

MARKET MATCH PROGRAM

A fresh strategy for food security and economic growth

We know that 80-90% of health happens outside a healthcare setting. That's because social factors have a major impact on health outcomes. The conditions in which a person is born, grows, lives, works and ages shape their health. In 2018, Louisiana Healthcare Connections conducted an internal population assessment that pointed to food insecurity as the most common “social determinant of health” challenge facing our members, with almost half our members experiencing a lack of food within the prior year.

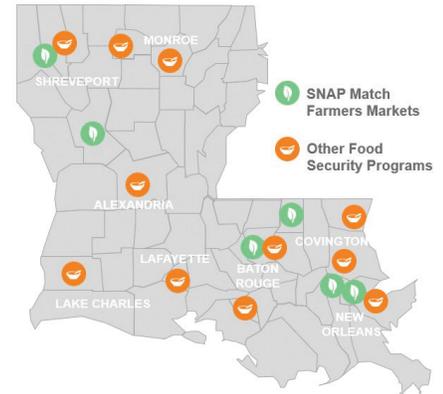
Food insecurity can have major and immediate consequences for an individual's health, especially when combined with conditions like chronic heart disease, diabetes, and pregnancy. Even without a health condition, a child who suffers prolonged hunger can experience detrimental impacts on their development, wellness, behavior, and academic performance—all with lifelong ramifications.

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

SNAP purchases matched by Louisiana Healthcare Connections **increased by 33%** at Baton Rouge-area Red Stick Farmers Markets in just the first year. 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 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. The SNAP match program increases access to fresh, locally grown and nutritious foods and provides additional revenue for Louisiana's small-scale family farmers. It is a win-win and BREADA is fortunate to have a partner like Louisiana Healthcare Connections”

—Darlene Rowland
Executive Director,
BREADA



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