



Healthy Eating, Here at Home

Do you support farmer's markets and food access for low income Minnesotans? We do too! We encourage you to support our **Healthy Eating, Here at Home initiative**. (SF 316 & HF 352)

Objective: To provide adequate fresh, local produce for disadvantaged populations; to achieve better health outcomes.

We are requesting a \$1 million annual appropriation from the general fund to provide a voucher for those who use SNAP benefits at farmers markets throughout Minnesota. This will encourage SNAP recipients to use their benefits on healthy choices grown here in Minnesota.

According to Change Lab Solutions, eating healthier foods — including more fresh fruits and vegetables — helps to reduce the risk of obesity and chronic disease. Families and children from low-income communities and communities of color are less likely to have diets that meet nutrition guidelines. Studies show that residents of rural areas, low-income neighborhoods, and communities of color have less access to supermarkets and large grocery stores and the fresh produce they sell. (<http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/fresh-produce-underserved-communities>)



BY THE NUMBERS:
SNAP redemptions at Minnesota markets increased
240% between 2011 and 2013



"It was a great help and very easy to use. It helps us eat fresher veggies and to try different types of food." —Freedom School parent

Funding can also be used for vouchers provided by nonprofits engaged in healthy cooking and healthy food education outreach for SNAP eligible families to use at farmers markets. In June of 2014, Hunger Solutions Minnesota partnered with Children's Defense Fund Minnesota to create a pilot nutrition education program to promote healthy eating among individuals and families. Children's Defense Fund Minnesota selected Academia Cesar Chavez (ACC) Freedom School located in Saint Paul as the pilot site to gauge interest and provide access to valuable community resources. ACC offered this program to its families as an incentive to participate in their weekly Parent Empowerment meetings.

The results? A positive impact on the diets of 55 families over 5 weeks. There was an 85% uptake of the offer from the enrolled families. The pilot included nutrition education, a \$20 weekly incentive and food sampling.

The proposal is also based on the success of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Market Bucks program and other similar efforts nationally. The idea is endorsed by the

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger, MAZON and the Healthy Kids Coalition.

This legislation will increase SNAP enrollees' access to fresh, local, and healthy foods by expanding their buying power at farmer's markets. By opening access to farmers markets, this program will benefit the health of low income families as well as serve as an economic boost to growers.

HUNGER SOLUTIONS MINNESOTA

Winning Minnesota's Food Fight

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27-Jan-15