

# **Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (GusNIP NTAE):**



## **Summary of Impact Findings Year 1: September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020**



**Nutrition  
Incentive Hub**




CREATED BY GUSNIP NTAE CENTER

Developed by Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition,  
GusNIP NTAE Center Project Lead

The Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE) is supported by Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Grant Program grant no. 2019-70030-30415/project accession no. 1020863 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

## Increasing Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

At a time when healthy, affordable food is needed more urgently than ever, incentive programs, including nutrition incentive (NI) and produce prescription projects (PPR), are helping to support:

-  Low-income consumers' increased purchasing of fruits and vegetables (FVs)
-  Health and economic resilience of communities
-  Fiscal health of farmers and retailers across the United States

**Both NI and PPR projects increase the purchasing power of low-income families to buy more FVs.**



**Produce prescriptions** are offered by health care providers, who give participants a “prescription” that can be redeemed for produce, typically in the form of a voucher.

**Nutrition incentives** provide a “match” amount for families using SNAP to spend on additional purchases of FVs at participating grocery stores and farmers markets.



### About GusNIP

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), formerly known as the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program, is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

**GusNIP funded projects work in partnership with:**

-  **Farm-direct (FD):** farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, community supported agriculture (CSAs)
-  **Brick and mortar sites (B&M):** grocery stores, corner stores








### “Triple Win”

*These programs strengthen access to healthy foods and help families bring home more FVs while supporting American farmers, agricultural communities, and local economies.*



### About the NTAE and Nutrition Incentive Hub

The GusNIP Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation and Information Center (NTAE) was competitively awarded to the [Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#) (a nonprofit research center based in Omaha, NE) as a cooperative agreement with the USDA NIFA, as specified under the 2018 Farm Bill. The Gretchen Swanson Center in partnership with [Fair Food Network](#) assembled a dedicated coalition of partners, including the Farmers Market Coalition, National Grocers Association Foundation, Michigan Farmers Market Association, Ecology Center, Colorado School of Public Health, Ingredients Consulting, University of California San Francisco, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis, and University of Michigan, among others. This nationwide coalition of partners created and led by the GusNIP NTAE—referred to as the ‘[Nutrition Incentive Hub](#)’—rigorously supports incentive programs nationwide, with expertise in:

-  Program evaluation
-  Outcomes-based reporting
-  Grocery retail
-  Farm-direct retail
-  Point-of-sale technology
-  Local sourcing
-  Public health
-  Authentic community engagement
-  Nutrition education

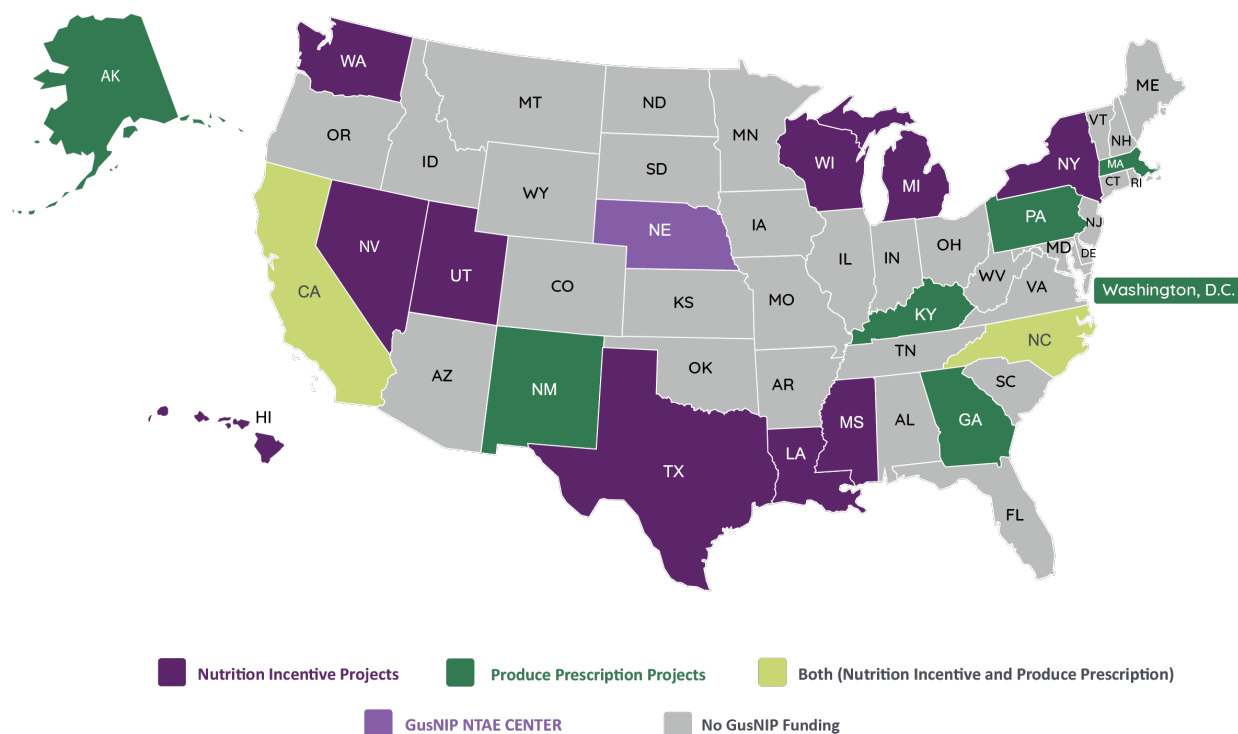
**The NTAE and Nutrition Incentive Hub work directly with GusNIP grantees to strengthen nutrition incentive and produce prescription projects by:**

(1) ensuring that all grantees and applicants have access to resources and networks to support program implementation and development, and (2) articulating program impact through robust and comprehensive reporting and evaluation.

**Glossary:** nutrition incentive (NI); produce prescription (PPR); fruits and vegetables (FVs); farm direct (FD); brick and mortar (B&M)

## GusNIP 2019 Grantees by Project Type

In 2019, the inaugural year of GusNIP funding, there were 22 projects across the U.S. (two on tribal land) funded, including 13 nutrition incentive projects and nine produce prescription projects.



### GusNIP Pilot Projects (3)

Projects in the early stages of nutrition incentive project development; award period of one year, up to \$100,000.

#### Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance

Systematic Capacity Building for Rural Farmers Markets: Incentivizing Customers, Vendors, and Leaders

\$51,750 | 2019-2020 | Louisiana

#### Glynwood Center, Inc.

CSA is a SNAP

\$48,524 | 2019-2020 | New York

#### Heritage Ranch Inc.

One Island, San Juan

\$100,000 | 2019-2020 | Washington

### GusNIP Projects (4)

Mid-sized groups developing nutrition incentive projects at the local or state level; award period of up to four years and up to \$500,000.

#### Hunger Task Force, Inc.

Hunger Task Force Fresh & Local Markets

\$276,305 | 2019-2023 | Wisconsin

#### MountainWise - Macon County Public Health

MountainWise: "A People Worth Preserving" The Double Up Food Bucks Program

\$377,252 | 2019-2023 | North Carolina

#### Sustainable Food Center, Inc.

Bolstering and Building Capacity for Double Up Across Texas

\$155,096 | 2019-2021 | Texas

#### Together We Can

Double Up Food Bucks Las Vegas Expansion

\$482,402 | 2019-2021 | Nevada

## GusNIP Large Scale Projects (6)

Groups developing multi-county, state-wide, and regional nutrition incentive projects with the largest target audience of all GusNIP projects; award period of up to four years and \$500,000 or more.

### **California Department of Food & Agriculture**

Farmers' Markets and Beyond: Expanding the California Nutrition Incentive Program  
\$7,166,877 | 2019-2023 | California

### **Fair Food Network**

The Next Generation of Double Up Food Bucks in Michigan: Growing to Reach Families in Every Corner of the State  
\$12,500,000 | 2019-2023 | Michigan

### **Jackson Medical Mall Foundation**

Innovating to Take SNAP Incentives to The Next Level in Mississippi  
\$841,000 | 2019-2022 | Mississippi

### **The Food Basket, Inc.**

DA BUX SNAP Incentive Project  
\$985,652 | 2019-2021 | Hawaii

### **University of California, San Diego**

Expansion of the Mas Fresco! More Fresh Nutrition Incentive Program  
\$3,415,200 | 2019-2023 | California

### **Utah Department of Health**

Utah Double Up Food Bucks Program  
\$1,999,942 | 2019-2023 | Utah

## Produce Prescription Projects (9)

Groups developing county, multi-county, and state-wide produce prescription projects, partnering with one or more healthcare entities; multi-year awards of approximately \$500,000.

### **Boston Medical Center Corporation**

BMC FreshConnect  
\$507,284 | 2019-2021 | Massachusetts

### **County of Alameda**

ALL IN Alameda County Food as Rx/Incentive Program  
\$507,258 | 2019-2022 | California

### **Community Farm Alliance**

Fresh Rx for MOMs  
\$496,620 | 2019-2022 | Kentucky

### **Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment Program, Inc.**

Navajo Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program  
\$507,309 | 2019-2022 | New Mexico

### **DC Greens**

Food as Medicine: Produce Prescription Program  
\$503,737 | 2019-2022 | Washington, D.C.

### **Forsyth Farmers Market**

Chatham County, GA Produce Prescription Program  
\$455,772 | 2019-2022 | Georgia

### **Reinvestment Partners**

RP Rx Produce Prescription Program: Better Food for Better Health  
\$507,340 | 2019-2022 | North Carolina

### **The Food Trust**

Expanding Food Bucks Rx with Multiple Healthcare Partners Across Pennsylvania and New Jersey  
\$507,340 | 2019-2021 | Pennsylvania

### **Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation**

Produce Prescription Program  
\$507,340 | 2019-2022 | Alaska







## NTAE COVID-19 Response

In the first year of GusNIP, the COVID-19 pandemic wrought havoc across communities, which were faced with a spike in emergency food needs and economic uncertainty. The uncertainty at the onset of the pandemic overwhelmed many grocery and farm-direct retailers with increased demand, while simultaneously impacting the livelihood of farmers and operations of farmers markets. In response to this economic and health crisis, the NTAE supported grantees in ensuring their incentive projects could help meet the surging needs in their communities. While GusNIP grantees and their partners raced to adapt to new operational challenges, the NTAE engaged Nutrition Incentive Hub partners in a coordinated fashion to award \$300,000 to 31 organizations to support COVID relief through the Capacity Building and Innovation Fund, and to quickly deploy resources, addressing topics ranging from initiating contactless payment and pick-up systems to understanding the process for retailers to offer SNAP online, complying with social distancing regulations, and pivoting promotional strategies. Although the NTAE was uniquely positioned to support GusNIP grantees and applicants with multi-sector connections, there was also an understanding that **data collection and reporting was limited due to the pandemic and social distancing requirements.**

## NTAE Support for Grantees

While rapidly generating and disseminating COVID-19 response support for grantees, the NTAE concurrently developed systems and processes needed for longer-term, broad-reach technical assistance, training, reporting, and evaluation, including:

- Core minimum datasets and associated training materials for all GusNIP grantees, including standardized firm- and participant-level metrics, to robustly and comprehensively articulate impact.
- A versatile interim technology solution to systematically collect core metrics from grantees and firms.
- Software platforms to facilitate direct one-on-one support and build community and knowledge-sharing between grantees.
- A Capacity Building & Innovation Fund awarding mini-grants to support initiatives that expand program reach and strengthen sustainability in high-need communities.
- A plan for a comprehensive public website and integrated web portal to provide a seamless, streamlined user experience with robust functionality for all stakeholders.





## Technical Assistance and Innovation

The Nutrition Incentive Hub helped grantees resolve issues and reduce barriers through one-on-one support, resource toolkits, webinars, and case studies on a number of relevant topics. In addition, the Nutrition Incentive Hub helped build a community to facilitate direct connections through Community of Practice meetings, collaborative communications, field research, a practitioner database, and an annual convening.



### 600 hours of TA

provided to 190 practitioners addressing primary topics including:

- EBT & incentive technology
- GusNIP applications
- Capacity Building and Innovation Fund
- State & local appropriations
- Strategic partnerships
- Outreach & engagement
- Contracts & MOUs
- Program implementation



**Awarded 45 Capacity Building & Innovation Fund mini-grants** totaling \$800,000



**Formed 6 Communities of Practice**, and facilitated 200+ practitioners connecting on 17 topic areas



**50+ GusNIP applications supported**



**RFA & stimulus information sharing with USDA NIFA** to call attention to implications, pain-points, and opportunities of key policy decisions

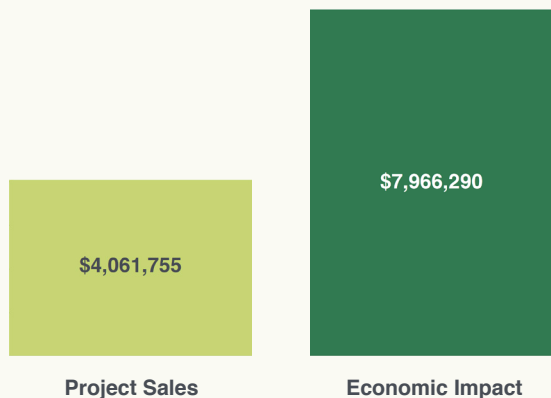


**COVID-19 Response**

# 2019 GusNIP Grantee Results

## Economic Impact of GusNIP Projects

The total local economic impact of 2019 GusNIP projects is estimated to amount to \$7,966,290; this value represents the maximum amount of money that was generated for communities surrounding the participating 588 firms that reported data.



## Types of Firms that Participated

Of the 773 firms (e.g., sites) that participated, the majority were FD sites, followed by B&M and Health Care organizations

533 (69.0%)

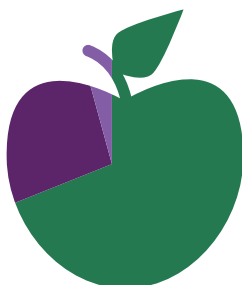
Farm Direct sites

207 (26.8%)

Brick & Mortar sites

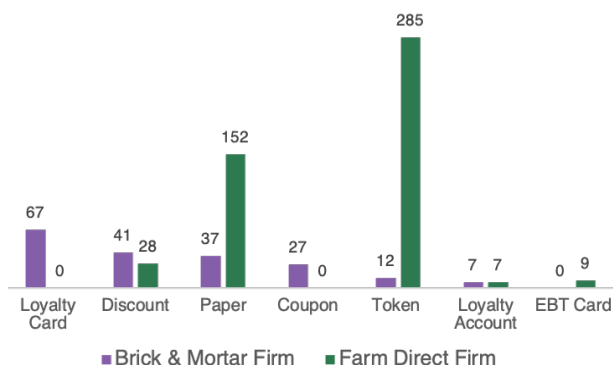
33 (4.2%)

Health Care organizations



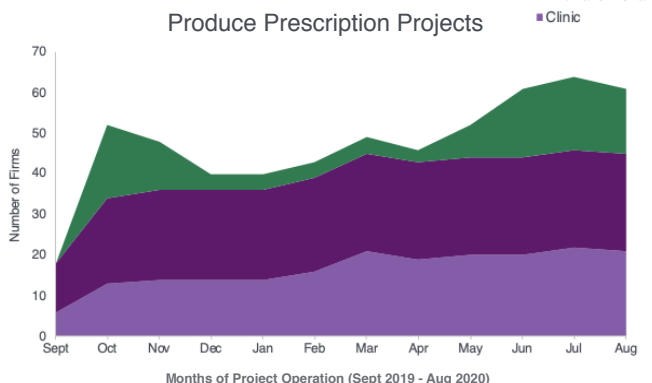
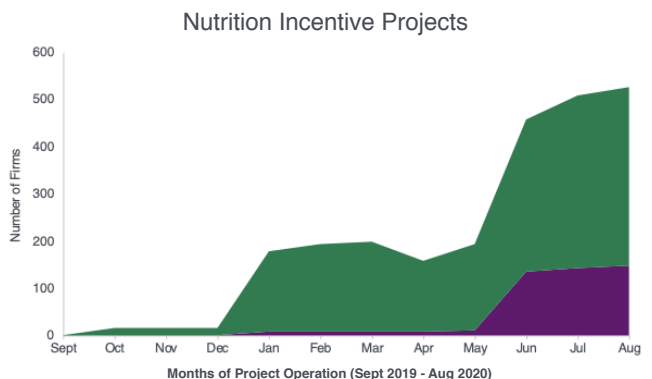
## Common Financial Instruments

There were variations in the type of financial instrument used by FD and B&M firms. Among FD firms, the most common financial instrument was tokens followed by paper vouchers. Among B&M firms, the most common financial instruments were loyalty cards, automatic discounts at the register, paper vouchers, and coupons.



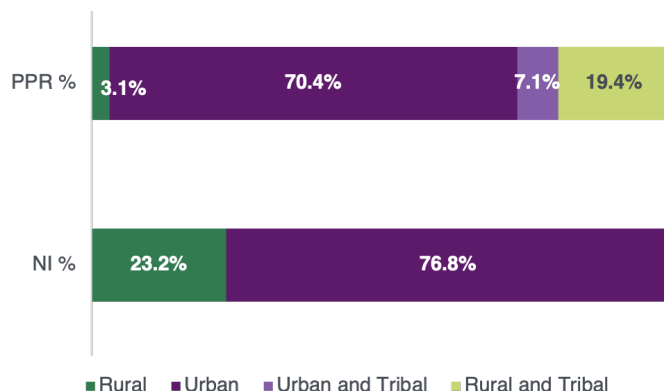
## Total Number of Firms Participating by Month of Project Operation

Among NI and PPR projects, the number of FD firms grew throughout the program year, with some fluctuations, in part attributed to pandemic-related shutdowns. For FD sites, the dramatic increase in late spring may have been partially attributed to the warming weather and nationwide efforts to support food distribution to address rising food insecurity during the pandemic. B&M firms were less likely to have shut down, and experienced large growth in the spring and summer of 2020 when many grantees began operating their grocery programs. For PPR, clinic sites also decreased in number at the onset of the pandemic when shutdowns were occurring.








## Population Served by Project Type

The majority of firms for PPR and NI projects served urban populations, with fewer firms serving rural and tribal populations.





**Nutrition education activities were conducted in 29.2% of firms overall (N=98). The most commonly deployed nutrition education included:**

-  Other (recipes, garden tours) (62.2%)
-  Taste test and cooking demonstrations (39.8%)
-  SNAP-Ed programs (31.6%)
-  One-on-one consultations (14.3%)
-  Grocery store tours (14.3%)

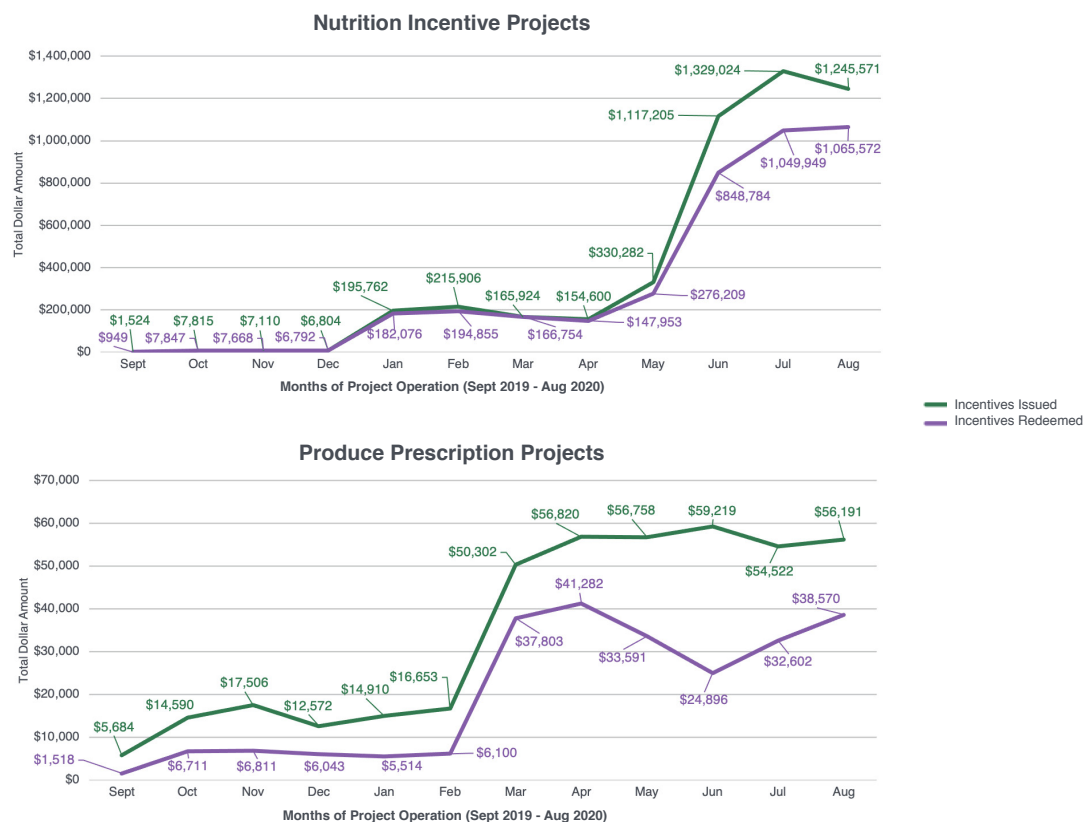
### GusNIP Spending

 **68.5%** of GusNIP funds were used for direct incentives (\$2,076,211)

### Incentive Issuance and Redemption

Across all NI and PPR projects, \$5,061,863 total incentives were issued, and \$4,061,755 total incentives were redeemed, yielding an 89.6% mean redemption rate across all firms. Among NI projects, incentive issuance and redemption were both lowest in September 2019 and highest in June-August of 2020. We expected issuance and redemption to be highest at this time as many grantees began operating their projects in late spring/early summer, and late summer is peak farmers market season in many regions.

#### Total Monthly Incentive Issuance and Redemption





## Participant-level Data Collection Efforts

Participant-level surveys are part of the core minimum dataset in order to assess the impact of NI and PPR projects. Year 1 was intentionally formative in nature, including efforts to define metrics and prepare grantees to systematically report on variables in the core minimum dataset. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges that limited grantees' ability to collect this data in year 1. The participant survey assesses impact in terms of FV intake, food security status, health status, program utilization, participation in other food assistance programs, and demographics, among other key outcomes of interest. At the time of this report, a majority of grantees are now in the process of collecting survey data from program participants, through a variety of methods including in-person, online, and via telephone. We anticipate being able to report participant-level results beginning in Y2 and in all future years of the GusNIP funding cycle.

## What's Next

The NTAE and Nutrition Incentive Hub are eager to continue working together with GusNIP grantees to increase capacity, efficiency, and demonstrate the collective impact. Over the next three years, the NTAE will continue to help strengthen the field of incentive providers, including sharing robust evaluation findings and helping more programs successfully and efficiently implement GusNIP projects.

Together with USDA NIFA, grocery retailers, and farmers markets, the NTAE will continue to **help low-income families increase their FV intake, thereby reducing food insecurity, and the burden of chronic disease.** Further, the economic contribution to local economies and American farmers has potential to strengthen communities well into the future.



[View the full, technical report.](#)

