



WASHINGTON STATE'S Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant



Progress Report

April 2015 to September 2017



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	2
Farmers Market SNAP Incentives	5
How it Works	5
Evaluation	6
Impact	6
Lessons Learned and Looking Forward	7
Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions	8
How it Works	8
Evaluation	9
Impact	9
Lessons Learned and Looking Forward	9
Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons	11
How it Works	11
Evaluation	12
Impact	12
Lessons Learned and Looking Forward	12
List of Washington's FINI Grant Subawardees	13
FINI Statewide Advisory Network	13
Related Publications and Presentations	14



Executive Summary

With support from the *Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive* (FINI) grant, Washington State prioritized the expansion of healthy food access and affordability for low-income individuals and families. In 2015, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and over 60 multi-sector partners were awarded a \$5.86 million competitive FINI grant by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. FINI funds support cash-value incentives for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) so they can purchase more fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores.

The Department of Health is testing three types of SNAP nutrition incentive programs:

■ Farmers Market SNAP Incentives

When customers spend their SNAP benefits¹ at nearly 80 participating farmers markets, they receive additional tokens or vouchers to spend on fruits and vegetables at the market.

● Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions

Participating healthcare providers, community health workers, and community nutritionists “prescribe” fruits and vegetables to SNAP patients during primary care visits, group classes, and home visits. The prescription is a paper voucher that patients can use like cash to buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores.

▲ Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons

When Safeway customers spend \$10 of their SNAP benefits on qualifying fruits and vegetables², they receive a \$5 coupon to spend on their next purchase of fruits and vegetables.

Nutrition incentives increase spending on fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets and grocery stores while expanding access and affordability of healthy foods for families on a tight budget. By making fruits and vegetables more affordable, FINI incentives help families improve their nutrition and reduce the burden and risk of chronic diseases.

By September 2017, SNAP nutrition incentive programs operated in 79 farmers markets and 175 grocery stores across 30 counties in Washington. Uptake of the incentives has been promising: SNAP participants redeemed more than \$850,000 worth of fruits and vegetables as a result of SNAP incentives. DOH and partners expect SNAP participants to redeem an additional \$2.6 million FINI-funded SNAP incentives by March 2020 (end of the FINI grant).

The following report provides a programmatic and outcome summary for Washington’s FINI grant from April 2015 to September 2017.

1 SNAP benefits are known as Basic Food Program in Washington, and sometimes referred to as Food Stamps.

2 Qualifying fruits and vegetables are any variety of fresh, canned and frozen with no added fats, sugars, or salt.

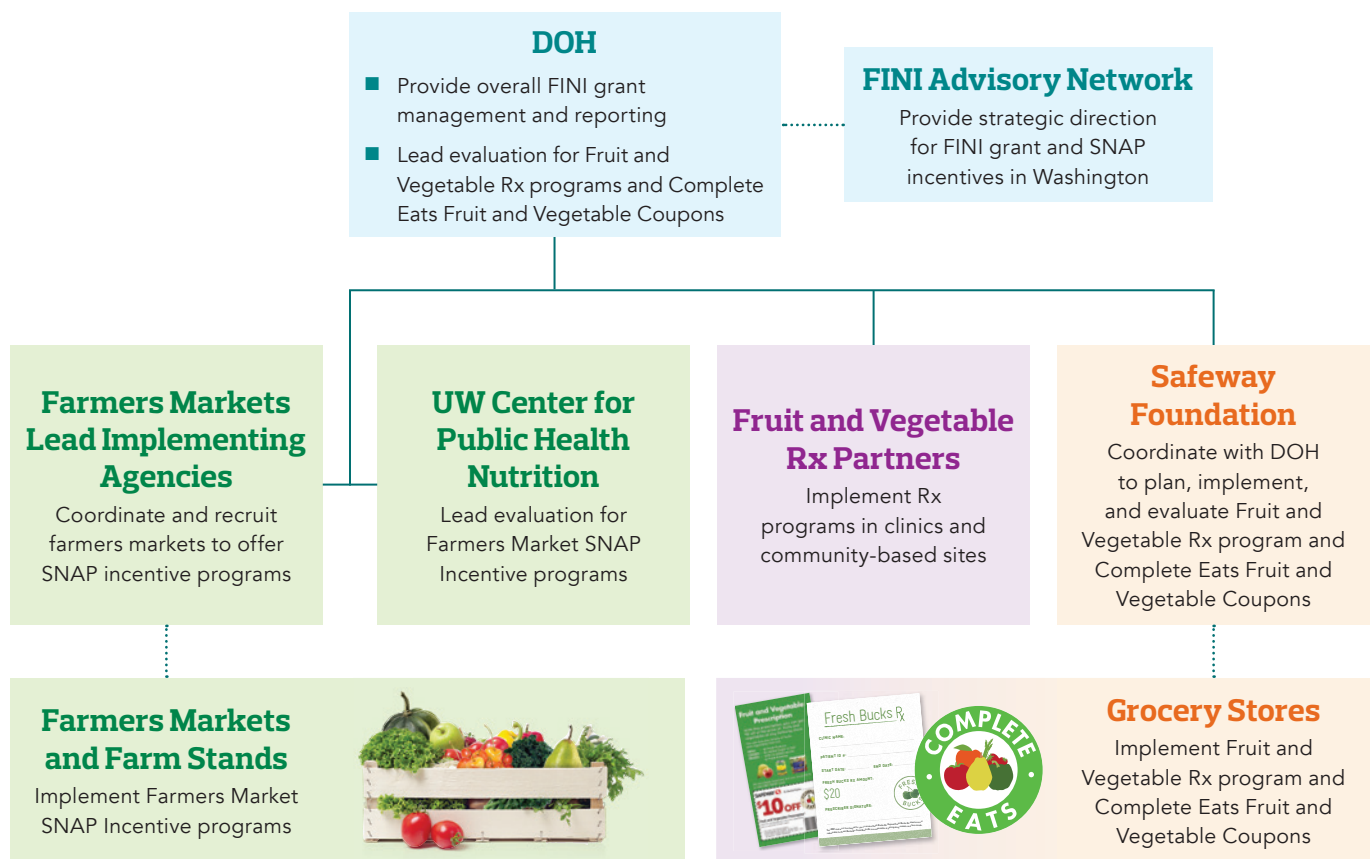


Background

Access to affordable, healthy foods is often challenging for the most vulnerable of populations, including low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, and the elderly. Food insecurity — limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods — is unacceptably high in Washington; nearly 12 percent of households struggle with food insecurity in our state.³ Research shows that food insecurity is associated with poor dietary quality, as well as clinical hypertension, diabetes, and other chronic diseases.^{4,5,6}

Participation in SNAP significantly reduces food insecurity.⁷ In state fiscal year 2016, over 1.3 million people participated in Washington’s SNAP program (also referred to as Basic Food Program in Washington, and sometimes referred to as Food Stamps); 36% were children. Individuals and families enrolled in SNAP receive a monthly benefit to buy foods at authorized food outlets. Some restrictions apply to what SNAP participants can purchase with their benefits (i.e., no alcohol, prepared foods, etc.).

Figure 1 Organizational Structure of Washington’s FINI Grant



3 Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M., Gregory, C., Singh, A. Household Food Security in the United States in 2016, ETT-237, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, September 2017. Retrieved January 2018, from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84973/err-237.pdf>.

4 Seligman, H., Laraia, B., & Kushel, M. (Feb. 2010). Food Insecurity is Associated with Chronic Disease among Low-Income NHANES Participants. *The Journal of Nutrition*, 140(2), 304-310. Retrieved January 2018, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2806885/>.

5 Gregory, C., Coleman-Jensen, A. Food Insecurity, Chronic Disease, and Health Among Working-Age Adults, ERR-235, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, July 2017. Retrieved January 2018, from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=42942>.

6 Hanson, K. & Connor, L. (2014). Food Insecurity and Dietary Quality in US Adults and Children: A Systematic Review. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 100 (2), 684-692. Retrieved February 2018 from, <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.114.084525>.

7 Mabli J., Ohls J., et al. Measuring the Effect of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation on food Insecurity. Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, August 2013. Retrieved January 2018, from <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Measuring2013.pdf>.

In 2015, Washington State prioritized expanding healthy food access and affordability for SNAP participants. With the support of more than 60 multi-sector partners (farmers markets, healthcare, grocery stores, academia, government, non-profit organizations), Washington State Department of Health (DOH) was awarded a \$5.86 million competitive *Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive* (FINI) grant. Federally, the FINI grant program is authorized under the [2014 Farm Bill](#) and managed by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

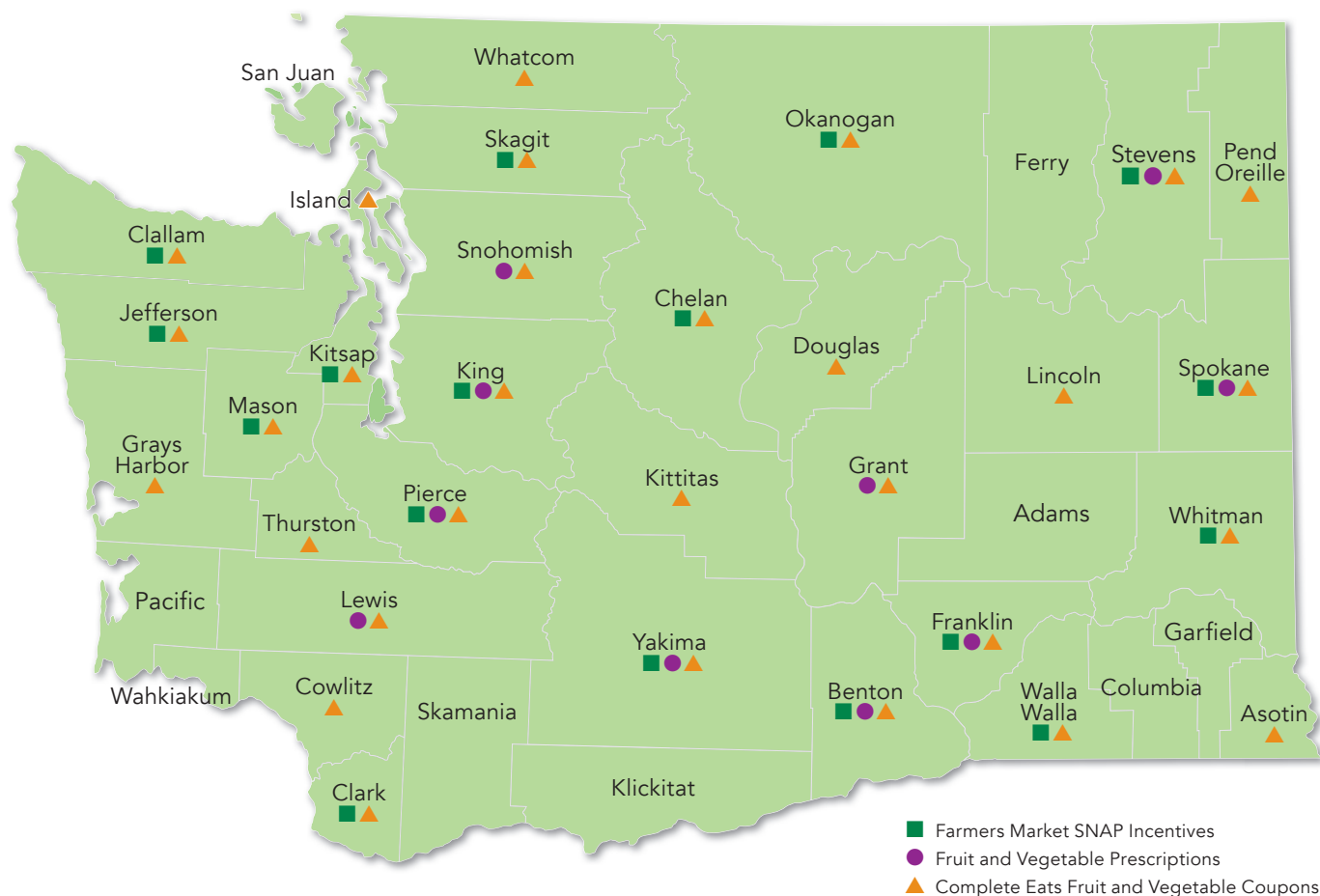
FINI supports cash-value incentives for SNAP participants to spend on fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores. Washington’s grant is the largest award to-date, and demonstrates our state’s commitment to reducing food insecurity and increasing healthy food intake for the most vulnerable communities. The grant requires a dollar-for-dollar local and state match—DOH and partners have pledged \$5.91 million

additional state and local dollars to implement FINI activities. FINI activities began April 2015 and are slated to run through March 2020 (includes a 12 month no-cost extension to the grant).

Through FINI, DOH and partners are testing three distinct SNAP incentive strategies: (1) Farmers Market SNAP Incentives, (2) Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions, and (3) Fruit and Vegetable Coupons. To implement FINI programs, DOH strategically partners with agencies located throughout Washington in counties where there are high rates of SNAP usage, poverty, and chronic diseases (see [Figure 2](#) and [Table 1](#)).

Subsequent sections of this report provide detailed descriptions of the three SNAP incentive strategies, as well as participant- and outlet-level outcomes⁸ achieved during the first half of Washington’s FINI grant.

Figure 2 Washington Counties Where FINI Activities Take Place



8 Data presented in this report is preliminary and collected by DOH as of December 2017; numbers are subject to change.

Table 1 Characteristics of Washington Counties Where FINI Activities Take Place

	SNAP Clients ¹	Households Utilizing SNAP ²	Food Insecure Population ³	Population in Poverty ⁴	Population Consuming F&V <1 time/day ⁵	Obese Population (BMI ≥ 30) ⁵	Population with T2DM ⁵	FINI Strategy ⁶
WA State	1,334,152	15.1%	12.8%	11.3%	10.5%	27%	8.3%	
By County								
Adams	5,529	21.2%	5.3%	20.0%	*	40.3%	16.0%	
Asotin	6,155	19.4%	14%	15.0%	14.9%	35.0%	10.5%	CE
Benton	42,546	16.3%	11.3%	11.0%	13.7%	28.7%	8.4%	FM, Rx, CE
Chelan	14,686	11.4%	9.5%	12.0%	*	28.9%	6.4%	FM, CE
Clallam	15,918	16.5%	14.9%	15.0%	*	28.6%	7.1%	FM, CE
Clark	88,652	16.7%	13.2%	9.0%	11.6%	26.6%	9.3%	FM, CE
Columbia	845	22.1%	14.3%	14.0%	*	33.5%	*	
Cowlitz	31,970	23.5%	15.2%	16.0%	12.5%	28.4%	9.2%	CE
Douglas	7,869	16.6%	8.9%	13.0%	11.0%	33.4%	9.3%	CE
Ferry	1,861	24.6%	18%	21.0%	*	39.4%	15.1%	
Franklin	23,556	20.6%	6.7%	15.0%	10.4%	33.8%	11.6%	FM, Rx, CE
Garfield	468	14.4%	13.7%	14.0%	31.0%	29.1%	*	
Grant	26,553	21.6%	9.4%	16.0%	9.9%	38.6%	10.7%	Rx, CE
Grays Harbor	21,291	22.7%	15.6%	15.0%	14.3%	41.3%	8.4%	CE
Island	10,003	10.9%	12.7%	9.0%	*	29.9%	5.0%	CE
Jefferson	5,384	13.0%	13.6%	12.0%	*	30.5%	8.1%	FM, CE
King	278,946	11.3%	12.9%	9.0%	9.6%	22.0%	7.1%	FM, Rx, CE
Kitsap	40,472	13.6%	12.6%	10.0%	9.1%	30.7%	8.2%	FM, CE
Kittitas	6,624	14.7%	16.3%	18.0%	*	30.2%	6.7%	CE
Klickitat	4,936	13.5%	13.3%	16.0%	14.0%	30.8%	6.6%	
Lewis	21,299	22.9%	14.9%	15.0%	18.2%	40.4%	8.4%	Rx, CE
Lincoln	1,806	13.2%	13.4%	13.0%	22.2%	32.3%	9.4%	CE
Mason	15,400	18.5%	14%	15.0%	*	37.7%	9.1%	FM, CE
Okanogan	10,919	21.5%	13.5%	20.0%	*	32.5%	12.0%	FM, CE
Pacific	5,824	22.7%	15.7%	17.0%	*	31.9%	12.4%	
Pend Oreille	3,377	20.8%	17.1%	16.0%	*	42.6%	7.5%	CE
Pierce	181,072	16.1%	14.3%	12.0%	11.4%	30.6%	9.0%	FM, Rx, CE
San Juan	1,400	8.6%	12.1%	10.0%	*	12.8%	8.0%	
Skagit	25,900	17.4%	12.3%	11.0%	8.1%	28.1%	10.7%	FM, CE
Skamania	2,355	16.2%	14%	14.0%	*	34.1%	5.8%	
Snohomish	111,123	13.3%	11.6%	8.0%	9.3%	27.2%	7.6%	Rx, CE
Spokane	119,199	19.2%	15.2%	13.0%	11.7%	28.8%	9.0%	FM, Rx, CE
Stevens	11,104	20.2%	16%	14.0%	12.4%	30.9%	9.5%	FM, Rx, CE
Thurston	50,735	14.3%	13.4%	10.0%	10.1%	28.8%	8.9%	CE
Wahkiakum	919	19.3%	15.2%	13.0%	*	29.3%	*	
Walla Walla	12,146	16.3%	12.1%	14.0%	10.6%	36.7%	10.7%	FM, CE
Whatcom	37,582	15.8%	14.1%	15.0%	8.4%	24.8%	7.2%	CE
Whitman	4,803	12.9%	19.9%	26.0%	13.2%	28.4%	8.1%	FM, CE
Yakima	82,651	25.3%	9.1%	18.0%	13.4%	34.8%	11.1%	FM, Rx, CE

Data sources:

¹ WA State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Research & Data Analysis, Client Services Database, 2016 State FY

² American Community Survey, 2011–2015

³ Map the Meal Gap 2015: Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Model-based Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

⁵ WA State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2014–2016 (T2DM and Obesity) & 2013–2015 (F&V).

⁶ FM: Farmers Market SNAP Incentives; Rx: Fruit & Vegetable Prescriptions; CE: Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons.

* Data not available or suppressed due to unstable estimates

Farmers Market SNAP Incentives

In 2015, DOH began funding farmers markets to offer SNAP incentive programs through the FINI grant. The grant enabled existing programs to scale up and new programs to start, reaching more communities and SNAP customers statewide (see **Figure 3**).



How it Works

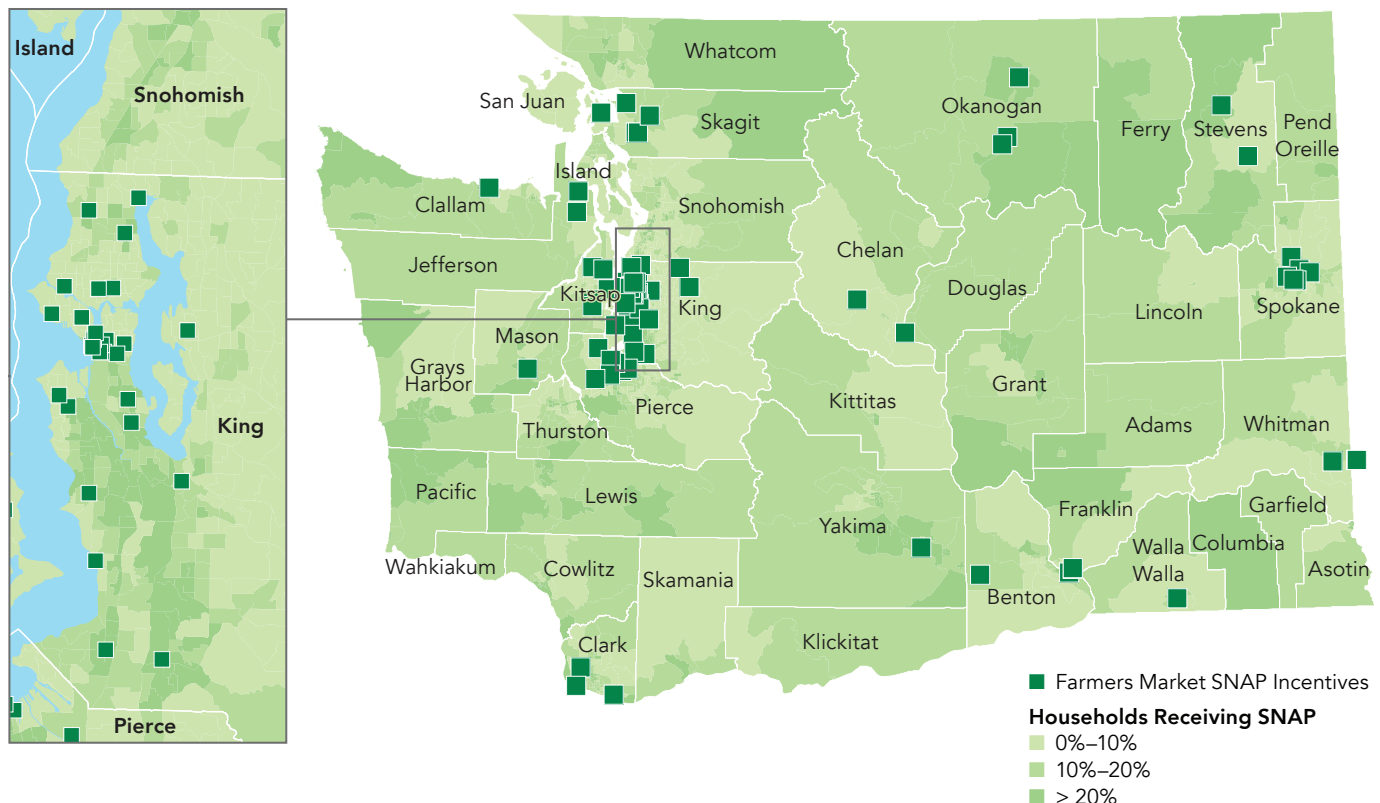
At participating farmers markets, customers use their SNAP food benefits to buy SNAP-eligible items and receive bonus tokens or vouchers to spend on fruits and vegetables. The amount of tokens or vouchers varies from market to market. Some markets offer a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$10, while others match \$2 for every \$5 spent using SNAP food benefits.

Three farmers market SNAP incentive programs are supported by DOH's FINI grant — *Fresh Bucks*, *Fresh Match*, and *Double Up Bucks*. DOH funds six Lead Implementing

Agencies (LIAs) to implement farmers market SNAP incentive programs. As FINI grant subawardees, the LIAs partner with farmers markets to administer SNAP incentive programs, lead regional efforts to promote their respective programs, and assist DOH in fulfilling grant requirements.



Figure 3 Percentage of Households Receiving SNAP by Census Tract and Location of Farmers Markets Offering FINI Programs



Sources: SNAP Data: American Community Survey, 2011–2015; Farmers Market Data: Department of Health SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) and Healthy Eating Active Living Programs, January, 2018

For example, Catholic Charities of Spokane (CCS) partnered with social service agencies (food banks, community health clinics, affordable housing facilities) to distribute over 50,000 fliers and promotional materials throughout eastern Washington during the 2016 market season. Additionally, two LIAs used and expanded a SNAP Ambassador/peer-to-peer model for outreach and education at farmers markets. City of Seattle’s Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) partnered with four community-based organizations serving racially/ethnically diverse communities (e.g. Latino, Somali) to encourage use of SNAP farmers market incentives.

Lead Implementing Agencies (LIAs)

- Catholic Charities of Spokane
- City of Seattle’s Office of Sustainability and Environment
- Kitsap Public Health District
- MultiCare Health System’s Center for Healthy Living
- Skagit Valley Farmers Market Coalition
- Washington State University – Clark County Extension

Along with LIA-led activities and marketing for farmers market SNAP incentives, FINI Advisory Network partners help promote the programs to SNAP clients. Northwest Harvest, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State Farmers Market Association, Washington State Alliance of YMCAs, and state and local SNAP-Ed agencies use newsletters, posters, rack cards, and social media to promote the programs at food banks and pantries, Community Services Offices, child care centers, and in nutrition education classes. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and DOH collaborate to distribute direct mailers to SNAP households in select cities and counties, informing SNAP participants of local farmers markets offering the program. Additionally, DOH maintains a [Farmers Market SNAP Incentives webpage](#) so SNAP participants can easily find markets that offer incentives.

Evaluation

The University of Washington (UW) Center for Public Health Nutrition leads data collection for the farmers market SNAP incentive programs. Due to the large number of farmers markets implementing FINI-funded programs, DOH and UW worked to introduce streamlined data collection. In 2017, all farmers markets participating

in FINI were required to use mobile tablets and Device Magic, a data collection application, to track SNAP and incentive transactions. LIAs trained dozens of market staff and volunteers on the Device Magic application. After one season of implementation, 70 percent of participating farmers market managers reported Device Magic was an efficient way to collect and store data for SNAP transactions.⁹

Impact

Farmers market SNAP incentives provide an economic boost to farmers while simultaneously helping low-income shoppers. Responses from SNAP customers are positive:

“I’m so lucky to try new things. This program changed the way I eat.”

“[This program] helps me stretch my [SNAP benefits] out to the end of the month.”

“My family loves this program because it makes it possible for us to enjoy our local farmers market.”

“As a newly disabled person, Fresh Bucks is helping me stretch my [SNAP benefits] so I can eat low carb foods to help with my medical issues.”



Participants in the SNAP Ambassadors program, Tacoma Farmers Market.

⁹ University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition (December 2016). FINI Farmers Market Evaluation; 2016 Post Season Survey Results.

In 2017, 79 farmers markets in 17 counties offered FINI funded SNAP incentives—a 65 percent increase from 2015, when only 48 markets participated. Most markets that began offering SNAP incentives in the last two years are in rural areas of western and eastern Washington, which have high rates of obesity, chronic disease, and food insecurity. The overall economic impact of SNAP transactions and incentives has been \$2,807,847, based on USDA’s estimate that for every SNAP dollar spent, \$1.79 is generated in the local economy.¹⁰

Table 2 Farmers Markets by the Numbers (April 2015 to September 2017)

Number of SNAP Transactions at Participating Farmers Markets	69,654
Amount of SNAP Benefits Spent at Participating Farmers Markets	\$956,816
Amount of SNAP Incentives Spent at Participating Farmers Markets	\$611,814
Average Amount of SNAP Benefits Spent per Transaction	\$13.70
Overall Economic Impact*	\$2,807,847

** Based on USDA's estimate \$1.79 generated for every SNAP dollar spent.*

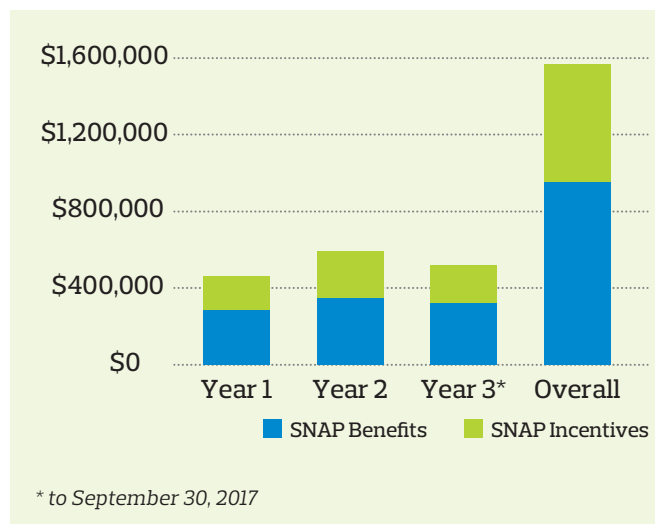
Lessons Learned and Looking Forward

Farmers Market SNAP incentive programs have not expanded to the current size without growing pains. From a state-level perspective, one of the key lessons learned was the need for streamlined data collection. Collecting SNAP transaction data through tablets and use of Device Magic has been critical for ensuring farmers markets are efficiently distributing SNAP incentives and evaluating the economic impact of SNAP incentives. LIAs have highlighted the importance of consistent communication with farmers markets in their region to (1) support accurate and timely data collection and invoicing, and (2) promote the SNAP incentive programs.

Table 3 SNAP Participants by the Numbers (April 2015 to September 2017)

Number of Unique SNAP Shoppers Using SNAP Benefits at Participating Farmers Markets	16,136
Estimated Number of Repeat SNAP Shoppers Using SNAP Benefits at Participating Farmers Markets	6,327

Figure 4 Amount of SNAP Benefits and Incentives Spent at Participating Farmers Markets



Over the next two farmers markets seasons, LIAs plan to recruit at least seven more farmers markets to operate SNAP incentives in areas of high SNAP usage. Statewide partners will continue to promote SNAP incentives at farmers markets through rack cards, posters, direct mailers, and social media. In 2018 and 2019, DOH and partners will engage farmers market SNAP customers to assess knowledge and attitudes towards SNAP match programs, and utilize information for program improvement. SNAP customer participation will be measured via an electronic SNAP customer survey and through facilitated focus groups.

10 Hanson, K. The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP, ERR-103. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, October 2010. Retrieved January 2018, from https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/44748/7996_err103_1_.pdf?v=41056.

Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions

Fruit and vegetable prescription (Rx) programs connect the medical system and the food system by creating a relationship between clinic staff, patients, and food retailers.



How it Works

Select healthcare providers, community health workers, and community nutritionists write “prescriptions” for their patients to eat more fruits and vegetables. The prescription is a paper voucher that patients can use like cash to buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores. With the support of FINI, Washington is testing three distinct fruit and vegetable Rx programs:

Fresh Bucks Rx, operated by City of Seattle’s Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), is an offshoot of the [Fresh Bucks](#) program. Launched in July 2016, Fresh Bucks Rx connects healthcare providers, patients, and participating farmers markets and grocery stores in King County. Healthcare providers and allied health professionals (doctors, nurses, social workers, and dietitians/nutritionists) offer Fresh Bucks Rx during visits with patients. The prescription is a \$20 or \$40 voucher (dependent on household size) that can be used like cash to buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and grocery stores in King County. Due to success in two pilot clinics, OSE added three more healthcare systems in June 2017.

Complete Eats Rx, operated by DOH and Albertsons Co. (doing business as Safeway), launched in July 2016 with nine health partners across the state. Participating healthcare providers, community health advocates, and community nutritionists offer Complete Eats Rx in a variety of settings, including one-on-one visits, chronic disease prevention and management classes, home visiting, and nutrition education programs. The prescription is a \$10 voucher that can be used like cash to buy fresh, canned, and frozen vegetables with no added fats, sugars, or salt at any Safeway store in Washington. As of September 2017, eight health partners continued to distribute Complete Eats Rx.

Fresh Bucks Rx Partners

- Harborview Medical Center
- Kaiser Permanente
- Neighborcare Health
- Public Health Seattle-King County
- Seattle Children’s Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic



Complete Eats Rx Partners

- Grant County Health District*
- Lewis County Public Health and Social Services*
- MultiCare Health System’s Center for Healthy Living*
- Olympic Peninsula YMCA*
- Seattle Children’s Odessa Brown Children’s Clinic
- Spokane Regional Health District*
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department*
- Virginia Mason Memorial Hospital
- Yakima Neighborhood Health Services*



* SNAP-Ed

Table 4 Fruit and Vegetable Rx by the Numbers (April 2015 to September 2017)

Rx Program	Rx Issued	Value of Rx Redeemed	Rx Redeemed
Fresh Bucks Rx*	2,792	\$63,078	86%
Complete Eats Rx*	11,897	\$70,680	59%
Small Steps Rx	64,990**	\$38,330†	N/A
Total		\$172,088	
Overall Economic Impact of Vouchers Redeemed‡		\$308,038	

* Program started in July 2016.
 ** Includes Rx issued to all eligible Small Steps participants (SNAP participants, Medicaid-eligible populations, and/or Dual Eligible Special Needs Medicaid/Medicare seniors).
 † Value of Rx redeemed by Small Steps Rx SNAP participants only.
 ‡ Based on USDA's estimate \$1.79 generated for every SNAP dollar spent.

Small Steps, operated by UnitedHealthcare Community Plan (UHCCP), began in 2013 and scaled up with FINI funds in 2015. In 2017, providers at 67 participating Federally Qualified Health Centers and WIC clinics offered a \$10 voucher during patient visits and classes. The voucher can be used at participating farmers markets on fresh fruits and vegetables. Small Steps Rx is available to SNAP participants, Medicaid-eligible populations, and Dual Eligible Special Needs Medicaid/Medicare seniors; FINI only reimburses UHCCP for vouchers redeemed by SNAP participants.

Along with screening for SNAP participation, several healthcare providers incorporate food insecurity and nutrition wraparound services (i.e., referrals to SNAP eligibility and enrollment providers, community food resources) into their client intake protocols. SNAP-Ed and other nutrition education providers are using the vouchers as a supplement to typical nutrition education activities. For example, Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) leads grocery store tours for SNAP-Ed participants, who receive \$10 Complete Eats Rx vouchers to use on the tour. In-store activities include making a market basket of \$10 or more of fruits and vegetables and searching for canned and frozen products with no added fats, sugars, or salt.

Evaluation

DOH leads the evaluation efforts for fruit and vegetable Rx programs, though healthcare partners are encouraged to conduct their own site-level evaluation, as able. The state-wide evaluation includes quarterly and annual data collection of distribution and redemption from participating healthcare partners, farmers markets and grocery stores. In September 2017, DOH launched a Rx patient survey, which gathers patient knowledge, attitudes,

and practices about the fruit and vegetable Rx and general fruit and vegetable purchases and consumption.

Impact

Uptake of fruit and vegetable Rx programs are promising for both local food retailers and food insecure patients. Since the start of FINI, 45 farmers markets and 103 grocery stores redeemed vouchers totaling \$172,088—an impact of \$308,038 to the local economy.

Low-income families report feeling better equipped to make healthy food choices:

“[Fruit and vegetable prescriptions] have been so useful to my daughter and [me]. It allows us to have healthy food that we wouldn't have been able to have otherwise.”



“It helps out financially. I get fruits and vegetables, whereas I normally might just walk by [produce section].”

While DOH is unable to track the number of unique patients served across all Rx programs, 419 unique patients redeemed Fresh Bucks Rx, and 2,274 unique Safeway Club Card holders redeemed Complete Eats Rx.



"As a family we cook more at home and eat a variety of fruits and vegetables in many different ways."

Lessons Learned and Looking Forward

With a variety of fruit and vegetable Rx programs operating, partners have gleaned many valuable lessons. Leveraging partnerships with local SNAP-Education agencies for the Rx program has been beneficial in several communities (see Complete Eats Rx Partners above). Healthcare providers report challenges with tracking the vouchers and making sure expiration dates are marked on each voucher. When patients redeem the vouchers, fewer challenges have been reported in participating farmers markets compared to grocery stores. Rx patients have reported inconsistent handling of vouchers in grocery stores. For example, Spanish-version vouchers were not accepted by some grocery stores at the beginning of the program. Providing extensive training and resources to grocery stores has been important in rectifying the issues Rx patients have reported. Safeway, DOH, and healthcare partners worked to conduct outreach and trainings to stores. For example, SRHD did extensive outreach to increase awareness of Complete Eats Rx

among grocery store managers and front-end staff. Additionally, Safeway's Point of Sale (POS) system did not recognize some qualifying fruit and vegetables as FINI-eligible items, so vouchers failed to scan at the end of the transaction. To avoid such transactions, Safeway updated the eligible items list in the POS system.

Over the next two years, DOH and partners plan to recruit at least five more health partners to implement fruit and vegetable Rx programs in areas of high SNAP usage. Evaluation efforts will continue and expand in 2018 and 2019. DOH and select healthcare partners plan to systematically track biometric indicators for Rx patients to assess health outcomes related to the vouchers and additional nutrition education/supports. DOH will also conduct interviews with health partners to inform process evaluation measures. Similar to the farmers market SNAP incentive evaluation, DOH and partners will engage Rx patients in facilitated focus groups.

Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons

Complete Eats is among the nation’s first SNAP nutrition incentive programs available in large-chain grocery stores. Nationally, more than 80 percent of all SNAP benefits are redeemed at supermarkets and super stores, such as Safeway.¹¹ Partnering with a major retailer in Washington makes SNAP nutrition incentives accessible to a large volume of customers.

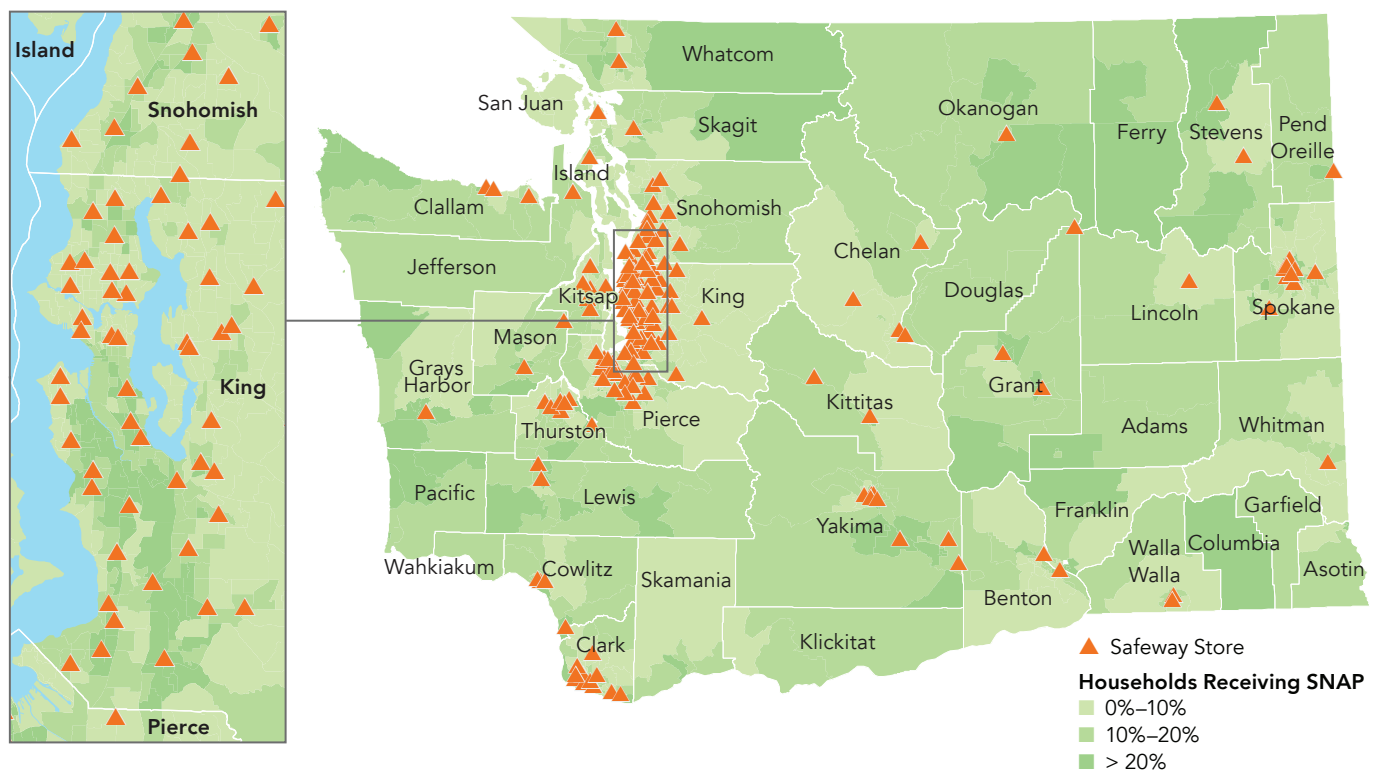


How it Works

In 2017, DOH and Safeway launched Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons at all 169 Safeway stores across Washington (see **Figure 5**). SNAP customers who spend at least \$10 of their SNAP food benefits to buy qualifying fruits and vegetables receive a coupon for \$5 off their next purchase of the same. SNAP customers can choose from a variety of fruits and vegetables—fresh,

canned, and frozen, so long as the products have no added fats, sugars, or salt. Coupons print out at the end of the transaction along with the grocery receipt, and they expire one month after they are issued. The program is expected to operate for two consecutive years (June 2017 to May 2019) or until funding for the coupons runs out.

Figure 5 Percentage of Households Receiving SNAP by Census Tract and Location of Safeway Stores



Sources: SNAP Data: American Community Survey, 2011–2015; Safeway Store Data: Albertsons Co. and Department of Health Healthy Eating Active Living Program, January 2018

11 U.S. Department of Agriculture (2016) SNAP Retailer Data. 2016 Year End Summary. Retrieved January 2018, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap-retailer-data>



A variety of community-based organizations that serve SNAP clients helped spread the word about Complete Eats and how it works. DOH relied on a large network of DSHS Community Services Offices, local health departments, WIC offices, SNAP-Ed programs, and community coalitions to promote the program via posters, flyers, electronic listservs, social media, and websites. A [Complete Eats webpage](#) and hotline are available to answer customer and service provider questions in a timely manner.

Evaluation

DOH leads evaluation efforts for Complete Eats, working closely with Safeway to obtain and measure weekly distribution and redemption numbers by store. The evaluation will analyze shoppers' market baskets and buying patterns to see how these vary by region and over time.

Impact

Complete Eats exemplifies how much government and private industry can achieve when they work together. In the first three months of programming the redemption rate for Complete Eats coupons was 10 percent, far above the typical redemption rate for grocery store coupons (3–8 percent).

Table 5 Complete Eats Coupons by the Numbers (June–September 2017)

Number of Grocery Stores Issuing Coupons	169
Number of Coupons Distributed ¹	141,476
Number of Coupons Redeemed ¹	14,084
Redemption Rate for Coupons ¹	10%
Overall Economic Impact of Coupons Redeemed*	\$126,052

* Based on USDA's estimate \$1.79 generated for every SNAP dollar spent.

¹ Estimates do not include information from 17 stores serving Southwestern Washington, as these stores began the program in September 2017.

Table 6 Top Ten Fruit and Vegetable Purchases*

Bananas	Strawberries
Apples	Red Grapes
Bell Peppers	Cherries
Avocados	Green Grapes
Cucumbers	Sweet Onions

*When shoppers redeemed the \$5 coupon

Table 7 Percent of Fruits and Vegetables Purchased by Fresh, Canned, Frozen Categories*

Fresh Produce	92.7%
Canned Vegetables	2.2%
Canned Fruits	1.7%
Frozen Vegetables	3.0%
Frozen Fruits	.4%

*When shoppers redeemed the \$5 coupon

Lessons Learned and Looking Forward

As with any new program, unforeseen challenges provide room for improvement. Key items DOH and Safeway are actively working to improve the program include: (1) Continually educating store staff about the Complete Eats program to ensure SNAP customers have a good in-store experience; (2) Regularly updating the eligible product list—as new, FINI-eligible products are introduced in the store, the POS system has to recognize them as a qualifying item; and (3) Ensuring coupons print for qualifying purchases—Safeway's POS system incorporates software updates/upgrades to make sure Complete Eats coupons print out for SNAP card holders after every qualifying purchase.

DOH and Safeway will continue to promote the program by using a large network of community-based organizations and statewide partners. Evaluation efforts will monitor redemption and purchasing patterns, and measure changes in retailer processes necessary to successfully implement the program.

List of Washington's FINI Grant Subawardees

Eleven organizations receive federal grant dollars and contribute the majority of in-kind match to implement FINI programming.

- Catholic Charities of Spokane
- City of Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment
- Kitsap Public Health District
- MultiCare Health System's Center for Healthy Living
- Safeway/Albertsons
- Skagit Valley Farmers Market Coalition
- Spokane Regional Health District
- UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
- University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition
- Virginia Mason Memorial Hospital
- Washington State University – Clark County Extension

FINI Statewide Advisory Network

In addition to the lead implementing partners, the Department of Health gathers together dozens of strategic partners to serve as an Advisory Network for the FINI grant. This cross-sector network includes representatives from state and local government agencies, healthcare systems, public health foundations, universities, and community-based organizations. Community representatives and individuals directly involved in program implementation are also key contributors to the Network.

Current Advisory Network Organizations

- American Heart Association
- Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition
- Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition
- Children's Alliance
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Empire Health Foundation
- Foundation for Healthy Generations
- Got Green
- Governor's Council on Health Disparities
- Governor Jay Inslee's Office
- Northwest Harvest
- OneAmerica
- Senator Patty Murray's Office
- State Board of Health
- University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition
- Washington State Alliance of YMCAs
- Washington State Farmers Market Association
- Washington State University - Extension
- WithinReach

Related Publications and Presentations

Auvinen A. Washington State's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant. Panel session presented at Seattle Children's Hunger Symposium; 2016 Dec. 3; Seattle, Washington.

Flores K and Igoe B. Synergies between Washington State's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Project & WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Oral presentation at the National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Annual Conference; 2016 Sept. 9; Juneau, AK.

Igoe B, McDermot D, Stahre M. Strengthening the Connection Between the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Farmer's Markets. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2016;13:160186. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd13.160186>.

Marcinkevage J, Nambuthiri S, Igoe B. Washington State's Large-scale FINI Project. Panel session presented at American Public Health Association Annual Conference; 2016 Oct. 29–Nov. 2; Denver, CO.

Nambuthiri, S, Marcinkevage J, Igoe B. Washington State Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Initiative: Year 1 Update. Poster session presented at CSTE Annual Conference; 2017 June 7; Boise, ID.

Wells J. Washington State's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant. Oral presentation at the Washington State Farmers Market Association Annual Conference; 2017 Feb. 2; Blaine, Washington.

Washington State Department of Health. FINI Overview factsheet, DOH 340-292 December 2017. Available online <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-292-FINIOverview.pdf>.

Washington State Department of Health. Farmers Market Match factsheet, DOH 340-307 August 2017. Available online <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-307-FINIFarmersMarketsOutcomes.pdf>.

Washington State Department of Health. Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program factsheet, DOH 340-293 December 2017. Available online <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-293-FINIFruitandVegetablePrescriptionProgram.pdf>.

Washington State Department of Health. Complete Eats Fruit and Vegetable Coupons factsheet, DOH 340-312 November 2017. Available online <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-312-CompleteEatsOverview.pdf>.

For more information, contact FINI@doh.wa.gov or visit www.doh.wa.gov/FINI.



DOH 140-176 February 2018

This project is supported in part by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2015-70018-23357.

For people with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711).