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Food Insecurity in Arizona

Each month in Arizona, approximately 900,000 individuals participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps), with 69% of participants belonging to families with children and 29% of participants belonging to families with members who are elderly or have disabilities.¹ During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Arizona (August 2020), SNAP participation increased to 937,013 participants.² Additionally, food insecurity disproportionality impacts Arizona's small towns and rural counties. Nearly 1 in every 4 households in small towns and 1 in every 5 households in rural counties participate in SNAP, compared to the Arizona state rate of 1 in every 8 households.³ While federal food assistance programs like SNAP are designed to reduce food insecurity, many participants still struggle to afford nutritious food. On average, SNAP households have lower acquisitions of vegetables, greens and beans, fruit, whole grains, seafood, and plant proteins compared to non-SNAP households.⁴

Healthy Food Incentive Programs

Healthy food incentive programs are designed to mitigate cost and access barriers by making healthy food more affordable and by expanding the outlets that offer healthy food, particularly in areas that have low retail access. One of the nation's largest and most successful food incentive program is Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program. This program doubles the value of SNAP benefits spent at participating farmers markets, farm stands, and grocery stores. The program began in 5 markets in Detroit in 2009 and has grown to 250 sites across Michigan. Double Up's success in Michigan helped to inform and launch the national Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program under the 2014 Farm Bill. Due to FINI's success, the 2018 Farm Bill expanded FINI (renamed the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program after former USDA Undersecretary), to include \$250 million annually for 5 years, granting the program permanent status in future Farm Bills. Today, GusNIP is housed under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Double Up Arizona

A 2016 FINI pilot grant helped launch the Double Up program at 8 sites in Arizona. Through this program, for every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile markets across the state, participants receive an additional dollar to spend on Arizona-grown produce. With the help of customer demand, support from community partners, and additional state and federal funding, the program has rapidly expanded to over 75 sites. Double Up Arizona sites currently include 25 weekly farmers markets, 4 farm stands, 12 community supported agriculture (CSA) sites, 2 mobile markets, and 10 corner stores.



¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Arizona Nutrition Assistance. April 2022. https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_arizona.pdf

² Family Assistance Administration Statistical Bulletin August 2020. Arizona Department of Economic Security. <https://des.az.gov/documents-center>

³ Food Research and Action Center. Household SNAP Participation in Metro, Small Town and Rural Counties, by State, 2012-2016. <https://www.frac.org/maps/snap-state-map/tables/snap-states-2016-tab2.html>

⁴ Manchio L and Guthrie J. Supermarkets, Schools and Social Gatherings: Where Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs and Other US Households Acquire the Foods Correlates with Nutritional Quality. United States Department of Agriculture. 2018; Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2018/januaryfebruary/supermarkets-schools-and-social-gatherings-where-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-and-other-us-households-acquire-their-foods-correlates-with-nutritional-quality/>

When more Arizonans buy healthy food from local family farmers, everyone wins.

Double Up Arizona's Impact

Double Up Arizona is a triple win for the state. The program benefits families, farmers, and local economies.

Families: Doubling the purchasing power of SNAP benefits improves health and reduces hunger for Arizona families. In 2022, Double Up served almost 30,000 participants. Of participants surveyed:

- 95% reported buying more vegetables.
- 82% reported buying vegetables they had not tried before.
- 96% said fruits and vegetables became more affordable.

Farmers: Incentivizing Arizona-grown produce helps farmers and growers across Arizona, especially in rural communities. Incentives create new sales opportunities for local farmers and increase demand for local produce. Local food markets, especially direct-to-consumer outlets, such as farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs, provide an affordable, low-risk, and scale-appropriate point of entry for the growing number of new and transitioning farmers and entrepreneurs who are launching farm businesses. Currently, Double Up Arizona serves over 150 Arizona farms and cooperatives. Of Double Up farmers surveyed in 2022, 76% reported making more money because of the Double Up Arizona program.



Whipstone Farm, a Double Up Partner in Prescott, AZ

Local Economies: An effective appropriation is one that keeps dollars local. This program directs federal SNAP dollars towards the purchase of healthy, Arizona-grown produce, which keeps more dollars circulating in our local communities. In 2017, SNAP issued approximately \$2.18 billion, which could be spent at any one of the nearly 4,600 SNAP-authorized retailers in Arizona. Finally, it is estimated that every dollar spent in SNAP benefits generates \$1.50 in local economic activity,¹ and every dollar spent on healthy food incentive programs generates \$1.79 in local economic activity.⁵

Double Up Arizona Funding

State, federal, and private funds make Double Up Arizona possible. A USDA FINI grant first established the program in 2016, and Double Up Arizona received additional USDA GusNIP funding in 2021. The Nutrition Assistance Produce Incentive Program (NAPIP) provided state funding for Double Up Arizona, established through a one-time, \$400,000 appropriation to the Arizona Department of Economic Security in the 2018 legislative session (§ 46-231). Additionally, NAPIP received \$2 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, allocated from the Governor's Office in FY 2023 and FY 2024. Both state and federal funding require private matching funds in the form of both cash and in-kind contributions. Private cash match partners have included health foundations and health care plans. In-kind contributions have included Double Up sites, state agencies, and local non-profit partners offering in-kind support through staffing, personnel time, and technical assistance.

⁵ United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Linkages with the General Economy. 2017. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/economic-linkages/>