

Full Calabash Fund

Feeding community and local food systems across Hawai‘i

The Full Calabash Fund (<https://kohalacenter.org/business/full-calabash-fund>) is a statewide effort to bolster immediate and long-term community health and resilience by strengthening the vulnerable families and farmers most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The Fund, administered by The Kohala Center, strategically directs funding to experienced community-based organizations with strong relationships and local networks to ensure that locally produced food is distributed effectively to resource-constrained individuals and families. The Fund will support community during this crucial time by:

- Feeding vulnerable community members healthy, local food
- Keeping Hawai‘i’s farms farming, ranchers ranching, and fishers fishing
- Strengthening Hawai‘i’s local food system

The Kohala Center will use its experience operating statewide grant and loan programs to support grantees in identifying additional resources beyond Full Calabash grants that further their capacity to do this important and urgent work in their communities. As a local fund administered by food system practitioners with deep knowledge and expertise, this initiative will bring resources and technical assistance to local community-based efforts that nourish our community now and into the future.

Beneficiaries

- Food insecure individuals and families who are struggling to access nutritious food
- Hawai‘i’s agricultural producers at risk of downsizing and/or closing as a result of decreased demand from hotels and restaurants
- Community-based organizations committed to strengthening food system connectivity and resilience beyond the pandemic response

Grantees

- Community-based nonprofit organizations and community meal preparation services
- A minimum of 50% of any single grant will be dedicated to purchasing local agricultural products from farmers, ranchers, and food producers.
- Grant funding can be used to support general operating expenses and indirect costs.
- Recipients will submit semiannual reports that detail the dollar amounts and types of local food purchased/grown, collaborative activities, and number of community members and families fed.

Characteristics of a successful applicant

- Has experience working with food insecure communities
- Collaborates with regional partners to source, prepare, and distribute food
- Engages youth and community
- Is deeply connected to place and empowers local residents to increase their resilience

Organizations and foundations can donate to the Full Calabash Fund by contacting Nicole Milne, The Kohala Center's vice president of food and agriculture initiatives, at (808) 987-9210 or nmilne@kohalacenter.org.

In Hawai'i, when a 'umeke or calabash was full, it was a sign of strong relationships, knowledge, and resource abundance held within our communities. Following this tradition, The Kohala Center and a group of Hawai'i food systems practitioners have established a Full Calabash Fund. The Fund reminds us of the honor that comes from the generous exchanges of gifts, including time, energy, and food. Although the coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented event in our lifetimes, the ways we feed our future are still deeply rooted as we craft solutions that strengthen food security and improve community access to healthy and nutritious food.



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With initial funding from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Frost Family Foundation, and The Johnson Ohana Foundation, the fund will support Hawai'i's community-based organizations that are purchasing food from local farmers, ranchers, and food producers AND providing food to community members in need. Ultimately, Hawai'i's community food system will benefit from the development of more connected and resilient local food networks. As fundraising

continues, grants may be extended to agricultural producers to scale up to support meeting the statewide need for local food, particularly those growing food for community emergency feeding and distribution programs. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds and community needs evolve, The Kohala Center will conduct assessments for learning to ensure the fund's responsiveness, while remaining committed to the underlying goal of developing a resilient local food system.

The Full Calabash Fund is being hosted and managed by The Kohala Center, an independent 501(c)(3) focused on research, education, and 'āina stewardship for healthier ecosystems. By turning ancestral knowledge and research into action, we cultivate conditions that reconnect us with our food, water, place, and people. The Center currently operates statewide loan and grant programs to support small-scale agricultural producers that contribute to building resilience in communities.

