



# DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

2021 Annual Impact Report

Double Up Food Bucks is a Fair Food Network Program







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	01	FROM THE FIELD: EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT	09
HISTORY	02	FROM THE FIELD: PANDEMIC RECOVERY	11
DOUBLE UP PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS	03	FROM THE FIELD: TECHNOLOGY	12
2021 IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS	05	FROM THE FIELD: POLICY	14
12 YEARS OF IMPACT: 2009-2021	06	VISION 2022	16
BEHIND THE NUMBERS	07		



# INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic's global effect on food insecurity continues to churn U.S. communities in 2021. We still see, for example, its fallout in the job market, as families experienced job losses while food retailers experienced staff shortages and supply chain disruptions.

What has eased some of these families' economic and nutritional worries is the rollout of the Pandemic EBT program, or P-EBT, which utilizes the infrastructure of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This temporary program provides supplemental food assistance benefits for students who have lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to the pandemic-exacerbated school closures. While it is not clear how long the P-EBT program will continue to operate, it has created a major increase in the amount of SNAP allotments to families this year, with more than \$2 billion in P-EBT distributed in the 2021–2022 school year.

With the increase in P-EBT dollars being spent at grocery stores and farmers markets in 2021, nutrition incentive programs across the country were able to help families extend their food budgets through the Double Up Food Bucks program. **More people utilized Double Up Food Bucks than ever before: Nearly 759,000 families participated in the program, and 375 new participating sites were added across the country.** As a result, Double Up shoppers redeemed more than \$20 million on healthy food in 2021 – an 85 percent increase from 2020.

Despite the challenges present during this persistent public health crisis, Double Up partners are adapting their programs and implementing innovative technology and delivery methods to support the increased need of families, farmers, and food retailers.





# HISTORY



In 2009, as the Great Recession further devastated Detroit's communities, Fair Food Network seeded the Double Up Food Bucks program in five of the city's farmers markets with a simple yet powerful idea: Double the buying power of SNAP participants, allowing them to purchase more fruits and vegetables while expanding market opportunities for local farmers. When Double Up began, Michigan families spent \$16,000 on produce. **Over a decade later, the program blossomed into a \$50 million initiative, with over 1,516,894<sup>1</sup> SNAP users taking part – and with sustained impacts for families, markets, grocers, and local farmers.** Today, Double Up is available at over 1,325 grocers and farmers markets across 30 states and continues to expand each year.

For more than a decade, Double Up has demonstrated the power of nutrition incentives to provide under-resourced families with affordable access to fresh fruits and vegetables on a national scale. We also know that our efforts have paid off. According to a report from our partner, the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition – which is charged with providing evaluation support to all 78 nutrition incentive and produce prescription projects funded by USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) – people who participate in nutrition programs like Double Up eat more produce than the average American.

**The secret to Double Up's success is its roots: It is a program designed to support SNAP shoppers, farmers, retailers, and communities.** Fair Food Network gathered best practices and knowledge, gleaned from experience operating the program in Michigan, to develop a toolkit of streamlined



program tools and branding that allows Double Up partners to focus on distributing nutrition incentives in their local communities without reinventing the wheel.

Fair Food Network also offers one-on-one technical assistance to Double Up partners, sharing our insights and expertise gained from building the starter program in Detroit. **A key part of that guidance has been supporting programs by making connections and building partnerships at the local, state, and national levels. We emphasize partnerships precisely because our success has grown from them.** This technical assistance experience laid the groundwork for the USDA selecting Fair Food Network as one of two leads of the GusNIP Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center, commonly known as the Nutrition Incentive Hub.

Our hope is that, in the future, there will no longer be a need for nutrition incentives or programs like Double Up because all families will have enough resources to purchase the food they need and want. Until then, Fair Food Network will continue to operate the Double Up Michigan program as well as support the 28 other Double Up programs and the national field of nutrition incentives.

Looking ahead, we are excited to deepen long-standing partnerships and add some we haven't yet imagined. With this incredible coalition of partners working together, we know we are better positioned than ever to cultivate opportunities for America's family farmers and community grocers while simultaneously bringing affordable fruits and vegetables within reach of every under-resourced American.

<sup>1</sup>This is an estimate based on case studies that suggest the average participating family redeems \$26.60 per year.







# 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

**Minnesota:** Bluff Coop

**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

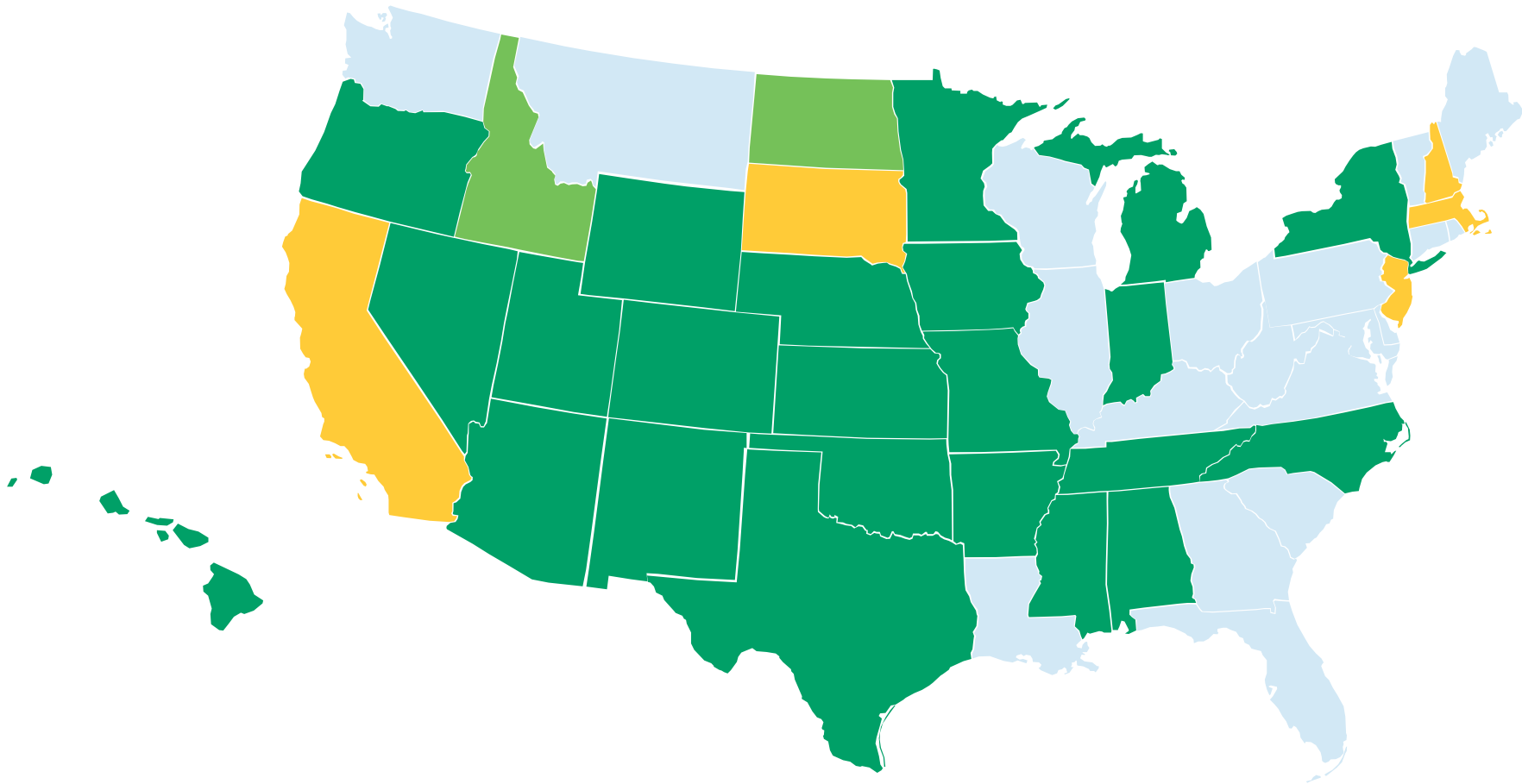
**Utah:** Utah Department of Health

**Wyoming:** Wyoming Food for Thought Project



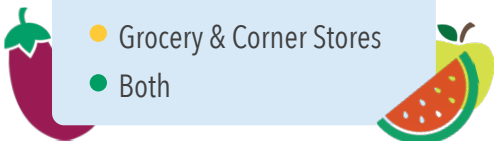
# DOUBLE UP PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

See Where Double Up Has Taken Root Nationwide



## Map Legend

- Farmer Direct
- Grocery & Corner Stores
- Both





# 2021 IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

## 1,325

Total Sites



826

Farm-Direct  
Sites



498

Brick & Mortar  
Sites

## 763,962

People Impacted



758,447

Families<sup>1</sup>



5,515

Farmers<sup>2</sup>

## \$14.3 Million

Farm-Direct SNAP & Double Up



\$8.5M

Earned



\$5.8M

Spent

## \$42.3 Million

Brick & Mortar SNAP & Double Up



\$28M

Earned



\$14.4M

Spent

## \$56.7 Million

Total Farm-Direct and Brick & Mortar  
SNAP & Double Up



\$36.5M

Earned



\$20.2M

Spent

<sup>1</sup> Families Impacted - This is an estimate based on case studies that suggest the average participating family redeems \$26.60 per year.

<sup>2</sup> Farmers impacted - 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.

# 12 YEARS OF IMPACT: 2009 – 2021



The infographic features three stylized apples of different colors (yellow-green, green, and orange) arranged on a light blue background. Each apple has a brown stem and two green leaves. The apples contain text representing different impact metrics.

**76 Million**

Pounds of  
healthy food

**\$120 Million**

SNAP & Double Up  
dollars supporting  
local farmers &  
businesses

**\$128 Million**

Federal USDA funding  
leveraged<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Because USDA GusNIP (previously FINI) awards fund a period of up to four years, this number includes funds committed through 2023



# 2021 IMPACT: BEHIND THE NUMBERS

## Where are Double Up Food Bucks spent?

In 2021, Double Up shoppers spent a total of \$20,174,693 at 1,325 participating brick-and-mortar and farm-direct sites, and 85 percent increase from 2020. Across 826 participating brick-and-mortar sites, shoppers redeemed \$14,375,320, a 55 percent increase from 2020. Across 498 farm-direct sites, shoppers redeemed \$5,799,372, a 65 percent increase from 2020.



## Federal & State Funding

Of the more than \$34 million awarded to SNAP incentive programs in the 2021 round of USDA GusNIP grants, more than \$16 million was awarded to seven Double Up programs: Double Up Arizona, Double Up Arkansas, Double Up Boston, Double Up Hawai'i, Double Up Iowa, Double Up Nevada, and Double Up New Mexico.

Additionally, the Double Up program leveraged more than \$13 million from state, local, and philanthropic funders to support their programs.



## Technology Improvements

Incentive technology is a significant barrier to launching and scaling nutrition incentive programs.

A core issue is the variation across project and site types, with different technology needs and capacities across grocery stores and farmers markets.

Despite these challenges, **16 Double Up sites reported upgrading to new technology.** Four partners implemented new or expanded loyalty solutions in grocery stores and six made upgrades to grocery point-of-sale systems to streamline the customer and cashier experiences at the register.



## Double Up Partner Spending

Program Administration spending varied significantly by Double Up partner. On average, **Double Up partners spent a majority of their budget on incentives** (61.7 percent). Other expenses included personnel/contracts (19 percent, communications (8 percent), technology (1.4 percent), evaluation (2 percent), and travel (1 percent).

## Expansion Efforts

**72 percent, or 21 of 29, Double Up partners expanded their programs 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. Previously, Double Up partner Nebraska Extension mainly worked in urban communities but expanded their reach into rural communities in 2021.

## Shopper Satisfaction

Programs in 11 states (Arkansas, Hawai'i, Indiana, Michigan, Mid-America Regional Council, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, and Utah) surveyed customers on the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables at participating Double Up locations and customer satisfaction with the program. **On average, 90 percent of customers expressed satisfaction with the program.**





# FROM THE FIELD: EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT

Double Up partners are participating in the Nutrition Incentive Hub's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion community of practice, where they are learning together and sharing best practices around equity to improve their programs.

## DOUBLE UP HEARTLAND

### Mid-American Regional Council & Partners

Double Up Heartland Collaborative is charged with codifying the diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) work of the individual Double Up partner organizations. The Collaborative has created a committee to integrate DEIJ efforts across partner organizations with the goal of improving the program for SNAP recipients. The committee worked over several months to develop a DEIJ Work Plan for 2022 that includes defining DEIJ-related terms with a healthy-food incentive lens, learning about the history of SNAP, researching the demographic profiles of the communities served by the Double Up Food Bucks program, and exploring resources in the Kansas City area (and beyond) that provide a better understanding of food system topics related to the diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice efforts.



# EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT



## DOUBLE UP NEVADA

### Vegas Roots

The pandemic really shed a bright spotlight on poor health and health disparities in communities of color. Vegas Roots knows well the existing racial disparities in health equity and supports Black women in their quest to attain optimal health. For example, its diabetes program, DIVA, is geared toward women on Medicaid and SNAP. DIVA has had a 30 percent success rate of reversing Type 2 diabetes in Black women who go through the program! Double Up is such a perfect fit as it provides the resources needed for the foods that the organization is teaching them to grow, shop for, prepare, and eat at substantial cost savings. Thanks to Double Up, those in the DIVA program eat more fruits and vegetables, experience less anxiety in trying new foods, and have more confidence in preparing food due to watching a chef demonstrate how to work with different types of produce. Vegas Roots is proud to be the catalyst in shining that bright light on those who are most in need. It's truly a win-win.



# FROM THE FIELD: PANDEMIC RECOVERY

As the impacts of the pandemic linger, organizations are working to meet increased need.



## DOUBLE UP NORTH DAKOTA

### North Dakota State University Extension

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension successfully applied for the **Nutrition Incentive Hub's Capacity Building and Innovation Fund (CBIF)**. The CBIF has become a critical resource for GusNIP grantees and their implementing partners to address capacity challenges. The CBIF grant program, which provides awards of \$5,000 to \$50,000, funds initiatives like North Dakota State University Extension that strengthen an organization's ability to implement nutrition incentives or produce prescription projects in their community. NDSU Extension used the funds to increase the number of farmers markets that can accept SNAP, implemented a nutrition incentives project in rural and Tribal communities in North Dakota, and provide training and technical assistance to facilitate the process.

## DOUBLE UP MISSISSIPPI

### Jackson Medical Mall Foundation

To mitigate COVID's negative impact for under-resourced communities, Double Up Mississippi pivoted from a steady three-year growth plan to a warp-speed approach in 2021, meeting unanticipated needs and tripling the geographical footprint of the program with new locations targeting hard-to-reach communities. They also supported local produce sourcing and offered a diverse range of redemption locations: farmers markets, farm stands, and grocery stores, with 24 of the 29 locations being designated as qualified USDA Opportunity Zones. Seventy-five percent of sites are open 5–7 days a week and offer extended hours year-round with a produce-for-produce incentive model.



# FROM THE FIELD: TECHNOLOGY

Double Up Food Bucks partners are implementing a wide range of incentive technology improvements. From technology upgrades like automatic discounts or printed coupons at registers to EBT integration, a central goal for every program is to improve the SNAP shopper experience.

## DOUBLE UP OKLAHOMA

### Hunger Free Oklahoma

In 2021, Hunger Free Oklahoma developed the first IBM Toshiba ACE nutrition incentive system in the country. The first problem they solved with this point-of-sale retail solution was the loss of benefits in other coupon-based POS solutions. Other systems work on a use-it-or-lose-it model. With Hunger Free Oklahoma's solution, program participants can get their unused Double Up Oklahoma Bucks back to be used on future purchases. They believe that is more equitable for low-income Oklahomans.

Overall, this pilot has been extremely successful! With this model Hunger Free Oklahoma has seen re-issuance redemption rates rise to nearly 100 percent, meaning that people who receive their unused Double Up Oklahoma balance back on a reissued voucher are highly likely to use their benefits. Overall, they have seen a 314 percent average increase in SNAP produce sales, including Double Up Oklahoma produce sales, at stores implementing the Toshiba Ace solution, which indicates that the program is working as intended. There have been some challenges with custom build-out including handling WIC transactions and coupon redemptions at the same time as Double Up Oklahoma redemptions. However, through repeated improvements, Hunger Free Oklahoma has been able to address those issues quickly. The organization has connected Nourish Colorado

with the program and, through an investment from one of the funders, the program can now be leased through Truno for a low, one-time cost and annual update fee so any Double Up partner can use the program.

Double Up Oklahoma had a lot of assistance from the NTAE Nutrition Incentive Hub and Double Up partners as they navigated the system requirements and the process of piloting their first grocery store program.





# TECHNOLOGY



## DOUBLE UP MICHIGAN

### Fair Food Network

Double Up Michigan works with Epic Technology to offer the Double Up Card and accompanying mobile wallet app, My Fresh Wallet, to streamline the purchasing experience for SNAP shoppers. The My Fresh Wallet App works with the Double Up card by allowing shoppers to access Double Up Food Bucks on their phone. Shoppers can view their incentive and SNAP balance, track their Double Up transaction history, find Double Up locations, and receive Double Up program news. With the mobile wallet app, shoppers never have to guess about their available purchasing dollars and can easily find Double Up information at their fingertips.

## DOUBLE UP INDIANA

### St. Joseph Community Health Foundation

The St. Joseph Community Health Foundation uses different technology at its grocery sites and farmers markets. The grocery sites utilize the Catapult POS (point-of-sale) system, which processes the Double Up benefit. It provides SNAP shoppers with an immediate 50 percent discount on all produce purchases – and the customers are thrilled that this benefit allows them to purchase more healthy food for their families. In 2021, St. Joseph Community Health Foundation brought Double Up to one of the year-round farmers markets. At the market, SNAP shoppers' Double Up is issued as voucher checks that can be used to purchase fresh produce at the market. Once the farmers take the checks, they endorse them with a Double Up stamp and deposit them directly into their bank account. This allows the farmers to receive the payments immediately. Using vouchers and checks was an idea borrowed from the Marion County Health Department in Indianapolis, which has a robust SNAP-matching program.

# FROM THE FIELD: **POLICY**

Double Up Food Bucks partners are also working on the policy front to advocate for federal and state dollars for nutrition incentive programs and champion improvements within the farm bill.

## **DOUBLE UP ARIZONA**

### **Pinnacle Prevention**

Pinnacle Prevention convenes the Arizona Food System Network (AZFSN), a community of local, state, and regional food systems advocates, practitioners, and leaders who have a vested interest in collaborating to improve the food system for all Arizonans. Annually, the organization identifies policy action items to improve the food system, including the delivery of nutrition incentive programs. In 2018, AZFSN achieved its first major statewide food policy win with the passing of SB1245, which appropriated \$400,000 to the Arizona Department of Economic Security to support the produce incentive program – commonly known as Arizona’s Double Up Food Bucks program – for individuals participating in SNAP. This early advocacy win offered inspiration and momentum for future food system policy opportunities in Arizona. These include creating a state-funded agriculture workforce development program to strengthen the career pipeline for farmers and ranchers, ensuring farmers markets and farm stands received essential service designation so sites could remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as requesting additional emergency funding for Double Up Arizona and the local farm-to-food bank program through the legislative budget process. These policy successes resulted in recognition of the need for a shared vision and greater coordination for food systems advocacy work.

AZFSN developed the first statewide Food Action Plan, released in 2022, to help guide decision making and inform policy opportunities.







## DOUBLE UP OREGON

### Farmers Market Fund

The Double Up Oregon coalition sought \$4 million in funding for the expansion of the Double Up Oregon program from the State. The coalition consisted of Farmers Market Fund, the Oregon Farmers Markets Association, the Oregon Food Bank, and the Pacific Northwest CSA Coalition, which have collaborated on Double Up Oregon since 2015. The American Heart Association contributed pro bono lobbying support, which was indispensable to the campaign's success. In addition, they collaborated with groups focused on supporting sustainable agriculture and ending hunger. Their bill had broad bipartisan support, including bipartisan chief co-sponsors and sponsors. In the end, the bill died in committee, but the Double Up Oregon coalition received \$4 million in one-time funds in the end-of-session omnibus bill. The funds will provide critical support that will facilitate the expansion of the Double Up program at farmers markets, groceries, and community supported agriculture farms (CSAs) across Oregon. While most of the budget is dedicated to the actual cost of incentives, the coalition has also prioritized funding expenses that will improve the accessibility of the Double Up program by implementing and assessing strategies that respond to barriers to participation shared by SNAP shoppers.



# VISION 2022

Double Up's vision for 2022 is to steadily grow the nutrition incentive program, planted in more than a decade of proven success. Double Up programs across the United States are continuing efforts to bring fresh fruits and vegetables within reach of all families by increasing their SNAP purchasing power. The impact of the program will continue to reach beyond Double Up shoppers and support farmers, retailers, and the broader community. **We plan to add 1,473 new sites, including an additional 927 farm-direct and 546 grocery and corner store sites this year.**

Furthermore, we plan to scale up and sustain our projects. Fair Food Network will continue to support Double Up programs and the broader field of nutrition incentives through the NTAE Nutrition Incentive Hub. We intend to support those programs in the start-up phase and beyond – nurturing such programs to scale or to continue sustaining themselves so they can best meet community needs and ongoing demand for nutrition incentives.





**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](https://FairFoodNetwork.org)**









# **DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS**

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