

Double Up Food Bucks Program

Improving Health by Increasing Access to Fruits and Vegetables at Local Markets



Access to fresh produce is a choice systematically denied to residents of underserved urban communities.

Fair Food Network's 2009 "Healthy Food for All" report examined barriers to healthy diets in low-income neighborhoods and found that high cost and limited access, more than any other factors, determined fruit and vegetable consumption. Current federal food assistance programs, while providing increased funds for groceries, do not address the current need for healthier food and better nutrition. In fact, only about 20% of the stores eligible to accept food stamps nationwide are categorized as grocery stores or supermarkets by USDA – the rest are primarily corner stores, liquor stores, and gas station convenience stores with limited offerings of fresh produce. USDA studies have also shown that if the goal is healthier eating habits, providing financial incentives has a greater impact than nutrition education or simply increasing the amount of a food assistance allotment.

This grant to Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks program will encourage food stamp recipients in Grand Rapids to eat healthier. When Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables are bought at participating farmer's markets using food stamps, the purchaser will also receive an equal number of Double Up tokens, which can also be used to buy Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables. As an added benefit, area farmers will experience increased revenue from the over 100,000 pounds of fresh produce expected to be sold through the program.

Grant Facts

Organization: Fair Food Network

Grant amount: \$150,000

Grant Purpose: to demonstrate the effectiveness of incentives to encourage healthier food choices for food stamp users.

Web site: www.fairfoodnetwork.org

Started: 2009

Location: 205 E. Washington St., Ste. B, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

No. served: 109,076 clients in Kent County who receive food stamp benefits

This is Community Leadership.

By providing match funding for this project, the Community Foundation **leverages** both local and national funding to bring this benefit to our community. In addition, this demonstration project will be used to **influence** USDA policy and to encourage changes in the food stamp system which will **further promote healthier eating.**

Ways You Can Help

To help ensure the success of this grant you may give to address any of the needs listed below. Call Fair Food Network at 734.213.3999 to learn more.

- **Banners** - \$100 each – to display at 4-5 participating farmers' markets.
- **Outreach coordinator, part-time** - \$10,000 per year – to coordinate with local groups on community outreach.
- **Communications materials** – up to \$40,000 – including direct mailings, billboards, radio and print advertising.
- **SNAP match funds** – additional funds to distribute to SNAP customers at farmers' markets. Donations of any size welcome, and will be matched by the Open Society Foundation.

*To ensure the Community Foundation can make grants like this one in the future, please consider a gift to the **Fund for Healthy People**. Please call 616.454.1751 to learn the benefits of Community Foundation giving and how gifts can be made.*



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community foundation**

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