SNAP & WIC: Invest in Fruit & Vegetable Incentive Programs

Fresh Bucks and the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program provide food assistance to low income people so they can afford to buy more fruits and vegetables. These programs reduce hunger, improve health, and support local farmers and grocery stores.

Washington’s nationally-recognized federal Fruit & Vegetable Incentives grant has been enormously successful over the past 4 years in addressing hunger and health for SNAP clients while supporting local agriculture and retailers across our state.

Low income SNAP shoppers now spend 15% more on fruits/veg at grocery stores and 19% more at farmers markets; 72% of patients report managing their health conditions better; and 75% said their food was less likely to run out – all because they now have help stretching their food budget so produce is easier to afford.

But this federal grant ends in 2019, so our state now has the opportunity to invest in the sustainability and expansion of these innovative strategies and update point-of-sale technology to make it easier to provide healthy produce to low income people.

“I am diabetic and unemployed and this program makes sure I have healthy food in my house.”
- Joshua

Invest to sustain SNAP incentive programs & expand WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program

3 Types of Partners Participate in Fresh Bucks & WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program:

- **Health Care Clinics**
  15 health care systems with 68 clinics & community sites

- **Grocery Stores**
  130 Safeway stores in Washington

- **Farmers Markets**
  90 farmers markets in 28 counties

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SNAP & WIC: Fresh Bucks & Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Every day, more than 900,000 people in Washington face uncertainty about where their next meal will come from. One in 8 Washingtonians can’t afford enough food for their households so they receive SNAP (food stamps): 36% of those are children. Fruits and vegetables, a critical part of a healthy diet and lifelong healthy habits, are not easily affordable in Washington with the average SNAP budget of $4 a day per person.

Thanks to a federal grant that ends in 2019, a network of farmers markets, health care providers, and all Safeway stores are making it easier for low income people to afford more fruits and vegetables: Customers who use their SNAP benefits are matched with extra dollars to be used to buy more fruits and vegetables, and low income patients are getting fruit & vegetable “prescriptions” from health care providers.

Among low income moms and young children in our state, 141,000 families get food assistance from WIC. Because WIC provides only $11/month to buy fruits & vegetables for a low income mom, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides $20 per family for fresh produce each summer at farmers markets.

Hunger & Healthy Food in Washington:

Map: Location of SNAP incentive strategies

Economic Impacts:

Spent at farmers markets (2015 – 2018*)

- $1.186 million - SNAP purchases
- $794,000 - fruit/veg Fresh Bucks
- $3.544 million - overall local economic impact in Washington

Spent by low income patients (2016 – 2017)

- $97,110 – fruit/veg Rx at 103 grocery stores & 34 farmers markets

Spent at grocery stores (2017- 2018*)

- $686,864 – fruit/veg coupons at all 170 Safeway stores

* partial year results

✧ based on USDA’s multiplier of $1.79 per $1 spent