

Farm Bill Messaging for GusNIP

Topline Message: There is bipartisan momentum in the upcoming Farm Bill to increase access to healthy food and boost farmers' bottom lines by improving and expanding the successful Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentives Program (GusNIP).

Key Farm Bill Talking Points

GusNIP is a proven tool to help low-income people afford to eat more fruits and vegetables:

- Since its inception as a pilot program in 2008, GusNIP has proven to be a successful public-private partnership that has expanded healthy food options for families and sparked economic opportunities for farmers and communities across the country.
- GusNIP invests in local nutrition incentive initiatives, which help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants make their benefits go further when they buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores, so they can ultimately put more healthy food on the table.
- When a SNAP shopper goes to a grocery store or farmers market that offers nutrition incentives, they receive a dollar-for-dollar match or discount when they buy fruits and vegetables. That means SNAP participants are able to eat more healthy food, and the farmers and retailers are benefiting from more sales.
- GusNIP also includes the Produce Prescription program, which enables healthcare providers to issue produce vouchers and purchasing cards to patients at risk of diet related disease as part of their care plan.
- The GusNIP Produce Prescription is a food-as-medicine approach that empowers patients to better manage a growing and disproportionately borne burden of diet related diseases like diabetes, hypertension, or even cancer.

GusNIP has long been considered a multi-win solution that is benefiting families, improving public health, and generating returns for farmers and economies:

- **GusNIP Helps Families Eat More Healthy Food:**
 - GusNIP helps low-income families bring home more healthy food.
 - Roughly 90% of Americans do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables needed to maintain a healthy diet, which is particularly challenging for people with low income, who say their primary barrier to eating healthier is affording healthy food.
 - [A recent analysis](#) shows that people who utilize nutrition incentives eat more fruit and vegetables compared to the average American, while improving their food security.
- **GusNIP Helps People Lead Healthier Lives:**
 - GusNIP is a transformative force in public health, enabling low-income Americans to access healthier food options that improve health outcomes.
 - Produce prescriptions are helping to expand food as medicine, with impacts rivaling prescription therapies for cardiometabolic health and offering new hope for improved diabetes and glucose control.
- **GusNIP Puts More Money in Farmers' Pockets and Boosts Local Economies:**
 - GusNIP generates a powerful ripple effect through local economies, benefiting farmers and businesses alike.

- The economic impact of GusNIP has been considerable, generating [approximately \\$85 million in 2022](#), a 107% increase from the previous year.

Congress can take action to help the program reach its full potential in the upcoming Farm Bill:

- GusNIP is a cost-effective way to increase access to healthy fruits and vegetables for low-income children, families, and seniors, while also bolstering farmers' bottom lines and local economies.
- In order to ensure that nutrition incentives and produce prescriptions are able to reach more families and help more farmers, Congress must take action in the Farm Bill to improve and expand GusNIP.
- [Over 600 farm, food, and health leaders support changes](#) in the Farm Bill to strengthen GusNIP, including:
 - **A significant investment in GusNIP** to expand the program across more food retailers and equip more low-income people with the purchasing power to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables.
 - **The reduction or elimination of the non-government match requirement** to enable more partners to participate and ensure program longevity.
 - **The creation of a new USDA grant tier to scale incentives statewide** and prioritize grants for fruit and vegetable incentive projects in diverse retail settings.
 - **Improvements to produce prescriptions** that improve scientific rigor and expedite their utilization in clinical and care management workflows.
- Every dollar invested in GusNIP bolsters local food retailers and the agricultural economy while putting healthier food within reach for low-income households.
- Taking these steps in the Farm Bill will help ensure that more farmers markets and grocery stores across the country are able to offer nutrition incentives so that more low-income families can buy healthy fruits and vegetables.

There is broad and bipartisan momentum to grow GusNIP in the Farm Bill:

- GusNIP is the only federal program with dedicated resources to help SNAP families eat healthier through improving access to fruits and vegetables.
- In addition to more than [600 groups from across the country](#) who support changes to GusNIP, numerous lawmakers from both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol have seen the potential to incorporate commonsense updates in the next Farm Bill that will help nutrition incentives and produce prescriptions benefit more farmers and families:
 - **GusNIP Improvement Act:** This comprehensive bill from Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) would transform GusNIP with much-needed resources to scale up the program across the country and enable more partners to participate. Additionally, the bill provides win-win impacts for both public health and farmers with increased funding and reductions to matching requirements.
 - **GusNIP Expansion Act:** This bipartisan bill from Rick Crawford (R-AR) and Dan Kildee (D-MI) will reduce program barriers to enable more partners to participate and will allow projects to expand statewide to improve access to nutrition incentives.
 - **Opt for Health with SNAP (OH SNAP):** This **bicameral legislation from Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)** provides significant investment to dramatically scale up the reach of nutrition incentives so that many more farmers and families can benefit. This legislation captures the projected funding needed to reach 80% of farmers markets and 60% of retailers nationally.

- These different “marker bills” reflect the extraordinary momentum and interest in expanding both the policy and resources for the program in the Farm Bill so it can reach its full potential.
- Each bill represents an important piece of the puzzle to making nutrition incentives and produce prescriptions work better for the farmers, families, retailers, and local economies that benefit from expanded access to fruits and vegetables.
- As lawmakers come together to negotiate the Farm Bill, these proposals combined serve as inspiration for what is possible so that the program can help more farmers and families alike.
- We ask lawmakers to cosponsor the OH SNAP Act, the GusNIP Expansion Act, or the GusNIP Improvement Act.