



# DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

## 2020 Annual Impact Report

Double Up Food Bucks is a Fair Food Network Program



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# INTRODUCTION

2020 was a year of unprecedented disruption as the coronavirus pandemic impacted nearly every corner of our lives, with families, farmers, and grocers all experiencing tremendous hardship.

**Significantly, COVID-19 stimulated a national hunger crisis.** Nearly 1 in 4 households experienced food insecurity in 2020, many for the first time in their lives, as those impacted by pandemic-related shutdowns and layoffs struggled to afford enough food for their families. This surge in hunger undercut a decade of progress reducing food insecurity, particularly among children.

As the coronavirus fundamentally upended communities, nutrition incentive programs like Double Up Food Bucks became more necessary than ever as an immediate emergency response with simultaneous systemic benefits.

In response, Double Up practitioners stepped up to meet the acute needs in their communities. While some struggled, many saw a surge of Double Up spending as they worked to help families bring home more food while supporting local farmers, markets, and grocery stores.

**Across sites, Double Up shoppers redeemed a total of \$11.74 million on healthy food in 2020 – a 98.9% increase from 2019.**

**As an organization dedicated to growing community health and wealth through food, we at Fair Food Network remain honored to support this national network.** This work pulls from our on-the-ground experience as a Double Up implementer in our home state of Michigan as well as our new role leading technical assistance and innovation for the Nutrition Incentive Hub. That said, the learning is always multi-directional and we remain in awe of the resilience and ingenuity of the national Double Up network, celebrating and learning from their work every day.

As we slowly begin to emerge from the pandemic, Double Up programs remain essential. They are helping the millions of Americans still struggling to feed their families, while also supporting the repair and recovery of our communities to follow this unprecedented time.

To learn more about Double Up Food Bucks and see the breadth of work happening nationwide, check out the new website:

**[DoubleUpAmerica.org](https://DoubleUpAmerica.org).**

- Fair Food Network Team







# HISTORY

**For 12 years, Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program has demonstrated the power of nutrition incentives to provide families experiencing poverty with affordable access to fresh fruits and vegetables at a national scale.**

The idea was and remains simple: Double the buying power of SNAP participants for fruits and vegetables and expand market opportunities for local farmers. In this way, every dollar spent does at least double duty, providing a dollar in new sales for American family farmers and local markets and a dollar in real nutrition assistance for families who need it most, thereby simultaneously improving community health and wealth.

Double Up, which started in 2009 as a promising idea at five farmers markets in Detroit, is today a national model for nutrition incentives available in 30 programs across 29 states, including 1,046 participating grocers and farmers markets.

**In pure dollars, \$16,000 of Double Up spent by families in 2009 on fruits and vegetables has blossomed into nearly \$11.74 million in 2020, with sustained impacts for families, markets and grocers, and local farmers.**

The evidence base around nutrition incentives continues to grow, showing the impact of such programs in addressing hunger, improving nutrition security, and sparking local economic development. Indeed, last year, Colorado State University published a

pioneering study, The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives, demonstrating that for every \$1 invested in nutrition incentives, we can expect to see up to \$3 in local economic activity generated as a result. The research was proudly initiated by Fair Food Network and SPUR in collaboration with ten partner organizations that operate incentive programs in states across the country.

**Over a decade of such proven impact in communities small and large helped make the case for permanent federal support of nutrition incentives** through the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program grants (GusNIP, formerly known as Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive or FINI).

Fair Food Network has been honored to support this national growth through both policy advocacy efforts and technical assistance based on our own on-the-ground experience as incentive implementers in Michigan. Technical assistance support for nutrition incentive practitioners includes a toolkit, which has streamlined the process for partners across the country to establish Double Up programs and continues to grow as we embark on the work of connecting authentically with the diverse people and needs of the communities we serve.

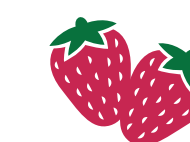
Our technical assistance work expanded last year through a new effort. In 2019, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) selected Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition and Fair Food Network to lead the Nutrition Incentive Hub, supported

by GusNIP. In 2020, a national coalition of partners was assembled to provide reliable, responsive support to nutrition incentives and produce prescription projects, including many Double Up efforts.

**Fair Food Network is leading the Nutrition Incentive Hub's national technical assistance and innovation work.** In this role, we have the opportunity not only to further align incentive partners and programming in every state, but also to make game-changing investments in areas such as evaluation and technology that can unlock the door to greater funding, administrative efficiencies, and ultimately on-the-ground impact for the families, farmers, and local markets such efforts serve.

**Double Up's success remains grounded in partnerships:** Families and farmers; markets and grocers; local, state, and federal agencies and legislatures; philanthropy; food banks; public health advocates; industry trade groups; and research universities.

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, we are excited to deepen longstanding partnerships and add some we can't yet imagine. Together, we know we are better positioned than ever to spur opportunities for America's family farmers and community grocers, while simultaneously bringing affordable fruits and vegetables within reach of every American.





# DOUBLE UP PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Partner organizations are bringing Double Up programs to life in communities from coast to coast.

**Alabama:** Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

**Arizona:** Pinnacle Prevention

**Arkansas:** Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention

**California:** SPUR (San Francisco Bay Area Planning & Urban Research Association)

**Colorado:** Nourish Colorado

**Hawai'i:** The Food Basket, Inc. & Sustainable Molokai

**Idaho:** Idaho Farmers Market Association

**Indiana:** The St. Joseph Community Health Foundation

**Iowa:** Iowa Healthiest State Initiative

**Kansas/Missouri:** Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)

**Massachusetts:** City of Boston Mayor's Office of Food Access

**Michigan:** Fair Food Network

**Mississippi:** Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Double Up Food Bucks Mississippi

**Nebraska:** Nebraska Department of Agriculture & Nebraska Extension

**Nevada:** Vegas Roots

**New Hampshire:** Fair Food Network

**New Jersey:** Fair Food Network

**New Mexico:** New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association

**New York:** Field & Fork Network

**North Carolina:** Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture & MountainWise

**North Dakota/South Dakota:** North Dakota State University Extension & South Dakota University Extension

**Oklahoma:** Hunger Free Oklahoma

**Oregon:** Farmers Market Fund & Oregon Food Bank

**Tennessee:** Nourish Knoxville

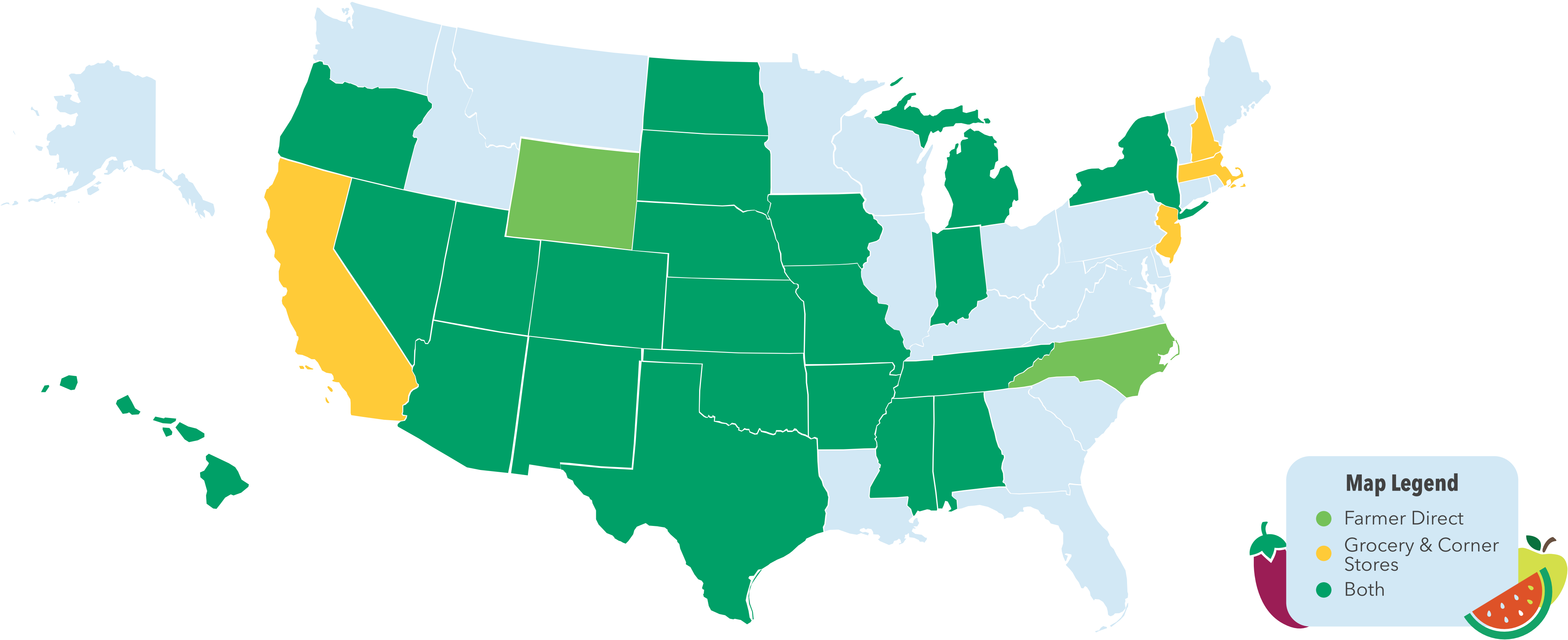
**Texas:** Sustainable Food Center

**Utah:** Utah Department of Health

**Wyoming:** Wyoming Food for Thought Project

# DOUBLE UP PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

See Where Double Up Has Taken Root Nationwide





# 2020 IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

From Coast  
To Coast

1,046

PARTICIPATING  
DOUBLE UP  
LOCATIONS

642

FARM DIRECT  
(farmers market, farm stands,  
mobile markets, & CSAs)

404

GROCERY &  
CORNER STORES

29

STATES

3

FARM DIRECT

4

GROCERY &  
CORNER STORES

21

BOTH

Generating  
Wins from  
Farmers to  
Families



882,726

INDIVIDUALS  
IMPACTED\*

441,363

FAMILIES  
IMPACTED\*

4,708

FARMERS  
IMPACTED\*\*



\$30+ MILLION SNAP & DOUBLE UP  
DOLLARS

\$7.96  
MILLION  
FARM DIRECT

\$4.59 MILLION

Double Up  
Dollars Earned

\$3.37 MILLION

Double Up  
Dollars Spent

\$22.36  
MILLION  
GROCERY &  
CORNER STORES

\$13.99 MILLION

Double Up  
Dollars Earned

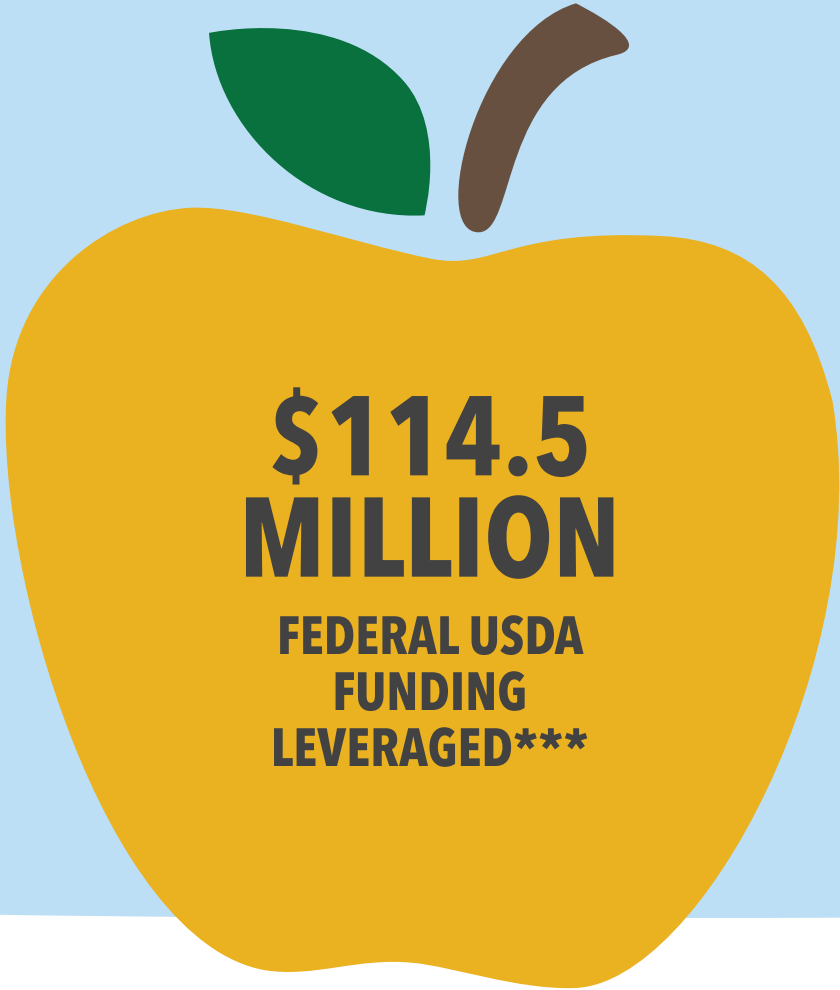
\$8.37 MILLION

Double Up  
Dollars Spent

\*This is an estimate based on case studies that suggest the average participating family redeems \$26.60 per year.

\*\* This is an estimate based on case studies that suggest the average farmers market includes 10 farmers and that the average mobile market, farm stand, and CSA includes 1. This estimate does not include farmers impacted through the local sourcing component of the grocery program.

# 11 YEARS OF IMPACT: 2009 – 2020



\*\*\*Because USDA GusNIP (previously FINI) awards fund a period of up to four years, this number includes funds committed through 2023.



# 2020 IMPACT: BEHIND THE NUMBERS

## Where Is Double Up Spent?

**Double Up dollars equal more healthy food for those who need it most.** In 2020, Double Up shoppers redeemed a total of \$11.74 million on healthy food – a 98.9% increase from 2019 (\$5.90 million). Across the 404 participating grocery and corner store sites, shoppers redeemed \$8.37 million, a 120% increase from 2019 (\$3.79 million). Across the 642 farm direct sites, shoppers redeemed \$3.37 million, a 59.7% increase from 2019 (\$2.11 million).



## Double Up Partner Spending

**Double Up partners spent a majority of program budgets on incentives (60.4%).** Other expenses include personnel/contractors (21.6%), communications (5.9%), technology (0.56%), evaluation (3.7%), travel (1%), supplies (2.9%), and other (4.1%). Between 2019 and 2020, average spending on incentives increased by 34% (from 45% to 58.3%). Spending on evaluation remained approximately the same, while spending in all other categories decreased.

## Technology

**Double Up programs are at the forefront of technology innovations.**

In 2020, partners focused on implementing new earning and redemption mechanisms to meet the surge in SNAP usage, with 12 Double Up sites upgrading to new technologies. Two partners implemented a loyalty solution in grocery stores, while seven made upgrades to grocery point of sale systems with the goal to streamline the customer and cashier experiences at the register. Finally, three partners used new technology in farm direct settings (e.g., FM Tracks, TotilPay).





# Shopper Satisfaction

**Double Up customers value the program.** Programs in ten states (Arizona, Hawai'i, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Utah) surveyed customers on their satisfaction with the program. On average, 96% of surveyed customers expressed satisfaction. Additional survey questions covered a variety of topics, including how shoppers learned about the program, impact on fruit and vegetable consumption, barriers to using the program, and highlights of using the program. Other programs asked questions based on the evaluation tools developed by the Nutrition Incentive Hub.

# Expansion Efforts

**Double Up programs continue to grow to meet community needs.** Seventy-eight percent or 21 of 27 Double Up partners expanded programming to reach customers in new geographies. The addition of new farmers markets, mobile markets, corner stores, grocery stores, and community supported agriculture (CSA) sites brought the program to shoppers in new neighborhoods, cities, and counties. In Hawai'i, a study conducted by Dr. Vanessa Buchthal of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa determined that the local DA BUX program tripled its accessibility to SNAP households in the state from 2018-2020. By the end of 2020, DA BUX retail sites were within shopping distance of 77% of SNAP households in the state (defined as within 0.5 miles in dense urban neighborhoods and 3.5 miles in rural areas based on USDA data on average grocery shopping distances traveled by SNAP participants). In New Mexico, expansion of Double Up to all Lowe's stores added 17 new grocery sites, mostly in rural or remote locations. Seven of those locations were in towns without another participating Double Up site.

# Federal & State Funding

**Double Up programs remain a public-private partnership leveraging a range of support.** Of the \$28 million awarded to nutrition incentive programs in the 2020 round of USDA GusNIP grants, \$12.91 million, or 46% of total GusNIP funds, were awarded to eight Double Up programs (Colorado, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, and Oregon). This federal funding in turn leveraged state, municipal, and philanthropic funds for a total of \$36.16 million in new funds committed to nutrition incentive programs in 2020. Of these funds, \$4 million came from CARES funding (Arizona, Iowa, and Michigan), and \$3.81 million came from state appropriations (Colorado, Hawai'i, Michigan, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Oregon).





# FROM THE FIELD: PANDEMIC RESPONSE

As hunger exploded across the nation, Double Up partners stepped up. From shifts in earning caps to expanding eligibility to include Pandemic-EBT, practitioners made a variety of program pivots. (Pandemic-EBT, or P-EBT, is a program that provides supplemental food assistance benefits to students who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Major program shifts included:

- Shift from in-person outreach to enhanced digital marketing
- Focus on adding new Double Up sites versus maintaining current sites
- Modifications of daily earning limits

Partners also faced persistent challenges, including the temporary closure of markets and difficulties in securing match funding as funders too were pulled in addressing the many and diverse immediate needs exacerbated by the pandemic.

In their own words, here are some of the ways partners adapted to the needs stimulated by COVID-19. Their extraordinary efforts have been ceaseless and their commitment to community boundless.



**PINNACLE  
PREVENTION**  
Arizona



**FAIR FOOD  
NETWORK**  
Michigan



**FAIR FOOD  
NETWORK**  
New Jersey



**NOURISH  
KNOXVILLE**  
Tennessee



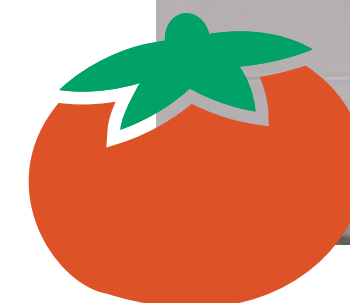


## PINNACLE PREVENTION Arizona

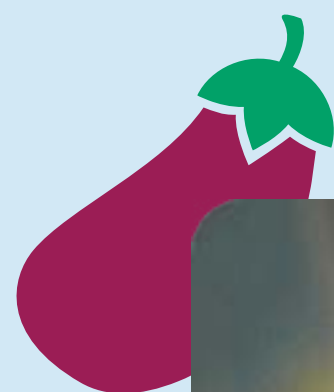
We moved from a \$20 daily limit to allowing unlimited SNAP match at farmers markets, CSAs, farm stands, and mobile markets. The \$20 daily earning limit remains in place at grocery stores and corner stores. All partners experienced unprecedented demand for SNAP and Double Up and several new farm direct and grocery partners were onboarded during the pandemic. **Between 2019 and 2020, there was a 136% increase in Double Up redemption at farm direct locations and a 773% increase in redemption at grocery and corner stores.** Unfortunately, all large-scale grocery partners have had to pause the program due to funding limitations. We also supported all farmers market and farm stand partners with safety adaptations, including personal protective equipment, communications, and location changes/closures.

## FAIR FOOD NETWORK Michigan

In 2020 we fast tracked the development of a free phone-based Double Up app that works alongside the Double Up card. Shoppers can download the app to enroll in the program, check their balance, and find participating food retailers. During COVID, the app became even more valuable as it reduces the need for in-person contact and physical tokens. Plus it can digitally store earned Double Up Food Bucks “credits” and has been shown to increase redemption at participating grocery stores. But its benefits are broader: Alongside the card, the app provides shoppers a modern and unified transaction system that they can use across participating farmers markets and grocery stores in their communities. It also supports improved user experience, stronger program integrity, and increased connectivity with potential for in-app communications. From app launch in April 2020 through May 2021, the app was downloaded 1,460 times and 2,676 shoppers enrolled in Double Up online through the app or the online portal. Another big push last year was increased digital marketing to get the word out to the many folks new to SNAP. In April 2020 alone, traffic to Double Up’s website attracted 86,000 unique visitors – a 3,500% increase compared to the same period in 2019. The Double Up Food Bucks Facebook page also reached nearly one million Michiganders in April. **Michigan’s Double Up use in 2020 was more than double that of 2019 – from \$2.4 million to more than \$4.9 million in spending, resulting in an estimated reach of more than 200,000 Michigan households.**







## FAIR FOOD NETWORK New Jersey

**As SNAP rolls soared, earnings exploded and redemptions followed suit.** While redemption rates remained consistently at about 24% (pre-pandemic and through the pandemic), the number of users and dollars actually earned and redeemed increased significantly. This increase was so strong that we had to cut the earning cap from \$10 to \$5 per transaction to ensure we could maintain the program during this time of acute need.

## NOURISH KNOXVILLE Tennessee

When the pandemic started, we removed the \$1 for \$1 match, so each user who swiped their EBT card at a participating site or brick and mortar store received the full \$20 in Double Up Food Bucks, no matter the amount they took out in EBT benefits. The user could only receive this benefit once per market per day. We kept the policy in place throughout 2020. Secondly, our state issued P-EBT benefits, and we added that program to our sites and increased our advertising and awareness around the change. A few of our partners did not open their farmers markets for in-person shopping, and we worked with them to double SNAP purchases for online pre-order. **With these changes, the program grew by more than 100%.**





# FROM THE FIELD: INNOVATIONS

In 2020, the Nutrition Incentive Hub launched the Capacity Building and Innovation Fund. This fund awarded \$800,000 in grants to 37 nutrition incentive and produce prescription projects across the country to support innovations and adaptations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These grants are administered by the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition and partners through the Nutrition Incentive Hub coalition created by the NTAE. This includes Fair Food Network, Farmers Market Coalition, Ecology Center, Michigan Farmers Market Association, and National Grocers Association Foundation.

Eight of the awarded organizations were Double Up programs. Here are highlights from their innovative projects.



**THE FOOD  
BASKET, INC.**  
Hawai'i



**JACKSON MEDICAL MALL  
FOUNDATION**  
Mississippi



**IOWA HEALTHIEST  
STATE INITIATIVE**  
Iowa



**NORTH DAKOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**  
North Dakota/  
South Dakota



## THE FOOD BASKET, INC. Hawai'i

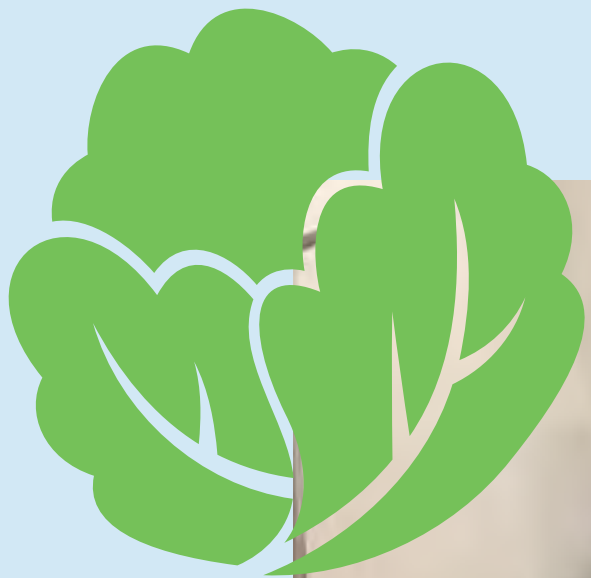
Partners in Hawai'i utilized this funding to purchase DA BUX Access Cards. The card's barcode triggers a 50% discount on qualifying Hawai'i-grown fruits and vegetables at 30 grocery stores across the state. The stores began accepting DA BUX Cards in June 2020. **Through a mass mailing in early June coordinated by Hawai'i State Department of Human Services, nearly every SNAP household in the state received a DA BUX Card, reaching a total of 90,975 households (except for households on Lanai and Molokai).** Mass mailings have proven to be imperative to ensuring awareness and participation in the DA BUX program. This grant helped local partners reserve enough of their budgeted GusNIP funds to cover the cost of a second round of mailers. The upcoming mailing will support program spending of the recently awarded CARES Act incentive funds.



## IOWA HEALTHIEST STATE INITIATIVE Iowa

Partners in Iowa used this funding to increase program awareness and participation for those who may have recently qualified for food assistance (SNAP EBT or P-EBT) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Utilizing targeted marketing strategies, partners distributed 25,000 flyers to community partners across the state, including WIC clinics, federal health centers, head start programs, community action centers, Medicaid providers, and food banks. **Partners were also able to run a three-month Facebook ad campaign, which was viewed 174K times and resulted in 14,600+ clicks to the locations page of the Double Up Iowa website.**



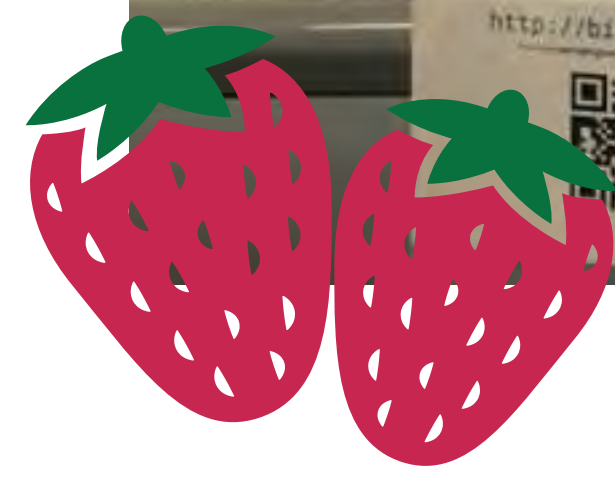


## JACKSON MEDICAL MALL FOUNDATION Mississippi

Partners jump started an innovative online grocery delivery program at a participating Vowell's grocery store. This project delivered food to residents in Sunflower County, one of the poorest areas in the state, where residents lack healthy food options as well as adequate healthcare and transportation. Due to COVID-19, the program was not able to be fully implemented until August 1, yet utilization continued to grow each week as word spread and \$26,348 in Double Up was distributed to the community. **With this additional funding, the Double Up Mississippi partners plan to continue this grocery delivery pilot program to bring good food to some of the poorest areas in the state.**

## NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION North Dakota/South Dakota

Local partners are using these funds to provide training and technical assistance to help increase the number of farmers markets who are able to accept SNAP as well as bring Double Up Food Bucks to rural and tribal communities in North Dakota and South Dakota. **Specifically, this project will build the capacity of SNAP-Ed educators to lead this work.** This includes providing professional development opportunities including grant writing, SNAP promotion at farmers markets, and communications planning to support community-specific and culturally informed messaging to promote incentive programs. It will also support select farmers markets in priority areas with additional resources for implementation.







# VISION FOR 2021

Double Up programs nationwide are continuing efforts to bring nutritious fruits and vegetables within reach of all families while generating benefits for family farmers and community grocers.

Looking ahead to 2021, Double Up partners plan to add 285 new sites. This includes an additional 201 farm direct and 84 grocery and corner store sites, reflecting programs’ understanding of community needs in recovering from the pandemic and the optimism required to see that to fruition.

As we emerge from a period of social distancing, we at Fair Food Network look forward to continuing to provide technical assistance to support Double Up programs and the broader field of nutrition incentives through our work with the Nutrition Incentive Hub. A key priority in the year ahead will be increasing peer-to-peer conections.

**1,331**

**PARTICIPATING  
DOUBLE UP  
LOCATIONS**

**843**

**FARM DIRECT**

**488**

**GROCERY &  
CORNER STORES**

**29**

**STATES**

**6**

**FARM DIRECT**

**4**

**GROCERY &  
CORNER STORES**

**21**

**BOTH**



**5,899** **FARMERS BENEFITED**  
via Farm Direct Sales





**Fair Food Network** is a national nonprofit on a mission to grow community health and wealth through food. Its Double Up Food Bucks program, first pioneered in Detroit in 2009, is today a national model for nutrition incentives in states from coast to coast. In 2019, Fair Food Network was selected by USDA NIFA to lead technical assistance & innovation for The Nutrition Incentive Hub, a new entity established in the 2018 farm bill designed to support the growing field of nutrition incentive and produce prescription projects.



**FairFoodNetwork.org**