Double Up Food Bucks Colorado 2018 Evaluation:
Executive Summary
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For more information on 2018 Double Up evaluation results, please refer to the other focused
evaluation reports and Appendix A for all tables and figures referenced in this report.

1. Executive Summary (this document)
2. Impact on SNAP Recipients
3. Impact on Farmers and Retailers
4. Implications for Community Partnerships, Outreach, and Engagement
5. Implications for Program Operations
6. Appendix A: Tables and Figures
I. Overview

The 2018 Double Up Food Bucks Colorado (Double Up) evaluation program looked to measure the impact of the program on stakeholders, as well as determine the implications of how the program operates. The evaluation is divided into four primary reports in order to share more focused findings with program stakeholders, including:

1. Impact of the program on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients
2. Impact of the program on farmers and retailers
3. Implications for community partnerships, outreach, and engagement
4. Implications for program operations

The Double Up evaluation team used a variety of methods, including financial reports, surveys, interviews, comments collected on the website, analytics of the marketing strategy, and facilitated symposium discussions to determine the impact of the program and implications for implementation in the future (Table 1: Evaluation Tools to Measure Program Reach and Impact).

The evaluation results revealed that the program does have positive self-reported results for both SNAP participants and vendors/retailers. SNAP participants report buying and eating more fruits and vegetables and also trying new varieties of fruits and vegetables. Vendors and retailers also reported economic gains from increased produce sales and new customer bases. In total, SNAP participants spent $363,401 in SNAP plus Double Up incentives in 2018, bringing financial benefit for farmers and retailers of Colorado-grown produce (Table 2: Incentives Redeemed (Spent) by Year).

The major evaluation findings span all areas of the program, including impact on stakeholders as well as program learning for the year. The Double Up team uses learnings about the program to inform future strategies. Growth of the program will continue to be a priority in the future, with a strong focus on building community partnerships in order to accomplish programmatic goals and remove barriers to participation identified by local partners. The evaluation results reveal consistent growth in Double Up redemption and, although there was a decrease in the number of unique customers in 2018, repeat customers visited more times than they had the previous year (Table 4: Customer Statistics by Year, from Customer Reports). So the program was able to have a deeper impact for a smaller group of repeat customers. The next step should be to continue that deep individual impact while also work on increasing the amount of total customers. According to evaluation results from the past three years and feedback from many stakeholders, this will take a localized approach with more direct contact with SNAP recipients and addressing local barriers. In order to work locally, LiveWell needs strong local partners. Double Up Community Food Advocates (Advocates) and Regional Partners play an important role in developing those partnerships. Meanwhile, LiveWell will also build partnerships at the state level with partners that have their own local reach. The evaluation program will continue to examine these relationships and the Double Up team will listen to partners at opportunities like the regional symposia where they receive program feedback that informs adjustments they make to program operations. Additionally, these evaluation findings can guide how regional partners and Advocates together can support outreach, enhance relationships with customers and vendors, and act as a source of information for continuous programmatic improvement.
II. Evaluation Methods

Evaluation Approach

In order to assess, understand, and ultimately strengthen the program’s ability to meet its goals, the Double Up team designed a program evaluation approach to answer the following questions:

Impact on SNAP recipients:
- What is the impact of the Double Up incentive program on fruit and vegetable purchasing and consumption patterns of SNAP recipients?
- How do SNAP recipients’ food purchasing behaviors change over time—during and after participating in the program?
- Who is being reached by the program and does this reflect the SNAP recipient population in Colorado?

Impact for farmers and retailers:
- What is the financial impact of the Double Up incentive program on farmers, markets, and retailers?
- What other impacts does the program have on farmers’ and markets’ business reach and practices, community connections, and partnerships?
- What market and retail environments support robust participation in the program by SNAP recipients?
- What are barriers to markets/retailers participating as Double Up locations?
- What are barriers for farmers/vendors to participate in Double Up?

Implications for community partnerships, outreach, and engagement:
- What mix of partnerships and outreach activities best support the redemption of Double Up?
- How did the Community Food Advocate program impact implementation of Double Up?

Implications for program operations:
- What organizational factors and conditions contribute to an effective healthy food incentive program?
- What are the revenue and cost implications of implementing the incentive program?

Customer, Market and Vendor, and Community Food Advocate Data Collection Tools

The evaluation program used a mixed-methods approach to answer the key evaluation questions. A summary of these methods can be found in Table 1: Evaluation Tools to Measure Program Reach and Impact in the appendix. The Double Up evaluation team collected information on the impact of the program from a diverse number of audiences including customers, vendors, market managers, and Advocates. This was in the form of customer surveys, daily customer transaction reports from farmers markets and retail locations (tracked Double Up and SNAP vouchers dispersed), vendor surveys, vendor reports on redemption (tracked Double Up and SNAP vouchers redeemed), market manager surveys, surveys and interviews with a cohort of Double Up participants, interviews with Advocates, notes from four Regional Symposia, and comments collected through the Double Up website portal.

With the exception of the daily customer and vendor reports, participation in all evaluation tools was highly encouraged but not mandatory for any of those partners and/or participants in Double Up. Those who participated in the Double Up cohort received a stipend for participating in the phone interview and a commitment to receiving additional stipends for planned future interviews. Survey, interview, and market data remained confidential throughout the evaluation process. While some survey participants provided contact information, all survey data was reported in aggregate to the Double Up team. Similarly, interview data was not linked to individual interviewees and these results were reported in themes.
III. Program and Background

**Double Up Food Bucks: An Overview**

Recognizing the connections between food insecurity and public health, LiveWell Colorado (LiveWell), in collaboration with a vast network of partners throughout and beyond Colorado, launched the Double Up Food Bucks Colorado (Double Up) program in 2016 with a three-year United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program grant. The program was initiated as a way to address hunger and the food and nutritional needs of Colorado residents as well as to provide an economic benefit to local agricultural systems by limiting the incentive to Colorado-grown produce.

The Double Up program works at the nexus of food, family, and community. The overarching goals of the program is to strengthen opportunities in local agriculture systems for healthy food purchases and ultimately to increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients’ fruit and vegetable consumption across urban, suburban, and rural communities. It achieves this in three ways: increasing available food dollars for SNAP recipients, keeping food dollars in the local economy, and directing more dollars to Colorado farmers. The program uses a multipronged approach that strengthens farmers market and retail environments, engages institutional partners to support and sustain the program, and provides social support for SNAP participants, vendors, and market managers. The program is modeled after Fair Food Network’s Double Up Food Bucks program, which was established in 2009 to make it easier for low-income Americans to purchase and eat fresh fruits and vegetables, while also supporting local farmers and local economies (Fair Food Network, 2015).

The program matches SNAP benefits spent at participating farmers markets, farm stands, food box programs, and small and large retail sites, dollar for dollar, up to $20 per visit. For example, if a SNAP recipient spends $15 of their benefits on any SNAP-eligible food item at a participating site, they would receive $15 in Double Up Food Bucks, which can only be spent on fresh, Colorado-grown fruits and vegetables. In order to implement and sustain this program, LiveWell partners with farmers, farmers market and retail managers, nutrition educators, human resource agencies, food advocates, and public health professionals across Colorado (see Appendix in Community Partnerships report for list of core, financial, and advisory partners). The program connects SNAP recipients to these resources by improving market environments, sharing educational resources, and strengthening social and institutional support in communities.

**Program Snapshot: The Past Three Years**

The first year of the Double Up program operated from June to December of 2016. In this pilot year, Double Up partnered with 42 participating markets in 20 counties and served 1,171 unique SNAP customers. The program distributed $72,294 in incentives at Double Up locations, of which 95% were redeemed, totaling $160,946 in SNAP and Double Up redemptions combined.

In 2017, the Double Up program expanded its geographic and participant reach. The program’s second year launched in April 2017 and operated through December 2017 at 85 individual locations in 28 counties. Approximately 5,755 unique SNAP customers redeemed $145,898 in Double Up incentives in 2017. In all, a total of $334,074 in SNAP dollars plus Double Up incentives were spent at participating sites.
In 2018, the program continued to expand its geographic reach, but less than the previous year’s expansion. With 96 locations statewide there was a focus in going deeper with technical assistance and work with markets that needed more attention. The 2018 expansion included 10 new neighborhood stores, two new Lowe’s Mercado locations, six new CSA programs, and five new direct to consumer farms. The program team also started to prioritize markets open year-round and open through the winter during the previous year. By 2018 Double Up sites were operating from January to December. The program team launched a tech pilot at 14 sites in Denver, Alamosa, and Saguache counties. These sites used Double Up cards and an electronic application (app), rather than paper vouchers. The Community Food Advocate program was piloted in 2017 in conjunction with Double Up and fully implemented in 2018. Advocates work locally to make connections to community partners, institutions, and SNAP recipients to promote the program. In 2018, approximately 4,401 unique SNAP customers redeemed $165,357 Double Up incentives at participating sites, to spend a total of $363,401 in SNAP and Double Up vouchers.

IV. References