

BACKGROUND

The Healthy Bucks Program, authorized under a proviso in the 2013-14 Appropriations Act, provides coupons allowing SNAP recipients to obtain additional fresh fruits and vegetables when purchasing fresh produce at grocery stores or farmer’s markets with SNAP benefits through their EBT cards. Each coupon allows the recipient to double the amount of produce purchased. In 2022 the proviso was amended to increase the incentive limit from \$10 to \$20.

The proviso directs the Department of Social Services (DSS) to *utilize all funds received in the prior and current fiscal years from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a bonus for reducing the error rate in processing SNAP applications to fund the [Healthy Bucks] program.* Food stamp bonuses received for FFY 2011 had already been spent when the proviso was established. DSS received **\$1,892,369** in high performance bonuses for FFY 2012. Notice of this award arrived in June 2013 and was set aside for the Healthy Bucks program. Federal law passed in 2014 requires bonus payments to be used only for investments in technology or other activities that improve the administration of the SNAP program, or actions to prevent fraud, waste and abuse. Thus, only the FFY 2012 bonus funds were appropriated for Healthy Bucks.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE HEALTHY BUCKS PROGRAM

Healthy Bucks began in June 2014 with six farmer’s markets in six counties. Currently 44 markets/vendors are active in 31 counties (see page 3 for list of vendors/markets by county).

While expansion efforts have resulted in significant increases in participation from 2015 to 2022, the percentage of SNAP recipients choosing to participate in Healthy Bucks remains relatively low. 21,730 clients participated in 2020, 43,031 clients participated in 2021 and 35,041 clients participated in 2022. A total of **134,552** incentives have been given to SNAP recipients since June 2014.

Year to year comparison of Healthy Bucks incentives (reimbursements for tokens used by participants):

2014:	\$3,432
2015:	\$31,089
2016:	\$47,262
2017:	\$62,160
2018:	\$81,860
2019:	\$121,700
2020:	\$264,985
2021:	\$500,750
2022:	\$385,540
Total:	\$1,498,778

Total Healthy Bucks program expenditures to date (June 2014 – December 2022): **\$1,501,973** (includes \$3,195 in supplies). DSS does not charge any administrative or staffing costs to Healthy Bucks, to preserve the funding for participant benefits. Thus, the estimated remaining balance for the program is **\$390,396**.

On October 1, 2022, DSS increased the maximum Healthy Bucks SNAP incentive amount from \$10 to \$15 in response to the 2022 proviso change. Healthy Bucks vendors distribute \$15 worth of Healthy Bucks tokens (three \$5 Healthy Bucks tokens) for fruits and vegetables sold to a SNAP recipient after a \$5 SNAP transaction occurs during the same market business day.

Due to increased participation and vendor expansion, the current funding source for Healthy Bucks will be fully exhausted by the end of SFY 2023. No federal funds may be used for Healthy Bucks, as the expenditures are classified as “direct client benefits”.

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS AND ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

DSS has made procedural improvements and efficiencies where possible to simplify program participation for both farmer’s markets and SNAP recipients, while maintaining controls over expenditures. In addition, the Department continues to work on addressing potential barriers to participation, such as:


- *Transportation.* Many SNAP recipients experience difficulties securing regular, reliable transportation, particularly in rural areas. DSS continues to work with Healthy Bucks vendors to offer additional opportunities for recipients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, such as incentivizing farmers to bring their produce to DSS county offices, community centers, and other locations.
- *Meal planning and storage of fresh produce.* DSS is working with community partners and SNAP Education & Outreach contractors to provide opportunities for SNAP recipients to learn more about the benefits of cooking with fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g., providing cooking demonstrations, recipes, and other outreach materials at farmer’s markets and other locations). The department is also working with community partners on options to provide low-income families with cooking and food storage materials to assist with meal planning.
- *Marketing/public awareness.* In 2018, 2,000 Healthy Bucks postcards were mailed to SNAP recipients in Charleston, Chester, Greenville, Richland, and Sumter counties in order to make clients aware of the Healthy Bucks program, identify where markets are located within these counties, and encourage usage of the incentive program to purchase more fruits and vegetables. Eight of the 11 vendors showed an increase in number of Healthy Bucks incentives given to clients.

In March 2020, DSS launched a strategic outreach agenda that includes conducting outreach directly to potential vendors as well as community organizations serving those most likely to qualify for SNAP benefits.

- *Technology (SNAP Only EBT Machine Grant).* In 2019, DSS was awarded \$150,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to purchase SNAP-Only EBT Machines. This was previously identified as a barrier to participation for some farmer’s markets and direct market farmers. DSS will continue to reach out to farmers in need of this support to further increase the number of vendors participating in the Healthy Bucks SNAP incentive program.

HEALTHY BUCKS VENDORS BY COUNTY: JANUARY 2023

Aiken County	Anderson County	Bamberg County	Beaufort County		Calhoun County
Aiken County Farmers Market (FM) 115 Williamsburg Street Aiken, SC 29801 Phone: (803) 644-1902	Anderson County Farmers Market (FM) 402 N. Murray Ave. Anderson, SC 29621 Phone: (864) 231-1924	Food Share of Bamberg (O) 13416 Charleston-Augusta Rd Denmark, SC 29402 Phone: (803) 571-5516	O Freeman Farm (RS) 3768 Betsy Kerrison Pkwy Johns Island, SC 29455 Phone: (843) 364-6200	Earth People Farms (RS) P.O. Box 131 St. Helena Is, SC 29920 Phone: (843) 441-0657	Alvin Pair Farms (RS) (Multiple Locations) Calhoun & Orangeburg, SC Phone: (803) 201-0397
Charleston County	Cherokee County	Chester County		Chesterfield County	Colleton County
Lowcountry Street Grocery, LLC (RS) (Multiple Locations) Charleston, SC Phone: (706) 340-4160	Know2 (Food Share) (O) 508 West Buford St. Gaffney, SC 29341 Phone: (864) 490-0747	The Chester Market of Cotton Hills (RS) 131 Church St. Chester, SC 29706 Phone: (803) 209-2703	The Market at Cotton Hills Farm (RS) 2575 Lowrys Hwy. Chester, SC 29706 Phone: (803) 209-2703	Chesterfield County Coordinating Council (RS) 203 Commerce Ave Chesterfield, SC 29709 Phone: (843) 623-5265	Colleton Museum Farmers Market (FM) 506 E. Washington Street Walterboro, SC 29488 Phone: (843) 549-2303
Edgefield County	Florence County		Georgetown County	Greenville County	
Cooks Roadside Market (RS) 1236 Augusta Road Trenton, SC 29847 Phone: (803) 275-2970	Ellerbe Vegetable Farm (RS) (Multiple Locations) Florence, SC Phone: (843) 496-7674	Florence City Center Farmers Market (FM) 200 Sanborn St. Florence, SC 29501 Phone: (843) 665-2047	Sisters 4 the Future (O) 4430 Pamplico Hwy Florence, SC 29505 Phone: (843) 702-2039	Carolina Human Reinvestment (O) P.O. Box 2440 Georgetown, SC 29442 Phone: (843) 461-4305	Greenville TD Saturday Market (FM) 206 S. Main Street Greenville, SC 29601 Phone: (864) 467-4494
Greenville County		Greenwood County	Hampton County	Kershaw County	
Mill Cty Ministries/Mobile Market, Food Share (RS) (Multiple Locations) Greenville, SC 29611 Phone: (864) 402-9796	Feed and Seed Company (RS) P.O. Box 3005 Greenville, SC 29602 Phone: (336) 458-6980	Marnatha Farms and Wellness (RS) 233 Goodwin Bridge Rd Travelers Rest, SC 29690 Phone: (864) 430-5375	Uptown Market (FM) 220 Maxwell Ave. Greenwood, SC 29646 Phone: (864) 942-8421	Huspah Missionary FoodShare Hampton (O) 719 Magnolia St. Hampton, SC 29924 Phone: (803) 943-6502	Mobile Nutrition Center/ Food Share (O) 110 East Dekalb St. Camden, SC 29020 Phone: (803) 432-0951
Lancaster County		Laurens County	Lee County	Marlboro County	McCormick County
Hope in Lancaster (O) 2008 Pageland Highway Lancaster, SC 29720 Phone: (803) 286-4673	Rich Hill Farm, LLC (RS) 3061 Rocky River Rd. Heath Springs, SC 29058 Phone: (803) 283-7233	SC Empowerment Centre/ Food Share Laurens (O) 62 Bridgeway Dr. Laurens, SC 29360 Phone: (864) 923-2681	Mt. Calvary Church/Food Share (O) 714 Camden Hwy Bishopville, SC 29010 Phone: (803) 483-2220	Marlboro School CC/Food Share Marlboro (O) 612 King St. Bennettsville, SC 29512 Phone: (843) 773-0181	McCormick County Historical Comm. (FM) 206 N. Main St. McCormick, SC 29835 Phone: (805) 201-5150
Oconee County	Orangeburg County				
Mcladke Orchards (RS) 350 Old Oak Drive Seneca, SC 29678 Phone: (318) 218-9992	McCurley Farms (RS) 8840 North Road North, SC 29112 Phone: (803) 760-4581	Right Choice Fresh Start Farmers Market (FM) 3300 Magnolia St. Orangeburg, SC 29118 Phone: (803) 531-6921	Season Seafood Corporation (FM) 12933 Old #6 Highway Eutawville, SC 29048 Phone: (803) 622-7274	Wideman Produce (RS) 547 Ebenezer Rd. Bowman, SC 29018 Phone: (803) 747-9199	Food Share Columbia (O) 2016 Harden Street Columbia, SC 29203 Phone: (803) 851-4461
		Key: (FM): Similar to Farmers Market (RS): Similar to Roadside Stand (O): Independent Vendor or Box Program			

Richland County	Richland/Fairfield County		Spartanburg County		
Martin Farms (RS) (Multiple Locations) Orangeburg/Columbia, SC Phone: (803) 308-6481	Toms Creek Family Farms LLC (RS) 141 Toms Creek Ct. Hopkins, SC 29061 Phone: (803) 447-3790	Blythewood Farmers Market (FM) 2 Dennis Lane Blythewood, SC 29016 Phone: (803) 402-6864	Ruth's Gleanings/Food Share (O) 147 Chapel Street Spartanburg, SC 29303 Phone: (864) 205-1723	Hub City Farmers Market (FM) (Saturday Market) 498 Howard Street Spartanburg, SC 29303 Phone: (864) 585-0905	Hub City Farmers Market (FM) (Mobile Market) Spartanburg, SC 29306 Phone: (864) 585-0905
Sumter County	Union County	Williamsburg County	York County		
Rogers Vegetable Farm (RS) (Multiple Locations) Lee and Sumter, SC Phone: (803) 840-1636	Union County Farmers Market (FM) 106 Lakeside Dr. Union, SC 29379 Phone: (864) 427-1530	CMD5 Pantry/Food Share Kingstree (O) 2231 Sumter Highway Kingstree, SC 29556 Phone: (843) 206-2642	Food Share H.O.P.E. (O) 648 South Jones Ave Rock Hill, SC 29730 Phone: (800) 357-0905		
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