

Farmers' Market SNAP Match: Fresh Strategy for Food Security

It's often said that 90% of health is determined outside of healthcare, through factors like nutrition, exercise, housing, income, and environmental factors. In 2018, an internal population assessment indicated that food insecurity was the most common "social determinant of health" challenge faced by our members, with almost half of members experiencing lack of food within the prior year.

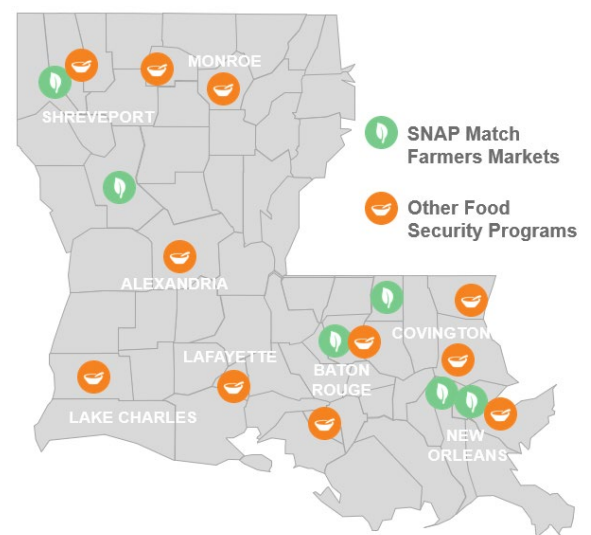
Food insecurity can have major and immediate consequences for an individual's health, especially when combined with conditions like chronic heart disease, diabetes, and pregnancy. Even without a health condition, childhood hunger can impact development, wellness, behavior, and academic performance – with lifelong ramifications.

A Practical Solution for Food Insecurity

Over the last five years, Louisiana Healthcare Connections partnered with local farmers markets cross the state to implement dollar-for-dollar matching for SNAP/EBT purchases, up to \$15 per market day. SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families—in Louisiana, about **1 in 5 people receive SNAP benefits**. This ensured individuals and families in need had more fresh food buying power and access to nutritious foods to support their health.

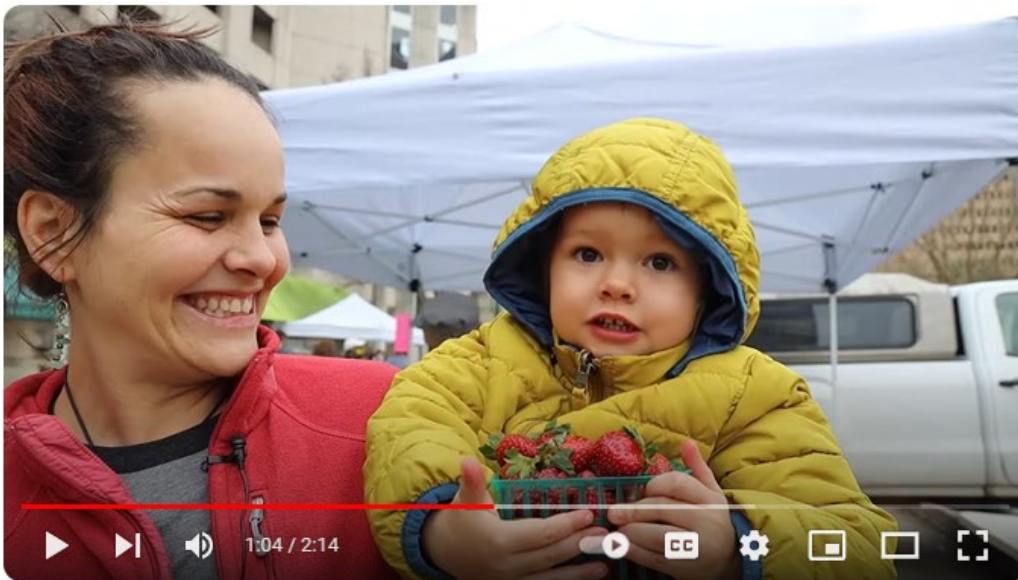
In just the first season, **SNAP purchases increased 33 percent** at Baton Rouge-area Red Stick Farmers Markets. Other markets saw similar increases in the use of SNAP benefits and matching dollars. Since 2018, Louisiana Healthcare Connections has invested more than \$500,000 in local community programs addressing food insecurity.

"The Red Stick Rewards program creates a healthy local food system that serves everyone in our community, regardless of income level," says BREADA Executive Director Copper Alvarez. "The matching program increases access to fresh, locally grown and nutritious foods for SNAP customers and provides additional revenue for Louisiana's small-scale family farmers. It is a win-win program, and BREADA is fortunate to partner with Louisiana Healthcare Connections in promoting healthy lifestyles for children and families in our community."



Feeding Families, Sustaining Farmers, Nourishing Communities

The SNAP match program provides a true cycle for both our farmers and our community, where people are able to come shop for the freshest, most healthy food. And at the same time, it provides extra revenue to local farmers, so they are able to remain sustainable. Doubling people's buying power both helps families in immediate need and strengthens the local food industry so it can continue feeding communities far into the future.



lahealth.cc/breada

BREADA's Red Stick Rewards SNAP Match sponsored by Louisiana Healthcare Connections

“They double and match my EBT purchases. Without this program, I would not be able to get the things I need for my family. I big part of being a mother is providing nutrition and a home for your family.”

– Emily, SNAP Shopper