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# **Meals on Wheels Program to Benefit from Stimulus Package**

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Lanakila Pacific Meals on Wheels will be getting a portion of a half million dollars from the stimulus package. You heard right. The federal economic stimulus package. And it couldn't come at a better time.

"Yes, we have about 300 seniors that are on our waiting list and it keeps growing every single day. We have so many calls from so many seniors out there that would like to get involved in our service but the only limiting factor is our funding," said, Brandon Mitsuda of the Lanikila Meals on Wheels.

The announcement of the grant was only made yesterday. "We are waiting for the state to make some decisions about how the counties will receive the money and then the counties in turn divvy up the money amongst the service providers," said Marian Tsuji, of Lanikila Meals on Wheels.

The Meals on Wheels kitchen is more than a place to prepare nutritious meals for homebound seniors. Tsuji said, "The kitchen actually serves as a training ground for folks that have disabilities. We train them in food service, food service preparation and then at the end of the training help them get placed in competitive employment."

Meals on Wheels has been in operation since 1971 and currently serves 750 homebound seniors and hundreds more at group dining sites. That's the initial purpose. Tsuji said, "But we've also created a social enterprise by providing meals for the public, catering service and providing services for schools."

Meals on Wheels is not counting solely on grants to continue its mission. The non-profit is generating revenue in other ways. The lei you see on the table were crafted by seniors and they are for sale. Mitsuda adds, "And we also have our express chefs which is part of our full service kitchen. We can cater any type of event. All you have to do is just give us a call at 531-0555. We also have healthy meal options as well."

They should do all right with a sales pitch like that.