



***Scope of Work and Request for Proposals
Updated March 5th 2024***

<i>Project: New Mexico Double Up Food Bucks Communications and Behavior Change Research</i>	
Start/ end-date	May 1, 2024 through October 31, 2024
How to apply	Interested applicants are invited to submit: 1) Proposal narrative of no more than 4 pages that summarizes the proposed approach, key qualifications of the research team, and 2 references for past work 2) Proposed budget including all planned costs for carrying out the research
Deadline to apply	March 31, 2024
Proposals and any questions to be sent to	nmfmaquestions@gmail.com
Who should apply	Individuals, consulting groups, universities, or other entities with local food systems, health and nutrition, and/or communications and behavior change-research experience
Project budget	\$25,000

I. Background

Double Up Food Bucks (Double Up) is a statewide healthy food incentive program managed by the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association (NMFMA). The program doubles the value of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits spent at retail outlets across New Mexico, including farmers' markets, farm stands, grocery stores, and other retailers. Double Up therefore helps SNAP recipients stretch their food budgets while supporting local producers, as Double Up incentives can only be used to buy New Mexico-grown food products.

This type of program is especially important in New Mexico as 25% of New Mexicans participate in SNAP – the highest percentage in the nation – and New Mexico has one of the lowest fruit and vegetable consumption rates. Moreover, the majority of the state's farms are less than 10 acres, and average net farm incomes are significantly lower than the US average. The Double Up program is responsive to these needs as it seeks to address food insecurity and health disparities while simultaneously supporting New Mexican farmers and local economies.



Double Up in New Mexico started as a small program in 2010 with the initial growth of SNAP-EBT technology at farmers' markets. In 2015 Double Up expanded to more than 30 participating farmers' markets and impacted an estimated 18,290 people through redemption of more than \$350,000 of SNAP and Double Up dollars spent on local produce. Since 2016 the program has grown significantly through expansion of state, federal, and private foundation funding; as of 2022, around 90 outlets participated, an estimated 131,444 people were impacted, and nearly \$2.5 million SNAP and Double Up dollars were redeemed. The program is expected to experience modest growth in the coming years.

Since its inception, Double Up has benefited from rigorous data collection and reporting requirements, periodic qualitative research, and quantitative data analysis. For example, farmer and customer transaction data and sales information are recorded for each participating outlet, and the NMFMA administers annual vendor and consumer surveys through outlet managers. A statistical analysis of vendor and consumer survey data from 2016-2021 by a research team at New Mexico State University is currently in progress. The NMFMA also partners with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition's "Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation and Information Center" (NTAE) to administer annual surveys to Double Up clients in New Mexico as part of a national evaluation effort. The NTAE surveys aim to measure changes in food security and health status as well as fruit and vegetable intake.

A series of qualitative studies has also been completed: in 2010, a Community-Based Participatory Research project explored barriers that low-income residents experience when accessing local food. The study revealed that while cost differences between farmers' markets and other food outlets were a barrier to accessing fresh, locally-grown produce, other factors such as habit and convenience were equally or even more significant. In 2015, a study was conducted to look at barriers to fresh food access and to understand the impacts of Double Up on participant consumption of fruits and vegetables, with a focus on Bernalillo County. Findings indicated that while participants valued and appreciated the program, they highlighted constraints related to: food budget, food choice, family preferences, and challenges associated with shopping at farmers' markets. Finally, in 2017, the NMFMA conducted an ethnographic research study to gain a deeper understanding of SNAP shopper behavior. This study showed that: incentives had a big influence on the type of food purchased; there is strong alignment between the types of produce purchased by low-income shoppers at grocery stores and what is offered by New Mexico farmers at local food outlets; and repetitive and personalized intervention works to increase produce purchases among SNAP shoppers using incentives.

With the expansion and maturation of the program, it is an opportune time to initiate another round of Double Up research. This Scope of Work outlines expectations for the proposed research, which will focus on the NMFMA's efforts related to communications and behavior change. The research will be used by the NMFMA and its partners to improve the program and its ability to appropriately, equitably, and inclusively meet participant needs.



II. Research Scope

a. Summary

The overall aims of the research are to better understand the effectiveness of Double Up program communication messaging and marketing campaigns and to identify ways in which these efforts can better serve Double Up participant needs in the future. These communication messaging and marketing campaigns are focused on the following types of information:

- General outreach for awareness of the program;
- How SNAP clients can participate in the program;
- Increasing fruit & vegetable purchasing, preparation, and consumption;
- Supporting local farmers and local economies.

The overall desired outcomes of the information that is provided through the communication messaging and marketing campaigns include:

- Increasing the number of Double Up participants;
- Increased fruit and vegetable purchasing and consumption by Double Up participants while participating in the program;
- Longer-term behavior change from those participating in the program in terms of:
 - o Fruit and vegetable purchases and consumption;
 - o Shopping at food outlets that offer local foods.

The research will therefore look at the tools that the NMFMA uses in its communication messaging and marketing campaigns:

Tool	Types of Information Tool is Used for	Target Audiences
GoodFoodNM text messaging program, delivered to subscribers via text messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment/Choice messages • Family Support messages • Control/Practical Steps messages • Nutrition information • Recipe links • Seasonal food info • Tips for shopping, cooking/prep, food storage/preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English and Spanish-speaking • SNAP participants • WIC participants • Families with children • FreshRx patients • Farmers' market customers
Local Food Guide (<i>Note: this was a new publication in 2023</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food outlet directory for Double Up partners (farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs, etc.) • Program information and awareness (outlet location, hours, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General NM population via farmers' markets, libraries, etc. • Food bank and food pantry customers • Income Support Division offices • Senior centers • Partner NGOs



Radio ads <i>(Note: most geographic areas have remained consistent over the years, but some areas lost a station or rates were too high, etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program awareness • Reasons to believe (save money, eat more produce) • Where to shop 	Select geographic broadcast areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Espanola (Spanish language) • Farmington/Aztec • Gallup (Navajo language) • Albuquerque • Las Cruces • Santa Fe
Bus ads <i>(Note: King Kong ads ran from 2016- 2022 (approx). Stopped in 2023)</i>	Program awareness	Albuquerque
Regional brochures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food outlet directory for Double Up partners (farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs, etc.) • Program awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General NM population via farmers' markets, libraries, etc. • Food bank and food pantry customers • Income Support Division offices • Cooperative Extension offices
Promotional 1-pager (with FAQ + cartoons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program awareness • Tips for shopping, cooking/prep, food storage/preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit organizations • Groups that support low-income populations • Educate partners about local food, seasonality, Double Up, and set expectations about how to maximize usage of the program
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program awareness • Where to shop • Reasons to believe (save money, eat more produce) 	General NM population
Facebook posts and ads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program awareness • Education about program availability, seasonality, and maximizing benefit • Reasons to believe (save money, eat more produce) 	General NM population
Market Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program awareness • Where to shop • Reasons to believe (save money, eat more produce) 	Farmers' Market Shoppers



The research is expected to look at the effectiveness of the tools, their cultural/ contextual appropriateness, and the degree to which the tools ensure dignity and inclusivity for program participants.

The research will be led and managed by a contractor – this can be an individual, university, consulting group, or other qualified entity.

b. Key Questions/ Areas of Inquiry

The research will focus on the following key questions:

- How effective, appropriate, and inclusive are current Double Up communication messaging and marketing campaign tools in achieving desired program behavior change outcomes?
- In what ways can the NMFMA improve Double Up communication messaging and market campaigns in the future?

Areas of inquiry to address these questions should include:

- What are the key outstanding barriers to behavior change adoption – specifically related to participation in Double Up and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption?
- What specific social, cultural, environmental, policy and other drivers influence adoption of promoted behaviors?
- To what extent are the communications messaging and marketing campaign tools effective in facilitating adoption of the program's desired behaviors and practices?
- Are the current tools:
 - o Targeting the right audience(s)?
 - o Reaching the intended audience(s)?
 - o Segmenting sub-groups effectively?
 - o Using the most effective delivery methods and messengers?
 - o Culturally and contextually appropriate?
 - o Ensuring dignity and inclusivity for program participants?
- How could the current tools be more effective?
- What audience "segments" or sub-groups of Double Up participants should be considered with communications messaging and marketing tools in the future?
- Are there any additional tools or approaches that should be considered in the future?

c. Methods

Research methods will include desk review along with primary data collection. For the desk review, the NMFMA will provide access to key program documents and data as well as past Double Up research findings; it is also expected that the Researcher(s) will conduct a brief literature review of relevant research from other sources.



For primary data collection, the NMFMA is open to a research methodology that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. It will be up to the Researcher/Research Team to further propose and define the methods to be used to respond to the research project's goals, key questions, and areas of inquiry, understanding that there are many types and methods of research (some of which help better define the "what"; others help illuminate the "why"; and still others are most useful for understanding the "how"). The methodology should be grounded in relevant research theories such as Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) and habit formation, among others.

Stakeholders that can be considered for taking part in the research include but are not limited to: **Double Up participants** (who could potentially be reached via the NMFMA's Mobile Commons Text Messaging Platform that allows for two-way communication and creating "super groups" for research purposes, or via sign-ups at farmers' markets and other participating outlets); **farmers' market managers** whose markets offer Double Up; **NMFMA staff and outreach partners** (such as libraries, food banks, other non-profits, etc.); and **local food producers** who have participated as vendors in the Double Up program.

Finally, it is expected that applicants will propose a realistic research methodology based on the available budget. During the first month of the project, the NMFMA will work with the selected researcher/ research team to finalize the research plan and methodology.

d. Timeline, Deliverables, and Budget

The timeline below provides a preliminary outline of key tasks and associated deliverables for this work, with the expectation that the research project will be a 6 month endeavor from mid-April through mid-October 2024.

Task	Responsible	When
Develop Scope of Work	NMFMA	February 2024
Finalize and share out Scope of Work	NMFMA	By mid/late-February
Request for Proposals is open	NMFMA	Through March 31
Proposal responses due	Applicants	March 31
Select evaluator	NMFMA	By mid-April
Contract begins	NMFMA & Research Team	May 1



Submit research plan (with final scope, methodology, tools, protocols, etc.)	Research Team	May 15
Finalize research plan	Research Team & NMFMA	May 31
IRB process (as needed)	Research Team	May - June
Desk review	Research Team	May - June
Data collection and analysis	Research Team	July - September
Final report – Draft	Research Team	September 30
Feedback on final report draft	NMFMA & partners	October 15
Final report – final version	Research Team	October 31

Available budget for the research is \$25,000; the funding for the research is through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

III. Response

Interested applicants are asked to submit a proposal package that includes the following:

- **Proposal narrative** of no more than 4 pages that summarizes the proposed research plan, approach, and methods, key qualifications of the proposed research team, and 2 references for past relevant work.
- **Proposed budget** that includes all planned costs for conducting the research. Please note that Indirect/ Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs may not exceed 20% of the total budget.

Proposal packages should be submitted on or before March 31, 2024 to nmfmaquestions@gmail.com. Any inquiries about the research or proposal package requirements can also be submitted to nmfmaquestions@gmail.com. Please include “**Double Up Research**” in the Subject when submitting questions or applications.

Qualified applicants will have significant experience in conducting mixed-methods research as well as local food systems, health and nutrition, and/or SBCC expertise. Applications from consulting groups, universities, individuals, or other entities are encouraged. The NMFMA is committed to hiring practices for staff and contractors that are fair, equitable, and inclusive.