

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program

Since its inception as a pilot program in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) has proven to be a successful public-private partnership that has expanded healthy food options for families and sparked economic growth for farmers and communities across the country. In the upcoming Farm Bill, Congress has the opportunity to expand and improve this tried-and-true approach and help it reach even more farmers and families.

How It Works

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. GusNIP also includes the Produce Prescription program, which allows healthcare providers to issue produce vouchers to patients with low income and promote healthier diets.



Helps Families Eat More Healthy Food: People who utilize nutrition incentives eat more fruits and vegetables compared to the average American, while improving their food security.



Helps People Lead Healthier Lives: 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.



Puts More Money in Farmers' Pockets and Boosts Local Economies: GusNIP generates a powerful ripple effect through local economies, benefiting farmers and businesses alike, and generating approximately \$107 million in incentive spending at local food retailers in 2023 – a 25% increase from 2022.

Congress Can Help More Farmers and Families Benefit from GusNIP in the 2023 Farm Bill

In order to ensure that nutrition incentives and produce prescriptions can reach more families and help more farmers, Congress must take action in the 2023 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 people with low income with the purchase 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.

Creation of a new USDA program to scale incentives statewide and prioritize grants for fruit and vegetable incentive projects in diverse retail settings including farmers markets and independent retailers.

Improvements to produce prescriptions that boost 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 households with low income. 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 families with low income can buy more fruits and vegetables. Increasing funding for the 2023 Farm Bill ensures GusNIP will operate at increased levels of investment, similar to that of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Priorities for a Bipartisan Farm Bill

GusNIP is the only federal program with dedicated resources to help SNAP families eat healthier through improving access to fruits and vegetables, while also benefitting farmers and local economies. 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.

The Farm Bill proposals out of the House and Senate signals progress towards reaching a final bill that will incorporate bipartisan policies.

The Senate Framework: The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act increases the federal match for GusNIP projects to 80%, makes program improvements to produce prescription projects, and more than doubles available funding to \$131 million a year so that more farmers and families can benefit from this important program nationwide.

The House Bill: The Farm, Food, and National Security Act includes a modest increase for GusNIP, but does not go far enough to improve the program so that it can benefit more Americans.

As lawmakers come together to negotiate a bipartisan Farm Bill, there are important bipartisan provisions to incorporate into the final bill that will expand and improve the program so it can reach more families:

- ✓ **More than double the investment in GusNIP**
- ✓ **Boost the federal match for GusNIP projects**
- ✓ **Direct USDA to coordinate agency support for scaling programs**
- ✓ **Continue Produce Prescriptions beyond the next farm bill**
- ✓ **Improve access in persistent poverty counties**