

HEALTHY FARM & FOOD FUND

Kentucky-Grown for Kentucky Homes

THE ISSUE

The gap between the plate and the field is too great, leaving Kentucky families hungry and Kentucky farmers frustrated. We could do **so much more** to close this gap if we had more funding. Thankfully, there's a way we can get there.

Pre-pandemic data reflects national food insecurity rates as the lowest they have been in more than 20 years, but the current crisis has reversed any improvements, with millions of people newly experiencing food insecurity.

THE SOLUTION

In 2000, the Kentucky legislature had the foresight to devote **Tobacco Master Settlement (TMS)** funds to support agriculture and improve public health. Whereas other states have set aside General Funds to bolster healthy food access, the TMS gives Kentucky a **unique opportunity to provide food and farm security**.

Each year around **\$121M is divided between agriculture and public health**. Even though healthy food access impacts both sectors, currently only the agriculture portion of the fund is supporting programs like Kentucky Double Dollars and Farms to Food Banks. This creates instability and jeopardizes sustainable funding for Kentucky's direct farm impact healthy food access programs.

We know that charity alone is not enough to close the hunger gap.

The good news is that the US Department of Agriculture has millions of dollars available for healthy food access – but the USDA requires an equal match. A Healthy Farm & Food Fund would **set aside 1.5% of the total pool of Tobacco Master Settlement funds to leverage these additional federal dollars**. This would significantly increase the amount of funding available to support successful programs which ensure that low-income Kentuckians—especially those utilizing SNAP—have access to affordable, healthy, locally-grown food.

Introducing and passing this Healthy Farm & Food Fund legislation will build upon Kentucky's current momentum, **creating stability and opportunities for direct farm impact food access** programs—such as Kentucky Double Dollars, Farms to Food Banks, and Fresh RX for MOMs—and pave the way for additional new efforts that **support the vitality of Kentucky agriculture and the health of Kentuckians**.

THE FACTS

- Despite Kentucky being a top agricultural state, a staggering number of Kentuckians are food insecure.ⁱⁱ 1 in 7 Kentuckians and 1 in 6 children struggles with hunger.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 14% of Kentucky's population or 622,782 Kentuckians are participating in SNAP.^{iv}

"AS A PRODUCER, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND TO NEW CUSTOMERS, AND PUT OUR PRODUCT ON AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD FOR KENTUCKY DOUBLE DOLLARS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS. MORE FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO FRESH, NOURISHING, AND LOCAL FOOD THROUGH COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PROGRAM."

Nathan Howell

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i. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research>

ii. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/196114/top-10-us-states-by-number-of-farms/>

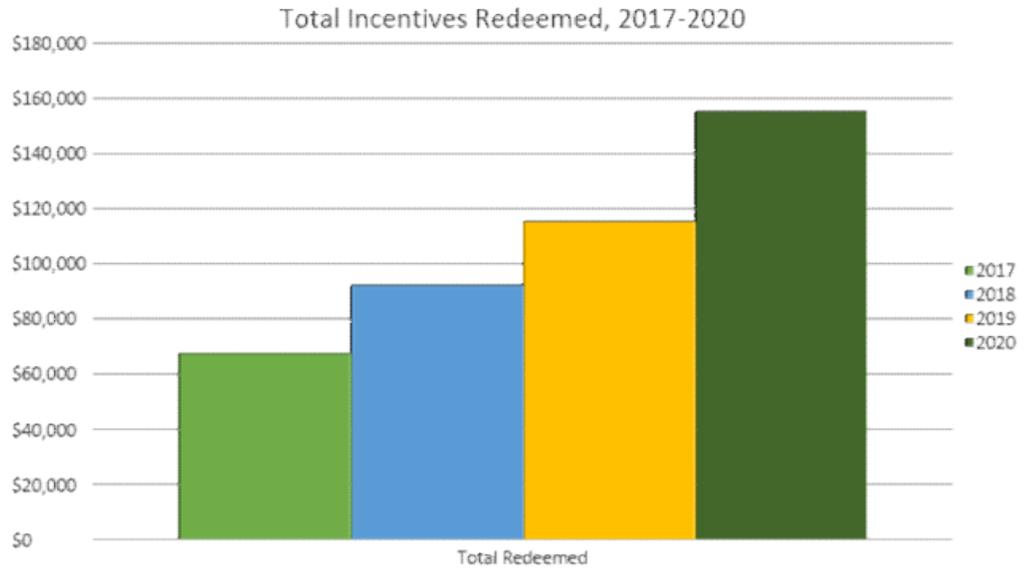
iii. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/Kentucky/>

iv. <https://kypolicy.org/tracking-snap-in-Kentucky/>

THE IMPACT

From the creation of the Farms to Food Banks Program in 2011 to the Kentucky Double Dollars Program and others, Kentucky NGOs, state agencies, and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) have worked together to address low-income Kentuckians' lack of access to healthy food. Through these incentive programs, low-income families gain more access to locally grown produce which has increased sales for Kentucky farmers. Stabilizing support for these solutions through the Healthy Farm & Food Fund is good for Kentucky farmers, families, communities, and the economy.

- **Farmers:** These programs help farmers grow their businesses through increased sales from new and repeating customers who otherwise would not be able to afford locally-grown food. Increasing capacity for matched federal dollars increases profits for farmers.
- **Families:** By increasing the accessibility of healthy locally-grown foods, the Healthy Farm & Food Fund will decrease household food insecurity and simultaneously improve the dietary health outcomes of Kentucky's children and their families.
- **Communities:** With more Kentuckians gaining access to locally-raised fresh produce, meat, eggs, and dairy, the Healthy Farm & Food Fund builds healthier communities across the Commonwealth.
- **Economy:** This fund will bring more federal dollars flowing into the state, which will raise the percentage of families' grocery budgets spent on Kentucky-grown foods, increasing the amount of money in Kentucky farmers' pockets and keeping more dollars local. Economists estimate that every \$1 a household redeems through SNAP generates about \$1.70 in economic activity.



This graph depicts the amount of money redeemed through local food incentive programs from 2017—2020 at Kentucky farmers markets, community markets, and retail stores.



THE FACTS

- 61% of Kentucky's public school children participate the free or reduced priced meals at school and 22% of Kentucky's children live below the poverty threshold.^{iv}
- Too many parents have to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel; in fact 35% of food bank clients report having to face this tough decision.^v

iv. <https://kyyouth.org/kentucky-kids-count/data/>
v. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/kentucky>



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For more information, visit www.cfaky.org/healthy-farm-food/
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