



Double Up Food Bucks is a statewide nutrition incentive program that partners with local farmers markets and Iowa-based grocery stores to increase the purchasing power of low-income families to buy fresh produce.

Double Up Food Bucks was launched as a pilot project in 2016 through the support of private-sector funding at six farmers markets. With the award of a USDA grant and private-sector match funding, the program doubled the number of participating sites in 2017 and subsequently continued to grow year-over-year. In 2020, with the confidence of the Feeding Iowa Taskforce and the award of emergency CARES Act funding, the Program was able to quickly and successfully scale-up to expand from 36 to 141 participating sites in 67 counties. Through that partnership, the Healthiest State is able to **increase access to fresh produce from an estimated 5,750 Iowa families in 2019 to over 38,000 families in 2020 and 86,500 families in 2021.**

Why Double Up Food Bucks

Food-insecure households are forced to engage in coping strategies, often including the consumption of cheaper foods that are high in calories, but low in nutritional value. Nutritious foods support growth and development and help lower rates of chronic diseases. Inconsistent access to these foods has a negative impact on the health of individuals at all ages. As the health of Iowans declines, it impacts not only the individual and their family, but also their ability to succeed in school and in their employment. Further, the cost of chronic disease in the U.S. is more than \$1 trillion annually. **In Iowa, just five percent of Medicaid members with at least one chronic condition account for 48 percent of acute care costs.**¹ Fruit and vegetable incentive programs, like Double Up Food Bucks, are estimated to save \$6.7 billion in healthcare costs over a lifetime.

How it's Funded

Double Up Food Bucks in Iowa is supported through private-sector match funding and a USDA grant opportunity, the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).

In 2023, we are requesting an annual appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the State of Iowa to support Double Up Food Bucks' efforts and ensure Iowa families continue to have expanded access to fresh produce.

¹ https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/3_Improve_Iowans_Health_Status_3.pdf?110120191802

How it works

For every SNAP dollar spent on fresh produce, the program will match the purchase, made at a participating Iowa grocery store and farmers market, at a 1:1 ratio, doubling recipients' healthy food budget. Not only does this program assist in addressing one of the most critical social determinants of health by ensuring access to healthy food for families, but it creates better business for farmers and boosts local economies.



Impact

Double Up Food Bucks is a win for Iowa's economy. Since the program only works with Iowa-based farmers' markets and grocery retailers, 100% of the funding is spent in the state. This benefits local producers and Iowa-based businesses instead of national retailers. Every SNAP dollar and Double Up Food Buck spent stimulates the local economy by \$1.90. That equates to more than \$7.6 million of economic impact since launching in 2016.

Double Up Food Bucks fights nutrition insecurity. Since 2016, this program has proven to be an effective way to help Iowans utilize SNAP dollars to increase their consumption of fresh produce. Increasing access to healthy food for SNAP recipients is an effective way to manage and prevent chronic disease. Providing Iowa's kids with fresh produce will have a positive impact on future health outcomes. Since 2016, Double Up Food Bucks customers have taken home an estimated 4.9 million servings of fresh fruits and vegetables with SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks combined.

