



THE POWER OF PRODUCE

IN PENNSYLVANIA

**NUTRITION INCENTIVES EMPOWER FAMILIES,
SUPPORT FARMERS AND LIFT UP COMMUNITIES
ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH**



NOW MORE THAN EVER, FAMILIES ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA WANT TO EAT NUTRITIOUS, WHOLESOME FOODS.

But when a head of lettuce costs more than a bag of potato chips, it's easy to see why the healthiest choice may not always be the easiest choice—and why, when shoppers have a limited budget, **putting healthy food on the table can simply be out of reach.**

In fact, only 8.4% of Pennsylvania adults are eating the recommended number of servings of vegetables per day¹. Without access to healthy, affordable food, Americans are at a higher risk for a host of diet-related diseases like diabetes and heart disease. In Pennsylvania, an astounding 47% of residents live with at least one chronic disease linked to diet². According to experts, each year poor diets costs the US economy \$1.1 trillion in combined health care spending and lost productivity.³

And when families can't afford to buy fresh produce, they're not the only ones who suffer: American farmers are losing their livelihood, and rising health care costs affect every taxpayer.

But we can change that.

Nutrition incentive programs for shoppers who rely on SNAP—a simple idea that started at farmers markets and has grown to supermarkets and other retailers—empowers families to make healthier choices by making **fresh produce more affordable**. And when the thousands of Pennsylvanians struggling with poverty start bringing home more healthy food, we see their communities start to benefit, too: Area farmers gain new customers and make more money, small businesses thrive, and more food dollars stay in the local economy.



1 https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Health%20Planning/SHA%20Complete%20Report_2021.pdf

2 https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6645a1.htm#T1_down

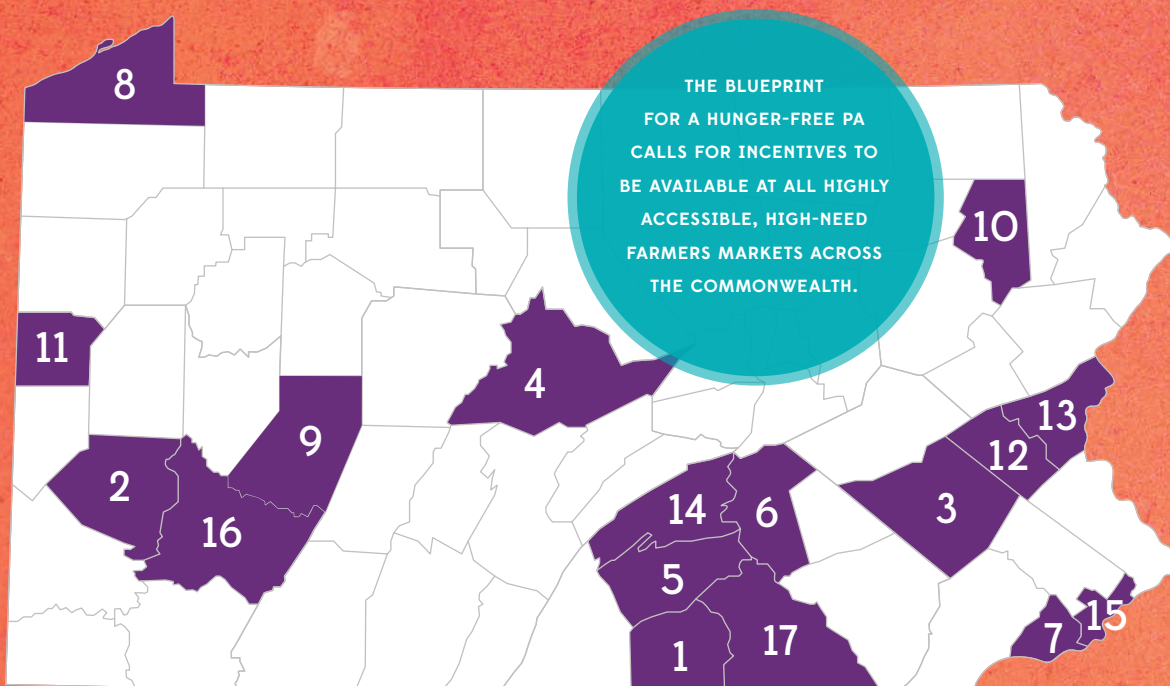
3 https://tuftsfoodismedicine.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Tufts-Food-is-Medicine-Institute_2023-FIM-Fact-Sheet.pdf

WHERE TO FIND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Nutrition incentives are available in the following Pennsylvania counties:*



View the current map at
thefoodtrust.org/foodbucks.



- 1 Adams
- 2 Allegheny
- 3 Berks
- 4 Centre
- 5 Cumberland
- 6 Dauphin
- 7 Delaware
- 8 Erie
- 9 Indiana
- 10 Lackawanna
- 11 Lawrence
- 12 Lehigh
- 13 Northampton
- 14 Perry
- 15 Philadelphia
- 16 Westmoreland
- 17 York

*Data not available for all counties at the time of publication.

What Are Nutrition Incentives?

Nutrition incentives were designed to make fresh fruits and vegetables more affordable for shoppers who use SNAP.

These SNAP incentives—often taking the form of a coupon, token, debit card or electronic discount—allow shoppers to purchase high-quality fruits and vegetables, try new foods and experience a positive shopping experience.

This purchasing power enables families to boost their food dollars and not just bring home a larger quantity of food, but a better quality of food.

SNAP incentives simultaneously increase consumption of nutritious produce and stimulate local economies by unlocking demand for fruits and vegetables. Moreover, when linked to local agriculture, the benefits extend to Pennsylvania farmers: As shoppers buy more food for their families, farmers make more money, serve more customers and grow more food.

By providing financial incentives on produce purchases, we can ensure that families no longer need to choose between eating healthy and eating enough.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is SNAP?

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps. To receive benefits, SNAP-eligible participants receive an EBT card, which can be used for most food purchases at supermarkets, corner stores and other food retailers.

What is GusNIP?

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among lower-income consumers participating in SNAP by providing incentives at the point of purchase. GusNIP requires a dollar-for-dollar match, and many states have appropriated these funds to draw down federal resources.

SNAP Incentives: A Triple Win

Nutrition incentives support a triple bottom line, helping families bring home more nutritious food, supporting Pennsylvania farmers and keeping more food dollars in the community.

FAMILIES



Nutrition incentives benefit families by:

- Improving access to healthy, affordable food
- Increasing purchasing power for and consumption of nutritious fruits and vegetables
- Integrating federal nutrition and education programs
- Supporting long-term dietary improvements

FARMERS



Incentives can also help Pennsylvania farmers by:

- Attracting SNAP recipients and farmers to the market, thereby increasing SNAP redemptions and overall farmers market sales
- Providing a gateway for beginning farmers
- Offering new direct and wholesale marketing opportunities
- Stimulating farm expansion in both acreage and crop diversity

COMMUNITIES



Communities win by:

- Stimulating local economies in a new, innovative, sustainable way
- Reducing health care costs
- Giving public nutrition assistance programs the opportunity to address hunger, health and local food systems simultaneously
- Allowing rural and urban communities to gain new and lasting connections, resulting in resilient economic growth

HOW DO SNAP INCENTIVES WORK?

Incentives are offered in a number of high-need areas across the state: supermarkets, small grocery stores, corner stores, farmers markets, mobile markets and at cooking demonstrations, and even through healthcare providers.

In Pennsylvania, programs have adopted one of two basic approaches: Shoppers either earn incentive dollars when they purchase SNAP-eligible items and may use those incentives on future produce purchases; or they receive an immediate price discount on produce purchased with SNAP. Programs often include additional nutrition education, recipes and shopping tips.


To participate, shoppers using SNAP benefits swipe their EBT cards and receive a token, paper coupon, digital coupon or discount when purchasing an eligible item.



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Data compiled by The Food Trust, as of March 2024:

- There are **17 counties** in Pennsylvania with nutrition incentive programs.
- Across the commonwealth, SNAP incentives are active in **over 100 retail sites**.
- Nearly **\$2,000,000** in SNAP incentives have been redeemed for fruits and vegetables since 2010.



“Food Bucks are a game changer: They are both beneficial to our farm and the customers who attend our market. About one-third of our sales at this farmers market are Food Bucks, and it motivates me to see people walking away from the market with extra healthy produce every week.”

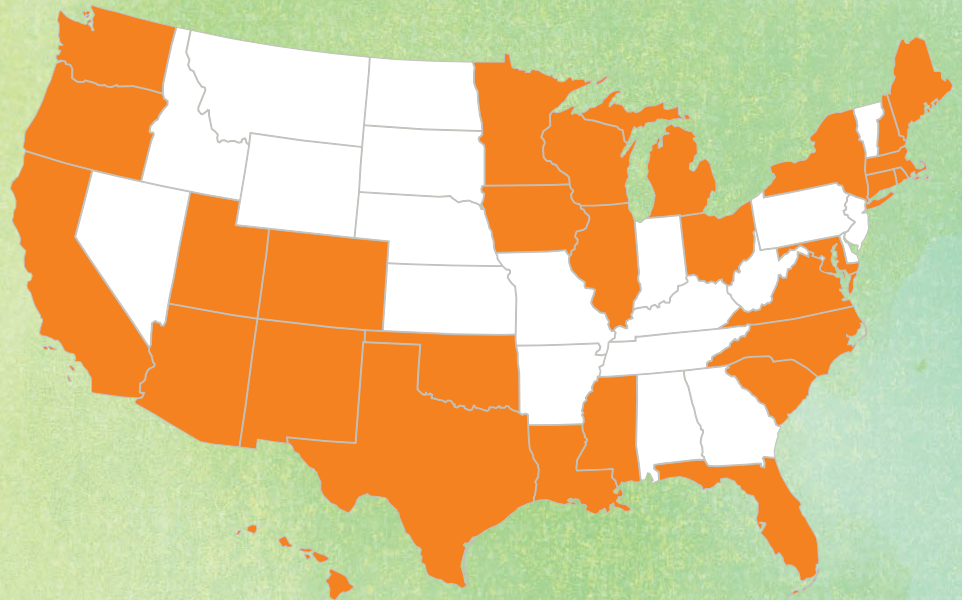
– ALKEBU-LAN MARCUS.
LEAD FARMER.
MILL CREEK COMMUNITY FARM

Looking Forward: Building on Success and Investing in Healthy Communities

In Pennsylvania, 2 million people participate in SNAP.* For these families, healthy options are often off the table. But nutrition incentives are changing that by transforming Pennsylvanians' purchasing power and keeping our communities thriving and healthy.

The Blueprint for a Hunger-Free PA outlined the Commonwealth's commitment to alleviate hunger and calls for incentives to be available at all highly accessible and high-need farmers markets. Pennsylvania's current programming shows that there is great opportunity to reach more families by partnering with not only farmers markets, but also with grocery stores, corner stores and healthcare systems. Pennsylvania's investment in SNAP incentive programs can leverage additional future federal funding (USDA GusNIP), as well as other public and private match funding, to ensure long-term sustainability.

This map highlights states that have invested in nutrition incentive programs that create new and improved opportunities for SNAP families to access nutritious, fresh fruits and vegetables. **Now is the time for Pennsylvania to strengthen its commitment to its farmers, healthy food retailers and communities.**



*updated info as of January 2024

ABOUT THE FOOD TRUST

Founded in 1992, The Food Trust works with neighborhoods, institutions, retailers, farmers and policymakers across the country to ensure **delicious, nutritious food for all**. Backed by three decades of research and evaluation, our holistic, community-centered approach to nutrition security weaves together three core programming elements—**access, affordability and education**—as well as a focus on advocating for public **policy** solutions. To learn more, visit thefoodtrust.org.



ABOUT JUST HARVEST

Just Harvest is a nonprofit organization that reduces hunger through sustainable, long-term approaches that lift up those in need. We get at the root causes of hunger by using public policy and programs to reduce poverty and improve food access. To learn more, visit justharvest.org.

