



Montana Double SNAP Dollars

A Win for Families, Farmers, and Local Economies

1 in 8 Montanans, including 1 in 6 children, struggle to afford all the food they need¹. Many of these families participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) to help, however affording healthy food can be difficult. Research shows that increased consumption of fruits and vegetables has lasting positive impacts on health² and that nutrition incentives such as Double SNAP Dollars are effective at increasing their consumption³.

1 in 3 Montana farmers markets accept SNAP benefits, and that number is growing. These markets are an important sales outlet for many small farms in Montana. Double SNAP Dollars encourage families to spend their SNAP dollars locally, bringing increased revenue to Montana's farmers while improving access to healthy, Montana-grown produce for low-income families.

**Connecting SNAP participants with farmers markets
is a win-win for families and farmers.**

What is Double SNAP Dollars?

- Double SNAP Dollars is a nutrition incentive program that helps food-insecure Montanans afford more fruits and vegetables. It has been operating in Montana since 2015
- For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets and farm share programs, SNAP recipients receive an extra dollar to spend on fruits and vegetables
- As of 2018, Double SNAP Dollars are available at 13 farmers markets and 4 farm share programs in Montana

How does Double SNAP Dollars impact Montana?

| FAMILIES | FARMERS | ECONOMY |
|---|---|---|
| Thousands of families purchase more fruits and vegetables which improves nutrition and food security. | Nearly 50% of farms in Montana are small farms less than 219 acres. This program helps these farms reach more customers | Local economies: Every dollar spent on local food can generate \$1.60 in economic activity |
| This means: Children are better learners | Once Double SNAP was implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger markets in Missoula saw an average increase in sales of 13%• Rural markets, such as in Whitefish or Anaconda, saw over 100% increase in sales | Since 2015, \$350,000 has been spent on local foods through the program, representing an economic impact of up to \$626,500 |
| Seniors and people with disabilities have better health outcomes | | With the requested investment in state funds, that economic impact could increase by an additional \$241,740 |
| The state can reduce healthcare spending in Montana. | | |

How is the program currently funded?

- A collaboration of nonprofits has raised over \$450,000 in both public and private funds to support Double SNAP Dollars – about \$360,000 has come from the USDA's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program
- These FINI funds will be fully expended during the 2020 farmers market season, limiting our ability to sustain the program at participating sites and to expand Double SNAP Dollars to additional communities or to new retailers

Why is state investment needed?

- State investment would provide stability for current sites and allow the program to grow to new communities, which will mean:
 - Improved food security for vulnerable families
 - Improved health outcomes
 - Increased revenue for Montana farmers
- Appropriation for this program through Montana state funds would allow us to better leverage federal funding for nutrition incentives

In the words of Montana farmers:

“Double SNAP Dollars has helped significantly in allowing me to contribute to the larger community while keeping my business profitable.”

“Access to fresh food is a right! We love serving people who otherwise could not afford local produce.”

In the words of Double SNAP Dollars customers:

“This program really helps me stretch my money and feed my family. It has been inspiring my kids to try new things and experiment with their taste buds. I feel that our health has improved, and the kids get sick less.”

“When I first went to farmers market, I felt very on the outside of it. I just wanted to zip in and zip out, and I felt embarrassed that I didn't have much to spend. But with Double SNAP Dollars, I gradually felt much more part of the community, because I was accepted without being questioned ... They appreciated me as a customer.”

“With Double SNAP Dollars, I can get a CSA. Something that would have felt out of reach, irresponsible to sign up for, was suddenly within my reach. I can have the best [produce] that's out there. Another aspect of a CSA that's wonderful is feeling part of a community. It makes me feel connected and cared about.”

This project is supported by:

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¹Feeding America. Food Insecurity in the United States. map.feedingamerica.org/

²Fair Food Network. Power of Produce Report. fairfoodnetwork.org/resources/report-the-power-of-produce/

³County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Programs. countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/policies/fruit-vegetable-incentive-programs

⁴Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. SNAP Boosts Retailers and Local Economies. cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-boosts-retailers-and-local-economies