

2023 - 2025
**HUI HĀNAI 'AI
PROJECT REPORT**

*Providing grants, technical assistance,
and support to Hawaiian mahi 'ai*



*Ho'oulu i ka 'āina, ho'ōla i ke kaiāulu
Grow the land, nourish the community*

ABOUT THE PROJECT



Hui Hānai 'Ai is a 9-month cohort program led by Mālama Kaua'i, designed to scale up the capacity and impact of Native-led food businesses. With grant awards of up to \$12,858 each, the program supports Native Hawaiian farmers, ranchers, and value-added producers working to strengthen local food systems on Kaua'i.

Funded by the Native American Agriculture Fund and The Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the program has offered financial support, tailored technical assistance, business mentorship, marketing support, and access to islandwide distribution through Mālama Kaua'i's online food hub, [KauaiLocalFood.com](https://www.kauailocalfood.com).

Rooted in food sovereignty and community resilience, Hui Hānai 'Ai uplifts indigenous food producers who are stewarding ancestral lands, growing cultural crops, and feeding our island 'ohana. These direct investments help scale operations, improve farm infrastructure, expand product lines, and ultimately increase local food availability on Kaua'i.

Since launching in 2024, the program has awarded over \$180,000 to 19 Native producers across Kaua'i, with measurable impacts in increased farm outputs and revenue, improved equipment access, and stronger markets. For producers like taro farmers, ranchers, and prepared food makers, this program has created a space to share 'ike, grow skills, and uplift one another while feeding community.

Hui Hānai 'Ai is part of Mālama Kaua'i's broader efforts to reduce reliance on imported food, while centering the knowledge, leadership, and innovation of Native producers in building a more just, healthy, and food-secure island.

THE TEAM

Stormy Hulali Soza & Mālie Contrades, Project Directors
Megan Fox, Executive Director



SCALING UP LOCAL & VALUE ADDED FOODS



“The impact this program had on my business was like a catapult...It was helpful to hear other business owner’s stories, struggles, & solutions.”

- Sommer Kauakahi

Native Hawaiian farmers and food producers increased the availability of locally grown crops and value-added foods that nourish our island community, delivering greater diversity and innovation to our local food system.

Participants expanded production of local sourdough and baked goods; value-added and prepared foods such as wellness shots, vegan summer rolls, and other ready-to-eat items; food plant starters; and culturally important kalo products. This included upgrades to poi mills, which increased poi production for community feeding programs like Kaukau 4 Keiki.

Chicken farmers expanded their operations, increasing the availability of local eggs, while other mahi ‘ai invested in planting and establishing fruit orchards across West and North Kaua‘i to support long-term food security.

Through Mālama Kaua‘i’s online food hub, KauaiLocalFood.com, these locally produced foods were made more accessible to community members, including those using SNAP benefits. SNAP/DA BUX participants are able to receive 50% off eligible purchases, helping stretch food dollars while increasing access to fresh, locally grown, and culturally rooted foods for Kaua‘i ‘ohana.

\$180k

In Producer Grants

19

Producers Participated

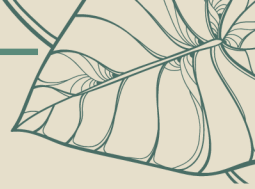
\$174k+

Participant Food Sales

112%

Sales Growth Year Over Year

WORKING TOGETHER: MAKAWELI TARO FARMERS



BEFORE



AFTER



WORKDAY

Several multi-generational kalo (taro) farmers in Makaweli Valley, who utilize water from the Pu'ulima ditch system had been facing incredible water shortages and irrigation issues. Their deteriorating water delivery system hadn't been updated since the 1960's and farmers at the end of the system were barely getting any water.

Two of the farmers applied and participated in Hui Hānai 'Ai, putting their funding towards supplies for ditch repairs and upgrades. The group also worked with us to submit a successful grant application to the County of Kaua'i which was awarded an additional \$100,000 to make a major repair to the ditch system's intake area. The result of this work, completed in May 2025, now sees cold flowing water going through the entire system. This is an exciting development, with continued fundraising ongoing to complete the repairs.

During this grant period, Yadao Taro Farm, Aana Taro Farm, and Puaka'i Farm worked collaboratively to host a community workday in Makaweli Valley, bringing together kalo farmers, families, and community members to plant vetiver along the new section of the auwai to improve bank stabilization and protect the waterway. This collective effort strengthened connections among kalo farmers within the Pu'ulima ditch system, reinforcing shared kuleana for mālama wai and long-term food security. The workday highlighted the importance of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and intergenerational stewardship in sustaining both the land and the farming community.

“The improvements made to our infrastructure will allow present and future farmers to have a continuous, dependable water delivery system that will increase production.”

- John A'ana, A'ana Taro Farm



***Mahalo to our participating farms,
product makers, and mahi 'ai:***

- A'ana Taro Farm
- Aloha 'Āina Poi Co. / Kumano I Ke Ala
- Avilla Farm
- Christopher Ka'iakapu
- Flour Lei
- Hau'oli Huamoia
- Kalalea Juice Hale
- Kalanikumai'O Nā Ali'i Hanohano
- Kaleikaimana
- Kūkulu Kumuhana O Anahola
- Lima Hana O Keale
- Manaku Farms
- Palakiko Farm
- Puaka'i Farm
- Nā Kahu O Hō'ai
- SBH Taro Farms
- Summer Foods
- Waipā Foundation
- Yadao Taro Farm

"I enjoyed the interaction and inter-networking with others. I believe that brought perspective, connection and relationship building. It was a great collaboration of all types of individuals farmers.

Together I believe we can build a successful and sustainable system to feed and resource local products."

*- Sierra-Lynn Stone,
SBH Taro Farm*



Mahalo to our funding partners:

*Native American Agriculture Fund
Office of Hawaiian Affairs*