

13 schools and nonprofits provide free meals for keiki in summer programs

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Thirteen schools and nonprofits are providing free meals and snacks for children in their summer programs thanks to some private donors.

The Stupski Foundation and Hawai'i Community Foundation gave more than \$225,000 to the Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance and Hawai'i Children's Action Network.

Nicole Woo, HCAN's director of research and economic policy, says roughly 60,000 students rely on free or reduced-price lunches — and only 1 in 12 will receive support during the summer.

"Since the pandemic, it took out a lot of food operations. So it's taking time for these programs to build back up. And now with inflation, parents are struggling to buy groceries and make ends meet," Woo told HPR.

"So this private funding to allow these kids to get some meals at their summer programs, it not only makes sure the kids are well fed and getting the enrichment that they need at these programs, but it also helps their parents make their budgets and afford food at home for them," Woo said.

Free meals are also available to keiki and their families this summer at 82 public schools across the state.

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