



## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 8, 2016

**For more information contact:**

Victoria Cherrie, public relations manager  
[victoria@cultivatekc.org](mailto:victoria@cultivatekc.org) or 816-810-4143

### **Cultivate Kansas City to share in \$5.8 million grant giving low-income families access to healthier food**

**Program to reach 68 farmers markets; 117 grocery stores in Missouri and Kansas by 2019**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Cultivate Kansas City is among a coalition of community partners awarded a \$2.9 million grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program. Those funds are being matched by private foundations and local governments, for a combined \$5.8 million.

Through the FINI grant, low-income individuals and families who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can double their purchasing power for fresh fruits and vegetables purchased at participating farmers markets and grocery stores

At farmers markets, SNAP tokens can be purchased with state-issued electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to receive a matching amount of tokens for free to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.

SNAP customers at participating groceries use store loyalty cards and vouchers along with EBT cards. For every EBT dollar spent on locally grown produce (up to \$25 per day) the customer receives another dollar in rewards that can be used for any produce purchased at the same store. At some grocers, the incentive is loaded onto their loyalty card, and for participating grocers that don't use a loyalty card, Double Up Food Bucks vouchers will provide the matching incentive.

"This is really exciting for so many families like mine who believe eating fresh food is the foundation for good health," said John Carr, a farmers market shopper and participant of Double Up Food Bucks Kansas City.

More than 40 farmers markets across the region currently participate in Double Up Food Bucks with 21 of them located in the KC metro area. Cultivate Kansas City is also partnering with Whole Foods Market to offer the program at its Metcalf Avenue store beginning in July and expanding to all four of its stores in Johnson County and Kansas City, Mo. over the course of the three-year grant cycle.

“Cultivate Kansas City believes that all people have the right to consume locally-produced food, regardless of income level,” said executive director Katherine Kelly. “The Double Up program is a win-win for low-income families and for local farmers. Working with Whole Foods increases opportunities for local farmers to scale up production and diversify their revenue streams while continuing Cultivate Kansas City’s overarching focus on increasing access to locally-produced food for all Kansas Citizens.”

Through its partnership with Menorah Heritage Foundation, Cultivate Kansas City helped develop the Beans&Greens SNAP match program in 2010 to increase local food access for low-income customers. Cultivate KC took over the programming in 2015 and this year strategically renamed the program to Double Up Food Bucks Kansas City to streamline nutrition incentive programs across the region in collaboration with the Double Up Heartland Coalition.

Over the next three years, the Double Up Heartland Coalition — led by the Mid-America Regional Council; Cultivate Kansas City; Douglas County, Kansas; the East-West Gateway Council of Governments in St. Louis; Fair Food Network based in Detroit; and University of Kansas Medical Center — will expand current food incentive initiatives to reach 68 farmers markets and 117 grocery stores in 34 counties in Kansas and Missouri with Double Up Food Bucks.

The Fair Food Network created the Double Up Food Bucks program in 2009 to give low-income families access to healthy food and support local farmers. The program began at five farmers markets in Detroit, spread to more than 150 sites across Michigan, and has since become a model for communities nationwide. In 2015, Fair Food Network received special approval from USDA to pilot Double Up at Ball’s Price Chopper, making it one of the first grocers in the country to offer healthy food incentives to SNAP clients.

### **About Cultivate Kansas City**

At Cultivate Kansas City, we grow food, farms and communities with the goal of developing sustainable, healthy, and local food systems in the Kansas City region. We value food-producing green spaces that are an integral part of beautiful, healthy, and economically vibrant neighborhoods. We believe every resident in our region should have access to the knowledge and resources for growing and eating healthy food no matter their socioeconomic status. And we advocate for programs, funding and policies in support of our beliefs.