

# THE POWER OF PRODUCE IN PHILADELPHIA

NUTRITION  
INCENTIVES  
EMPOWER FAMILIES,  
SUPPORT FARMERS  
AND LIFT UP  
COMMUNITIES

## Now more than ever, Philadelphia families 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 day.<sup>1</sup> 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 diet.<sup>2</sup> According to experts, each year poor diets costs the US economy \$1.1 trillion in combined health care spending and lost productivity.<sup>3</sup>

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 like Food Bucks empower shoppers with limited resources to choose healthy food by making **fresh produce more affordable.** Over 30% of families in Philadelphia rely on SNAP to purchase groceries (Census, 2019–2023) and when they 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](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](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6645a1.htm#T1_down)

3 <https://tuftsfoodmedicine.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Food-is-Medicine-Fact-Sheet-2025.pdf>

## 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 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 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

# What Are Nutrition Incentives?

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

These incentives, like Food Bucks—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. As a result, families bring home not just a larger quantity of food, but also food of higher quality.

**Nutrition incentives for shoppers using SNAP simultaneously increase consumption of produce and stimulate local economies by unlocking demand for fruits and vegetables. Moreover, when linked to local agriculture, the benefits extend to farmers in southeast Pennsylvania: 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.



## HOW DO NUTRITION INCENTIVES WORK?

- Incentives are offered in a number of retail settings in high-need areas: supermarkets, small grocery stores, corner stores, farmers markets, mobile markets and at cooking demonstrations, and even through healthcare providers.
- In Pennsylvania, programs have adopted a few standard 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.

For more information, visit [thefoodtrust.org/foodbucks](https://thefoodtrust.org/foodbucks)



## 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.

## IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

SNAP incentives are active at **19 Philly retail sites**, including grocery stores, farmers markets and sites like Reading Terminal Market.

**Over \$1 million** in SNAP incentives were redeemed for fruits and vegetables in Philadelphia between 2021 and 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](https://thefoodtrust.org).

