

Food Assistance in a “SNAP”

Hawaii’s Lanakila Pacific’s Supplemental Food Assistance Program (SNAP) partnership to reach homebound seniors

Social Determinants of Health:

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environment where people are born, live, work, play, worship and age. They affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks.

The SNAP partnership at Lanakila Pacific focuses on the following SDOH objective:

1. Decreasing household food insecurity and hunger

Overview of the Program:

Lanakila Pacific is a program in Hawaii that is dedicated to empowering individuals with cognitive, physical, social, and age-related challenges to live an independent and fulfilled life.

Lanakila Pacific utilizes a local SNAP Outreach contract to educate food insecure households, including older adults in need of home-delivered meals. Lanakila Pacific is also a SNAP vendor, able to receive SNAP benefits from participants to purchase home-delivered meals and produce subscription boxes. These produce subscription boxes are delivered along with the home-delivered meals. In Hawaii, SNAP dollars can purchase double the amount of produce through the local Double Up Food Bucks program when purchasing local produce. *This further assists in reducing food insecurity in Hawaii for older adults.*

Partners:

Lanakila Pacific acts as a “middleman”, partnering with local farmers to obtain fresh produce for their meals and produce subscription boxes. A partnership with the Hawaii Food Basket--the Double Up Food Bucks contracted program administrator--makes the produce even more affordable for their participants. Additional partnerships include the Hawaii Farm Bureau, the local Aloha United Way, and private foundation grants.

Funding and Sustainability:

Additional partnerships with the Hawaii Farm Bureau, the local Aloha United Way, and private foundation grants helped launch the produce subscription service and provided multiple rounds of free fresh produce to their participants during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Then, once the participants were familiar with the different types of produce they might receive, they then were willing to join the produce box subscription going forward.

Lanakila Pacific sees the program as only a portion of a movement to create food security in Hawaii. The organization continues to subsidize this program, to help with the total cost for the participants. Plans are currently underway to establish a food hub. The food hub will help to make the program financially sustainable. In keeping with Lanakila Pacific’s mission, providing job training and employment for individuals with disabilities will be a key component of the food hub. In the future, the project’s commercial kitchen may utilize the fresh produce to create a value-added product. A few examples of value-added products are salsa, jams/jellies, soup, etc. This can also assist with financial sustainability.

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Timeline

2018

- **Hawaii Hunger Action Network:** Lanakila Pacific joins the Hawaii Hunger Action Network which brings organizations together to talk about food security. Here they first connected with experts in food safety, farming practices, etc.

2019

- **Addition of Produce Subscription Boxes:** The organization started talking about produce subscription service because they felt it would add value to their home-delivered meals. It would also give them more opportunity and more purchasing power to buy local produce for incorporation into their meals.

2020

- **Partnership Opportunity:** In 2020, Hawaii's tourism and related businesses shut down. With no hotels and restaurants operating, local farmers had a surplus of produce that was going to waste. Lanakila Pacific saw the opportunity to help both the farmers as well as their participants. They were able to purchase directly from the farmers and begin offering their produce boxes.

Advice for Replication:

“Utilize partnerships to create layers of support for your participants.”

Lori Lau | Lanakila Pacific

In addition, Lanakila Pacific stresses that this program was able to take advantage of the shifts in the need and environment during a global pandemic. It is able to succeed because it remains nimble and adaptable while staying focused on its mission and determination to fight food insecurity.

Tools and Resources:

1. Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved July 27, 2022, from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

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