



# Field & Fork Network

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## Double Up Food Bucks NY: A proven, innovative model for food access

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## Introduction

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Thank you to the chairs for today's hearing — Senator Liz Krueger, Senator Roxanne Persaud, Assemblymember J. Gary Pretlow, and Assemblymember Maritza Davila — as well as all members of this joint committee for allowing me the privilege of submitting testimony today.

My name is Lisa French. I am the CEO and co-founder of Field & Fork Network — a nonprofit whose mission is to connect communities to innovative solutions that foster a sustainable food system.

I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss the future of our flagship nutrition incentive program, Double Up Food Bucks NY (DUFBNY). DUFBNY is a proven, innovative model of food access that offers a dollar-for-dollar match for SNAP users when they purchase fresh produce.

Since the program's inception in 2014, we've adapted DUFBNY to a wide variety of retailers, allowing us to meet SNAP users where they shop in a seamless experience. Additionally, our emphasis on selecting participating locations that procure and sell New York-grown produce directs revenue toward local agricultural development and strengthens regional food systems.

I respectfully request that you include **\$6 million** for Field & Fork Network in New York State's budget for fiscal year 2027 to sustain and expand the DUFBNY program. Our request for increased funding reflects DUFBNY's ability to meet New York residents' urgent demand for healthy, affordable food. Additionally, this amount would unlock matching federal funds under Field & Fork Network's Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, potentially doubling the state's investment in DUFBNY.

## New York Residents Need Healthy, Affordable Food

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Imagine, for a moment, you reach into the pocket of an old coat and find a grocery list from February 2020. If you were to spend the same amount on groceries today, you'd get 26% less food.

This is our current economic reality. Struggling families across the state can *feel* their purchasing power erode as their budgets become tighter and their grocery bags become lighter. And for New York's nearly three million SNAP recipients, recent cuts to federal nutrition programs mean their dollars aren't just worth less — they have less of them.

This has left roughly one in seven New York residents (and one in five children) food insecure, higher than even the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the crisis isn't limited to the checkout counter and kitchen table. It extends throughout the entirety of New York's food system, as long-term uncertainty, tariffs, and spending cuts at the federal level stand to make life harder for New York farmers.

New York families, farmers, and communities are getting squeezed. DUFBNY offers a way for SNAP recipients to stretch their benefits without sacrificing a healthy diet; for New York farmers to find new customers for their products; and for a more resilient food system to take root in our state.

## Rapid Expansion for a Proven Model

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This past June, Field & Fork Network finalized the largest expansion of DUFBNY to date. In partnership with Northeast Grocery — owner of Market 32, Price Chopper, and Tops Friendly Markets — DUFBNY was introduced to SNAP recipients in 16 new counties across rural New York using technology that can instantly incorporate the program into the company's point-of-sale system.

In the subsequent four months, total redemptions and transactions for DUFBNY **increased by 95% statewide**.

With our annual totals now finalized, DUFBNY officially **matched \$4.2 million** in fresh produce purchases by New York shoppers in 2025 — **a more than 400% increase** from 2024 and **more than the first 10 years of the program combined**.

And even with our rapid expansion into brick-and-mortar locations, DUFBNY still managed to set a new annual redemption record at participating farm stands and markets with more than \$480,000 matched.

Cumulatively, the DUFBNY program has:

- Matched **\$7.8 million** in SNAP purchases of fresh produce, which has ...
- Generated **\$11.6 million** in total economic impact, with ...
- **\$2.3 million** going directly to New York farmers.

DUFBNY now operates at over **320 locations in 53 counties**, covering 85% of the state. In 2026, we project DUFBNY will match **at least \$6 million** in SNAP purchases of fresh produce, **a potential 50% increase over our 2025 totals**. Additionally, Field & Fork Network is on track to expand the program to all 57 counties outside of New York City more than a year ahead of schedule.

These projections are based on current figures. They're a trajectory. But the program's ceiling is only limited by our ability to match redemptions and reach more SNAP recipients.

However, this is not expansion for the sake of expansion. When we consider new locations, we look at a number of data-driven criteria to ensure that DUFBNY is an efficient and targeted program that creates the biggest impact with limited funds.

We do our best to go where the need is highest. For instance, our most recent expansion focused on rural locations. Based on a 2022 survey of food-insecure New York residents, rural participants rated "affordability" as a major hurdle to food access at the highest rate (79%) compared to their suburban (76%) and urban (53%) counterparts.

### **Technological and Logistical Advantages**

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We don't need to divert funds toward costly logistical challenges — because we've already solved them. DUFBNY currently utilizes five seamless point-of-sale options, making the program adaptable to a wide range of retailers to meet SNAP users where they shop, from farm stands to full-service grocers.

Most notably, DUFBNY can be instantly incorporated into Northeast Grocery's automated coupon system, meaning SNAP users can start participating in the program without needing to sign up. And while typical coupons from food manufacturers are redeemed only 3-5% of the time, **DUFBNY coupons are redeemed at a staggering 40% rate.**

New York State's \$6 million investment would sustain program operations and maximize the dollars matched at the register, helping SNAP shoppers weather today's affordability crisis. And with DUFBNY's emphasis on New York agriculture, the program is a cost-effective way to grow the amount of food dollars circulating in local communities. That means a vast majority of the program's cost is injected directly into local economies.

DUFBNY's efficiency and ease-of-use were put to the test this past November, as the federal government's delayed disbursement of SNAP funding put undue stress on recipients. Uncertain about when and if they would receive their benefits, SNAP users were still able to redeem previously earned Double Up dollars for fresh produce without needing to run a SNAP transaction, which offered a critical bridge during a period of instability.

### **More Than a Nutrition Incentive Provider — We're an Investment**

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Recent federal cuts have placed an unexpected burden on states. As New York looks to fill these new funding gaps, DUFBNY offers a way for the state's investment to have an impact greater than the initial dollar amount.

Because after more than a decade and **nearly 1,000,000 transactions**, we know that every stakeholder in DUFBNY gets more out of the program than they invest in it:

- SNAP users can afford **twice** as much fresh produce.
- New York State's investment can be **matched** by federal funds under Field & Fork Network's GusNIP grant.
- The economic impact is **nearly 50% greater** than the program's cost.

In short, DUFBNY puts more fruits and vegetables on struggling SNAP households' tables while ensuring that every dollar spent is reinvested in New York families, farmers, and communities.

I'd like to thank all the members of this joint committee once again for the opportunity to discuss our collective fight against hunger and our mutual desire to build a more resilient food system in New York. If you have any additional questions about the Double Up Food Bucks NY program, Field & Fork Network, or other issues raised in this testimony, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or our office.