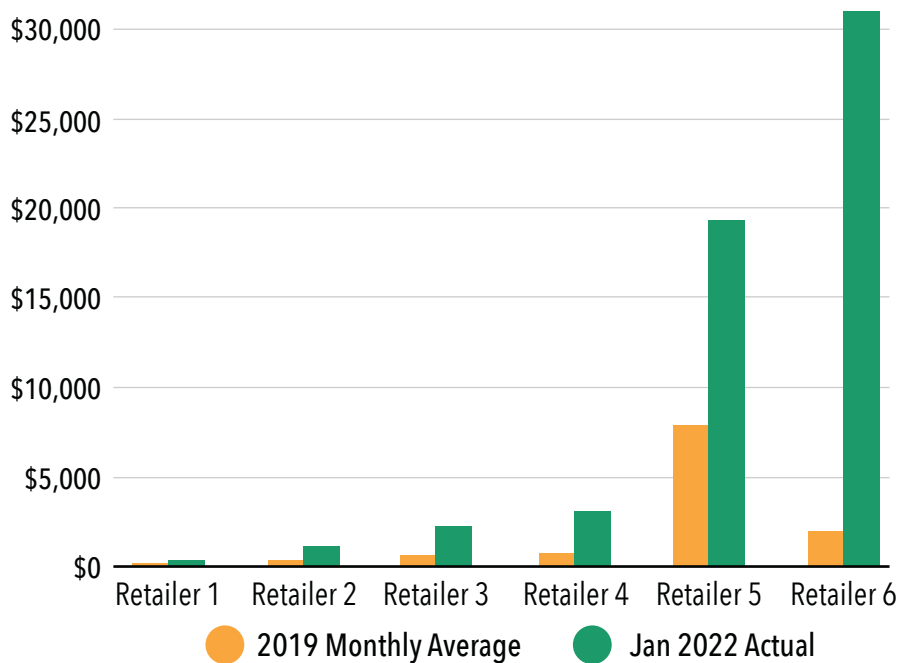
**Figure 8. Local Produce Sales to SNAP Shoppers at Grocery Stores**



## Local Produce Sales Increase 531% at Farm Direct Retailers

In Jan 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019 (increases ranged from 84% -1505%; Figure 9). Analysis excludes farm direct retailers that did not have SNAP authorization in 2019.

**Figure 9. Local Produce Sales to SNAP Shoppers at Farm Direct Retailers**



# KEIKI NUTRITION EDUCATION

## An Integral Part of DA BUX

Through the release of the *Kai and Hōkū Explore Foods of Hawai'i* book in Sept 2021 (Figure 10), DA BUX is helping families and early childcare providers explore local fruits and vegetables with their keiki (the Hawaiian word for children). It features the popular mascots, Kai and Hōkū, of the Keiki Heroes public health initiative as they learn about eight crops commonly grown in the state, including 'ulu (breadfruit) and bok choy (kāpiki pākē).

The book offers hands-on learning activities and simple recipes, making each fruit and vegetable an exciting adventure and valuable learning experience for young food explorers. It also comes with a sticker page that helps the keiki track the foods they have tasted from the book (Figure 11).

*Kai and Hōkū Explore Foods of Hawai'i* was authored by Tiana Kamen, author of *Farm to Keiki*, and Dr. Koh Ming Wei, Executive Director of Center for Getting Things Started. By the end of 2021, over 2,200 hard copies of the book were distributed throughout Hawai'i to Head Start schools, family childcare homes and other early childcare centers, and a free PDF version of the book was made available for download at: [www.dabux.org/keiki-corner](http://www.dabux.org/keiki-corner).

Keiki nutrition education is an integral service of the DA BUX program. By getting children and their families excited about eating more local fruits and vegetables, we aim to increase participation in the DA BUX program and ultimately address alarming public health concerns in the state, notably, trends of high obesity among its socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.

Over the last decade in Hawai'i, obesity was consistently most prevalent among the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population as well as low-income adults earning less than \$25,000 per year. In 2020, the respective obesity rates for these populations were 45% and 28%.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 10. Nutrition Education Activity Book

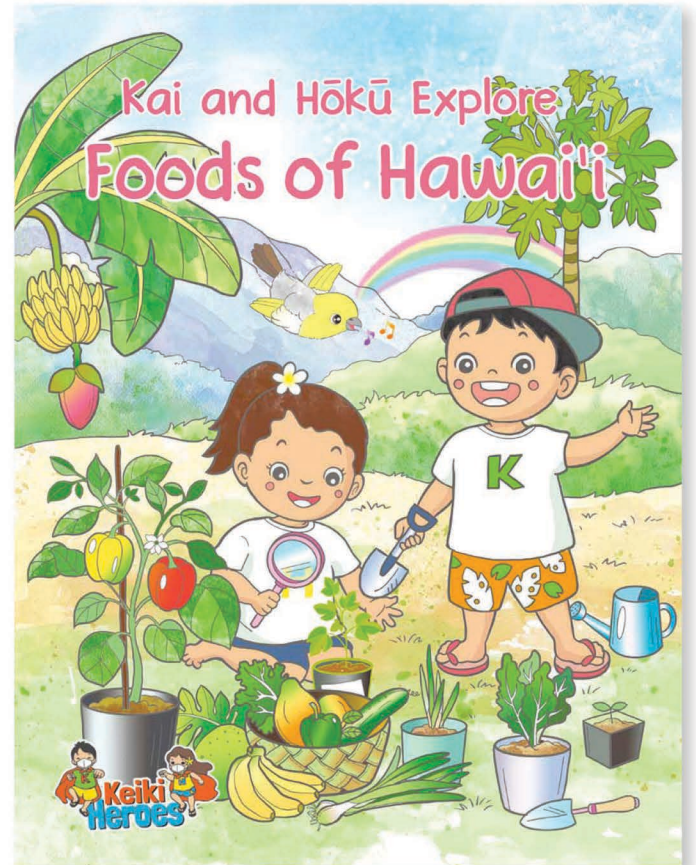


Figure 11. Activity Book Sticker Page



<sup>3</sup>"Obesity in Hawaii," America's Health Rankings, [americashealthrankings.org](http://americashealthrankings.org).

# TESTIMONIES



## Helping Families

"The most I saved in one trip was \$28 and some change. ***I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.*** Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce & can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few."

- Dawn Marquez, SNAP Shopper, Waimānalo, HI



## Helping Local Farmers

"DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people; [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy. ***This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods.***"

- Ryan Earehart, Farm Owner, Oko'a Farms



## Helping The Local Economy

"For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai'i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers. ***Since launching DA BUX in Sept 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations.*** We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state."

- Toby Taniguchi, President, KTA Super Stores

# LOOKING AHEAD

## Prioritizing Rural Areas and Expanded Purchasing Power

In Sept 2021, DA BUX received two of its largest grants to date—a \$2.6 million Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) award and a \$5 million award from emergency GusNIP COVID Relief and Response (GusCRR) funding—both were federal grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additionally, DA BUX secured \$2.6 million in federally required matching contributions from local philanthropy and program implementation partners. GusNIP was awarded to fund the expansion of DA BUX to retailers in rural areas, and GusCRR was awarded to fund the removal of the former \$20 daily discount cap. We were given a three-year period to accomplish the goals of these two grant projects.



## Advocating for Sustained Funding

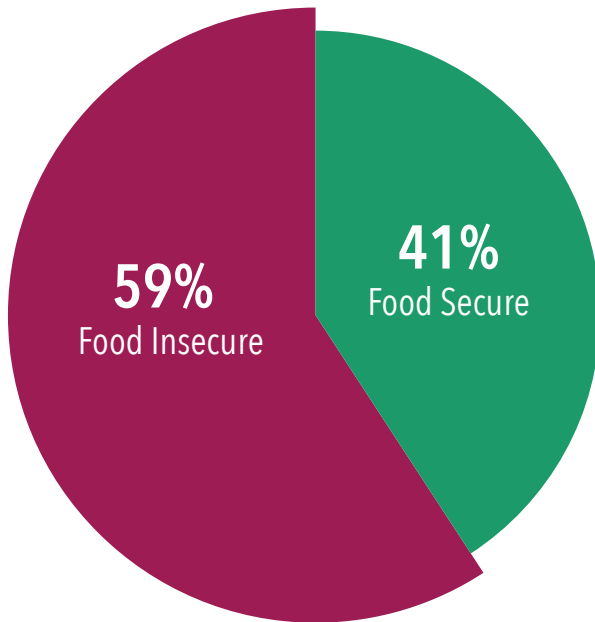
While our trajectory of grant funding has steadily increased and has allowed for exponential growth since The Food Basket first launched DA BUX in 2017, we now seek opportunities to establish more permanent funding sources other than from grants that typically expire within 1-3 years. DA BUX is engaging in national discussions with other GusNIP grantees on how future federal funding can be administered to large-scale SNAP nutrition incentive programs like ours that are well established and have a successful track record. The current competitive grant process is not sustainable for our growth as it requires a plan for substantial program expansion or innovation each time we apply. The eventual outcomes from these discussions will be proposed Farm Bill legislation that will be presented to key members of the U.S. Congress.

At the state level, we will continue to rely on our policy partners, including Hawai'i Island Public Health Institute, Ulupono Initiative and American Heart Association, to ensure our State Legislature is informed of how DA BUX has become a critical service for low-income SNAP beneficiaries struggling with economic hardship and food insecurity.





**Figure 12. Food Security Status of DA BUX Participants (n=436)**



## Addressing Food Insecurity

A survey conducted among DA BUX participants (n=436) revealed that 59% of participants are food insecure (Figure 12). This high percentage of food insecure participants suggests rising food prices and cost of living in Hawai'i are overwhelming barriers in achieving food security despite the cost savings DA BUX offers. Over time, we believe continued program availability has the potential to curb the prevalence of food insecurity among participants as they become more familiar with identifying qualifying produce at our partner retailers and as they learn to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into their diets. These behavior changes will maximize their cost savings and stretch the value of their SNAP dollars to purchase more food. Additionally, anticipated behavior changes among participants will increase demand for local produce and stimulate growth in local food production. Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, we are determined to ensure DA BUX is sustained as a permanent staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households across the state.



Photo Credit: MA'O Organic Farms

# MAHALO!

The DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program would not be possible without the generous contributions of our statewide partners. We express a sincere thank you to all those who have supported program funding, outreach and implementation of our statewide expansion for the last two years.

## Funding Partners

Aloha Care

Castle Foundation

Community First

First Insurance Company of Hawai'i  
Charitable Foundation

Hawai'i Community Foundation

Hawai'i Pacific Health

Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Hawai'i USA Federal  
Credit Union

HMSA Foundation

HPM Building Supply

Kaiser Foundation  
Health Plan, Inc.

Kamehameha Schools

Kosasa Foundation

Nutrition Incentive Hub

'Ohana Health Plan

Simpson Foundation Fund

Sophie Russell  
Testamentary Trust

State of Hawai'i Department  
of Agriculture

Stupski Foundation

The Cruise Industry Charitable  
Foundation

The Harry & Jeanette  
Weinberg Foundation

UHA Health Insurance

Ulupono Initiative

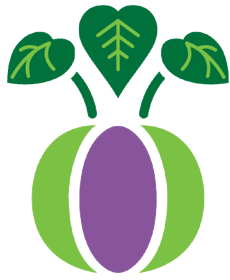
W.M. Keck Observatory



Photo Credit: The Food Basket

## Key Outreach, Implementation and Advocacy Partners

1284 Kilauea K&M, LLC	Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center	New West Broadcasting - KWXX
American Heart Association	Hawai'i Public Health Institute	Okimoto Corporation - Waianae Store, Nanakuli Super, & Friendly Market Center
Bennet Group	Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative	Oko'a Farms
Blue Zones Hawai'i	Hilo Y's Men and Women's Club	Pacific Media Group
Boy Scouts Pack 78	HIP Agriculture	Project Vision Hawai'i
Center for Getting Things Started	Hoffman Clark + Associates	QSI, Inc. - Times Supermarkets, Big Save Markets, & Shima's Supermarket
Chef Hui	Hui No Ke Ola Pono	State of Hawai'i Department of Health
Child and Family Services - Nana's House and Hale Ho'omalua	Kahumana Food Hub & Organic Farms	State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services
Common Ground Collective	Kalama Beach Corporation - Malama Market	Student Parents @ Mānoa
Connections Public Charter School	Kaua'i Economic Opportunity, Inc.	Summit Media Hawai'i
Converged Telcom	Keauhou Farmers Market	Sust'ainable Molokai
County of Hawai'i - Research and Development	Keiki Heroes	The Kohala Center
County of Hawai'i - Retired Seniors Volunteer Program	KNDI Radio	Think Tech
Exp Realty	Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa - College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
Fair Food Network	KTA Super Stores	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa - Office of Public Health Studies - Dr. Vanessa Buchthal
Farm Link Hawai'i	Lanakila Pacific Meals on Wheels	Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center - 'Elepaio Social Services
Farm to Keiki	Lions Club Region 7 Zone 1	Wai'anae Neighborhood Place - Hale Na'au Pono
Foodland	Mālama Kaua'i	We Are Oceania
Get Fit Kaua'i	MA'O Organic Farms	Yuko Green
Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition	Maui Food Bank	
Hale Puna	Maui Hub	
Hana Farmers Market	Maui United Way	
Hawai'i Appleseed	Micronesians United-Big Island	
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance	MK Design Marketing	



**DA BUX™**  
DOUBLE UP  
FOOD BUCKS

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**Hawai'i  
GOOD FOOD  
Alliance**

Communities uniting to grow, eat, and share

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks is a program of The Food Basket in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance. This work is supported by the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program grant no. 2021-70034-35360 & 2021-70030-35786 / project accession no. 1027062 & 1027314 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.