



# DESIGNING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY:

Case Studies from the 2023 Participant  
Engagement Learning Cohort



CREATED BY GUSNIP NTAE CENTER



1.99 LB  
2.29 LB

Nutrition  
Made  
Easy



FREE GIFT CARD ON ENTRY

# INTRODUCTION

The following case studies, organized by their primary community engagement objective, highlight equitable community engagement strategies and practices implemented by GusNIP grantees in 2023 as part of the Nutrition Incentive Hub's Participant Engagement Learning Cohort. The case studies highlight practices implemented by grantees offering nutrition incentive (NI) and produce prescription (PPR) programs and offer practical examples of turning equitable engagement strategies into action.

**Photo on Title Page**

Screenshots from nutrition education videos created for shoppers by Double Up Food Bucks Mississippi

**Photo on Opposite Page**

Participant Katey C using the interactive kiosk at the Piggly Wiggly in Luka, Mississippi.

**Photo Credit:**

Double Up Mississippi

# DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

## Community Food and Agriculture Coalition

 **Project Location:**  
Montana (Statewide)

 **Type of Project:**  
NI and PPR

The [Community Food and Agriculture Coalition](#)'s (CFAC) mission is to grow a healthy local food community by preserving farmland, teaching new farmers, and making food accessible for all. CFAC has been operating the Double SNAP Dollars program since 2015, which is currently serving over 1,600 participants in 20 counties throughout Montana, offering incentives at 34 sites including seasonal farmers markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture (CSAs), and one independent rural grocery retailer and six large-scale grocery retailers located in five rural communities. More recently, CFAC launched a PPR project, which is run collaboratively with several partner organizations and serves 200 participants in 15 Montana counties (as of 2023).

### Photo on Opposite Page

Fifth graders get hands-on during a 4-part cooking series in their school

**Photo Credit:**  
CFAC Montana



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## Opportunity:

To reach new groups of participants in the program while engaging community partners and members in any design of these changes to ensure they met community need. To accomplish this, they worked with local community organizations in Missoula, MT who have expertise in connecting directly with community members. They sought to learn the following:

- 1.If community members attending free community nutrition-education activities (such as cooking classes) also participate in NI programs,
- 2.If these participants face any particular barriers that inhibit them from accessing and/or using nutrition incentives, and
- 3.What the best locations and times are to host mobile markets.

## Project Snapshot:

CFAC co-planned and co-facilitated nutrition education pop-up events hosted and led by various partner organizations across Missoula, MT including All Nations Health Center (an Indigenous-led and focused health center in urban Missoula), SNAP-Ed nutrition educators at a shelter for women and children, and SNAP-Ed nutrition educators in a kitchen space dedicated to community nutrition education, among others. Future events and collaborations are planned with local elementary schools. Written surveys were distributed at the end of each event containing questions related to the nutrition incentives use. Folks who filled out the surveys were entered into a contest to win an Instapot.

## Project Impact and Learnings:

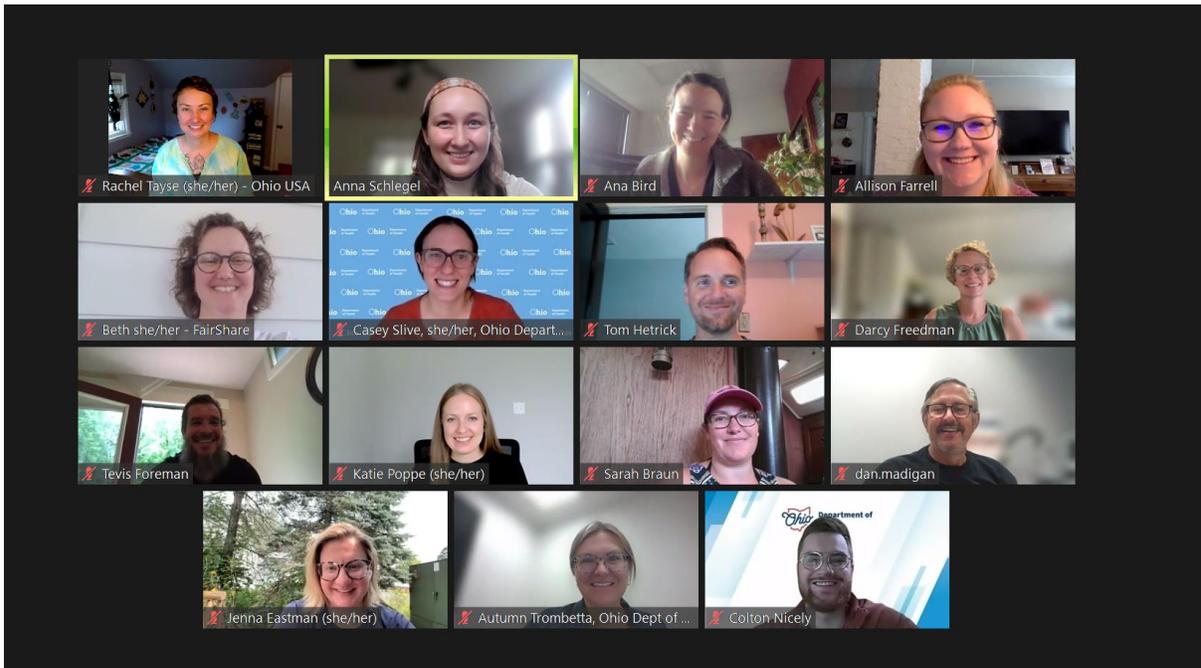
The collaborative nutrition events helped CFAC find answers to their specific questions and helped the organization to profoundly deepen its roots in the community and build trust with both partners and community members, which has led to new programming and partnerships.

For example, the principal of one partner elementary school shared that many of the young children are cooking for their even younger siblings. This learning has influenced the type of nutrition education that the educators will provide, emphasizing recipe hacks using shelf stable items already in the home (such as adding protein and vegetables to ramen packets).

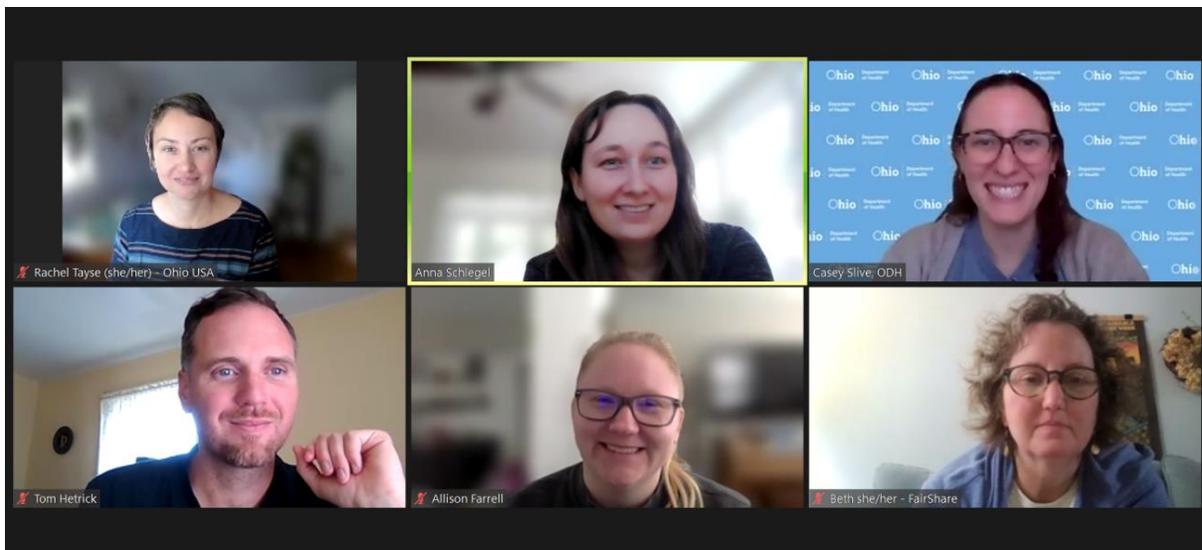
CFAC also learned that transportation is one of the highest barriers to incentive participation, which has helped CFAC prioritize the creation of a mobile market.

## Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:

Invest in meaningful collaborations with community partners, creating space and time for evolving the work, together, and remaining open to any feedback received through the activities. “This project has brought us closer to organizations in Missoula that are invested in the health and well-being of the Missoula community...The in-person support has been remarkably helpful in furthering and expanding all of CFAC’s food access programs...We are hoping to continue doing nutrition demo events with them beyond the scope of this grant” (CFAC employee).



Zoom screenshot from an OHNIN meeting to introduce and kick off work with consultant Rachel Tayse



Zoom screenshot from OHNIN subcommittee meeting (this committee convenes to plan and review PELC project work)

**Photos Above [Top to bottom]**

- 1) Zoom screenshot from an OHNIN meeting to introduce and kick off work with consultant Rachel Tayse” Participants took time to review the PELC project plan, current network operating procedures, and brainstorm the “rose/buds/thorns” of the current state of community engagement within the network operating procedures.
- 2) Zoom screenshot from OHNIN subcommittee meeting (this committee convenes to plan and review PELC project work)” Subcommittee members pictured at this meeting are developing network operating procedures to present for adoption at the monthly OHNIN meeting.

**Photo Credit:**

Produce Perks Midwest

# PRODUCE PERKS MIDWEST

 **Project Location:**  
Ohio (Statewide)

 **Type of Project:**  
NI and PPR

[Produce Perks Midwest](#) (PPM), an Ohio nonprofit with a mission to improve the health of underserved communities by increasing affordable access to healthy foods, serves as Ohio's lead agency administering NI programming statewide. Founded in 2017, PPM works in partnership with the [Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network](#) (OHNIN) to advance the work and impacts of NI programming within Ohio. OHNIN is a multi-sector coalition working toward a shared vision of affordable access to healthy, local foods and a healthy, equitable Ohio food system; OHNIN represents diverse stakeholders and geographical regions of Ohio, working under collective vision and shared values. As of 2022, PPM and members of OHNIN, operated an incentive project at 94 farm direct and 37 brick and mortar sites in both urban and rural communities across Ohio.

 **Opportunity:**

To sustainably incorporate community voice into OHNIN programming decisions in a way that honors community members as the experts of their own lives/situations.

 **Project Snapshot:**

PPM and OHNIN hired a consultant to explore the intentional and sustainable incorporation of community engagement within OHNIN network operating procedures.

**Phase 1:** Established a strong foundation with current OHNIN members by calling on them to form a subcommittee, who worked with the consultant to revise the network operating procedures and reported out to the larger network who voted to accept the proposed changes.

**Phase 2:** Establish an advisory group composed of end users of the program (e.g., farmers, market vendors, consumers utilizing NI programs) as well as other key stakeholders (e.g., market managers, community-based partners), who will serve as partners in future program decision-making and design.

## Project Impact and Learnings:

Over several months, OHNIN members engaged in fruitful discussions led by the consultant and the project's subcommittee, ultimately revising the network operating procedures to directly support community engagement in the future. Revisions included the establishment of a community engagement advisory group, which is participant-guided, in regular communication with the wider network, and supported by current network members.

The new OHNIN operating procedures also include a process wherein established network members serve as champions and mentors for community engagement advisory group participants, with the ultimate goal of onboarding them to become full OHNIN network members. Finally, revisions to the network operating procedures included clear guidelines about how to join/leave the network and also established a simplified set of guidelines (free of jargon) that could be shared with the wider community. The community engagement advisory group will begin to meet in early 2024.

Thus far, revising the guidelines with OHNIN members has been incredibly valuable. In the words of program coordinator Anna Shlegel, "They have changed our network structure and the ways we are dedicated to receiving and acting on community feedback." OHNIN engagement has been slowing recently, and this project has provided a push for members to come back to the table and evaluate participation. For example, network members have had a renewed interest in working groups and ongoing projects, such as planning for digital incentives in 2024. Since the NI program operates on a hub and spoke model, having an engaged network across the state is important to program operation.

## Project Impact and Learnings:

The OHNIN phase one meetings also resulted in the creation of a facilitation guide, which will serve as an umbrella of guidelines and flexible structures for facilitators of the community engagement advisory group meetings. It is intended to help empower community members to explore topics that interest them and feel welcomed to produce solutions for their own needs and wants that make sense from the end user perspective. The facilitation guide helps facilitators to avoid industry jargon, an important issue that came up repeatedly in the process.

Furthermore, the process revealed that the majority of PPM's community engagement efforts were focused on farmers markets. While farmers markets account for most of PPM's participating locations, they have a growing portfolio of grocery-retailers. With on-going expansion into the grocery-retail setting, it will be essential to include grocery stakeholders (e.g., owners, retailers, customers, cashiers) within community engagement efforts.

## Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:

Consider what organizational policies may limit your ability to engage meaningfully with community members and partners—and make a plan for updating those policies. “We appreciate that the connections we have made in this project have opened channels to further network with other practitioners and work collaboratively to reach end users” (PPM staff member).



## Strategies for Deepening Relationships with Community Partner Organizations:

- » Consider what organizational policies may limit your ability to engage meaningfully with community members and partners—and make a plan for updating those policies. “We appreciate that the connections we have made in this project have opened channels to further network with other practitioners and work collaboratively to reach end users” (PPM staff member).

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY-INFORMED PROGRAM DESIGN

## Share Our Strength



### Project Location:

This program operates in six parishes in Louisiana: Washington, Tangipahoa, St. Helena, St. Landry, Acadia, and Lafayette.



### Type of Project:

PPR

Share Our Strength launched the [Healthy Families Produce Rx](#) program in 2022. The pilot program, funded by GusNIP and other private sources, was developed in partnership with Aetna Better Health of Louisiana (a Medicaid provider) and Vouchers4Veggies (a national model for PPR programs). Families receive either paper vouchers, which can be redeemed at local farmers markets and small grocers, or debit cards, which are accepted at big box stores like Walmart and Albertsons. The mission of the program is to improve dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, while reducing individual and household food insecurity and increasing engagement in preventative care.

#### Photos Above [Top to bottom]

“Journey Map” created to identify and synthesize barriers and insights based on focus group feedback.

#### Photo Credit:

Share Our Strength



## Project Scope:

Originally, the program was designed to work through the Aetna managed care organization partner and their provider network to identify eligible families and enroll them in the program at well child or other clinic visits. The program now has more expansive enrollment locations, including community events and partners, and has grown to serve over 1,550 participants.

## Opportunity:

To better understand Healthy Families Produce Rx program participant experience and identify specific barriers to full program utilization.

## Project Snapshot:

Share Our Strength conducted a survey of current and former Healthy Families Produce Rx participants, followed by a series of focused discussions with small groups via Zoom. For these focus groups, they invited participants who experienced barriers to program participation as well as those who did not. Focus group activities included a “journey map” activity that involved identifying program pain points and brainstorming possible program improvements. All participants were compensated for their time, which resulted in high participation numbers and impactful feedback.

## Project Impact and Learnings:

These in-depth conversations led to several discoveries and subsequent programmatic pivots. According to program coordinator Katrina Scott, “It was surprising to hear that some participants were hesitant to apply because they thought it might be a scam or was ‘too good to be true.’ These were participants who received flyers with QR code/link to enroll but did not receive them from their children’s medical providers. Working [more frequently] with Community Health Workers who work in spaces that eligible participants frequent has helped [build trust with participants and encourage them to enroll].”

Another key insight was related to the initial uncertainty by participants about how to use the Healthy Savings card, despite reporting that the welcome packet was comprehensive and easy to understand. Insights gained from the focus groups were used to inform Share Our Strength’s newest partnership with the organization About Fresh, which offers a debit card that can be used at farmers markets and grocery stores and provides participants direct access to card-related customer service during the onboarding process.

Insights gleaned from this research will also be used to advise Aetna Better Health of LA to develop a PPR program specifically for their Medicaid members.



## Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:

Let go of the assumptions you may have about participant perspectives if they aren't backed up by data. Connect directly with participants to understand their desires, needs, and hesitations. Then build your programs from there.

# FORSYTH FARMERS MARKET

 **Project Location:**  
Chatham County,  
Georgia

 **Type of Project:**  
PPR

[Forsyth Farmers Market](#) (FFM) was founded in 2009 in Savannah, GA with a mission to promote understanding and participation in a local food system that supports sustainable production and increases access to local products. They achieve this by supporting local growers, producers, and consumers, especially those with low access to fresh, affordable food.

**Photo on Next Page**

A monthly outreach event, conducted primarily in Spanish, at the Good Samaritan Clinic.

**Photo Credit:**

Forsyth Farmers Market



## Project Scope:

In addition to running a weekly farmers market, FFM operates a mobile farmers market 7 days a week (Farm Truck 912), offers a low-cost farm share program, and provides a variety of community education services including nutrition education, SNAP enrollment, nutrition incentives through the Georgia Fresh for Less program, and youth education. They offer produce prescriptions at the Forsyth Farmers Market, Farm Truck 912, and the [912 Food Farmacy](#). The PPR project specifically was founded in 2020 and approximately 150 participants were enrolled as of 2022.

## Opportunity:

To expand FFM's engagement with the Spanish-speaking community as they opened up a new 912 Food Farmacy location and to inform their program's offerings.

## Project Snapshot:

FFM aimed to enroll more Latine people in their program by adding a new 912 Food Farmacy clinic site location in partnership with the Good Samaritan Clinic in Garden City, GA, a heavily Spanish-speaking community. In order to promote this new site, they launched a monthly event series, which included a cooking demonstration, voucher distribution, and an opportunity to shop at the Farm Truck. This monthly event was primarily conducted in Spanish, and community members were engaged in one-on-one conversations and community forum discussions as part of the events.

 **Project Impact and Learnings:**

The findings resulted in FFM enhancing the role of their Bilingual Community Outreach Specialist to include the accurate translation of social media posts and printed material. The translator on staff is Mexican, and while Mexican Spanish is most common among the population, care is taken to use the correct and appropriate choice of language for context. The event also resulted in FFM becoming a stakeholder within several relevant community networking groups (Public Library System and several Hispanic Outreach Coalition Groups). FFM also identified WhatsApp as being the best method of communication for this population and plans to utilize it at the beginning of the 2024 season.

 **Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:**

When conducting outreach to a specific demographic group, engage with a diverse set of community members within that demographic. Avoid assuming that any group is a monolith. “Overall, it was a surprise to learn that although we went through great lengths to create community awareness, culture plays a huge part in how information is disseminated and understood among certain marginalized communities” (Asia Harold, FFM staff member).



## WHOLESOME WAVE GEORGIA

 Project Location:  
Georgia (statewide)

 Type of Project:  
NI and PPR

Founded in 2009, [Wholesome Wave Georgia](#) (WWG) is on a mission to make fresh, healthy, locally grown produce affordable and available to all Georgians. They accomplish this through three statewide programs including Fresh for Less, a NI program, Food for Health, a PPR program, and SNAP Connection, which links residents to SNAP and other benefits.

**Photo Above**

Stakeholder Advisory Group members meet in person at the Wholesome Wave Georgia office.

**Photo Credit:**

Wholesome Wave Georgia

 **Project Scope:** WWG includes 80 partner sites all over the state of Georgia, including farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, mobile markets, and brick and mortar retailers.

 **Opportunity:** To more deeply engage with the [Fresh for Less](#) program operators (farmers markets, mobile markets, farm stands, and brick and mortar grocery stores). As a statewide organization, WWG is one step removed from the day-to-day transactions of the program, so the goal of this project was to better understand and, in turn, to improve the program experience of operators and end users.

 **Project Snapshot:** During the summer of 2023, WWG launched a Stakeholder Advisory Group made up of Fresh for Less partners. Over the course of several months, this group met monthly.

## Project Impact and Learnings:

WWG initially assumed that the Stakeholder Advisory Group would only meet quarterly, but the group was so excited about its work together that it chose to meet monthly instead. Monthly meetings are held via Zoom, but quarterly meetings are held in person (with a virtual option, as needed). As a result of these meetings, the Stakeholder Advisory Group has started multiple initiatives, including the creation of a new, customizable flier for partners, which makes it easy for them to add in relevant information about their specific location, while maintaining message consistency about the program at large. The Stakeholder Advisory Group will also begin piloting a new survey method collection strategy and have developed a plan to begin more actively supporting farmers. In the upcoming Network Gathering, for example, WWG is hosting a panel made up exclusively of farmers, so they can speak about their experiences to an audience made up of primarily market managers. This is one step WWG is taking to more actively center farmers in the work that they do.

## Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:

Speak directly with community members to learn how they want to engage with your organization, and then hold that time and space. “Having the [Stakeholder Advisory Group] has changed the way that we make decisions because we now have a designated group to bounce ideas off of and engage with when making decisions” (Moira O’Neill, WWG staff member).



## Creating Opportunities for Community-Informed Program Design:

- » Ask your own team, “Whose voices are missing from this conversation?” when designing advisory boards and focus groups.
- » Consider a “snowball” approach by asking community members, “Who else should we be connecting with?”
- » Consider that even within a single demographic, there may be a variety of ways that people prefer to receive communication
- » Investigate your individual and team assumptions to understand what is actually relevant and based on evidence
- » Check your own biases; they can influence operating assumptions
- » Create a learning plan for what you need to learn more about (otherwise, you may end up designing based on unfounded assumptions)
- » Make sure it’s easy for participants to receive and use any compensation (e.g., avoid offering it as taxable income)
- » Recognize that there are different forms of compensation and ask people what they want in exchange for their engagement; some people or organizations may prefer something else (e.g., opportunities for ongoing involvement in the work)
- » Ensure participants know what they are consenting to by communicating clearly (e.g., being direct, communicating in relevant languages)

# MAKING ACCESSIBILITY A PRIORITY

## Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (Double Up Food Bucks Mississippi)

-  **Project Location:**  
25 Counties throughout the State of Mississippi
-  **Type of Project:**  
NI

[Double Up Food Bucks Mississippi](#) is a project of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, which was initially established with a mission to foster a holistic approach to health care for the underserved and to promote economic and community development in the Jackson Medical Mall area. The Jackson Medical Mall is an actual shopping mall transformed into a thriving medical and retail facility.

### Photo on Next Page

Yolanda Green, Double Up Food Bucks MS Outreach Coordinator, being filmed by Lapis Film Co. at Piggly Wiggly in Iuka, Mississippi

**Photo Credit:**  
Double Up MS



fruit

\$7.99

\$4.99

\$3.29



FILM  
4K 60FPS  
120FPS

## Project Scope:

Since 2020, Double Up Mississippi has offered nutrition incentives at brick and mortar retail and farm direct locations throughout the state. As of 2022, the program had reached approximately 172,000 SNAP households and was active in 31 unique locations statewide from family-owned farm stands to supermarket chain stores.

## Opportunity:

To increase retail shopper engagement in Double Up Food Bucks Mississippi specifically, and nutrition education more generally, through self-directed, informative videos offered at select participating grocery stores.

## Project Snapshot:

Double Up Mississippi, in partnership with the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, filmed concise, informative videos about nutrition education and incentive programs. These videos, uploaded to iPads, are featured on interactive kiosks in two grocery stores. Both the kiosks and the content are accessible to those with visual impairment (the videos can be played aloud), physical challenges (the iPad stands are adjustable and ADA compliant) as well as those with social anxiety who would prefer autonomous learning experiences. Individuals who watch all videos can enter to win a gift card. Designed for both SNAP shoppers and the broader community, the technology system allows Double Up Mississippi to update videos at any time.

 **Project Impact and Learnings:**

Thus far, the interactive kiosk has been used by SNAP and non-SNAP shoppers alike. Most shoppers watch the entire series of videos, motivated by the prize they can win if they do. And while it is too soon to see the impact of the videos on Double Up activity in the two stores where the kiosks are present, the Double Up team has already learned valuable lessons about how best to harness the power of technology when conducting engagement activities. For example, some parts of the store did not have proper Wi-Fi, and the iPad has been much more difficult to update remotely than expected. These two interconnected issues offer good learnings for future set ups and questions to ask in advance. The team also added physical signage to the areas where the kiosks are present, raising awareness even among non-tech users about a technological engagement opportunity. Overall, this project holds a great deal of promise and has held significant unanticipated technology challenges. As the team becomes more and more skilled with the setup of the iPad, it is anticipated that usage will increase. This frontloading of effort should yield long term results.

 **Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:**

Broaden inclusion by considering multiple facets of accessibility when designing programs and services. “The process of planning for accessible technologies changed our relationship with shoppers in that it shifted our thinking on how to make learning engaging and self-directed!” (Double Up Mississippi employee).

# HARVEST HOME FARMER'S MARKET

-  **Project Location:**  
Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan boroughs of New York City
-  **Type of Project:**  
NI

[Harvest Home Farmers Markets](#) (HHFM) is a pioneer in bringing farmers markets to low-income New Yorkers and underserved neighborhoods. Founded in 1993, HHFM is one the largest managers of farmers markets in New York City, operating 14 locations and serving more than 250,000 shoppers a year.

## Project Scope:

Launched in 2022, the project serves older adults who receive less than \$281 a month in SNAP benefits. These food insecure seniors receive incentives to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at HHFM farm-direct markets.

## Opportunity:

To understand the barriers to participation in their [Healthy Seniors Healthy Shoppers](#) (H2S2) NI program, identify ways to improve communications messaging, and improve experience with and engagement from both senior participants and program partners.

## Project Snapshot:

HHFM conducted two community events designed to reach the elderly population in three New York City boroughs—the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan—where they operate 14 farmers markets at which seniors can utilize the H2S2 NI program coupons. During these events, staff led cooking demonstration sessions that served a total of 80 seniors. They also hosted 18 presentations across the city from April through August 2023, where they shared information and materials about the H2S2 program. As part of these activities, they were able to educate and receive direct feedback (via simple, 5-question surveys) from participants about their experiences with H2S2.

## CORN SUMMER SALAD

Serves 10

### Ingredients

4 ears of corn  
2 tomatoes, diced  
1 yellow onion, cut into thin strips  
1/2 bunch cilantro, minced  
2 limes, juiced  
1/3 cup rice vinegar or apple  
cider vinegar  
1/4 teaspoon salt



### Preparation:

1. In a bowl, combine corn, tomatoes, onion, and cilantro.
2. Pour lime juice over vegetables and mix in.
3. Stir in vinegar to taste and season with salt.
4. Cover and let chill for 45 minutes (optional). Stir before serving.

**Nutritional Benefit:** Corn, which is a summer favorite, is loaded with vitamin A, B and E and minerals. The high level of antioxidants and fiber content in this recipe helps reduce inflammation and promotes a healthy digestive system.

Source: Adapted from Teen Cuisine Cookbook, page 11

## ENSALADA DE MAÍZ DE VERANO

10 Porciones

### Ingredientes

4 mazorcas de maíz  
2 tomates, cortados en cubitos  
1 cebolla amarilla, cortada en  
tiras finas  
1/2 manojo de cilantro picado  
2 limas, en jugo  
1/3 vinagre de sidra de manzana  
1/4 cucharadita de sal



### Preparación:

1. En un tazón, combine el maíz, los tomates, la cebolla y el cilantro.
2. Ponga el jugo de lima sobre las verduras y mezcle.
3. Agregue vinagre al gusto y sazone con sal.
4. Cubra y deje enfriar durante 45 minutos (opcional). Revolver antes de servir.

**Beneficio Nutritivo:** Maíz, el favorito del verano, está repleto de vitaminas A, B y E y minerales. El alto nivel de antioxidantes y contenido de fibra en esta receta ayuda a reducir la inflamación y promueve un sistema digestivo saludable.

Source: Adapted from Teen Cuisine Cookbook, page 11

### Photos on This Page

Recipe cards featuring seasonal produce provided in English and Spanish to event participants.

### Photo Credit:

Harvest Home Farmer's Market

 **Project Impact and Learnings:**

During these events, in addition to receiving survey feedback, HHFM staff were able to have informal, in-depth conversations with program participants. It was a reminder that community voice is key when designing programs. HHFM staff have continued to create spaces for these kinds of conversations since then. For example, the staff have been meeting with local healthcare providers that serve the senior population and will hold events this winter and spring in the healthcare facilities where seniors gather. These events will be a combination of tabling/ outreach events and cooking demonstrations, and they speak to the need to meet populations where they are gathering already, an insight that was reinforced during the events last summer.

 **Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:**

Consider meeting communities where they are gathering already in order to most thoughtfully connect and glean feedback. Many populations, such as seniors, require unique care when considering their mobility, weather, and accessibility.



# NOURISH COLORADO

 **Project Location:**  
Colorado (statewide)

 **Type of Project:**  
NI

[Nourish Colorado](#) works to reshape the food system, pursuing systemic change by engaging in state and federal policy advocacy, managing innovative programs, and developing community partnerships and grassroots networks to employ multiple-win strategies that rebalance the food system and create healthy food environments. Founded in 2009 through a public and private partnership, Nourish Colorado has grown significantly over the years and launched its NI program (Double Up Food Bucks) in 2016.

**Photos on Opposite Page [clockwise]**

Double Up Food Bucks Manager, Lonni Byrd, and Outreach Manager, Caitlin Stuart, pose for a quick photo after speaking with community members, Kevin and Shelia, about their accessibility surveys at a partner market, Rebel Market place, in Aurora, CO. Outreach Manager, Caitlin Stuart, proctors two accessibility surveys with anonymous community members at a partner market, the Colorado Farm and Art Market, in Colorado Springs.

**Photo Credit:**  
Nourish Colorado

## Project Scope:

As of 2022, the project operated at 90 sites (farm direct, farmers market, CSA, and retail) throughout the state and has an adjacent program focused on CSA distribution.

## Opportunity:

To build trust with community members with (self-identified) disabilities who are also eligible for Double Up Food Bucks, while identifying and creating strategies for addressing barriers to program accessibility for this population.

## Project Snapshot:

Nourish Colorado surveyed Double Up Food Bucks participants at community outreach events and within the community. They then followed up on these surveys to learn about program experience directly from community members with disabilities. Respondents were compensated for their expertise in their own lived experiences. The next phase of the project will include hosting feedback sessions on the topic of accessibility with the potential to develop an accessibility toolkit for farmers markets.

## Project Impact and Learnings:

Among the biggest learnings was how important it is to reduce jargon when creating surveys. Many people are not familiar with terms such as “food system” and do not refer to their benefits as “SNAP” but rather the previous term, “food stamps.” The initial surveys created needed to be simplified and proctored directly by staff so that participants would be able to more easily provide answers. The initial surveys had been run through an accessibility editor, with several experts weighing in on the language, but they still needed to be modified and proctored.

Another result of this project is that Nourish Colorado plans to create some accessibility guidelines—specifically for farmers markets. Moving forward, they will prioritize partnerships with markets that can commit to addressing some of these barriers (what they are able to, given their own capacities—i.e. they don’t expect every rural market to have a wheelchair ramp!). This is simply to make these markets more accessible. An example of this would be at the information booths, having accessible keypads for the Blind, instead of using an iPad where a person risks exposing their pin by having someone else enter it for them.

## Equity-Driven Community Engagement Practice:

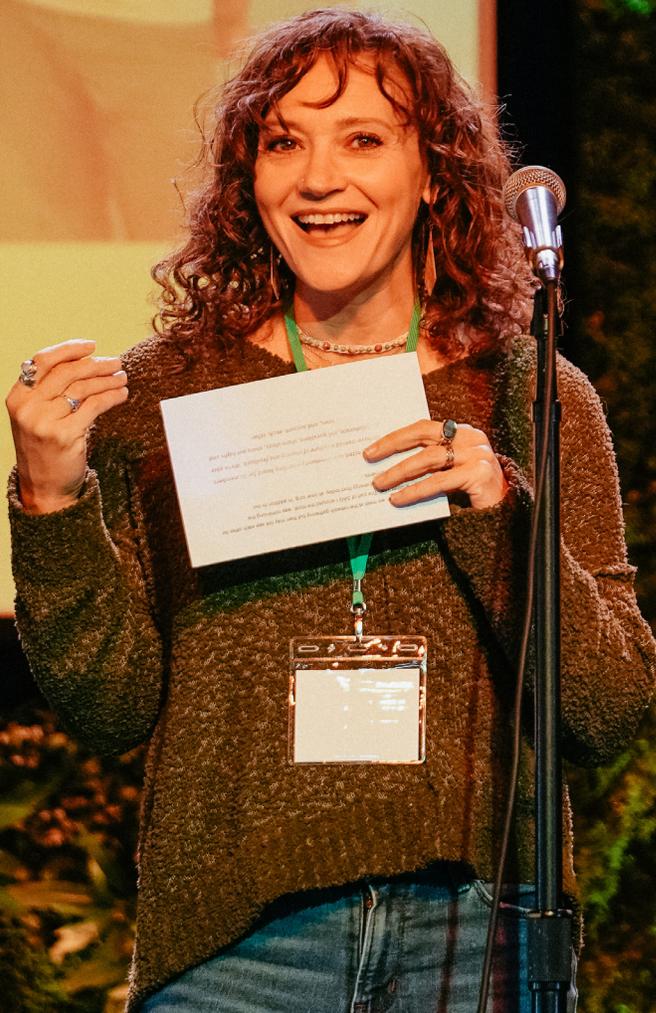
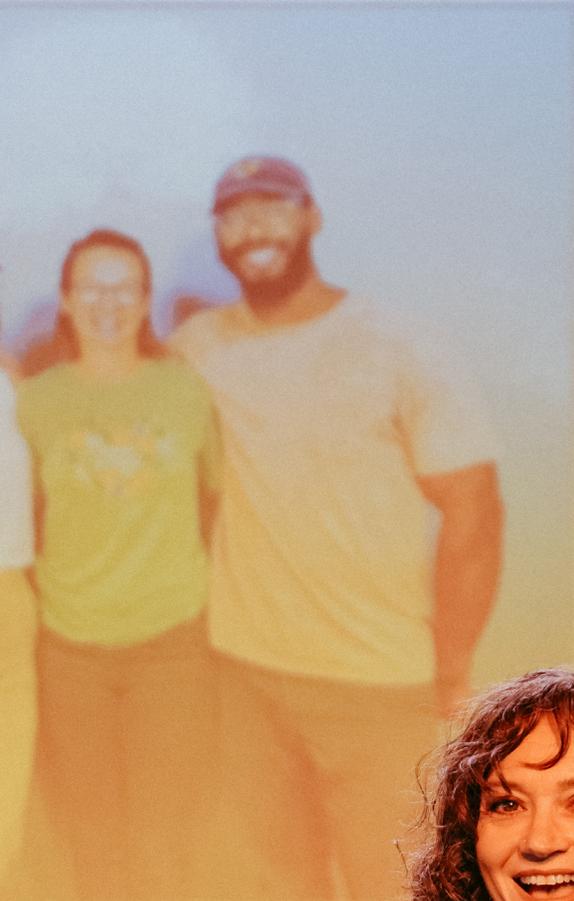
Use clear and simple language in communications, avoiding jargon and asking for feedback from a small group before circulating widely.



## Strategies for making accessibility a priority when designing programs and services:

- » Collaborate with community members with disabilities in your program development process to co-create inclusive program experiences
- » Develop and use an accessibility audit to use with your programs moving forward
- » Follow the most up-to-date Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to make program-relevant web content more accessible

(SAG)



# CLOSING

## About Featured Organizations and Programs

These case studies are based on work completed by participating organizations from the Nutrition Incentive Hub's inaugural Participant Engagement Learning Cohort (PELC). These organizations, based throughout the United States, joined together virtually from Winter 2022 through Summer 2023 to deepen their knowledge of and skills in equitable community engagement, with support from the Nutrition Incentive Hub and Lucy Flores of Studio Magic Hour.

During the learning cohort sessions, participants were introduced to equity-centered design and given opportunities to work within their own teams as well as with one another, to identify promising strategies for participant engagement utilized thus far in their work, while also identifying the opportunities available to them for deeper engagement. Each organization carried out a learning phase, in which members directly interacted with participants to learn more about their needs and then worked one-on-one with Lucy Flores to shape and design equity-centered community engagement projects in the short term that would lay the groundwork for expansion and future opportunities.

**Photo on Opposite Page**

Melinda King (Rockmart Farmers Market manager and Stakeholder Advisory Committee Member) and WWG staff member Moira O'Neill presenting at the Fresh for Less annual Network Gathering about the Stakeholder Advisory Group's accomplishments.

**Photo Credit:**

Wholesome Wave Georgia

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Liz Alpern is a consultant for Fair Food Network and the Nutrition Incentive Hub. She has implemented nutrition incentive projects in three states and is also a chef, cookbook author, and food entrepreneur.



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The Nutrition Incentive Hub is a coalition of partners, created by the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (GusNIP NTAE Center), that supports NI and PPR projects.

The GusNIP NTAE Center is led by Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN). In partnership with Fair Food Network, GSCN assembled the Nutrition Incentive Hub, a coalition of practitioners, grocery and farmers market experts, researchers, and evaluators from across the country. Together, they are dedicated to supporting program applicants and grantees and strengthening and uniting the best thinking in the field to increase access to and affordability of fruits and vegetables and improve health outcomes for participating households.

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Studio Magic Hour is a design studio dedicated to co-creating a more equitable and joyful food system. They partner with organizations tackling strategic, programmatic, and other design challenges and help them identify impactful solutions that advance equity in their work and communities. They do that by crafting and facilitating equity-driven, human-centered design processes that ensure stakeholders most impacted by a design challenge are key collaborators throughout the journey. Learn more at [www.studiomagichour.com](http://www.studiomagichour.com).

# DESIGNING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY:

Case Studies from the 2023 Participant  
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