



# HAWAII

## Where are the charter school deserts in Hawaii?

We detail the distribution of schools in Hawaii in order to provide educators and policymakers with information about communities that provide no access to charter schools. Many families lack the financial means to move out of neighborhoods when dissatisfied with their schooling options, so the location of schools is key to ensuring access and equity for all students. Policymakers and parents can use this information to better understand the supply of schooling options in their states and cities—and to press for changes that would improve that supply. Charter operators and authorizers may also find this analysis helpful as they consider where to establish new schools.

### What is a charter school desert?

The following maps display where elementary charter schools are located in Hawaii. A **charter school desert** is three or more contiguous census tracts that have poverty rates greater than 20 percent but that have no charter schools. It should be noted that Hawaii’s unique geography presents problems for our method of identifying charter school deserts. Because most of Hawaii’s population is distributed across several islands and we define charter school deserts as groups of contiguous census tracts, many census tracts in Hawaii are divided by water and therefore cannot be contiguous. This may limit the possible formation of some charter school deserts.

### Results

Hawaii has 180 public elementary schools, of which twenty-nine are charter schools. The state as a whole has a 9.5 percent poverty rate. Hawaii has no charter school deserts.<sup>1</sup>

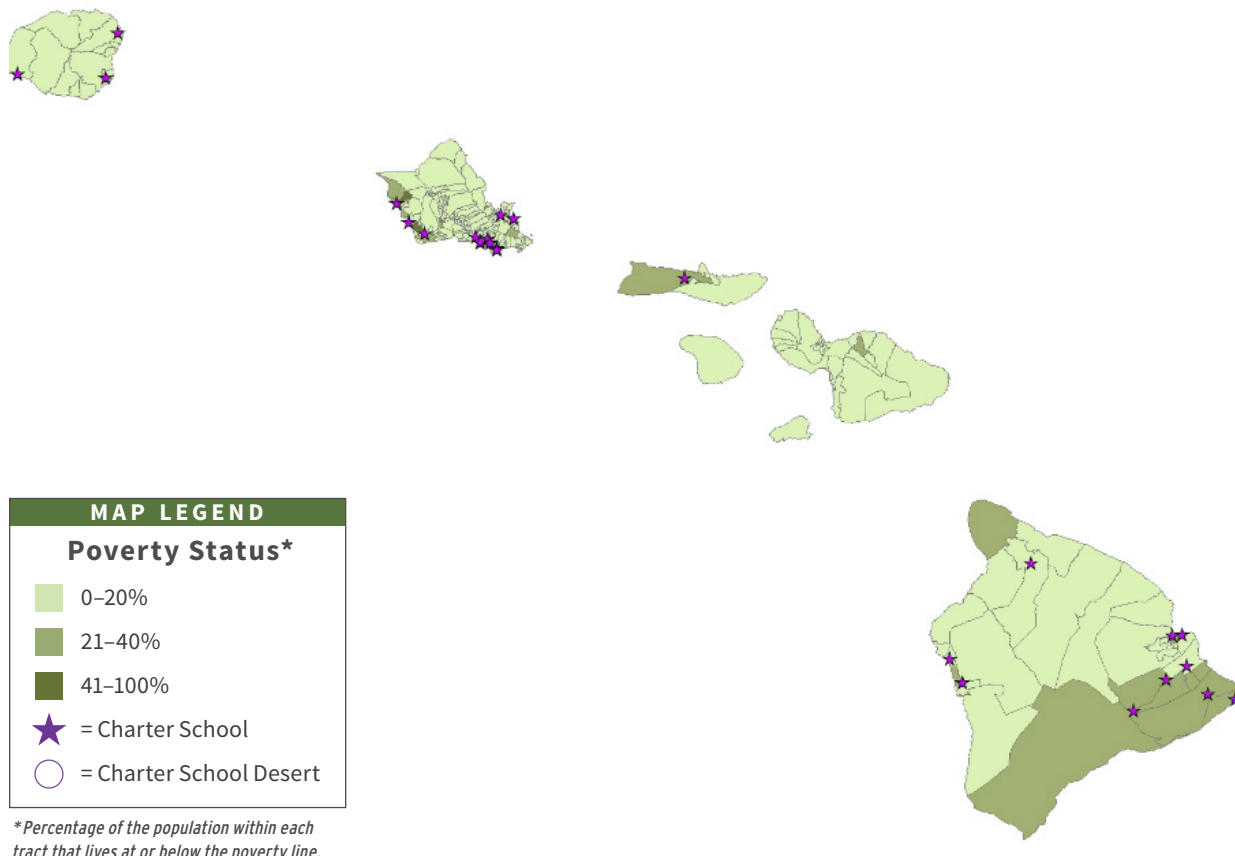
#### Hawaii Charter School Deserts by the Numbers

% of the state population living in poverty.....	<b>9.5%</b>
# of public elementary schools.....	<b>180</b>
# of charter schools .....	<b>29</b>
# of census tracts .....	<b>351</b>
# of charter school deserts.....	<b>0</b>
Approximate proportion of mid- to high-poverty census tracts that charter school deserts comprise .....	<b>0%</b>

1. Note that Hawaii’s unique geography does not align well with our method of identifying charter school deserts. Because most of Hawaii’s population is distributed across several islands and we define charter school deserts as groups of contiguous census tracts, many census tracts in Hawaii are divided by water and therefore cannot be contiguous.

Map 1 shows the census tracts and charter schools in Hawaii. Darker green highlights indicate areas in which more than 20 percent of the population lives in poverty. There are no charter school deserts in Hawaii.

### Map 1: Overview of charter school deserts in Hawaii



### Five Things to Keep in Mind

Readers should note several points. First, we have not tried to describe, analyze, or infer how state policies may impact the distribution of charter schools in Hawaii—simply to show which high-poverty areas lack such schools. Second, although we focus on school locations, location alone is insufficient to ensure that families have viable access to schools. Nearby schools may not be available to families if they’re filled to capacity, if policies prohibit transfer, or if transportation is unavailable. Third, some rural areas may lack charter schools simply because the population is too thin to support them. Fourth, our report does not address school quality, but the companion website allows users to view schools’ math and English language arts proficiency data. Finally, visually identifying charter school deserts is inevitably vulnerable to human error, as they may be identified differently based on how contiguous census tracts are positioned and how “desert circles” are drawn.