

Food Access Initiatives

→ 2020 Report

GROW^{NYC}

February 2021



We are GrowNYC

We protect the environment, create green spaces, help people stay healthy, and give them opportunity to make a positive impact.

Our Work

We make it easy for you to have a positive impact.



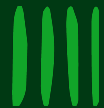
Conservation

We are providing outreach and education to increase participation in the city's zero waste programs and help conserve natural resources.



Green Space

We are bringing more green space to our city by building and rejuvenating community and school gardens.



Education

We are fostering future environmental stewards by providing thousands of children and adults with opportunities for meaningful interactions with the natural environment.



Food Access and Agriculture

We are transforming our regional food system and ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to the freshest, healthiest local food.

GrowNYC Food Access Initiatives

GrowNYC Food Access Initiatives get fruits and vegetables where they are most needed: everywhere. Income shouldn't be an impediment to good health. GrowNYC believes that healthy food access is a basic human right.

We make regionally-produced food accessible to all New Yorkers through promotion and acceptance of nutrition benefits, incentive coupons, over-the-counter (OTC) benefit cards, and credit cards.

We rely on partnerships with the City and community-based organizations to enhance food access in New York City. This effort improves access to good food and provides critical revenue for our farming community.

GrowNYC Food Access Sites

- **Greenmarket** – Our network of over 50 farmers markets provide direct retail opportunities for farmers and the bounty of regional products to New Yorkers. We accept SNAP, Farmers Market Nutrition Program Checks, Health Bucks, Fresh Connect coupons, and eWIC.
- **Fresh Food Box** – Our collective purchasing program sources seasonal produce from GrowNYC Wholesale and provides it to communities to purchase below retail prices. We accept SNAP, Health Bucks, and Fresh Connect Coupons.
- **Farmstand** – Farmstands employ young people to sell local, seasonal produce sourced from GrowNYC Wholesale. We accept SNAP, Farmers Market Nutrition Program Checks, Health Bucks, and Fresh Connect coupons.

2020 Overview

- COVID-19 caused a dramatic increase in food insecurity citywide, and Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits were distributed to every family with children in public school. Due to these factors, GrowNYC **SNAP/EBT sales increased 56%** in 2020, totaling \$1,555,224.
- GrowNYC created a **national model for safe operation of food access sites** by implementing social distancing protocols, providing PPE, mandating masks, and introducing a “no touch” policy for produce.
- Thanks to funding from the NYC Department of Sanitation, GrowNYC began the Emergency Fresh Food Box program, which distributes pre-packed boxes of fresh produce and staples through CBOs across the city - reaching **one million meals** delivered by December 2020.

Operations During Covid-19



- Mandated masks
- Enforced social distancing
- Worked with the City to expand market footprints
- Began a “no-touch” policy for products
- Provided PPE and hand sanitizer
- Increased staffing to ensure compliance with safety measures



Promoting Food Access during COVID-19

GrowNYC worked with city and state agencies and local WIC centers to educate customers on where and how to access FMNP benefits while sites were closed and services were offered remotely.

Beginning in March 2020, we compiled and distributed resources with information on free meal pickup, SNAP and WIC enrollment, and food delivery assistance.

 FOOD ACCESS GUIDE 			
SERVICE/BENEFIT	By PHONE	By WEB OR APP	COVID-19 CHANGES
FREE MEALS TO PICK-UP	Text: "NYC FOOD" to 877-877	Google: "NYC Free Meals"	Any New Yorker can get 3 free "Grab and Go" meals a day at more than 400 Meal Hubs across the city. Monday - Friday Families: 7:30am-11:30am Adults: 11:30am-1:30pm
FOOD PANTRIES & COMMUNITY KITCHENS	National Hunger Hotline English: 1-866-348-6479 Spanish: 1-877-842-6273	Food Bank: foodbanknyc.org/get-help Multiple languages: maps.nyc.gov/foodhelp	The sites listed in the Food Bank map have switched to "grab and go" meals and pantry bags to minimize the risk of exposure.
SNAP ENROLLMENT, CASH ASSISTANCE, & MEDICAID	HRA info-line: 718-557-1399 or 311	App: Access HRA a069-access.nyc.gov/accesshra Google: "Access HRA"	Apply online or via the Access HRA app or call the phone number provided to have an application sent in the mail.
WIC (WOMEN, INFANTS, CHILDREN)	Growing Up Healthy Hotline: 1-800-522-5006	www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic Google: "WIC New York"	Many NYS WIC offices are available to provide services by phone for appointments.
SENIOR MEALS/SERVICES	Dept for the Aging: 212-244-6469 or 311	www1.nyc.gov/site/dfta/index.page Google: "Department for the Aging NYC"	Senior centers are currently closed for congregate programming and meals are being provided through a centralized meal delivery system.
FOOD DELIVERY ASSISTANCE	Call: 311	NYC.gov/getFood Google: "NYC Food Delivery Assistance"	Last resort when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No members of the household can go out and get food because they are at increased medical risk or homebound No neighbors or family members can go out and get food for you Do not receive meal assistance from other providers You are unable to afford meal delivery or grocery delivery

*** If you are in need of emergency food assistance, call the NYC Emergency Food Line at 1-866-888-8777 ***

GrowNYC COVID-19 Food Access Guide displayed at market

Food Access Currencies



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are accepted at all Greenmarkets, Farmstands, and Fresh Food Box sites.

Health Bucks are \$2 coupons that can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at all NYC farmers markets. For every \$5 spent using SNAP benefits customers receive an additional \$2 in Bucks, a 40% increase in purchase power.

Greenmarket Bucks are \$2 coupons that can be used to purchase items at any GrowNYC Greenmarket, Farmstand or Fresh Food Box. They are bought by businesses or organizations as incentives or rewards to clients, employees or specific community groups, introducing new customers to the fresh foods available at farmers markets.

Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides WIC participants and low-income seniors with packets of \$4 checks that can be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at all Greenmarkets and Farmstands.

FreshConnect Coupons are worth \$2 and are distributed to NYC military veterans and their families to purchase food at Greenmarkets, Farmstands, and Fresh Food Box sites.

SNAP and P-EBT

Due to COVID-19, the rate of food insecurity in New York City has risen to 25% since March 2020.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) remains a critical resource for families. Increased SNAP enrollment citywide and GrowNYC's active promotion of Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) acceptance led to a significant increase in SNAP spent at GrowNYC sites.

Health Bucks are provided as incentives for SNAP as well as P-EBT purchases at Greenmarkets and Farmstands, offering additional resources for New Yorkers to access regional produce.



P-EBT poster for GrowNYC sites (Spanish)

PANDEMIC EBT (P-EBT)

Transferencia Electrónica de Beneficios por la Pandemia

¿Qué es P-EBT?

P-EBT es una reasignación de fondos para el programa federal de almuerzos escolares mientras los estudiantes han estado aprendiendo a distancia. Cada estudiante de escuela pública de la ciudad de Nueva York, de 3 a 21 años, sin importar sus ingresos o su estatus migratorio, recibirá 420 dólares. Los beneficios serán asignados automáticamente y no se requiere ninguna solicitud o documentación.

Puedes gastar tu P-EBT en cualquier sitio de GrowNYC: [grownyc.org/map](https://www.grownyc.org/map)

Usa P-EBT en los Mercados Agrícolas y apoya a los granjeros locales

Úsalos en los Greenmarkets o Farmstands de GrowNYC, y por cada \$5 que gastes, ¡recibirás \$2 adicionales en Health Bucks para gastarlos en frutas y verduras!

Si no corres el riesgo de padecer inseguridad alimentaria, gasta tu P-EBT en los Greenmarkets, Farmstands o Fresh Food Box de GrowNYC, y dona el equivalente a 420 dólares para apoyar el acceso a los alimentos en tu comunidad.



Para donar al Fondo de Respuesta a COVID de GrowNYC, escanea el código o visita [grownyc.org/donate](https://www.grownyc.org/donate).



O haga una donación a otra organización que brinde ayuda alimentaria vital en la ciudad de Nueva York.

Línea directa de P-EBT
(833) 452-0096

Crear PIN
(888) 328-6399

GrowNYC es una organización sin fines de lucro 501(c)3. Todas las donaciones son deducibles de impuestos.

2020 Sales

SNAP/EBT and Credit Sales

- GrowNYC SNAP/EBT sales totaled \$1,555,224, an increase of over 56% from 2019.
- GrowNYC Credit sales totaled \$1,516,599 (does not include credit sales processed directly with producers, which increased significantly).

Greenmarket Bucks

- 14 organizations and programs sponsored Greenmarket Bucks, including West Side Campaign Against Hunger and Queens College Food Pantry.
- Sponsors purchased a total of \$49,826 in Greenmarket Bucks to distribute to communities.





Health Bucks

Greenmarkets & Farmstands (formerly Youthmarkets) distributed **\$616,820** in Health Bucks as a SNAP incentive.

GrowNYC sites distributed approximately **two thirds** of all the Health Bucks distributed in NYC in 2020.

Highest SNAP/P-EBT Sales by Market 2020

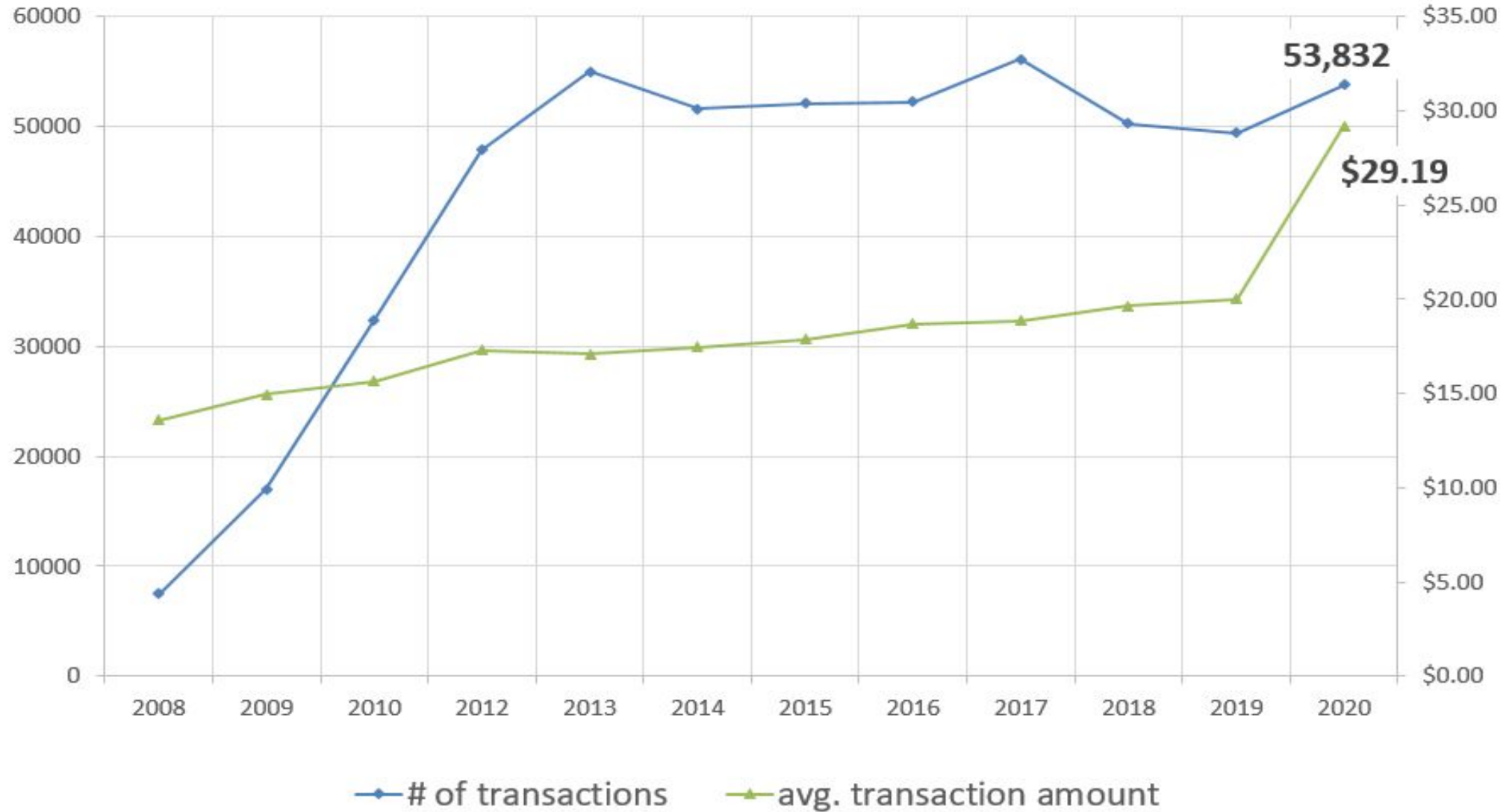
GREENMARKET	BOROUGH	2020 SNAP SALES	CHANGE FROM 2019
Union Square	Manhattan	\$376,569	+23.5%
Jackson Heights	Queens	\$90,037	+140.7%
Grand Army Plaza	Brooklyn	\$86,044	+73.9%
Inwood	Manhattan	\$84,655	+107.7%
Poe Park*	Bronx	\$81,306	+30.9%
175th Street*	Manhattan	\$71,191	+20.1%
Forest Hills	Queens	\$56,584	+201.7%
79th Street	Manhattan	\$41,347	+279.8%
Bronx Borough Hall*	Bronx	\$40,009	+43.4%
Fort Greene	Brooklyn	\$36,465	+265.5%

* Seasonal Market

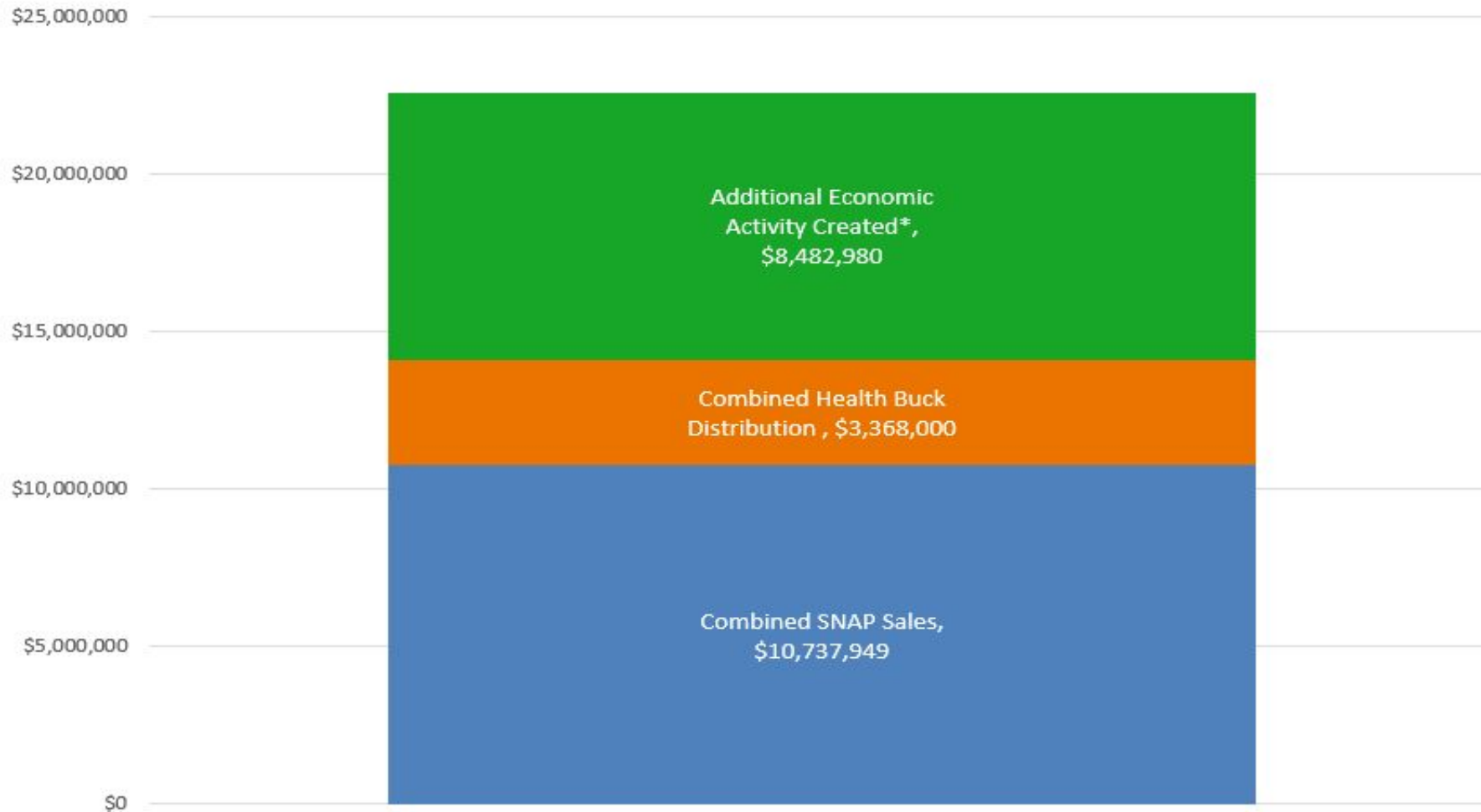
2020 SNAP Sales by Borough



History of SNAP Transaction Amounts



Project Impact Since 2005



***The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that for every dollar spent on SNAP, \$1.79 in economic activity is generated, mostly in local communities**

Addressing COVID-19:

Emergency Fresh Food Box



Emergency Fresh Food Box

- In April 2020, under a contract from the NYC Department of Sanitation, GrowNYC launched Emergency Fresh Food Box (EFFB) to distribute pre-packed boxes of fresh produce and dry goods to organizations throughout NYC, providing nourishment to communities impacted by COVID-19.
- Partners include United Sherpa Association, Chinese American Planning Council in Sunset Park and Flushing, Mixteca, Flatbush Community Gardens, Flatlands Reformed Church, Loving The Bronx and Brotherhood Sister Sol.
- On December 31st, EFFB marked the milestone of delivering **more than 1,000,000 meals**, delivering an average of 26,605 meals every week.



Chinese-American Planning Council, Sunset Park

GrowNYC has been diligent about developing partnerships with community organizations serving NYC's most vulnerable: majority undocumented immigrant populations, areas with little to no access to fresh produce or other food relief and those most affected by COVID-19.



GrowNYC Wholesale Partnerships

- In addition to the City-funded Emergency Fresh Food Box program, GrowNYC Wholesale expanded distribution by 137% to nonprofit partners distributing food in communities impacted by COVID-19.
- Supplied key partners citywide by distributing emergency food outside of the traditional food bank and food pantry infrastructure, including Albanian American Open Hands Association; Center for Court Innovation; Red Hook Initiative; Urban Health Plan, and dozens of others.
- GrowNYC Wholesale distributed 450,000 pounds of food to organizations that received Nourish New York funding. This funding was provided by the NYS Dept of Agriculture and Markets to allow food pantries to source NYS product for emergency food distribution.
- Trained 7 organizations in our Fresh Food Box best practices and helped 4 to launch food access programs in their communities.

Fruit & Vegetable

Prescription Programs



Pharmacy to Farm

Funded primarily by a Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant from USDA, in partnership with NYC DOHMH and 12 pharmacies in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens.

New Yorkers receiving SNAP who filled a prescription for hypertension medication also received a monthly prescription good for \$30 in Health Bucks at the farmers market.

Year	2018	2019	2020
Pharmacies	10	16	12
Participants	395	1417	1,173
Vouchers Redeemed	1,230	5,404	5,000+
Health Bucks Dist.	\$36,988	\$162,140	\$150,000+



Prescriptions were redeemed at the nearest Greenmarket linked to the participating pharmacy:

- Inwood Greenmarket
- Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket
- Fort Greene Greenmarket
- Jackson Heights Greenmarket
- 97th St Greenmarket
- Union Square Greenmarket
- **New in 2020: Lincoln Hospital Greenmarket**

Fruit & Veggie Rx

The Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program is a collaboration between the New York Presbyterian Choosing Healthy & Active Lifestyles for Kids (CHALK) and GrowNYC, funded by NYP Community Relations.

Registered dietitians screen patients for food insecurity and provide a prescription good for \$20 in Greenmarket Bucks to be used for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at participating Greenmarket locations. In 2020, more than \$16,000 was distributed to food-insecure families.

In 2020, digital prescriptions were provided to patients following their virtual appointments and paper vouchers were given to food-insecure families at CHALK's food distribution sites. The \$10 voucher was discontinued due to increased food insecurity.

Prescriptions can be redeemed at four Greenmarket locations:

- Fort Washington Greenmarket
- 175th Street Greenmarket
- Inwood Greenmarket
- **New in 2020: Lincoln Hospital Greenmarket**

Year	2018	2019	2020
Prescriptions Redeemed (\$10)	696	573	0
Prescriptions Redeemed (\$20)	0	595	800+
Greenmarket Bucks Distributed	\$6,960	\$17,410	\$16,000+

Nutrition Education



Nutrition Education

GrowNYC partners with NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene along with various other organizations to provide free, multilingual, nutrition education at our markets.

While in previous years these programs have included cooking demonstrations featuring seasonal, regionally grown produce, we suspended cooking and tastings due to COVID.

For the 2020 season, we worked closely with NYC DOHMH and other partners to provide educational programs that would abide by COVID-19 safety measures and educate customers on seasonal produce as well as benefit programs including SNAP/EBT/P-EBT, Health Buck incentives and WIC & Senior FMNP Checks.



Nutrition Education

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)

- Cornell staff worked at eight Greenmarkets showing recipe videos, giving out Health Bucks, and sharing food safety and fruit and vegetable tips with customers who visited their table.
- From September to November 2020, CCE engaged with 3,884 people.

NYC DOHMH Stellar Farmers Markets

- Conducted 75 virtual nutrition workshops (40 English, 35 Spanish) via Facebook, reaching over 130,000 individuals.
- Gave \$14,000 in Health Bucks directly to GrowNYC and other market operators to distribute at 13 farmers markets.

New York Common Pantry

- Conducted 47 virtual nutrition workshops in English, Spanish, and Mandarin reaching 311 participants.
- Eight distributions were conducted from August to November at Mt. Sinai Greenmarket, providing \$4,000 in Greenmarket Bucks.



Nutrition Benefit Screenings

GrowNYC partnered with Hunger Free America (HFA) to provide nutrition benefit screenings to farmers market customers in a safe outdoor setting.

HFA staff provided expertise on benefit eligibility to customers seeking assistance and distributed Health Bucks to provide an immediate resource to purchase fresh fruits & vegetables.

From September to December 2020, HFA staff visited GrowNYC sites 78 times at ten different locations to provide benefit screenings and distribute Health Bucks.



Looking Ahead





Life Improvement Plan (LIP) and CompleteCare (CC)

USE HERE!

¡USA AQUÍ!

在这里用!



For 2021

Serving Medicaid and Medicare Patients

- Starting in February, Medicare and Medicaid members of Healthfirst will be able to spend their over-the-counter (OTC) cards at GrowNYC locations on healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables, distributing more than \$100,000 in Greenmarket Bucks to members to spend with regional farmers.
- MetroPlus will be providing \$115,000 in Greenmarket Bucks to their Medicare members for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at GrowNYC sites.

Changes to Health Bucks

- Beginning January 2021, GrowNYC introduced the NYC DOHMH's new SNAP incentive to market shoppers: customers paying with SNAP receive a \$2 for \$2 match, up to \$10.

Anticipating Second Allotment of P-EBT

- GrowNYC will update resources and continue to inform customers on how to use SNAP and P-EBT benefits at our sites when P-EBT benefits are reissued.







GrowNYC is a 501(c)3 environmental nonprofit organization

GrowNYC serves 3 million New Yorkers annually, providing opportunities to make NYC truly livable, a place where every person can **thrive**

To make a fully tax-deductible contribution, please visit www.growNYC.org or call (212) 788-7900