



FOOD 4 KEIKI SCHOOL PANTRY TOOLKIT



What is a **SCHOOL PANTRY?**

A School Pantry is a food pantry that is located on school property. The purpose of a School Pantry is to increase access to healthy food for children and their families who are experiencing food insecurity. Since there are schools in every community in Hawai'i, School Pantries are a vital resource to ending childhood hunger.

There are multiple models of food distribution that can be tailored to meet the needs of each school community. Food is distributed to students and their families free of charge, and School Pantry recipients cannot be discriminated against based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or age.



**School Pantries
are a critical food
resource for young
students, their
siblings and their
families.**

***How Do Schools* SET UP A SCHOOL PANTRY?**

School Pantries can be guided or sponsored by **Hawai'i Foodbank**. Schools wishing to set up and run their own School Pantry unaffiliated with Hawai'i Foodbank can do so with guidance from Hawai'i Foodbank. These schools will purchase their own food or solicit food donations independently. Independently-run School Pantries may be a good option for schools that have a smaller number of students experiencing food insecurity.

Schools may wish to start a small-scale pantry until they can increase their food supply and better understand their school community's food needs. They will also need to determine staffing for their School Pantry and may want to recruit community volunteers. Schools wishing to receive guidance about operating their own School Pantry may contact Hawai'i Foodbank to discuss their next steps.

Schools with a high number of students experiencing food insecurity may request to become a Hawai'i Foodbank-sponsored School Pantry. While these schools typically have at least 50% of their student body eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, schools with a lower percentage of eligible students may still request to become a Hawai'i Foodbank-sponsored School Pantry.

Steps to set up a School Pantry include:

1. The school contacts Hawai'i Foodbank to express interest in starting a School Pantry.
2. An initial meeting is held, either virtually or in person, to discuss the school's capacity and requirements for their School Pantry.
3. At least one person who will be present at the food distributions needs to have a Food Handlers Certification.
4. The school determines what space will be used to store food and purchases any needed equipment such as refrigerators, shelves or cabinets.
5. The school decides on the frequency of their distributions and their distribution time and day of the week.
6. The school announces the distribution schedule to their community and collects enrollment forms from families interested in participating.

NOURISHING

How Do Schools **FUND A SCHOOL PANTRY?**

If a school is partnering with Hawai'i Foodbank, the school does not need to provide any funding for their School Pantry. All food costs will be covered by Hawai'i Foodbank, and Hawai'i Foodbank may be able to assist with purchasing equipment for the School Pantry. Some schools receive donated food from other sources, such as community members, but this is not required.

Schools running a pantry independently will need to determine how to raise funds and source food. They may want to hold fundraisers to raise money that can be used to purchase food for their pantry. Schools may also opt to have food and fund drives to collect both food and monetary donations. Independently-run School Pantries may want to solicit food or monetary donations from local businesses such as grocery stores and restaurants.



What Type of Space and Equipment **IS NEEDED FOR A SCHOOL PANTRY?**

The size and location of the School Pantry may vary depending on the space available at the school and the level of need in the community. Pantry sizes can range from a few small containers or a single cabinet to an entire room.

Schools will need to have a designated place to store food, which may be in cabinets or on shelves. The space selected will need to be locked when unattended; if the room cannot be locked, schools will need to have cabinets that are kept locked. If the school wishes to distribute cool or frozen items, they will need a designated refrigerator and/or freezer. Hawai'i Foodbank may be able to assist with purchasing cabinets, a refrigerator and/or a freezer if the school does not have access to this equipment.

Schools may opt for pop-up distributions if there is no space on campus for a permanent pantry.



Our Schools

How Do Schools **STAFF A SCHOOL PANTRY?**

First, schools will want to ensure they have support from administration and other key stakeholders. One person cannot run a School Pantry alone, so it is imperative to have support from others within the school community.

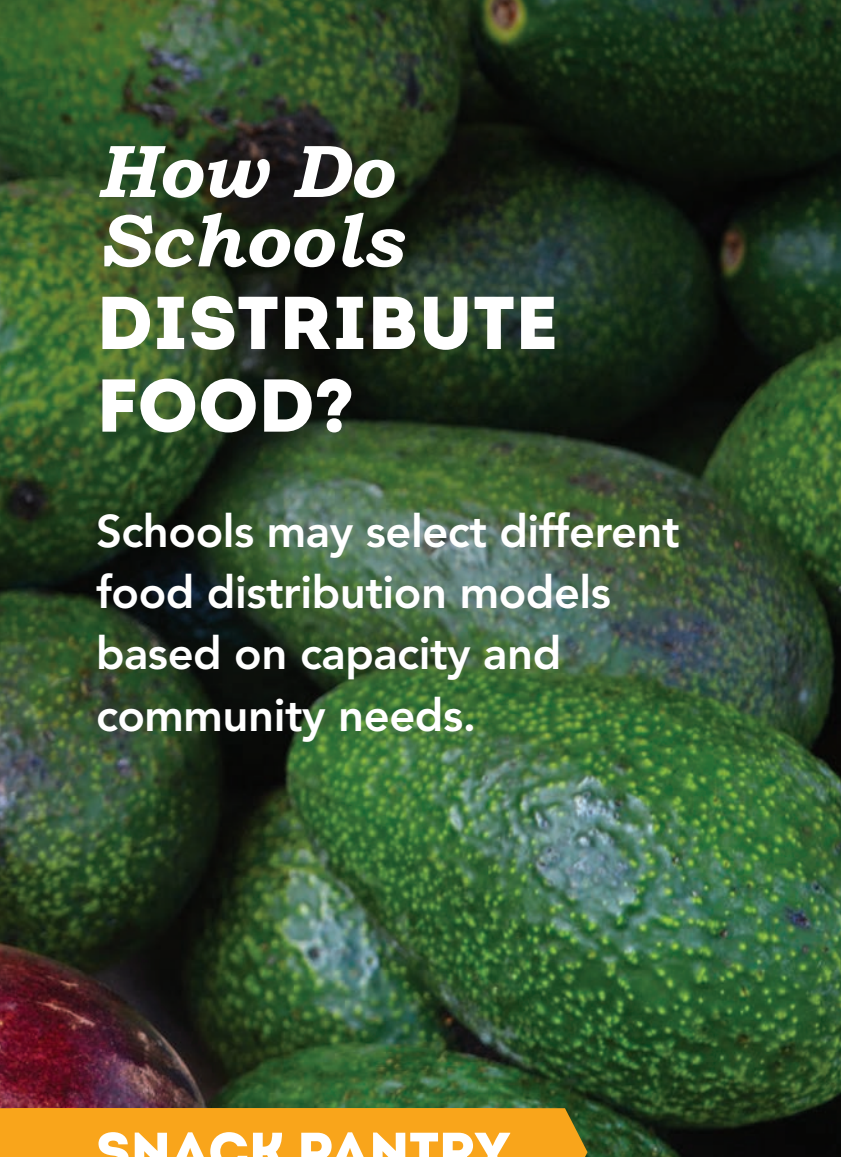
Each school will need to designate a site coordinator to serve as the primary point of contact for Hawai'i Foodbank. The site coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Communicating with Hawai'i Foodbank about food needs such as ordering more food or requesting certain types of food.
2. Tracking information on the children and families who utilize the School Pantry and completing a monthly report on pantry usage.
3. Participating in food safety training and ensuring food is stored and distributed safely.
4. Recruiting, coordinating and training school staff and volunteers.
5. Promoting the School Pantry to staff, students and families in the school community.
6. Receiving food deliveries from Hawai'i Foodbank and ensuring food is stored properly.

In addition to the site coordinator, each school will need to determine the number of assistants needed to successfully run their School Pantry. The help needed will be based on the number of students and families served and the distribution model used. These assistants may be school staff, parents, students or other community members. Hawai'i Foodbank may be able to provide volunteers if the school needs assistance during distributions. Volunteers provided by Hawai'i Foodbank are required to complete a background check if they will be regularly interacting with students. Assistants will be responsible for:

1. Helping children and families during distributions.
2. Ensuring food is distributed safely.
3. Tracking information about the children and families who utilize the School Pantry.





How Do Schools **DISTRIBUTE FOOD?**

Schools may select different food distribution models based on capacity and community needs.

SNACK PANTRY

A snack pantry provides ready-made food for students to eat during the school day when they are experiencing hunger. Snacks may be distributed by teachers, counselors, health care professionals or others who have regular contact with students.

PROS: Providing snacks to children who are hungry helps alleviate immediate symptoms like stomachaches and difficulty focusing, so students can remain in class and will not miss out on learning. There may be less stigma surrounding snack pantries compared to other types of pantries. A snack pantry requires less people power than some other types of pantries.

CONS: The quantity of food provided to students is small and only meant to address their immediate need for food. A snack pantry does not address greater food insecurity needs. Many schools choose to have a snack pantry along with another type of pantry to address other needs for students and their families.





BAGS

Hawai'i Foodbank volunteers pack bags of shelf-stable food, which then get passed on to schools to distribute to students and families. Bags weigh under five pounds to allow young students to transport the items home independently. Larger families may receive extra bags.

PROS: The bags are delivered to the schools ready-to-distribute, so it requires less work than other models. Young students can easily carry the bags, so this may be ideal for schools with many students walking home unaccompanied.

CONS: The bags are all the same, so schools are not able to address the unique needs of different students or families. While older students or parents can typically carry more food, the bags are intentionally kept very light to allow for the youngest students to carry them home. Because students and families are not able to select items themselves, the food provided may not meet their needs – which can potentially lead to greater waste.

STANDARD PANTRY

Cases of food and boxes of mixed items are provided by Hawai'i Foodbank. School staff or volunteers package the food for students and families in boxes or bags. The food can be packed in advance if many people are expected, or can be packed as families arrive. The distributions can be done as drive-through or walk-up, depending on the needs of the community.

PROS: There is greater flexibility for the school to pack items based on the needs of their community and individual families. Schools can adjust for family size, dietary restrictions and other factors. Families can receive more food and a greater variety than with the pre-packed bags.

CONS: Because students and families are not able to select items themselves, the food provided may not meet their needs – which can potentially lead to greater waste. Assembling the bags requires more labor.



A child's
chance for a
bright tomorrow
starts with getting
enough food
to eat today.

CHOICE PANTRY

Cases of food and boxes of mixed items are provided by Hawai'i Foodbank. Students or their family members can then shop in the pantry and select items to take home.

PROS: With this model, students and families are given the dignity of choice, which correlates with a more positive experience. They know what will be used in their household, leading to less food waste. Students can access the pantry discreetly. Choice pantries may be a good option for schools with a smaller population in need of food assistance. This model requires less manual labor as nothing is prepackaged in bags or boxes prior to food pick-up.

CONS: Having students or their families shop for food may take longer compared to models where food is prepared for pickup ahead of time.

POP-UP

Food delivered by Hawai'i Foodbank will be distributed to students and families on the same day. Volunteers can assemble boxes of food for people to pick up at a drive-through or walk-up distribution, or the food can be displayed for people to select.

PROS: This model accommodates schools with limited or no storage space, as the food will be delivered and distributed on the same day. As they are held on the same day, pop-ups allow for items like fresh produce to be distributed.

CONS: Pop-ups allow for more food to be distributed, so younger students may have difficulty carrying large amounts or heavy items home.

MODEL	OVERVIEW	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
Snacks	- Provides ready-made food for students to eat during the school day or immediately after school when they are experiencing hunger. - Snacks may be distributed by teachers, counselors, health care professionals or others who have regular contact with students.	- Providing snacks to children who are hungry helps alleviate immediate symptoms such as stomachaches and difficulty focusing. - Students who are given a snack can remain in class and will not miss out on learning. - There may be less stigma for students utilizing a snack pantry than other types of school pantries. - A snack pantry requires less people power.	- The quantity of food provided to students is small and only meant to address their immediate need for food. - A snack pantry does not address greater food insecurity needs. - Schools may need additional pantries to address the food insecurity of students and families.
Bags	- Hawai'i Foodbank volunteers pack bags of shelf-stable food, which are passed on to schools to distribute to their students and families. - Larger families may receive additional bags if they are able to carry them.	- The bags are delivered to the schools ready-to-distribute, so it requires less work compared to other models. - Bags weigh under five pounds to allow young students to transport the items home independently. - Young students can easily carry the bags, so this may be ideal for schools with a large number of students walking home unaccompanied.	- The bags are all the same, so schools are not able to address the unique needs of different families. - While older students or parents are typically able to carry more food, the bags are intentionally kept very light to allow for the youngest students to carry them home. - Food items are preassembled, meaning they may not meet the needs of each specific family. This could lead to potential food waste.
Standard Pantry	- Cases of food and boxes of mixed items are provided by Hawai'i Foodbank. - School staff or volunteers package the food for students and families in boxes or bags. - The distributions can be done as drive-through or walk-up.	- There is greater flexibility for the school to pack items based on the needs of their community and individual families. - Schools can customize the food distributed based on the size of the family, dietary restrictions or needs, access to kitchen appliances, etc. - Families can receive more food with a greater variety than with the preassembled bags.	- Students and families are not able to select items themselves, so the foods provided may not always meet their needs, which may lead to greater waste. - More labor is required for assembling boxes or bags of food at schools.
Choice Pantry	- Cases of food along with boxes of mixed items are provided by Hawai'i Foodbank. - Students or their family members can then select the items they wish to take home.	- Students and families are given the dignity of choice, which correlates with a more positive experience. - There is less food waste as people can select their own items. - Since schools do not need to package the food, this model is less labor intensive.	- Having students or their family shop for food may take longer than having food ready for people to pick up. - Selecting food takes time so more people participating can increase the wait time.



What Types of Food **ARE INCLUDED IN A HEALTHY SCHOOL PANTRY?**

A wide variety of items should be offered through a School Pantry to meet the diverse dietary needs and wants of students and their families. Schools may want to utilize the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA's "My Plate" to ensure foods offered through the pantry are consistent with recommendations from professionals. In general, schools should limit foods that are high in sugar, sodium and saturated fat. Culturally familiar items should also be included if possible.

Hawai'i Foodbank utilizes Healthy Eating Research (HER) Guidelines to rank food items in its inventory system. This allows more detailed nutritional information to be collected in the system to ensure each School Pantry receives a variety of nutritious foods. Schools can be provided with fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to canned fruits, canned vegetables, healthy proteins like fish and chicken, whole grains, and dairy.



HEALTHY SCHOOL PANTRY

How Do Schools **ENSURE THE FOOD IS SAFE TO DISTRIBUTE?**

The safety of our keiki and families is our top priority. To ensure that all food is stored and distributed in a safe manner, at least one person present at the distribution must have a current Food Handlers Certification. This training can be completed in person through the Hawai'i State Department of Health or online through an approved organization. The certification is good for three years.

Hawai'i Foodbank also requires that:

1. Those using a refrigerator or freezer must monitor and record the internal temperature weekly.
2. Whenever possible, food is stored in an air-conditioned room.
3. Perishable foods should be given to students at the end of the day to take home.
4. All food must be stored at least six inches off the ground and away from the wall to avoid pest problems.
5. All food is stored away from cleaning materials and toxic chemicals.
6. A sign is posted explaining the importance of proper hand-washing. (This can be provided by Hawai'i Foodbank.)
7. Gloves are worn by anyone handling unpackaged food such as produce.
8. A sign is posted with emergency numbers. (This can be provided by Hawai'i Foodbank.)
9. The School Pantry will be monitored annually for food safety by Hawai'i Foodbank.

Who Can Access **THE SCHOOL PANTRY?**

The School Pantry should be open to all children, families and employees from the school community. We encourage schools to allow other neighbors to access the pantry as well if they can do so while ensuring the safety of students. To make sure that food is distributed in a fair and equitable manner, all staff and volunteers who will be interacting with students or community members are required to complete civil rights training on an annual basis.

BEYOND SCHOOL PANTRY



How Do Schools **IDENTIFY STUDENTS IN NEED AND INCREASE PARTICIPATION?**

Some students and families who are experiencing food insecurity will self-identify and seek assistance. Others may try to hide their need or feel embarrassed asking for help. Staff and volunteers will want to make students and families feel safe accessing the pantry. Discreet or private access to the pantry may be an option for participants who feel hesitant. Holding food distributions out in the open may also help to decrease stigma and encourage those who need it to get food.

It is important for school staff to recognize signs of a child not having enough to eat at home. Children who are experiencing hunger may complain of frequent stomachaches or headaches. They may also appear tired during class, have difficulty concentrating or demonstrate aggressive behavior.

Ways to promote a school pantry:

1. Sending a flyer or sign-up sheet home with students.
2. Promoting distributions on the school website and/or social media.
3. Announcing upcoming distributions over the school intercom or on the school news.

Hawai'i Foodbank can also help create fliers or suggest other ways to promote the School Pantry.





What Type of Data **NEEDS TO BE COLLECTED?**

School Pantries are made available through grants and generous donors, and they should be able to know how their money is spent. It is very important for schools to provide data to Hawai'i Foodbank to ensure continued funding to support this program.

Hawai'i Foodbank typically creates a shared spreadsheet for schools to track their distributions monthly.

- For snacks, schools just keep a tally of the number of people receiving food each day, and they do not need to keep track of who the food went to.
- For other types of food, schools will be responsible for tracking basic demographic information of the food recipients, such as number of adults and children in the household, employment status and ZIP code.
 - Schools typically collect families' information when they sign up for the school pantry or during their first pantry visit.
 - For each subsequent visit to the pantry, the school should mark down the date that the student or family member received food.

Hawai'i Foodbank staff will walk schools through the reporting process when they are starting a new school pantry, and is happy to help with any questions or concerns that come up along the way.

While not required – stories, thank you notes or artwork from children, and photographs of distributions from schools showing how the School Pantry helped their students is appreciated.





Is a Formal **AGREEMENT NEEDED?**

Public schools within the Hawai'i Department of Education do not need to sign individual agreements as an agreement is signed by the Superintendent. Public charter schools and private schools will need to have a Memorandum of Agreement signed by their principal. This will outline what Hawai'i Foodbank has agreed to provide and what schools agree to carry out.



How Do Schools **REQUEST MORE FOOD?**

Many School Pantries have regular food delivery scheduled with Hawai'i Foodbank. This allows schools to receive food at planned intervals. If the food supply is running low or schools have too much food, the amount of food brought to the school at the next delivery can be adjusted. Schools are also encouraged to communicate with Hawai'i Foodbank about the types of food needed.



FOOD 4 KEIKI



What Do Schools **DO AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR?**

Schools are encouraged to continue food distributions if there is activity on campus during the summer. However, if the school does not have the capacity to do so or if there will not be students on campus during the summer, all food should be distributed prior to the end of the school year.



What Do Schools **DO AT THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR?**

Schools should notify Hawai'i Foodbank during the summer or at the start of the school year if there are any changes in the school's needs. Hawai'i Foodbank will work with the school to restart the School Pantry at the start of the new school year.



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QUESTIONS?

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