



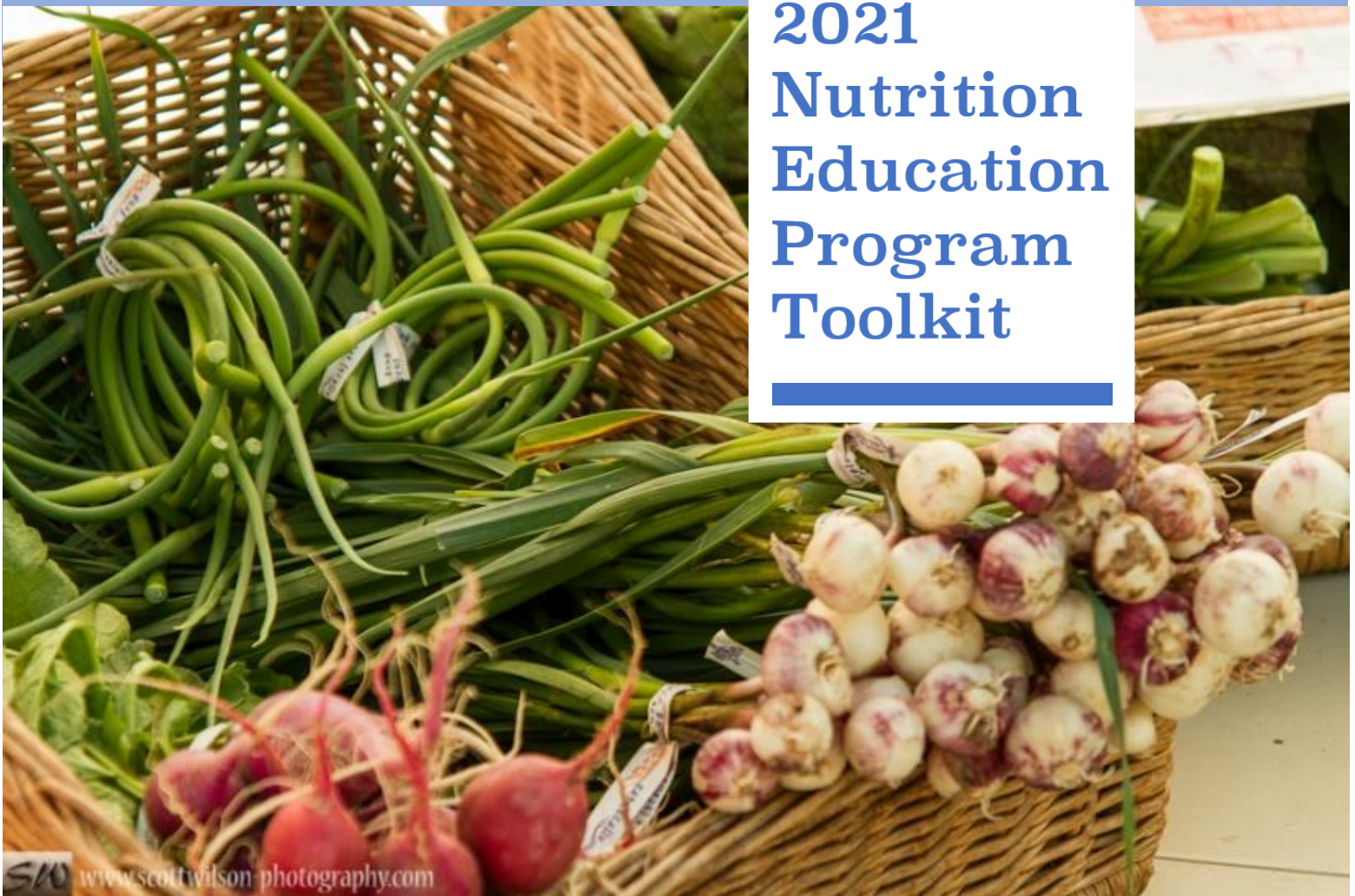
**DOUBLE
SNAP
DOLLARS**



**MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY**
EXTENSION



2021 Nutrition Education Program Toolkit





Eat better
on a budget.

Community Food & Agriculture Coalition's (CFAC) Double SNAP Dollars (DSD) and MSU Extension's Buy Eat Live Better Nutrition Education Program are teaming up to encourage and incentivize attendance at Eating Smart, Being Active classes (ESBA) and Creates classes with the added goal of getting participants to shop at their local farmers market. SNAP recipients that attend a nutrition education class in their area will be incentivized with up to three \$20 Double SNAP Dollar coupons that can be redeemed at nearby participating markets.

This short guide will offer suggestions on how to establish and maintain beneficial community relationships between local farmers markets that are offering Double SNAP Dollars and MSU Extension sites that are incentivizing SNAP recipients to attend their classes.



Double SNAP Dollars

Double SNAP Dollars is a nutrition incentive program that helps food-insecure Montanans afford more fresh, local produce by doubling the purchasing power of their SNAP benefits. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets or farm shares, SNAP recipients receive an extra dollar to spend on fresh, local produce. The goal of the program is to provide a dignified approach for people with limited means to access the quality of food they desire, while supporting local farmers and the Montana economy.

How Double SNAP Dollars Works

A market must first be able to accept SNAP before they can participate in Double SNAP Dollars. When SNAP customers shop at these participating markets, they receive a dollar-for-dollar match (up to a match limit of \$10 or \$20, depending on location) that can be used to buy more fruits and veggies. For example, if a SNAP customer spends \$20 of their SNAP dollars, they will be eligible for \$20 worth of Double SNAP for a total purchasing power of \$40. Unlike regular SNAP, Double SNAP can only be spent on fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, and vegetable starts.

Last year, DSD operated at 26 farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture Programs in Montana. Since its inception in 2015, over \$500,000 have been spent on local produce.



Double SNAP Dollar Coupons to Incentivize Eating Smart, Being Active Classes

Double SNAP Dollar coupons, offered in partnership with MSU Extension classes, provide additional incentive to SNAP recipients. Building on the example mentioned above, the SNAP customer who has a total purchasing power of \$40 with SNAP and Double SNAP will now have a total purchasing power of \$60 if they choose to also use their \$20 Double SNAP Dollar coupon. However, DSD coupon recipients do not need to spend \$20 of their SNAP dollars to redeem the coupon. They just need to make a purchase as little as \$1 in SNAP to activate their \$20 DSD coupon.

DSD coupons offer an opportunity for SNAP recipients to learn hands-on skills that assist them in preparing healthy, low-cost meals for their families. It also provides extra funds for families to use on fruits and vegetables and allows them to put into practice what they've learned at the classes.



How DSD coupons work:

1. A SNAP recipient attends an advertised incentivized MSU Extension healthy eating class.
2. A MSU Nutrition Educator issues a \$20 Double SNAP Dollar (DSD) paper coupon to an eligible class attendee** and records coupon data and participant info in the tracking Excel Spreadsheet. A single participant can receive up to \$60 of incentives (3 coupons) for attending classes for the 2021 market season. Only SNAP recipients can use the DSD coupons, so it is best practice to be clear about that when providing coupons to class attendees. If a class attendee does not receive SNAP benefits, they cannot use the coupon.
3. Class attendee brings their EBT card and paper coupon to the participating market's information booth to be redeemed for Double SNAP Dollars tokens. **An EBT purchase of at least \$1 is required to redeem the coupon for tokens.** The individual can then spend their tokens on any fresh fruit or vegetable at the market. Tokens are how farmers markets keep track of SNAP transactions among vendors.
4. Markets keep track of coupons and mail them in at the end of the month.

** Coupons can be administered to class attendees at the conclusion of a class or coordinated in a different way if the class is virtual. One great tip is to hand out coupons at your nearby participating market. This encourages recipients to redeem their coupons right away, leading to higher redemption rates over the season. Talk with your local market manager if this is how you plan to administer coupons.

Establishing Contact with Your Local Farmers Market

One of the most important steps an educator can do to make sure SNAP recipients that attend a class follow through to redeem their coupons at the farmers market, is to inspire comfort with knowledge. Sharing the market dates, location, operating hours, and how a customer redeems their coupons once they arrive to the market are key components to making this partnership successful. The goal is getting more folks to nutrition classes and increasing participants' access to healthy food at their local farmers market. Find location info at DoubleDollarsMT.com

Establishing a direct line of communication from educator to market is extremely helpful to sites. One might go about developing these imperative relationships by scheduling a phone call or in-person meeting with their local market to make introductions, exchange emails and phone numbers, and to talk through the DSD process, as well as the coupon process, so that when questions or concerns arise, there is a direct line of communication.

Example:

Ginger Pitts from SNAP-Ed received feedback from a class attendee a couple of seasons ago that there was a specific problem in getting coupons redeemed at the Polson Farmers Market. Ginger has worked with the market for many years because Polson was the first site to offer incentive coupons for attending nutrition education classes. She also shops there herself and had established a face-to-face relationship with the market manager and board members. They worked together to clarify how the coupons were redeemed and solved the issue.

If you can't get to the market to introduce yourself, a phone call and email can be an effective approach as well to establish a direct line of communication. The more direct conversations you can have, the better this program will work. CFAC will provide educators with a contact list at the beginning of the market season and start the season with an introductory email to each local educator and their participating farmers market(s).

Suggested checklist for contacting your market:

- Once CFAC sends an introductory email to connect you and your participating farmers market(s), respond to introduce yourself. If you prefer, call the market to make your introduction.
- Meet in person with market to establish relationship.
- Visit and tour the market if possible, to familiarize yourself.
- Begin planning classes where incentives may help to attract attendees (May).
- Market classes in conjunction with the farmers market—this is important so the market can help you get the word out about your classes. Printing specific class info that can be handed out at the market is very helpful. It is helpful to have all your classes planned and marketed for the market season.
- Hand out DSD coupons, either after class or at the market, and keep track in data spreadsheet.

Planning Classes

MSU nutrition education classes already focus on how to get better quality food in the hands of participants and teach them cost and time-saving tricks to build into their lives—these are included in both ESBA and Creates lessons. Planning to promote DSD in your classes requires thinking ahead about how to incorporate additional information.

The following curricula and resources are available and may be helpful:

Eating Smart Being Active: Lesson 4, Make Fruits and Veggies Half Your Plate, has an optional Farmers Market section that can be included. Be sure to order the optional handouts from the State Office to provide to participants, and be prepared with information to share about your local market.

Create-Amazing-Veggies, or any of the Creates lessons can be used to promote use of fresh produce from your local market. The Create lessons are available with minor modifications for you to make to more easily promote Farmers Markets.

Fact Sheets and Recipes from buyeatlivebetter.org can be used to promote shopping at a local market or to talk about produce from the market in creating healthy meals. Food specific facts sheets provide selection, storage, and preparation tips for common market produce. Other fact sheets of interest may include:

- [Stretching Your Dollar with Locally Grown Food](#)
- [Save Money by Swapping Out Plant Parts](#)
- [Montana Grown](#)

You are not alone in this process. If you still need help thinking through possible curriculum or class ideas, please contact Carrie Ashe, Leah Gramlow, or your peer educators for ideas.



Photo by Dorothy Patent.

Marketing

There are many ways to market the classes in conjunction with the farmers markets. It is a good idea to advertise the classes at both the market and through general communication channels that you would use to advertise any class in your community. Examples of ways to advertise your classes include Nutrition Made Simple and Creates posters, Nutrition Made Simple postcards, online class postings through the State Office, press releases, announcements in partner electronic newsletters and mailings, working with your county office to post classes to their county Facebook page, or working with your partners to obtain direct referrals. Quick press releases are an easy way to announce partnerships and to get information out to the media in your community. They can then be shared to your local paper, on county Facebook pages, and through other social media outlets. Sharing when your classes are scheduled with your direct line of communication at the market is also highly suggested. Consider asking the market if they have any suggestions related to marketing or hosting classes that may be new and innovative. **Please ensure press releases and any other information written for media publication are approved by the MSU Extension state office, to ensure the required funding and disability accommodation statements are included.**

Market demonstrations and/or recruitment *can* occur at participating market sites if desired and if approved by market managers. Please follow NEP policies and protocols (different for EFNEP and SNAP-Ed) as well as the guidance of your local sanitation for any plans involving the preparation of food on site.

CFAC will provide Double SNAP Dollar class coupons, which include redemption location information specific to each site. DSD rack cards and other promotional materials will be provided to all sites as requested.

Issuing Coupons and Keeping Track of Data

Coupons are issued to nutrition educators by the MSU Extension state office. Each coupon has a specific coupon number that corresponds to a data spreadsheet. We ask that you keep track of all coupons going out in this spreadsheet. We will ask markets to keep these coupons and mail or email them in with their other Double SNAP Dollar data. **Each educator can use the coupons how they see them most benefiting class attendance.** Each site is different, and this program offers the flexibility to know your community and be creative in your approach to using these coupons. There is a limit on coupons for \$60 per participant per year.

Technical Assistance

CFAC is a grassroots organization that focuses on supporting community-based change. We are here to help you develop this network within your community. Experience-based technical assistance is available as needs arise. If you have more questions on how to develop and maintain relationships with your market, please contact:

Ian Finch, Food Access Programs Manager at the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition:
ian@missoulacfac.org