

We provide objective, thoughtful analysis on current nutrition related policy and practice issues through this Policy and Practice Brief Series.



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
Center for Research in Nutrition & Health Disparities

Brief—August 2014



South Carolina SNAP Healthy Bucks Pilot Implementation

By Carrie Draper, MSW

We know that eating fresh healthy foods is good for all of us, but doing so can be difficult for some families due to economic constraints. SNAP healthy incentive programs aim to increase the economic buying power for people who receive SNAP to be able to purchase fresh healthy foods. This is done by matching what recipients spend on produce with their SNAP benefits up to a certain amount. These programs are being implemented around the country at farmers' markets and grocery stores. Results show increased consumption of fruits and vegetables among participating SNAP recipients and increased SNAP sales at participating locations, leading to more income for small-scale farmers and money staying in the local economy.¹⁻⁷

Due to a budget proviso passed in the South Carolina General Assembly in 2013, the state now has close to \$2 million dollars allocated for this type of programming. The pilot implementation of the **SC SNAP Healthy**

Bucks program is taking place during the 2014 market season at 6 farmers' market locations, with plans for expansion to more sites next year. The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) is the agency administering the program.

SNAP healthy incentive programs are shown to result in increased consumption of fruits and vegetables among SNAP recipients and increased SNAP sales at participating locations, leading to more income for small-scale farmers and money staying in the local economy.¹⁻⁷

How Does SNAP Healthy Bucks Work?

For Customers Shopping with SNAP:

When a customer shopping with SNAP visits a participating farmers' market, they can receive a \$5 Healthy Bucks token (equivalent to \$5 in cash) for fruit and vegetable purchases. This token can be received once they purchase at least \$2.50 with their own SNAP card (officially called an EBT card). After the \$5 Healthy Bucks token is received, the recipient fills out a simple form signifying the receipt. The initial \$2.50 and \$5 Healthy Bucks token can then be spent on produce at the market. A customer shopping with SNAP can participate once per market day. There are no other limits on how many times they can participate in a market season.

For Farmers' Markets:

Farmers' markets must be set-up to accept SNAP before they can participate in the SNAP Healthy Bucks program. (*Learn how to get set-up as a SNAP vendor here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers-0>.)* DSS provides the Healthy Bucks tokens to the market, which are to be given out after a customer has purchased at least \$2.50 in tokens with their EBT card. Purchases must be for fruits and vegetables only. Once a Healthy Bucks token is given to the customer, the customer fills out a simple form signifying they have received the token. These forms are turned into DSS who reimburses the market for the amount of Healthy Bucks tokens used at the market.

A video of the process can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/user26115300/healthybucks>



Farmers' Markets Participating in the Pilot Implementation:

- ⇒ **Chester Farmers & Artisans Market**, 100 West End Street, Chester. Open Tuesday 3-7pm and Saturday 7am-1pm.
- ⇒ **Colleton Museum Farmers' Market**, 506 East Washington Street, Walterboro. Open Tuesday 2-6pm and Saturday 10am-2pm.
- ⇒ **Easley Farmers' Market**, 205 North 1st Street, Easley. Open Tuesday 5-8pm and Saturday 8am-12pm.
- ⇒ **Hub City Farmers' Market**, 298 Magnolia Street, Spartanburg. Open 11am-1pm Wednesday and 8am-12pm Saturday.
- ⇒ **Kershaw County Farmers' Market**, West DeKalb & Church Streets, Camden. Open 8am-12pm Saturday.
- ⇒ **Right Choice, Fresh Start Farmers' Market**, 3310 Magnolia Street, Orangeburg. Open 8:30am-12:30pm Friday.



The writing of this brief was supported by [National Research Initiative or Agriculture and Food Research Initiative] Grant no. 2012-69001-19615 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Childhood Obesity Challenge Area A2101.

For further information contact:

Carrie Draper, MSW

Community & Policy Outreach Director

draper@mailbox.sc.edu

803.777.2413

Dr. Sonya Jones

Director

sjones@mailbox.sc.edu

803.777.3892

University of South Carolina Center for Research in Nutrition & Health Disparities

Discovery Building

915 Greene Street

Columbia, SC 29208

References:

1. Baronberg, S., Dunn, L., Nonas, C., Dannefer, R., & Sacks, R. (2013). The impact of New York City's health bucks program on electronic benefit transfer spending at farmers markets, 2006-2009. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 10*, 1-7. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd10.130113>.
2. Bodonyi, B. & Gilroy, A. (2011). Healthy eating at farmers markets and the impact of nutrition incentive programs. Oregon Public Health Institute.
3. Fair Food Network (2012). Double up food bucks 2012 evaluation report. Retrieved from <http://www.fairfoodnetwork.org/what-we-do/projects/double-food-bucks>.
4. Freedman, D.A., Choi, S.K., Hurley, T., Anadu, E., & Hebert, J.R. (2013). A farmers market at a federally qualified health center improves fruit and vegetable intake among low-income diabetics. *Preventive Medicine, 56*(5), 288-292.
5. Freedman, D.A., Mattison-Faye, A., Alia, K., Guest, A., & Hebert, J. (2014). Comparing farmers' market revenue trends before and after the implementation of a monetary incentive for recipients of food assistance. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 11*, 1-10. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd11.130347>.
6. Herman, D., Harrison, G., Afifi, A., & Jenks, E. (2008). Effect of targeted subsidy on intake of fruits and vegetables among low-income women in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. *American Journal of Public Health, 98*(1), 98-105.
7. Young, C.R., Aquilante, J.L., Solomon, S., Colby, L., Kawinzi, M.A., Uy, N., & Mallya, G. (2013). Improving fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income customers at farmers markets: Philly food bucks, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2011. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 10*, 1-8. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd10.120356>.