

Expansion of SNAP participation at Petersburg Public Library Market

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# BOOSTING SNAP PARTICIPATION AT FARMERS MARKETS

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## ABSTRACT

Accessing healthy foods is a basic right for each individual, but in low-income neighborhoods, access and affordability create a barrier to achieving these needs. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides financial assistance for qualifying, low-income individuals and families when purchasing groceries. Providing financial assistance alone is not enough to reduce the food access gap for low-income households and neighborhoods. Farmers markets are a source of fresh fruits and vegetables and oftentimes provide incentives for purchasing these products using SNAP benefits such as discounts on fresh produce. This type of program, along with increased community involvement and outreach, has been effective in increasing SNAP participation amongst these markets. Despite the potential that SNAP has on farmers markets participation rates, levels still remain low. Through a comprehensive literature review, research showed financial incentives such as discounts and promotional methods increase the participation of SNAP customers amongst farmers markets. The purpose of this program was to test the efficacy of promotional materials in increasing the awareness of farmers markets and the benefits they provide to SNAP customers in Petersburg, VA. Findings showed no substantial success in overall SNAP redemption as SNAP sales and transactions between May 2023 and 2024 had a -9% change and a +9% change between June 2023 and 2024. This initial investigation provides helpful insight to community organizations looking to collaborate with farmer's markets to increase SNAP participation rates. Moving forward, continued collaboration between stakeholders will be essential to sustain motivation and determination when aiming to increase accessibility and

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affordability of healthy behaviors, such as purchasing and consuming fruits and vegetables.

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## **Introduction**

### *Background and Setting:*

Having access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned) is a key element when promoting healthy behaviors. A lack of access to these foods can contribute to chronic disease states such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and other diet-related diseases. There are many factors creating barriers to access to fresh, healthful foods such as transportation, geographic region, affordability, and knowledge. Affordability is one of the main barriers that affects individuals from purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. With this, nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) aim to “reduce poverty and food insecurity while stimulating economic growth”<sup>1</sup>. SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program, yet a gap still exists between participants receiving access to fresh fruits and vegetables<sup>2</sup>. However, farmers markets provide access to fresh, local, and oftentimes affordable fruits and vegetables in addition to having a match program for SNAP participants. These matching programs provide SNAP participants with a dollar amount that matches the SNAP dollars that are spent at the farmers market. These programs aim to double or increase the purchasing power of those using SNAP<sup>1</sup>. Even with programs like this implemented at farmers markets, the participation from SNAP users still lacks. The purpose of this project and report is to determine the ability of educational materials to impact SNAP participation at the farmer’s market in Petersburg, VA.

Fruit and vegetable consumption is an important component of diet quality in individuals and provides high levels of nutrients. Frequent intake of fruits and vegetables is associated with the prevention of chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes, Chronic Kidney Disease, musculoskeletal disorders and reducing inflammation<sup>3</sup>. The USDA’s MyPlate method

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recommends that individuals fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables<sup>3</sup>. According to the USDA, only 15% of the U.S population meets the daily recommended intake for fruits and vegetables<sup>3</sup>. While understanding the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption is essential, it is also important to recognize that a balanced diet, one that includes all food groups, aids in healthy lifestyles<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, the food that people eat is influenced by their environment. Environmental factors such as food availability and accessibility, and transportation access strongly affect and influence the types of foods that individuals and families consume<sup>4</sup>. Other factors like knowledge and skills also influence the purchasing and consumption of foods. Communities, stakeholders, and programs must take these factors into consideration in order to provide more accessible and affordable fruit and vegetables to promote healthy behaviors.

Food and nutrition programs aim to reduce hunger and increase food security levels by providing increasing access to food, healthy diets and nutrition education<sup>5</sup>. There are various food assistance programs providing individuals and families with additional resources that could potentially promote the adoption of healthy behaviors. SNAP is one of many food assistance programs that provides assistance in hopes of providing individuals with food access<sup>2</sup>. Individuals who access SNAP benefits and visit a SNAP authorized store can use their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which is a system that allows for individuals to pay for food and deducts from their benefits each time they purchase SNAP-eligible foods. Due to the poverty level in Petersburg, VA, there is immense need for attention on SNAP participants and overall providing the Petersburg population with access to affordable foods.

SNAP, previously known as food stamps, is the largest food assistance program in the United States<sup>2</sup>. Nationally, 12% of the U.S population participates in SNAP and in the state of Virginia, 9% of the population participates in SNAP<sup>6</sup>. In 2022, the USDA spent a grand total of

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119.5 billion dollars on SNAP<sup>7</sup>, which is 65% of the USDA's total spending on food assistance programs. These data demonstrate the reach that SNAP has at the national and state level as well as the level of resources that contribute to SNAP. It is an essential, and fundamental aspect of life, that individuals have access to healthful and fresh foods and are aware of opportunities to purchase fresh produce<sup>4</sup>. SNAP is effective in improving hunger, food insecurity, poverty and the possible effects of these circumstances such as poor health outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

Participation in SNAP and awareness of available programs is a major food access barrier<sup>4</sup>. Methods to connect citizens to appropriate, affordable and accessible fresh produce are needed in order to continue improving health at a community level. After recognizing and understanding this need, this literature review discusses possible interventions that can be implemented in order to increase the awareness of resources and programs available to SNAP recipients as well as increase the participation that is seen from SNAP recipients throughout fresh and local markets.

Petersburg is a small city in Virginia located just south of the state capital of Richmond. SNAP benefits are largely used among citizens of Petersburg, VA but this usage is not routinely seen within the city's farmers markets. The Petersburg community faces high levels of poverty and food insecurity, requiring increased attention to individuals benefiting from SNAP<sup>8</sup>. The city of Petersburg has a history of limited nutrition and food resources, meaning that they do not have access or the means to purchase fresh produce. According to the United States Bureau of the Census 2022, the median household income in Petersburg, VA is \$46,930 with an overall poverty rate of 22.2% compared to the median household income of \$87,249 and an overall poverty rate of 10.6% for the state of Virginia<sup>8</sup>. On the national level, the median household income is \$74,580 and the overall poverty rate is 11.5%<sup>9</sup>. These data demonstrate there is a disparity in



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income between individuals living in Petersburg and state and national averages. Additionally, the United States Bureau of the Census 2022 reported that 22.0% of households in Petersburg, VA receive SNAP benefits while 8.3% of households in the state of Virginia receive SNAP benefits and 11.5% of households in the U.S receive SNAP benefits<sup>10</sup>. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest federal nutrition assistance program and aims to “reduce poverty and food insecurity while stimulating economic growth”<sup>1</sup>. The population of Petersburg, VA is prominently involved in SNAP, giving reason to the importance of focusing on this community. These rates, along with many community-based organizations and agencies working in the area, makes Petersburg a prime area to highlight the benefit of using SNAP benefits at farmers markets to increase food access.

The Petersburg Healthy Options Partnerships (PHOPS) is funded by a CDC High Obesity Program (HOP) grant between 2018 and 2023 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and the Virginia Tech Center for Public Health Practice and Research (CPHPR). One of PHOP’s goals is to increase food access throughout the city by focusing on extending the reach of farmers markets through an implementation of mobile markets in neighborhoods and at frequented city destinations. With this goal in mind, PHOPS partnered with Petersburg Public Library. The Petersburg Public Library has been aiming to increase food access throughout the city by creating a farmers market located directly in the Petersburg Public Library. Although the grant has ended, work by the Petersburg Public Library to increase food access throughout the city is continued through the Market at PPL, which is the setting of this project.

*Needs Assessment:*

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In the beginning stages of this project a needs assessment was conducted in order to better understand the population being served and the community in which the intervention would take place. After multiple discussions with stakeholders in Petersburg, VA who work closely with SNAP participants, local farmers and at farmers markets it was understood that the farmers markets in Petersburg, VA, such as the Market at PPL, do not see the level of SNAP participants as they hope to. These stakeholders stated that individuals are unaware of the Market at PPL which may contribute to the lack of participation. In addition to this, an interview guide was created to ask farmers market visitors about their experiences at the market and suggestions for further improvements. Although this interview guide was not specifically used to create the intervention, answers provided constructive feedback and insights regarding how further research and similar projects can enhance the experiences of farmers market visitors. Through completion of this needs assessment it was determined that focusing on increasing awareness of farmers markets and redemption of SNAP benefits was desired to better serve the community of Petersburg, VA.

### *Purpose of the Project:*

The purpose of this project is to increase total SNAP redemption at farmers markets in Petersburg, VA. Through an extensive literature review, and discussions with community partners, an intervention to reach this population will be chosen based on best practices and best possible outcomes. Furthermore, the goals of this project include:

1. Increasing awareness of farmers markets and the fresh fruits and vegetables that are available at the markets in Petersburg, VA.
2. Connecting SNAP participant individuals and families to farmers' markets and farmers in Petersburg, VA.

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3. Understanding how the experiences of farmers market visitors can be improved through a customer interview guide.
4. Promoting fruit and vegetable purchasing through SNAP and nutrition incentives at markets in Petersburg, VA.

### *Project Objectives:*

The overarching project objective is to determine how to appropriately reach SNAP participants through marketing and promotional methods. The two questions leading to this objective include:

1. Which interventions are most effective to increase SNAP participation?
2. Which interventions are effective in increasing SNAP redemption for fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets?

### *Definition of Terms:*

1. **SNAP:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides food benefits to qualifying individuals and families<sup>12</sup>.
2. **Electronic Benefit Transfer:** An electronic payment system for SNAP participants<sup>13</sup>.
3. **Food Insecurity:** Household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food to meet an individual's needs<sup>14</sup>.
4. **Farmers Market:** A public and recurring assembly of farmers or producers or their representatives selling the food that they produce directly to consumers<sup>15</sup>.
5. **Nutrition Incentives:** Provide extra food dollars to help low-income shoppers include more healthy fruits and vegetables in their diet<sup>16</sup>.

### *Review of Literature:*

#### ***Food insecurity:***

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Food insecurity is defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food to meet an individual's needs<sup>14</sup>. This is a prevalent health and nutrition challenge throughout the United States and has become more common due to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>17</sup>. A personal positionality is that food is a basic right for individuals and individuals should never question where their next meal is coming from or if they will have enough money to provide food for themselves and their family. Food insecurity can be divided into four subcategories; high food security, marginal food security, low food security and very low food security. A survey done in 2022 assessed the prevalence of food insecurity in the state of Virginia among individuals living at or below the federal poverty line. Survey questions addressed socio-demographic characteristics, food security status, access to healthful food, and mental health<sup>18</sup>. Overall, 25.2% respondents reported experiencing high food security, 14.9% marginal food security, 20% low food security and 39.9% very low food security. Furthermore, in 2020, the rate of food insecure individuals in Virginia was 8%<sup>19</sup>. These results depict the importance of providing resources to food insecure individuals and families in order to see an improvement in responses and work towards healthier communities.

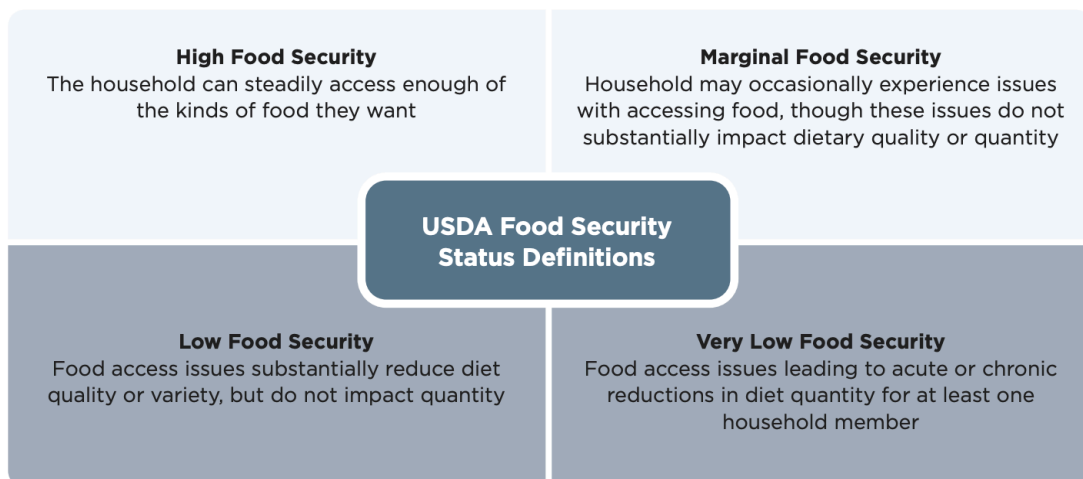


Figure 1 from Liebe et al. (2022).<sup>18</sup>: USDA Food Security Status Definitions

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Food insecurity affects the variety and quantity of foods an individual eats as food insecure individuals lack access to adequately nutritious foods. In addition, the state of being food insecure also possesses health risks by putting individuals at a higher likelihood of not receiving adequate nutrition. In addition, access to and education about nutritious foods and healthy choices is lacking across adolescents living in low-income urban populations such as the city of Petersburg, VA. Vilar-Compte M, Burrola-Méndez S, Lozano-Marrufo A, et al. states that 55% of the global population lives in urban communities, which experience poverty and lack essential resources to ensure adequate well-being<sup>20</sup>. Food insecurity possesses health risks and puts individuals at a disadvantage when it comes to fulfilling healthy behaviors and lifestyles. With this in mind it is critical to provide appropriate interventions to individuals facing high levels of food insecurity.

### ***Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:***

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program in the United States designed to alleviate food insecurity and hunger across low-income individuals. In addition to improving food security, SNAP helps stimulate the economy through increasing the demand for nutritious foods<sup>12</sup>. This program is administered by the U.S. The Department of Agriculture (USDA). Eligible individuals include those that have an income at or below 130% of the federal poverty limit in order to supplement income for groceries<sup>21</sup>. Individuals that receive SNAP benefits are provided an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) that can be used to purchase food at authorizing stores, including farmers markets. Increasing awareness of opportunities or additional food access points such as incentives at farmers markets can not only increase participation of those benefiting from SNAP but also improve diet quality<sup>22</sup>. Through these

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efforts, SNAP aims to ensure that all Americans have access to nutritious foods in order to live healthy lives.

### ***Farmers markets:***

Farmers markets provide communities access to fresh and local goods and act as critical resources for many individuals<sup>23</sup>. These markets act as a source for fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy options for individuals living in areas that lack access to nutrient-dense foods. Not only do farmers markets provide fresh and local food items, but can also provide entertainment, education and community engagement for those who attend. Many farmers markets across the nation accept nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP<sup>23</sup>. However, participation from SNAP users remains low across farmers markets<sup>24</sup>. Farmers markets that accept SNAP benefits must also provide welcoming experiences to SNAP participants in order to promote continued usage of SNAP at farmers markets<sup>4</sup>.

Farmers markets are gaining popularity across the United States and are a form of direct marketing of fresh and local produce. The increasing popularity of farmers markets corresponds to increasing awareness of healthy behaviors<sup>25</sup>. The relationship between farmers markets and health indicators was examined through a survey in Washington, DC. Questions in the survey focused on individuals' usage of farmers markets, common grocery patterns, money spent on food, dietary patterns and reasons for shopping at farmers markets. The findings and research behind this survey confirm that an increase in farmers market usage by individuals is positively associated with an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption. In addition to these findings, the survey showed that farmers markets increase an individual's access to fresh and local produce. Furthermore, a cross-sectional study was completed to assess the relationship between EBT transactions at farmers markets and dietary behaviors, such as purchasing of fruits and

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vegetables<sup>26</sup>. Low-income participants were recruited from the waiting rooms of private healthcare systems (PHCs) operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to participate in this study<sup>26</sup>. The survey included questions using a six-item scale regarding dietary activity and behaviors, as well as indicating if they received SNAP benefits. There was a 69% response rate during this study and results depict that 529 respondents received SNAP benefits<sup>26</sup>. In addition, respondents stated that farmers markets have helped them increase their fruit and vegetable purchasing and consumption. Moreover, SNAP participants also reported higher frequencies of fruit and vegetable intake due to the benefits they receive at farmers markets. This information helps prove that creating an intervention to increase foot traffic, and bring awareness to the benefits available at farmers markets can in turn improve dietary behaviors across individuals<sup>25,26</sup>.

### ***SNAP Redemption at Farmers Markets:***

Farmers markets are commonly seen in urban communities for many reasons that make them ideal locations. Urban communities have various characteristics that make them a great location for farmers markets. For example, these areas boast diverse populations and cultures, enriching the variety of produce at farmers markets. In addition, the presence of farmers markets in urban communities contributes to economic vitality by supporting agriculture and entrepreneurship within the community. Importantly, urban communities may include individuals benefiting from nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP. With the presence of farmers markets in urban areas, opportunities for community growth are facilitated. In addition to these farmers markets, there is a strong history of the markets accepting SNAP/EBT, which has shown effectiveness in increasing consumption and purchasing of fruits and vegetables among customers<sup>27</sup>. It is critical that individuals are aware of SNAP benefits and participation

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opportunities such as those seen throughout farmers markets. Through a comprehensive literature review it is understood that a variety of interventions and methods can be used to achieve the goal of increasing SNAP redemption at farmers markets. In conclusion, it was found that main interventions for achieving this goal include the use of incentive programs, SNAP-ED and community outreach efforts.

Farmers markets include an array of fresh products for individuals to purchase and oftentimes include financial incentives in order to limit the burden of buying fresh produce. In the state of Virginia, agriculture is the largest industry and farmers markets play a key role in providing fresh local foods to consumers. In addition to accepting SNAP, farmers markets may also have a match program in place for SNAP participants. As of 2020, 68% of farmers markets in Virginia accept SNAP/EBT, many of which provide a matching program<sup>27</sup>. These match programs essentially provide additional incentives for those using SNAP when purchasing products. For example, the two farmers markets located in Petersburg, VA including the Market at PPL and the Saturday market, have their own match programs in place in order to further promote the usage of SNAP across visitors. The Market at PPL provides a 50% discount on fruits and vegetables when using SNAP benefits. The Saturday market doubles SNAP dollars spent to provide SNAP participants with free fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, when a SNAP participant arrives at the market, there is a SNAP booth that can accompany them by providing tokens matching to the dollar value of SNAP benefits they are using and these tokens can be redeemed when purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables.

### ***Community SNAP outreach efforts:***

Increasing SNAP participation is at the forefront of providing individuals access to fresh foods like fruits and vegetables. There are a variety of interventions that can be implemented at



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the community level to achieve this goal<sup>28</sup>. These include targeting community outreach, assisting the unemployed, moving SNAP services online, and diminishing barriers to affordable groceries<sup>29</sup>. Community outreach efforts are critical in ensuring there is community engagement and participation in SNAP activities and programs.

SNAP outreach is another component of SNAP that works to promote the program as well as continue advocating for and reaching those that already benefit from SNAP<sup>30</sup>. Implementing appropriate and effective outreach strategies is a critical step in the process of increasing SNAP participation all around. These strategies should be designed specifically to the population and area in which outreach is taking place in order to effectively reach the audience. In addition, outreach should be available in multiple formats due to varying health literacy levels, languages, access to technology, age, etc<sup>31</sup>. The Federation of Virginia Food Bank listed strategies and best practices for outreach<sup>31</sup>. Outreach can either be direct (application assistance for SNAP applications or community engagement) or indirect (posting flyers and handouts, digital outreach). Using a combination of these methods helps to ensure that individuals are reached and SNAP awareness can continue to grow.

### ***Point of Purchase Financial Incentives for SNAP Participants:***

The implementation of incentive programs has increased the purchasing and consumption of fruits and vegetables across individuals, specifically those benefiting from SNAP<sup>25</sup>. It is known that fruit and vegetables are important components to maintain healthy bodies, yet with elevated prices, consumers are limited when it comes to purchasing these goods. Participation in SNAP aids in alleviating the stress and challenges that one faces when accessing healthful foods, but does not solve the issue entirely. With that said, financial incentives have been shown to mitigate the gap in diet and health risks by making healthy foods more affordable as well as

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allowing SNAP participants to make their benefits last longer<sup>32</sup>. For example, the Market at PPL has their own incentive program in place for SNAP customers. The incentive program at this market includes a 50% discount on fruits and vegetables when using an EBT card to purchase these goods. The goal of this incentive program is to increase purchasing power of fruits and vegetables in addition to promoting the market to SNAP participants. Other markets around the country have similar programs with much success. Overall, financial incentives when purchasing fruits and vegetables have been successful in making produce more accessible and affordable for SNAP participants as well as promoting the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and increased diet quality.

Food on the Move (FOTM) is a mobile market that provides fresh produce to residents in Providence, RI<sup>32</sup>. This program was created in efforts to reduce barriers such as transportation and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, FOTM provides a 50% discount on fresh fruits and vegetables to those using SNAP benefits in order to increase purchasing and consumption levels of these foods<sup>32</sup>. Initially this incentive was implemented in five markets and due to the success rates, was eventually implemented in all sixteen markets. Point of sale data between January 2018 and May 2019 was used to determine the effectiveness of the 50% discount on fresh fruits and vegetables. This data collection included the following: date of transaction; total dollar sales; use of 50% discount; and whether an Electronic Benefit Transaction (EBT) card was used for the transaction. Data analysis concluded that SNAP participants spent more money on fresh fruits and vegetables than non-SNAP participants due to the implementation of a 50% discount incentive. Moreover, the implementation of FOTM has proven effective in promoting fruits and vegetables as well as increasing the purchasing of these foods across SNAP participants<sup>25</sup>.

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Philly Food Bucks is one another successful program when enhancing SNAP participation<sup>31</sup>. This study aimed to understand the impact of an incentive program, on the purchasing and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Among the six hundred and sixty two participants, 27% of which were Philly Food Buck, and of these, 75% were also SNAP participants<sup>31</sup>. Data collection through interviews aimed to assess respondents' changes in shopping habits, demographics, participation in SNAP and other assistance programs, and the utilization of Philly Food Bucks. Results indicated that participants self-reported an increase in purchasing and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, the implementation of Philly Food Bucks correlated with notable increases in SNAP transactions and sales. For example, SNAP sales at farmers markets in low-income areas surged by more than 300% from \$12,431 in 2009, prior to Philly Food Bucks, to \$52,405 in 2011, after two years of the program's implementation<sup>33</sup>.

Similarly, Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB) aims to increase participation among individuals benefiting from SNAP. This program is used throughout many states in the U.S and aims to increase accessibility and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables<sup>34</sup>. A specific study analyzed the influence of Double Up Food Bucks when purchasing fruits and vegetables throughout Michigan. Individuals who spent \$10 or more on fruits and vegetables at an independent supermarket in Detroit were given a \$10 gift card to use towards additional Michigan grown fresh fruits and vegetables sold in the store. A quasi-experimental design was used in this study and examined SNAP beneficiaries who received financial incentives and customers who did not receive financial incentives when purchasing fruits and vegetables. A total of 6 different fruit and vegetable purchase behaviors were examined, including : Fruit and vegetable (F&V) expenditure; fruit expenditure; vegetable expenditure; F&V expenditure share;

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F&V variety; and F&V purchase decision<sup>35</sup>. Conclusions show that DUFB increased all 6 fruit and vegetable purchase behaviors, yet these findings were not seen with the absence of financial incentives.

Virginia Fresh Match (VFM) is a network of farmers markets and food stores across the state that offer incentive programs<sup>36</sup>. SNAP benefits are doubled when using VFM incentives in order to promote the purchasing of healthy foods. Half of the farmers markets in Virginia accept SNAP benefits, but with a large amount of money going towards SNAP (over a billion dollars), only 0.2% goes to farmers markets. In 2022, 94% of VFM participants bought more produce due to the VFM program and a grand total of \$2M was invested in SNAP incentive programs with the help from Virginia legislation<sup>37</sup>.

A cross sectional study was conducted to evaluate the impacts of the VFM program. A 16-item questionnaire was available to consumers at VFM participating farmers markets between August and October 2021<sup>38</sup>. This questionnaire was available in various formats and languages and was only available to individuals benefiting from SNAP. Participants were asked their frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption before and after using VFM incentives, if changes in their consumption were due to VFM and if VFM incentives helped make food and SNAP benefits last longer. Frequency of fruit and vegetable intake was higher with the use of the VFM incentive program. Results of the questionnaire showed that 66.9% of participants stated that their change in fruit and vegetable consumption was due to the use of VFM. In addition, 52.2% of respondents stated that VFM helped their food and benefits to last when they did not have the means to purchase more food. In conclusion, participants stated that using VFM incentives helped to increase the frequency of consuming fresh fruits and vegetables and VFM continues to be successful in promoting and providing access to healthful foods.

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### ***Healthy Incentives Pilot:***

The Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) was created in order to better understand how SNAP participants are impacted by making fruits and vegetables more affordable and accessible<sup>39</sup>. This initiative provided 30 cents for every dollar spent on fresh fruits and vegetables in participating locations. These fruits and vegetables included fresh, canned, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables without added sugars, fats, oils or salt and excluded potatoes, mature legumes and 100% fruit juice. There are five specific objectives within the HIP which are;

1. Assess the causal impact of HIP on fruit and vegetable consumption by SNAP participants and on other key measures of dietary intake
2. Identify and assess factors that influence the impact of HIP
3. Describe the processes involved in implementing and operating HIP
4. Assess HIP's impact on the grantee (the State SNAP agency), the local SNAP agency, and their partners (including retailers, State EBT processor, and community organizations)
5. Quantify, to the extent possible, the Federal, State, and local administrative and benefit costs of the pilot.

The evaluation of this program included splitting up the SNAP participants so that one group was receiving the HIP incentive and the other group was receiving baseline SNAP benefits. The participants who were a part of the HIP group were able to receive incentive benefits for 12 months. Telephone interviews regarding 24-hour dietary recall and attitudes and behaviors towards purchasing and consuming fruits and vegetables and other food purchasing behaviors<sup>39</sup>. The main goal of HIP was to increase participants' consumption of fruits and vegetables. Results showed that between the HIP and non-HIP participants, the HIP participants showed significantly greater consumption of fruits and vegetables (quarter of a cup more) than

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the non-HIP group<sup>39</sup>. In addition, participants stated that they purchased larger quantities of fruits and vegetables due to HIP. In conclusion, HIP has shown effectiveness in increasing fruit and vegetable consumption across individuals and can serve as a stepping stone for other similar programs.

The Healthy Incentives Program has since evolved from the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program (FINI) into what is now called The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)<sup>40,41</sup>. FINI was established in the 2014 Farm Bill and provided grants to programs aiming to help SNAP participants increase their purchasing power at farmers markets<sup>40</sup>. A year later, farmers markets that were funded by FINI distributed \$3 million in nutrition incentives and \$5 million in SNAP benefits across rural and urban areas. These benefits financed the purchasing of tens of millions of fruits and vegetables, working towards healthier communities. Additionally, GusNIP is under the 2018 Farm Bill, to provide funding opportunities to projects that provide incentives for low-income individuals looking to purchase fruits and vegetables<sup>41</sup>. Grants provided by GusNIP are a combination of partners from the food and healthcare system that follow the three initiatives<sup>41</sup>:

1. Help improve the health and nutrition status of participating households
2. Facilitate growth in states with low participation,
3. Collect and aggregate data to identify and improve best practices on a broad scale.

Together, these programs were a continuation of HIP that aim to increase the purchasing power of fruits and vegetables, improve food security of Americans and promote healthy lifestyle behaviors.

### ***Improving Wellness through Nutrition Education:***

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An important component of increasing purchasing and consumption of fresh foods is nutrition education. Not only are individuals deserving of understanding how and where to purchase fresh produce, but they also deserve information regarding the importance of purchasing and consuming fresh produce. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-ED) offers nutrition education, budgeting and resource management to those participating in SNAP<sup>42</sup>. The goal of this program is to “improve the likelihood that SNAP participants and persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles”<sup>42</sup>. There are a variety of studies and resources that have proven the effectiveness of SNAP-ED on individuals receiving benefits. In addition to education, SNAP-ED educators also promote the use of SNAP to qualifying individuals in order to increase the level of participation. SNAP participants that also take part in SNAP-ED are seen to have higher levels of food security than those who do not participate in SNAP-ED programs. In addition, participation in SNAP and other food assistance programs has increased due to the work done by SNAP-ED outreach<sup>44</sup>.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health completed a cross-sectional study to examine the effect of efforts through SNAP-ED on self-reported health behaviors<sup>45</sup>. The study included two samples from outside selected markets and two samples from SNAP-ED class sites. Between 2016 and 2020, designated agencies delivered SNAP-ED nutrition education to sites surrounding Los Angeles County. Over this four-year period, 20,000 SNAP-ED classes were taught, reaching a grand total of two million people. In order to assess the effectiveness of these programs, a questionnaire was created to determine individual levels of changes. Questionnaire results determined that participants consumed greater amounts of fruits and vegetables as well as participated in more physical activity after participating in and receiving SNAP-ED nutrition

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education. This study aids as a prime example of the success that SNAP-ED programs have had on individuals receiving SNAP benefits and findings should be taken further and used throughout other communities in order to continue the increase of fruit and vegetable consumption across individuals<sup>46</sup>. Overall, participating in SNAP-ED can have a positive impact on individuals' dietary and physical behaviors<sup>46</sup>.

### ***Five Dimensions of Access:***

A framework labeled The Five Dimensions of Access explains all aspects regarding nutrition and food resources<sup>47</sup>. This framework goes beyond access by identifying and explaining aspects that impact access, creating a community-based approach<sup>47</sup>. Additionally, the framework includes “access” as an accumulation of factors that affects an individual’s ability to obtain and gain from healthful foods. This framework was created after recognition of the lack of supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods as well as the difference of fast-food restaurants between racially different neighborhoods. The dimensions included help to explain all aspects that play a part in an individual’s life when purchasing and consuming healthy foods. This concept was considered when creating an intervention for individuals and families in Petersburg, VA. The infographic material that was created includes Acceptability, Accessibility, Accommodation, Affordability, and Availability all in different ways in order to create an intervention that fits into a multitude of lifestyles. Aiming to increase SNAP redemption at farmers markets includes ensuring individuals and families have readily available access to fresh foods at affordable prices. Although these dimensions are defined separately they all interact with one another to provide individuals and families with access to healthy foods.

### ***Conceptual Framework:***

#### ***Four P’s Marketing Mix:***



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The four P's are a method that is used to market and promote an idea to a targeted audience<sup>48</sup>. This marketing mix includes product, price, place and promotion in order to increase the reach of your product or idea. Product is defined as the physical or digital item that is being offered<sup>48</sup>. Price considers what people are willing to pay for the product<sup>48</sup>. Place considers the logistics of the product being available to consumers<sup>48</sup>. Finally, promotion refers to the strategy used to make individuals aware of the product and convince them to purchase it<sup>48</sup>. These four p's work together in order to create successful marketing strategies. In relation to farmers markets, these four p's relate to the fresh and local produce that is being sold, the price at which they are being sold, the location of where the products and markets are located and the channels in which the markets and products are promoted. Additionally, the four p's are specifically designed and identified depending on the target audience and individual goals of the program, idea or business. Using this marketing mix when creating an intervention for increasing SNAP redemption at farmers market would include a marketing material highlighting the four p's in order to gain attention from individuals and bring them into the market. Implementing this strategy will overall allow for best possible outcomes when aiming to reach SNAP participants at farmers markets.

### *Summary and Significance of the Problem:*

Individuals benefiting from SNAP lack readily accessible and affordable nutrient-dense foods<sup>5</sup>. With the ever-increasing emphasis on fruit and vegetable consumption and other healthy behaviors, it is critical to continue the messaging on the importance of eating fruits and vegetables<sup>3</sup>. Food insecurity affects a multitude of people, leading to worsening disease states and low-quality dietary patterns<sup>17</sup>. However, promotion and marketing materials referencing healthy behaviors such as purchasing fruits and vegetables are not reaching those who receive

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SNAP benefits. In order to tackle the complexity of increasing fresh fruits and vegetables purchases among SNAP participants, it is critical to create appropriate and effective interventions.

### **Project Overview**

#### *Targeted Population:*

The targeted population for this project includes individuals (families, children, adolescents, adults) living in Petersburg City, VA receiving SNAP benefits.

#### *Participating Audience:*

The participating audience within this promotion project includes stakeholders working closely with SNAP recipients who are interested in promoting and improving access to fresh produce at local markets. In addition, market visitors and SNAP participants also participated in this project and intervention.

#### *Program Methodology:*

This project aims to create an intervention that is tailored to the specific needs of the target population. After thorough research and discussion with stakeholders, the best suited intervention for this project and population was to create infographics highlighting farmers markets in the area. This approach was designed to increase awareness of farmers markets and the acceptance of SNAP benefits and incentives at the Market @PPL and the Saturday River Street Market. These infographics were distributed through community partners, who serve SNAP participant populations in Petersburg, VA (e.g., Department of Social Services, Virginia Family Nutrition Program, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Petersburg Health Department) with the intention that the farmers markets see an increase in SNAP customers.

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Furthermore, an interview guide was developed to delve into the behavior and perceptions of farmers market visitors, aiming to gather qualitative insights. This guide encompassed various aspects such as overall awareness and perceptions of farmers markets, frequency of visits, typical purchases, and the utilization of SNAP benefits. Market attendees were invited to partake in a brief questionnaire designed to deepen understanding of their visiting patterns and experiences at these marketplaces. The responses from this guide will serve as further insight on research needed in order to better serve communities such as Petersburg, VA.

Though this was a small scale project, following the Four P's of Marketing framework yielded the following dissemination methodology:

**Behavioral changes being sought:** Increase in fruit and vegetable purchases at the market

**Targeted population:** SNAP participants with an emphasis on families

**Qualifying settings or market channels messages or interventions are being delivered:**

- Farmers market
- Social media
- Government programs (Department of Social Services and Petersburg Department of Recreation, Special Events and Volunteerism, Petersburg Health Department)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension & SNAP-Ed agents

**Geographic area:** Petersburg, VA, specifically high SNAP participant census tracts

**Mass communication methods and elements that the campaign used:**

- Consumer education
- Social media "push" to consumer segments
- Rack cards and Flyers

*Methods:*

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Formatting and developing this particular project included multiple aspects. After discussions with local stakeholders, designing a project fitting the needs of the population was clear. Stakeholders, such as SNAP-Ed Agents and other individuals of Virginia Cooperative Extension, reported a desire for an increased presence of individuals at farmers markets in Petersburg, VA, especially those who receive SNAP benefits. The reasoning for this was due to the fact that the overall goal of these stakeholders was to increase healthy behaviors of the population and purchasing and consuming fruits and vegetables is one way to achieve that goal. The effectiveness of this intervention will be measured by tracking SNAP sales and transactions to see the comparison between May and June 2023 and 2024. In addition to this, stakeholders explained the importance of understanding what brings individuals to the market and how customers' experiences at the markets can be improved. With this in mind, individuals purchasing products from the Market at PPL were asked to participate in interviews. These interviews allowed for a better understanding of the experiences that individuals have when they visit the market, what can make their experience better and their knowledge of redeeming SNAP benefits. Another piece of this project was the development and distribution of materials. Once created and printed, the infographics were distributed to community partners throughout Petersburg, VA. Flyers were created in rack card size and standard flier size in order to allow for flexibility of distribution and placement. In addition, flyers highlighted both the Market at PPL and the Saturday River Street Market and were distributed through community-based partners, healthcare facilities and food pantries. After a comprehensive literature review that addressed SNAP, SNAP benefits at farmers markets, incentive programs and best practices to reach SNAP participants, a project was created that addressed the need and want for increasing awareness of farmers markets.

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### *Data Collection:*

Data for this project was collected in various ways in order to understand the multiple aspects of the project. As for the SNAP sales and transactions data, data was collected solely from the Market at PPL as this was the main location of the intervention and research. In addition, data was only collected and measured for the first half of June due to time constraints, but the full month of May was used for both 2023 and 2024. In addition, data collection also included qualitative responses from visitor interviews to better understand the patterns and experiences of farmers market visitors.

### *Results*

#### *Farmers Market Transactions:*

*Table 1: Farmers Market Transactions*

<b>Month &amp; Year</b>	<b>Total Transactions</b>	<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>SNAP Transactions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>SNAP Sales</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
May 2023	992	\$11,462.27	89	18%	\$1,187.23	19%
June 2023	277	\$3,794.25	45	16%	\$659.10	17%
May 2024	505	\$6,802.21	74	15%	\$1,093.90	16%
June 2024	356	\$4,563.50	52	15%	\$708.37	16%

This data represents sales and transactions data for the whole month of May 2023 and 2024 and the first half of June in both 2023 and 2024.

#### *SNAP Transactions:*

*Table 2: SNAP Transactions*

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<b>May Transactions</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>% change</b>
SNAP	<u>89</u>	<u>74</u>	-17%
<b>May Sales</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>% change</b>
SNAP	<u>\$1,187.23</u>	<u>\$1,093.90</u>	-8%
<b>June transactions</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>% change</b>
SNAP	<u>45</u>	<u>52</u>	16%
<b>June sales</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>% change</b>
SNAP	<u>\$659.10</u>	<u>\$708.37</u>	7%

This data represents sales and transactions data for the whole month of May 2023 and 2024 and the first half of June in both 2023 and 2024.

*Market at PPL Interview Guide:*

After interviewing customers at the Market at PPL, there were some common themes observed. To start, 38% of customers reported visiting the market due to wanting to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. The other 62% reported miscellaneous reasons for visiting the market such as being in town for an event, working at the public library, and attending a meeting in the library. 31% of individuals reported that it was their first time at the market. Knowledge about the market came from advertisements, word of mouth and visiting the library. 100% of respondents reported that they had a “good” or “great” first experience at the market at PPL due to the friendliness of employees, interactions with other customers, availability and affordability of products. All respondents state that they visit farmers markets due to organic and fresh produce and supporting local farmers.

*Table 3: Market @PPL Visit Frequency*

<b>Visit Frequency</b>	<b>Responses (%) (n=13)</b>
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More than once a week	3 responses (23%)
Once a week	2 responses (15%)
2-3 times per month	3 responses (23%)
Once a month	1 response (8%)
Less than once a month	1 response (8%)
N/A	3 responses (23%)

Table 3: Market @PPL Visit Frequency depicts common visit frequencies among market visitors. More than once a month, 2-3 times per month and N/A were the most common responses. Non-applicable was an option due to the set up of questions in the interview guide. 70% of the respondents (n=9) stated that they also visit the Saturday farmers market in Petersburg, VA to purchase additional fresh fruits and vegetables. The other 30% do not visit other farmers markets due to their work schedules and transportation. Common products that are purchased at the market include fruits, fresh greens, mushrooms, vegetables, crackers, peanut butter, sandwiches and salad items. SNAP benefits were used by 23% of the respondents. These individuals reported having good experiences when using SNAP benefits at the market and enjoy the extra savings they receive when using them. As for suggestions that customers had for improving their experience at the market at PPL and the Saturday market in Petersburg, VA, they suggested that more vendors and interactive activities could provide better experiences as well as having an indoor or covered space for the market during extremely hot or cold months. The last category of suggestions concluded that more consistency of products and transportation to and from the market would improve participation levels. Lastly, 62% of the respondents live in Petersburg, VA where the Market at PPL is located. These data help to conclude that customers enjoy the local and fresh products, affordability, variety and location of the market, but would like to see some small changes in the future to enhance their experience. These data are helpful

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to better understand the needs of the population when creating interventions to improve the health of communities.

### Dissemination of Promotional Materials:

*Table 4: Dissemination of Rack Cards and Flyers*

Promotional material dissemination partners	# of rack cards (RSM)	# of flyers (RSM)	# of rack cards (PPL)	# of flyers (PPL)
<b>Community based partners</b>				
Petersburg Department of Social Services	50	10	50	10
Petersburg Department of Recreation, Special Events, and Volunteerism	25	5	25	5
Petersburg Cooperative Extension	50	25	50	25
Virginia Family Nutrition Program	50	20	50	20
Petersburg Public Library	20	20	20	20
<b>Healthcare</b>				
Petersburg Health Department	20	20	20	20
<b>Food Pantries</b>				
JJD Heart Foundation	20	5	20	5
Emmanuel COGIC	15	20	15	20

*Table 4* shows the location in which flyers were distributed and how many fliers were provided to each location. These locations were chosen based on the population they serve and the relationship they have with SNAP/EBT and increasing access and awareness of healthful foods.

### *Discussion:*

As seen through the results, the implementation of fliers highlighting farmers markets in the Petersburg, VA area, location and hours, available products, and acceptance of SNAP has not



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shown substantial effectiveness in reaching the targeted audience and achieving the goal of the project. The results show that the implementation of promotional materials around Petersburg, VA had little to no effect on the overall percentage of SNAP sales at the Market at PPL. There was a decrease in SNAP transactions and sales between May and June 2023 and 2024. Payments made and tender sales for the month of May decreased between the years 2023 and 2024 and the same goes for SNAP payments and sales. For the month of June, payments made and tender sales increased between 2023 and 2024 as well as SNAP payments and sales, but not enough to increase the overall percentage of SNAP redemption at the market. In addition, Total SNAP payments in 2023 were 134 transactions and the total SNAP payments in 2024 were 126 transactions. Total SNAP transactions in 2023 came out to \$1,846.33, whereas 2024 transactions came out to \$1,802.27. The May data shows that there was an initial drop in not only SNAP sales and transactions but also overall sales and transactions. The reasoning for this drop could be because May is the beginning of peak season for farmers markets. The June data indicates a potential trend that could be uncovered with further data collection. Furthermore, with June being a part of peak season time, the thought is that the upwards trend at the farmers market will continue over the summer months. Although these results do not show complete success, there were lessons learned and partnerships created with community partners.

Partnering with community organizations was another main topic discussed throughout the literature and qualitative data has shown that this project was effective in doing so. With the slight impact thus far on the targeted audience, the hope is that reach to SNAP participants continues and greater participation is seen at the Market at PPL. In addition, including a longer data collection period would provide a greater evaluation opportunity. Recommendations for this project or future projects include increasing the scope and scale of the social marketing campaign

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by coordinating with nutrition education programs at the market to provide education reinforcement tools such as cooking tools and utensils. A summary of this information could reach the intended audience through newspaper articles, posters, community presentations and much more. Although these results did not show complete success, it shows the effort and continuous work that is essential in creating programs that will have a lasting impact.

Moving forward, suggestions for this project include having a longer data collection period, administering the interview guide in the beginning stages of the project and including an additional distribution method of materials such as social media or newspaper postings. Making these revisions to the project would allow for a more comprehensive approach to the project and ensure that the best possible results are being achieved.

### *Strengths and Limitations:*

As the results show, complete success with this project was not achieved. However, without complete success lessons were still learned and partnerships were developed. Anecdotal data infers that individuals are unaware of the Market at PPL, which causes a main limitation for the project. In addition to this, other factors such as perceptions of farmers markets being expensive could be the reason for the initial drop in data and lack of complete success. Furthermore, having the ability to include a longer data collection period would provide additional insight on project success. For example, the data collected from June was only measured for the first half of the month during 2023 and 2024. This was due to time constraints with the project and wanting to match the 2024 data as closely as possible with the data from 2023. In addition, distributing materials during peak seasons when markets are the busiest (May-August) as well as collecting data from visitors during busy days or times at the market would provide additional insight on the project. Although materials were distributed in May,

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having a longer data collection period would allow for greater insight on the effect the materials had on the community. Furthermore, distributing the materials during peak season as well as at more community partners would allow for a greater reach to the Petersburg, VA population. These materials were distributed in public places and not solely to those who benefit from SNAP. With this said, a case could be made that due to the materials being available to the general population, it is challenging to determine the effect that the materials had on SNAP participating individuals. In addition, it would be helpful to survey market visitors regarding their experience with seeing the promotional materials, recall of messaging channels and their perception of the marketing materials as a means of evaluation. This would allow for feedback regarding the promotional materials for future implementation or projects. If more time allotted, data would be collected from community partners regarding the perception of value of the materials for SNAP participants. This would provide data supporting or rejecting the effectiveness of the materials. On the other hand, strengths include the involvement of stakeholders, reaching the targeted audience and creating a carefully designed set of promotional materials, and building partnerships with community and SNAP partners. This project emphasized the importance of addressing the needs of the target audience by aiming to increase the awareness of fresh, local and affordable fruits and vegetables and encouragement of visiting farmers markets. All in all, this project included some technical weaknesses but was successful in fostering community engagement and participation with hope that substantial success will eventually be seen.

### *Conclusion:*

Overall, the goal of this project was to boost SNAP redemption at farmers markets in Petersburg, VA. Aiming to increase SNAP redemption at farmers markets is a critical community nutrition effort in hopes of fostering inclusive access to affordable and nutritious foods. Working

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towards bridging the gap between accessibility and affordability supports local farmers as well as communities such as Petersburg, VA by promoting the consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Through a comprehensive literature review and multiple discussions with stakeholders an initiative was taken to create a project in hopes of increasing overall SNAP redemption at farmers markets. An emphasis on clarity, inclusivity, visual appeal and relevant information was essential when informing individuals on SNAP benefits at the farmers market. Strategic distribution and engagement with various community stakeholders assisted in bridging the gap between accessibility and affordability. Continued collaboration between all stakeholders will be essential to sustain motivation and determination when aiming to increase accessibility and affordability of healthy behaviors, such as purchasing and consuming fruits and vegetables.

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Appendix A

# Market @PPL

## Why farmers markets?

- Source of local and fresh produce.
- Promotes healthy eating habits!
- Supports our local farmers and economies.



## Using SNAP benefits at farmers markets.

- SNAP benefits can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables!
- Use your SNAP/EBT card when purchasing fruits and vegetables and receive a 50% discount!



## How to use?

1. Find a participating market near you
2. Use your SNAP EBT card at the register
3. Spend LESS on fresh fruits and veggies

Appendix B

# Welcoming you to Market @PPL

201 W Washington Street, Petersburg, VA 23803  
Monday-Thursday, 12pm-6pm



### What is offered?

- LOCAL and fresh fruits and vegetables
- Personalized recipes for products at the market!
- Expanded hours to fit your schedule.
- located conveniently near the Petersburg Transit Station



Scan here to learn more!



Use your SNAP EBT card to get more fruits and veggies!

Appendix C

# River Street Market

## Why farmers markets?

- Source of local and fresh produce.
- Promotes healthy eating habits!
- Supports our local farmers and economies.



## Using SNAP benefits at farmers markets.

- SNAP benefits can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables!
- Virginia Fresh Match will double SNAP dollars so you get FREE fresh fruits and vegetables.



## How to use?

1. Find a participating market near you
2. Use your SNAP EBT card at the register
3. Spend LESS on fresh fruits and veggies

Appendix D

# Welcoming you to River Street Market!

30 River Street, Petersburg, VA 23803  
Every Saturday, 9 am-12 pm



## What is offered?

- Fresh produce from Virginia farmers
- Community events and meeting place
- Weekly Kids' Activities with POP Kids Club
- Music from local community groups



Scan here to learn more!



Use your SNAP EBT card to get more fruits and veggies!

# BOOSTING SNAP PARTICIPATION AT FARMERS MARKETS

## Appendix E

### Market @ PPL SNAP Customer Interview Guide

The goal of these questions is to gain an understanding of how visitors experience the Market @ PPL, and how that experience can be improved. We would like to learn about which foods, activities and market attributes draw you to the Market @ PPL and other farmers markets. From your valuable insights, we will develop and implement strategies to expand and improve opportunities for customers who visit the market. The Market @PPL is devoted to creating strong connections with community members and providing accessible and suitable food choices for all.

All of your responses will be kept confidential and used in combination with other interview participants. Please let us know if there are any questions that make you uncomfortable which you would like to skip. We appreciate your time and effort to help us improve.

- 1) What brings you to the Market @ PPL today? (all)
- 2) Is this your first time at the Market? (all)

**“Yes” responses to Q.2:**

- 2a) How did you learn or hear about the Market @ PPL?
- 2b) How was your first experience at the Market @ PPL (prompt: What did you like/dislike)?
- 2c) Do you visit /shop at any other farmers markets?

**If yes to 2c**, please tell me about why you choose to shop at farmers markets

**“No” responses to Q. 2:**

- 2a) How often do you shop here?
  - Could prompt with categorizing by:
    - More than once a week
    - Once a week
    - 2 -3 times per month
    - Once a month
    - Less than once a month
- 2b) Why do you shop at the Market @ PPL versus another location (e.g., Food Lion, Walmart, corner store)?
- 2c) What foods do you usually buy at the Market @ PPL?
- 2d) Do you visit other farmers markets?

**If yes to 2d**, please tell me about why you choose to shop at farmers markets?

- 3) Did you use SNAP/EBT at the Market @ PPL today?

**If no to #3, go to #4.**

**If yes to #3, go to #3a**

- 3a) How was or has been your experience using your SNAP benefits at the Market @ PPL (prompt: What did you like/dislike)
- 3b) What is the reason you choose to use your SNAP benefits at the Market @ PPL versus another location (e.g., Food Lion, Walmart, corner store)?

*Note: could be the same as the response to 2b*
- 4) If you could wave a magic wand, to improve farmers markets in the City of Petersburg, what would you change? (all)

- 5) Do you live in Petersburg, VA? (all)



# BOOSTING SNAP PARTICIPATION AT FARMERS MARKETS

## Appendix F



### Division of Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-3732  
irb@vt.edu  
<http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp>

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 12, 2024  
**TO:** Emily Myers, Valisa Ellen Hedrick, Sarah Anne Misyak, Stella Lucia Volpe, Carlin Rafie  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** OMALS-Dietetic Interns Project and Report  
**IRB NUMBER:** 24-436

Based on the submitted project description and items listed in the Special Instructions section found on Page 2, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) has determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by HHS and FDA regulations.

Further review and approval by the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) is not required because this is not human research. This determination applies only to the activities described in the submitted project description and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made you must immediately submit an Amendment to the HRPP for a new determination. Your amendment must include a description of the changes and you must upload all revised documents. At that time, the HRPP will review the submission activities to confirm the original "Not Research" decision or to advise if a new application must be made.

If there are additional undisclosed components that you feel merit a change in this initial determination, please contact our office for a consultation.

Please be aware that receiving a "Not Research" Determination is not the same as IRB review and approval of the activity. You are NOT to use IRB consent forms or templates for these activities. If you have any questions, please contact the Virginia Tech HRPP office at 540-231-3732 or [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu).

### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As: **Not Research**  
Protocol Determination Date: **April 12, 2024**

### ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol.