

TO: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
FROM: Matt Newell-Ching, Senior Policy Manager
RE: Support for Double-Up Food Bucks (HB 2728)
DATE: February 6, 2023



"I cannot express how grateful and happy I am that this program is being offered. I feel that I am able to have more healthy food in my life. I really hope this program continues and is integrated everywhere else! Thank you from the bottom of my heart to the top of my belly!"

-Double-Up Food Bucks shopper in Astoria

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to eliminate hunger and its root causes. We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty.

We believe no one should go hungry. Yet over 114,000 kids in Oregon live in households that struggle to afford food. In 2022, the price of food at the grocery store went up by 11.4%. As we gather today in this hearing, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians participating in SNAP face the elimination of federal pandemic-related food assistance after this month. These are significant challenges that impact all of us, and especially those of us already facing disparities.

Oregon Food Bank Strongly Supports HB 2728, the Double Up Food Bucks Bill

Double-Up Food Bucks is a program that matches SNAP benefits to enable participants to purchase additional fruits & vegetables. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, CSA shares, and select independently-owned grocery stores across Oregon, SNAP participants receive an additional dollar to spend on Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables, up to \$20 per visit. You can learn more about how Double Up Food Bucks works in Oregon at <https://doubleuporegon.org/>.

We believe the time is right for the legislature to take bold action to support our communities, and HB 2728 is part of the solution. The bill would increase funding for Double Up to \$8m/biennium so more Oregonians participating in SNAP would have access to fruits and vegetables at farmers markets, CSAs, and grocery stores.

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Double Up Supports Oregonians Participating in SNAP

Double Up creates access, choice, and dignity for Oregonians facing hunger. Based on a comprehensive program evaluation done by Oregon State University, SNAP shoppers participating in Double Up Food Bucks program shoppers experienced:

- A 16% improvement in food security after participating in Double Up for six months
- A significant increase in fruit & vegetable consumption

Grocery shoppers have also shared the personal impact of accessing fruits and vegetables:

“Due to your excellent program, I have purchased more high-quality organic produce than I normally would. The program brings the overall cost of food down to affordable levels. I love this! I also love anything that benefits our farmers, and helps preserve our critically valuable agricultural land! Thank you so much for Double Up Food Bucks. This is the type of program that restores faith in our governments.”

-Double Up shopper in Medford

“Due to my cancer there isn’t much I can keep down, so I drink fresh smoothies everyday to try and stay healthy and keep food in me because my stomach can handle it, but fruit and veggies that are fresh are REALLY expensive, especially berries, so this helps me so much.”

-Double Up shopper in North Portland

Double Up Strengthens Local Economies and Supports Oregon Farmers

Double Up is a win-win-win for our communities. According to a report from Colorado State University, Double Up generates \$1.80 in further economic activity for every SNAP dollar spent, and this impact is even greater, up to \$3, for purchases on local farm direct produce.¹

Oregon Food Bank is proud to support the operation of Double Up at grocery stores, and we are proud of the work we have done to build partnerships with retailers and increase the reach to SNAP shoppers in our state. Today, 24 grocery sites in 15 counties offer increased access to fruits and vegetables through Double Up. The inclusion of stores increases access to DUFEB, bringing the program to communities without a farmers market and to locations where SNAP shoppers frequently shop. You can find a [list of participating grocery stores here](#).

¹[The Economic Contributions of Healthy Incentives](#)



The presence of Double Up in grocery stores also increases support of Oregon farmers by working with participating stores to purchase local produce. Grocers participating in Double Up “choose local” by committing to display and track local produce purchases. For example, each grocery partner commits to display at least 5 local produce items during the peak Oregon growing season. Double Up program staff provide technical assistance to identify supply chains and purchase directly from farmers, build tools to track local purchasing, and leverage Double Up to distribute more fruits and vegetables.

Double Up has a History of Leveraging Federal Funding

Oregon’s investment also helps secure additional federal funding. Farmers Market Fund leveraged the State of Oregon’s \$4 Million investment in DUFB from 2021 to secure nearly \$4 Million in federal funding through the federal USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). Investing in Double-Up helps Oregon’s resources go further.

HB 2728 Builds on Oregon’s Success by Reaching More Communities

In 2020 Oregon launched DUFB with 7 grocery stores. Today we’re up to 24 stores in 15 counties today, and passing HB 2728 would mean the ability to expand even further. There are currently more stores that want to participate in Double Up than there is available funding. Passing HB 2728 would help us reach a goal of significantly increasing the number of store partners in areas that are historically underserved and remote (rural) communities. This means more Oregonians participating in SNAP having access to Double Up, as well as a boost to local economies and farmers. It’s a win-win-win.

Thank you for your time, and **we urge your support for our communities by passing HB 2728.**

