

January 2021

Background:

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (formerly known as the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program, or FINI) was established in the 2014 Farm Bill (PL: 113-79) to support projects that incentivize the purchase of fruits and vegetables for consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The grant program is a joint effort between the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), agencies housed within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

While hundreds of retail food stores, farmers markets, supermarkets, and convenience stores participate in the GusNIP program, grocery stores have the ability to reach more SNAP customers and the capacity to analyze and evaluate SNAP purchasing habits over time due to their ability to retain customer purchase data.

The 2018 Farm Bill permanently reauthorizes the GusNIP program without expiration, while more than doubling program spending over a 10-year budget window. It provides mandatory funding levels of \$45M for FY 2019; \$48M for FY 2020; \$48M for FY 2021; \$53M for FY 2022; and \$56M for 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter. Only non-profit organizations and government agencies are eligible to apply for grants; however, any entity that applies for funding must partner with SNAP authorized firms to deliver the incentives to SNAP clients.

Grantees must provide matching funds equal to the amount of the grants. USDA does not allow retailers to apply for grant funding directly, but prioritizes grantees that coordinate with multiple stakeholders, including grocery associations. The 2018 Farm Bill also creates a clearinghouse to offer technical assistance and provide best practices for participating retailers.

USDA Prioritizes GusNIP Projects that:

- Provide access to fruits and vegetables for extended hours and most or all days of the year;
- Offer supplemental services in high need communities, such as online ordering, transportation between home and store, and delivery services;
- Includes coordination with multiple stakeholders including grocery associations; and
- Has adequate plans to collect data for reporting changes in purchasing habits

Double Up Food Bucks:

The Double Up Food Bucks program, created in Michigan by the Fair Food Network and expanded to grocery stores in 2013, is one of the best examples of success in incentivizing healthy foods by using GusNIP grant resources. The program allows SNAP participants to receive a voucher in the amount used to buy fruits and vegetables; meaning if a customer purchases \$4 of fruits and vegetables, he or she receives a voucher for \$4 towards a future purchase of fruits and vegetables.

