Hawai‘i Food+ Policy

Internship Information

2027

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APPLICATION

FOODPLUSPOLICY.COM

Message from the team

Aloha mai,

Mahalo for taking the time to learn more about Hawai'i Food+ Policy. Every cohort, we watch a new group of interns come in curious about food systems and leave fluent in testimony writing, bill tracking, and community organizing, often surprising themselves along the way.

This internship exists because Hawai'i's food future depends on people who understand both the 'āina and the legislative process, and are willing to show up for both. Whether you're drawn to farming policy, food access, or growing into a civically engaged leader, there's a place for you here.

Take time with this packet, and reach out if you have questions along the way. We hope to see your application soon!

Mahalo,
The Food+ Policy Team

Internship Origin and Purple Maiʻa

Purple Maiʻa Foundation is a technology education nonprofit dedicated to empowering culturally engaged, community-oriented innovators. By integrating Indigenous values with contemporary technology, Purple Maiʻa fosters sustainable solutions for Hawaiʻi's communities. Since 2014, the foundation has created place-based programs that uplift local and Indigenous voices, blending cultural knowledge with modern tools to build resilience and inspire future leaders.

Recognizing the need to address food systems as part of community resilience, Purple Maiʻa's co-CEO, Kelsey Amos, created Hawaiʻi Food+ Policy to focus on food sovereignty and policy change.

Hawaiʻi Food+ Policy emerged as an initiative aimed at creating pathways for meaningful civic engagement and policy change within Hawaiʻi's food systems. With a mission to advance food sovereignty and promote sustainable, equitable food policies, Food+ empowers advocates to shape the future of Hawaiʻi's food landscape. By educating and supporting local leaders, the program provides the tools needed to influence policy and drive systemic change at all levels. In partnership with Purple Maiʻa, Food+ integrates cultural knowledge with policy work, ensuring that the voices and values of Hawaiʻi's diverse communities remain at the heart of food system transformation.

Food+ Policy Mission

To develop the next generation of food system leaders by providing hands-on policy education, mentorship, and opportunities to engage in community-centered, ʻāina-rooted food system work.

VISION

A Hawaiʻi where communities are nourished by resilient, equitable, and ʻāina-centered food systems led by informed and empowered people of those places.

IMPACT

- **101 interns** from across Hawaiʻi and one international intern from Malaysia, contributing to policy change through hands-on experience.
- **907 bills tracked** collectively, showcasing active involvement in legislative efforts that impact food systems.
- **691 testimonies submitted**, influencing policy decisions and advocating for sustainable food systems.
- Interns from diverse islands: **Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Maui, Molokaʻi, and Hawaiʻi Island**, reflecting broad representation from across the state.

Core Commitment: Civic Engagement and Youth Leadership

Civic engagement and governance literacy are central to Food+. We build pathways for Hawai'i's students and communities to understand the legislative process, participate in shaping public policy, and stregthen food systems through informed and empowered action.

Policy Focus Areas

Local Agriculture, Farmers, and Food Production

Strengthening Hawai'i's capacity to feed itself by supporting local farmers, expanding opportunities for young and emerging growers, and reducing reliance on imported food.

Regenerative, Indigenous, and Climate-Reslient Food Systems

Restoring ecosystems, uplifting indigenous knowledge, and building long-term resilence in the face of climate change.

Food Access, Health, and Cultural Nourishment

Supporting community access to healthy, affordable, and culturally meaningful food.

Farm to School, Education, and Youth Food Pathways

Increasing food literacy and strengthening the connection between learners and Hawai'i-grown food.

Read more about our policy focus areas

INTERNSHIP AT A GLANCE

- **Start Date: January 2027**
- **5 month duration (Jan - May)**
- **10-15 intern** cohort size

KEY SKILLS CULTIVATED DURING THE INTERNSHIP

RESEARCH	CREATIVITY	COMMUNITY	DATA/TECH
Focused research on food policy and food systems transformation efforts in Hawai'i	Building skills in graphic design, art, video, and other creative means	Engagement in outreach and networking with various Hawai'i communities focused on food systems advocacy	Building resources and data products to further our food systems advocacy

Internship Overview



Key Details and Responsibilities

- Interns will attend:
  - A weekly 1.5-hour team meeting on Mondays at 2 pm (working check-in meeting).
  - A weekly 1.5-hour learning session on Thursdays at 4 pm (presentations, discussions, or activities to deepen understanding of the legislative process).

- Additional internship work (estimated 2 to 8 hours per week) includes:
  - Tracking food and agriculture bills during the legislative session.
  - Developing written testimony on bills.
  - Communicating with the community through newsletter campaigns, social media, opinion pieces, outreach events, and other creative methods.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

- Have a passion for and strong knowledge of an aspect of Hawai'i's food system
- Are eager to deepen your understanding of the legislative process, policy-making, and advocacy
- Thrive in a dynamic work environment that requires adaptability and creative problem-solving
- Can commit to mandatory team meetings on Mondays from 2-3:30 pm and Thursdays from 4-5:30 pm
- Must currently reside in Hawai'i and contribute to Hawai'i's food system throughout the program.









Application Timeline

STEP 1: APPLICATION | OCT 5 - NOV 13, 2026

Those interested in applying must submit an application online by **Friday, November 13, 2026.** Email food@purplemaia.org or janine@purplemaia.org with any questions.

STEP 2: INTERVIEWS | OCT - NOV 2026

A 30 minute interview via Zoom will be scheduled where you'll meet our team and we'll learn more about you, including your background in civic engagement and the food system.

STEP 3: EVALUATION | NOV - DEC 2026

The Food+ team will evaluate applicants and select the interns.

STEP 4: ACCEPTANCE | DECEMBER 2026

The selected interns will be notified via email of their acceptance. You will be given a deadline to confirm your participation

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS THIS A PAID INTERNSHIP?

Yes! We're offering $2,000 stipends for the legislative session/semester (Jan-May 2027).

DO I NEED TO BE BASED ON O'AHU TO PARTICIPATE?

We are encouraging applicants from across the pae ʻāina to apply. Most of the internship can be done remotely and via Zoom.

WILL THERE BE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK ON-SITE, OR IS IT PRIMARILY VIRTUAL?

We value the accessibility of virtual meetings but recognize the importance of building strong, in-person connections. To balance this, we offer several opportunities to meet face-to-face, including an in-person orientation, volunteer workdays, and tabling at community events.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED TIME COMMITMENT FOR THE INTERNSHIP?

The expected time commitment is approximately 8-10 hours per week, which includes two mandatory weekly meetings.

DO I NEED TO BE A COLLEGE STUDENT TO APPLY?

Priority is given to currently enrolled college students (any level, including community college and graduate programs). Others with a strong connection to Hawaiʻi's food system are welcome to apply.

CONTACT



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READY TO APPLY?

APPLY TODAY