



# Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports to Reduce Child Hunger



## Hawai'i Spotlight: *Building a Data-Driven Foundation to Help End Hunger in Hawai'i*

The Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS), in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) and the Children's Healthy Living Center of Excellence (CHL Center) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, is building foundational capacity to share and analyze administrative data across the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). This groundwork will enable Hawai'i to increase access to nutrition support programs, in alignment with Hawai'i's 'Ohana Nui framework, which aims to dismantle intergenerational poverty. Through their project, Hawai'i will:

### Build Foundational Data Analytics Capacity

DHS and DOH will develop a process to share data to determine how many families participate concurrently in SNAP and WIC and examine the factors underlying patterns of co-enrollment. As DHS works to develop and implement a new eligibility system, advancements to cross-agency data sharing will improve wrap-around service provision to families.

### Develop Strategies to Engage Communities Experiencing Food Insecurity

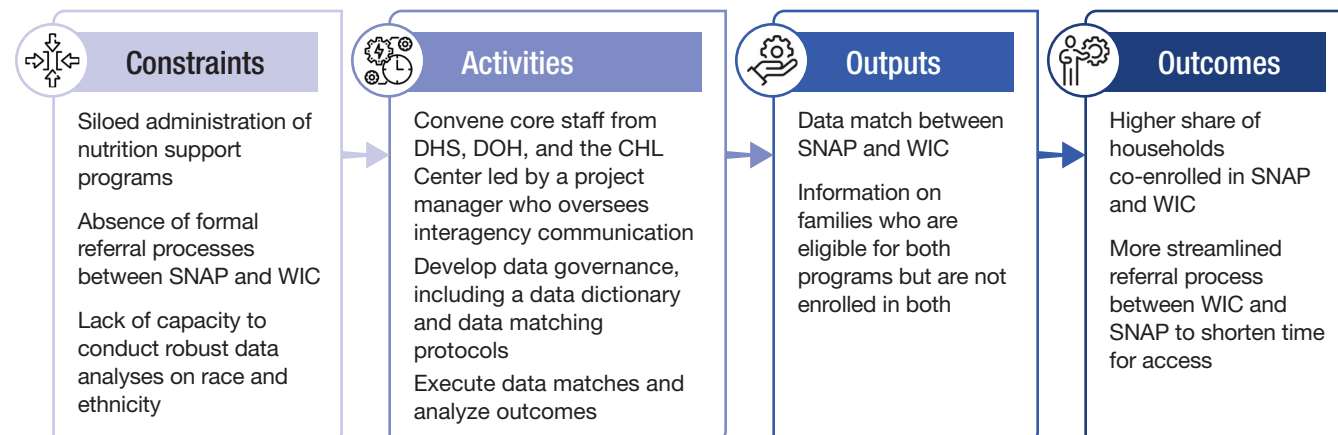
By learning more about individuals who utilize SNAP, WIC, or both through enhanced data analysis, DHS and DOH will be better able to identify families who may be eligible for, but missing out on, critical nutrition supports. Analyses will examine how demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, household make-up, pregnancy, and geographic location relate to experiences with hunger and limited access to nutritious food and will help guide future outreach.

### Enhance Cross-Agency Coordination

DHS and DOH are working together to streamline program administration, from initiating applications to conducting eligibility determinations for nutrition support programs. This will contribute to the long-term vision for the two agencies of designing one-stop, wrap-around service systems that are easier for clients to access and navigate.

## Logic Model

*Purpose:* To improve access to SNAP and WIC through more comprehensive data analysis.



## Background and Context: *Building On Hawai'i's Growing Record of Collaboration*

Hawai'i's project adds to the state's momentum improving coordination across programs and community stakeholders to reduce barriers to accessing critical supports that help people and communities thrive. Related efforts include:

### Modernizing DHS' Benefits Eligibility Solution (BES)

DHS is currently carrying out a long-term initiative to modernize its information technology system used to administer program eligibility for SNAP and other human services programs. This modernization will enable program administrators to better navigate across benefit programs and streamline both referral and eligibility determination processes for program participants.

### 'Ohana Nui, a Multi-Generational Approach

In 2016, DHS launched 'Ohana Nui, a transformational change in its approach to deliver human services that seeks to break generational patterns of poverty by supporting the entire family. The shift to the 'Ohana Nui framework simultaneously improves government efficiency and effectiveness while connecting families to the comprehensive suite of benefits and services that address basic needs.

## Problem Identification: *Grappling with Organizational Siloes to Advance Anti-Hunger Initiatives*

In spite of these and other efforts, persistent siloes and outdated infrastructure among Hawai'i's nutrition programs make it difficult for agencies like DHS to measure and reduce food insecurity in the state. Hawai'i is committed to removing barriers that place burdens on participants and administrators, including:

### Connecting Applications for Nutrition Supports

SNAP, WIC, and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are managed by three different state agencies: DHS, DOH, and the Department of Education (DOE), respectively. Therefore, families with children must engage in three separate application processes to access nutrition benefits, which places unnecessary and significant burdens on participants. Since each system of record is owned by a separate agency, no IT solution is currently in place to collect, match, or analyze data to identify families who are either co-enrolled [in nutrition support programs] or eligible for benefits, but not enrolled.

### Issuing Referrals Across Nutrition Supports

Although WIC provides information about other social service programs to participants, no formal referral process currently exists between SNAP and WIC. This is in part due to the fact that DOH has limited access to DHS' SNAP database, for income verification purposes only, and DHS lacks any access to WIC's system.

### Leveraging Demographic Data

Without efficient access to analyses of data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, DHS and DOH are currently unable to extrapolate how hunger, or lack of consistent access to nutritious food, impacts Hawai'i's culturally diverse and multigenerational households. Notably, no one racial demographic makes up the majority of Hawai'i's population – over one third of the population identifies as Asian; about a quarter as white; another quarter as two or more races; over a tenth as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander; and another tenth as Hispanic or Latinx. More meaningful data will lead to better options to meet residents' various nutrition needs and ethnic or cultural preferences.






“ Our Thriving Children Strong Families project will assist in building the foundational capacity to prepare for electronic data sharing between Hawai'i's SNAP and WIC programs. This will allow a more systematic referral approach to increase cross-enrollment and reduce the time and number of processes to access benefits. This project will also allow the state to move toward our long-term goal of analyzing SNAP data to identify gap groups and communities, improve policy and system alignment, and create intentional approaches to support families with young children to ensure their nutritional needs are met while reducing system-caused stress and trauma. ”

*Cathy Betts*, Director, Hawai'i Department of Human Services

## Project Implementation Plan

To tackle these problems, DHS has launched a transformative effort to plan, develop, and implement new capabilities for analyzing administrative data across SNAP and WIC. The approach aims to improve the reach of Hawai'i's nutrition support programs through systems alignment, tailored outreach, and more efficient delivery of nutrition supports.

 <b>Plan</b>	 <b>Develop</b>	 <b>Implement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene core staff from DHS, DOH, and the CHL Center</li> <li>Initiate development of data governance documents</li> <li>Hire project manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create data dictionary and matching methodology</li> <li>Conduct field tests of new data sharing mechanisms</li> <li>Facilitate trainings on SNAP, WIC, and Medicaid for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement matching of SNAP and WIC participant data</li> <li>Start collecting SNAP and WIC co-enrollment data</li> <li>Analyze trends in SNAP and WIC co-enrollment</li> <li>Refine outreach strategies</li> </ul>

## Long-Term Goals: *Moving Closer to Eliminating Food Insecurity in Hawai'i*

DHS and DOH seek to drive higher rates of co-enrollment in SNAP and WIC among children and families. The joint project will develop data governance tools—including a data dictionary; matching methodology; and policies and procedures for data management, reporting, analysis, and referral—necessary for DHS and DOH to continue modernizing access to nutrition supports. Strengthened interagency relationships and more connected information management systems will enable DHS and DOH to develop streamlined application and enrollment processes across benefit programs serving children.



Operating through the lens of the 'Ohana Nui multigenerational framework, Hawai'i will prioritize equity throughout the project by systematically planning to combat food insecurity with strategies tailored to the needs of Hawai'i's racially diverse, multigenerational, and geographically varied populations. The success of Hawai'i's project will be measured by the effective creation of data governance documents and the formalization of business processes between DHS, DOH, and the CHL Center to facilitate analyses of SNAP and WIC participant data.



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