



Field & Fork Network



American Heart Association



Center for Regional Food and Farming



Hawthorne Valley farm store



Poughkeepsie Waterfront MARKET



SYRACUSE ORTHOPEDIC SPECIALISTS





February 2024

Members of the NYS Senate
Members of the NYS Assembly

Re: Support for Nutrition Incentive Program Double Up Food Bucks NY

Dear Senator/Assemblymember,

The undersigned organizations representing food, nutrition, agriculture, health and wellness and community-based organizations serving the great State of New York, **write in very strong support for the inclusion of a \$2 million appropriation in the FY 2024-2025 NYS Budget for the nutrition incentive program Double Up Food Bucks NY which would unlock \$2 million in Federal Matching Funds.**

Many New Yorkers, particularly those who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), still lack access to fresh, healthy food in their communities. As such, more support is needed so that individuals' dollars can go further in the purchasing of fresh fruits and vegetables, thereby increasing health outcomes, and supporting our local farming and business economies.

Since 2014, Double Up Food Bucks NY has been addressing access and affordability concerns for SNAP shoppers through nutrition incentives offered at grocery stores, farmers markets, farm stands, CSA/farm shares, and mobile markets, while at the same time providing a support to NY state farms and businesses in the form of putting more money into SNAP shoppers pockets for the purchasing of fresh fruits and vegetables. This pivotal opportunity holds the potential to substantially enhance the Double Up Food Bucks NY nutrition incentive program, helping to address the urgent issue of food insecurity in New York State.

Bringing Federal Dollars back into New York State

Of particular significance is that Field & Fork Network successfully amplified the impact of last year's appropriation by securing matching federal funds through a [USDA National Institute of Agriculture Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#) (GusNIP) grant award. This achievement transformed the initial \$2 million into a total of \$4 million, providing increased affordability and access to New York State-grown fruits and vegetables for SNAP shoppers. However, continued state support is crucial. A

budgetary allocation of \$2 million in level funding from New York State will unlock an equivalent amount in federal funding, as required by the grant's non-federal matching stipulation. Failure to secure this appropriation would mean forsaking millions of dollars in federal funding, funds urgently needed to support farms, businesses, and SNAP shoppers across the state. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated, as it directly impacts the well-being of our communities and contributes to the vitality of local agriculture and businesses.

Field & Fork Network has also formed a strategic partnership with Tops Friendly Markets to increase access to Double Up Food Bucks NY by automatically offering the incentive to anyone using SNAP benefits. This groundbreaking solution eliminates registrations barriers for customers, making earning and spending the Double Up Food Bucks NY nutrition incentive as simple as using your SNAP benefits to purchase fresh produce. This partnership will allow the program to vastly expand across the state and meet more SNAP customers where they are shopping.

Research-Based Practices to Improve Food Security and Nutrition

The Double Up Food Bucks NY program is based on a proven model that works to incentivize healthy choices. According to the [Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#), nutrition incentive programs like Double Up Food Bucks are statistically proven to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, with these changes in habits continuing even after their participation in the program ends. The Double Up Food Bucks NY program is effective at creating long-term changes in diet and purchasing habits. Farmers' Market managers also report that customers who come to the markets for the first time to take advantage of the Double Up Food Bucks NY program continue to shop at the markets, even when they are no longer using the SNAP program. This indicates that new, healthy shopping habits form because of the Double Up program.

Funding this statewide program will improve access to nutritional food for our most vulnerable, keep federal and local dollars in the community, and increase the long-term viability of family farms across New York State.

Sincerely,

Field & Fork Network | Double Up Food Bucks NY

Action Research Collaborative | Cornell University

Adirondack North Country Association

American Heart Association

Bargain Grocery | Compassion Coalition

Buffalo Go Green

Buffalo Place Inc.

Capital Roots

Catskill Farmers Market

Chatham Real Food Market Co-op

Comfort Food Community

Community Food Advocates

Conscious Cooking

Crop2Shop

Dash Markets Inc.

Doce Lume Farm | Go Native! Perennials LLC

Dunkirk Farmers Market | Dunkirk Local Development Corporation

Essex Food Hub

Feeding New York State

Foodlink

Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County

Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming

Groundwork Market Garden

Hawthorne Valley Farm Store

Island Harvest Food Bank

Jamestown Public Market

Joint Council for Economic Opportunity

Lexington Cooperative Markets

Lockport Community Farmers Market

Lyons Farmers Market

Massachusetts Avenue Project

Nature's Storehouse

New York Farm Bureau

New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NYSAWG)

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)

Northeast Shared Services | Price Chopper | Market 32 | Tops Friendly Markets

Potsdam Food Coop

Poughkeepsie Waterfront Market

Providence Farm Collective

Random Harvest

Refugee and Immigrant Self-Empowerment

Rural Health Network of South-Central New York

Schenectady Greenmarket

Syracuse Cooperative Market

Syracuse Housing Authority

Syracuse Northeast Community Center

Syracuse Orthopedic Specialists

Syracuse Urban Food Forest Project

Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFSA)

The Abundance Food Co-op

The Alliance for a Hunger Free New York

Thera Farms

Tupper Lake Farmers Market

UBMD Psychiatry

United Way of Buffalo and Erie County

United Way of New York State

United Way of Westchester and Putnam

Upskill Tax Services

Upstate Medical University