

FISCAL BRIEF



DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

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FAST FACTS

- Double Up Food Bucks is a program that increases the purchasing power of Michigan residents who receive SNAP benefits by providing a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$20 per day to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at participating grocery stores and farmer's markets.
- The program was developed and is administered by the Fair Food Network, a private non-profit.
- The program has been funded through private foundation grants, federal grants, and beginning in FY 2015-16, state appropriations.
- The Governor has requested the appropriation of \$4.0 million GF/GP in the MDARD budget to support expansion of Double Up Food Bucks to all 83 Michigan counties and to increase the number of participating grocery retailers.

OVERVIEW

Double Up Food Bucks is a program that increases the purchasing power of Michigan residents who receive Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by providing a dollar-for-dollar match – up to \$20 per day – to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at participating grocery stores and farmer's markets. The program incentivizes the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP clients. The Fair Food Network, a private nonprofit, initiated the Double Up Food Bucks program in 2009 in Detroit. The program has since expanded to 65 Michigan counties.¹

Governor Whitmer's budget proposals for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) include \$4.0 million in General Fund/General Purpose (GF/GP) support for Double Up Food Bucks (\$2.0 million in FY 2018-19, and \$2.0 million in FY 2019-20).

The additional state support in the FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20 budgets would allow the expansion of the program to all 83 Michigan counties as well as increasing the number of participating retailers in the counties where the program is currently established. State funding would be used to match federal grant funding.

FUNDING HISTORY

From the program's inception in 2009, and through 2015, the Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program was funded solely by private foundation donors. In March 2015, the Fair Food Network received a direct \$5.1 million award from the United State Department of Agriculture, Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grants program. This program was established in the 2014 Farm Bill.

The Fair Food Network received an additional \$3.5 million FINI award in 2017 to grow the program in four regions in Michigan. The FINI program was reauthorized in the 2018 Farm Bill.

State appropriations for the program have been included in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) budget each year from FY 2015-16 through FY 2018-19. MDARD administers the program under a Memorandum of

¹ See <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/projects/double-up-food-bucks/>

Understanding with DHHS. MDARD in turn grants program funds to the non-profit Fair Food Network. Table 1 reflects this funding history.

Table 1				
Double Up Food Bucks Funding in State Appropriations				
Year	Budget	Flint	Other Areas	Total
2016	DHHS	\$380,000	\$0	\$380,000
2017	DHHS	\$380,000	\$750,000	\$1,130,000
2018	DHHS	\$380,000	\$750,000	\$1,130,000
2019	DHHS	\$300,000	\$0	\$300,000
(Proposed) 2019	MDARD	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
(Proposed) 2020	MDARD	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000

In addition to the direct appropriation in the FY 2015-16 DHHS budget, the Fair Food Network received a \$249,000 grant under MDARD’s FY 2015-16 Value-Added/Rural Development Grant Program (April 2016 Announcement). The announcement indicated that the grant was for a 2016 expansion of the Double Up Food Bucks program to Flint. The MDARD grant was matched with \$695,000 in private foundation funds.

Representatives of the Fair Food Network indicate that approximately 60% of current Double Up Food Bucks funding is used to reimburse grocers and farm market vendors for the cost of doubling the value of the SNAP benefit. The balance of funding is used for program administration and outreach, including technology upgrades to grocery and farm market sales systems to allow for the processing of Double Up Food Bucks transactions. The Fair Food Network indicated that the reimbursement percentage will increase as the program expands to more counties and additional grocery retailers.