



Findings from an Evaluation of the California Nutrition Incentive Program at Farmers' Markets

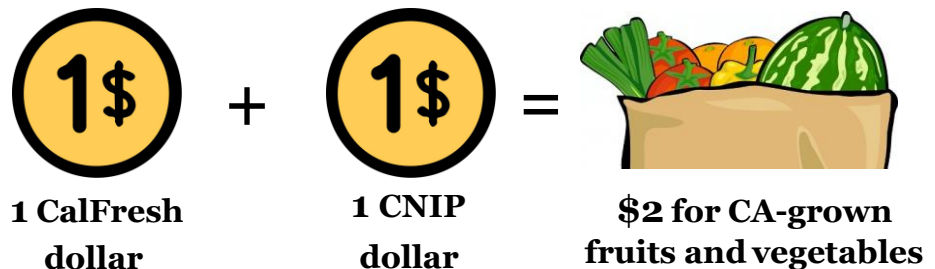
Key Findings

- Farmers' market shoppers who used more of the match tended to have greater food security.
- Most shoppers requested the maximum incentive available.
- Most shoppers reported that CNIP was “very important” to their decision to shop at farmers' markets.
- Farmers' market shoppers who used CNIP were significantly more likely to report buying CA-grown to be important.



- Shoppers at markets offering higher incentives were more likely to report purchasing more than half their produce at farmers' markets.
- Farmers' market shoppers consumed more fruits and vegetables compared to supermarket shoppers, though no differences were found between CNIP and non-CNIP shoppers.

The California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) provides CalFresh shoppers a dollar-for-dollar match when purchasing CA-grown produce at participating markets.



This brief describes the program operating in farmers' markets in California in 2018. Participating markets offered maximum incentives of \$5-\$20 per transaction. CNIP incentives are projected to increase CalFresh spending on fresh produce by over \$6.6 million.

"It's the best program... I mean, I love this program!" - CNIP participant

We conducted a study to assess the impacts of the CNIP program.

During the summer of 2018, Nutrition Policy Institute researchers interviewed 386 CalFresh shoppers from ten farmers' markets and nine nearby supermarkets (not offering match benefits) in California.

We asked about shoppers' fruit and vegetable consumption, food security, and experiences related to the CalFresh match incentive program.

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Participants appreciate the ability to buy more and higher quality food. Respondents reported being able to buy more fresh fruits and vegetables with the match which helped feed their families.

"We can get more food for less money because they match the food stamps... you buy... fresher food, vegetables and fruits... [we] get more for our money."

Families enjoy greater variety of fruits and vegetables. Respondents appreciated the opportunity to try new fruits and vegetables that they otherwise would not have been able to afford.

"I'm eating better because I can afford to get fresh food, fresh vegetables and fruit that I wouldn't get otherwise... It gives me a chance to taste and to eat foods that I might not otherwise be exposed to... and foods that I wouldn't feel like I could afford... I just think it's fabulous."

Families eat healthier. Participants appreciated that the program allowed them to shift their diets toward more nutritious foods.

"[The program] has helped us... eat a lot more fruits and vegetables instead of junk food."

Customers like supporting local farmers. Respondents valued the opportunity to spend their CalFresh dollars supporting local growers, farmers' markets and local economies.

"I enjoy having [CNIP] because it gives me an opportunity to come to a local environment and help the community... help local farmers."

Shoppers overwhelmingly reported a desire to see CNIP continue and expand.

CNIP shoppers indicated high satisfaction and strong support for this program.

"I would say absolutely expand it because farmers' markets are extremely important for both the consumers and the people selling the food. Because it helps... put money back into the local farmers, and people really need to start eating differently... it's definitely something that needs to be expanded."

Additional Findings

- Fewer than **one in five** supermarket shoppers **were aware of CNIP.**
- After learning about the program, **nearly all** said they **would be likely to use CNIP**



Conclusion

The California Nutrition Incentive Program provides an opportunity to increase CalFresh shoppers' access to fresh California-grown produce.

California Nutrition Incentive Program shoppers:

- Reported **lower** levels of **food insecurity**
- Consumed a **greater variety** of **fruits and vegetables**
- Expressed consistent, **overwhelmingly positive appreciation** for the program

CalFresh shoppers would like to see **additional investments** in program **outreach and expansion.**