



Double Up Food Bucks Michigan 2023

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Double Up Food Bucks Michigan

Fair Food Network's [Double Up Food Bucks](#) program in Michigan is a national model for nutrition incentives that has been adopted by partners around the country to improve healthy food access. The program helps people using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables through a dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$10 a day. Fair Food Network piloted Double Up in Detroit in 2009. Since then, it has spread to nearly every county in Michigan! Double Up is a triple win: better business for Michigan farmers, more healthy food for families, and a boost for local economies.

Double Up was seeded more than a decade ago as a pilot program in collaboration with five Detroit farmers markets. Today, Double Up is a statewide success across Michigan powered by federal, state, and philanthropic support.

Funding

Governor Whitmer's executive budget recommends \$15.5M for Double Up in an FY23 supplemental which, with the \$900,000 already appropriated for FY23. The governor's budget recommendation also includes the ongoing \$900,000 for FY 24-25. This proposed funding will allow us to maintain our current Double Up sites.

The supplemental would be used to provide required non-federal matching funds for federal grants. This investment is made in anticipation of Federal Farm Bill reauthorization and the expectation that Michigan will have access to *significantly* more USDA nutrition match funding.

Additionally, there is room for growth as we have a waiting list for both grocery and farmers market sites.

We are grateful for long-term planning support from the administration, the state budget office, and the legislature as we prepare to navigate the committee process. Michigan families will have consistent and local access to Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables with this well-planned approach.

Food Insecurity and Nutrition

Last year, the state's Food Security Council determined that food insecurity in our state was an ongoing issue only heightened by the pandemic. Federal and state food assistance and nutrition incentive program were a crucial safety net for families during that time. Now, as more Michigan



families rely on SNAP benefits to feed their families and put healthy food on the table, Double Up brings these choices more within reach.

Nutritional food access is one of the key Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Demand for Double Up continues to climb for Michiganders – related fruits and vegetable purchases are up 212% since 2019.

According to the [Harvard School of Public Health](#), a diet rich in vegetables and fruits can lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, prevent some types of cancer, lower risk of eye and digestive problems, and have a positive effect on blood sugar. According to the [Year 2 GusNIP Impact Findings](#), people who participate in nutrition incentive programs like Double Up consume greater amounts of fruits and vegetables---more than the average adult---and experience decreased food insecurity.

Impact on Michigan Ag

Double Up remains a win for local farmers. Since 2017, participating stores have reported purchasing more than \$20 million of Michigan-grown produce. In 2020, independent grocers purchased \$3.64 million in Michigan produce during the peak growing season. In 2021, that number grew to \$5.96 million. The average amount of Michigan produce purchased by participating Double Up stores has more than tripled since we started requiring this in 2017.

On average, participating grocery stores have increased the amount of Michigan produce they are purchasing while implementing Double Up. In 2017, when Double Up started requiring stores to report their produce purchases, participating stores reported purchasing an average of \$14,700 of Michigan produce during the peak growing season of July-November. **That average is now \$46,300 of Michigan produce purchased per participating store for the 2022 growing season.**

The prospect of significantly enhanced funding for Double Up and other nutrition incentive programs through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in the 2023 U.S. Farm Bill would disproportionately benefit Michigan farmers because of our significant specialty crop production.

Availability

Double Up is available at more than 250 farmers markets, farm stands, and grocery stores across Michigan. The program allows people to purchase additional fruits and vegetables, if they currently use SNAP benefits at the time of their purchase.

Temporary Pause on Earning

Through January 15, 2023, Double Up customers could not earn Double Up at grocery stores. However, they could still spend what they earned from past purchases. The pause did not affect participating locations in Flint or purchases at farm stands and farmers markets.



Earning/Spending

In order to modulate spending so as to mitigate the need for future pauses, the cap on how much Double Up families can earn and spend has dropped to \$10 a day, from \$20 a day. Additionally, customers using the Double Up card or app will need to spend what they have earned within 90 days of earning it.

Participation in the program more than *doubled* since 2020 and has never decreased.

Informing Public Policy

Double Up's track record of positive impact on families and farmers helped make federal support for incentives a permanent part of future farm bills. Since 2015, Fair Food Network has received three USDA awards totaling \$22.71 million to expand Double Up in Michigan and support its replication in communities across the country.

Looking Forward

Today, Michigan's Double Up program remains a proving ground for innovation, pushing the field forward with a focus on grocery expansion, technology innovations, and farmer-to-grocer connections. Technology innovations seeded in Flint are also allowing shoppers to carry earned incentive dollars on electronic Double Up cards or an app that can be used across participating locations.

The following information comes from our external evaluator, the University of Michigan. This April they completed their annual program evaluation that concluded:

- In 2021, Double Up recipients purchased nearly \$2M per year in fruits and vegetables directly from local Michigan farmers in the farmers market/farm stand setting.
- Double Up participants eat more fruits and vegetables than both the average adult in Michigan and across the U.S.
- The proportion of households with children who use Double Up was higher than that for both Michigan Bridge Card holders and the Michigan population generally. Kids who eat more fruits and vegetables build lifelong healthy eating habits.
- In a 2022 survey of Double Up participants, 84 percent rated their experience with Double Up as either positive or very positive.
- Price is the most frequently cited reason why Double Up shoppers do not purchase more fruits and vegetables, followed by challenges storing fruits and vegetables.