

Rural Grocery Development & Nutrition Incentives in the Four Corners

CommonSpirit Health

Nourish Colorado

Durango Natural Foods Co-Op

Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE)

Teec Nos Pos Trading Post

June 2024

CommonSpirit Health Mountain Region Fresh to Flourish Produce Prescription & Beyond

Jess Church, Director of Food Security Initiatives, Durango, CO

June 2024



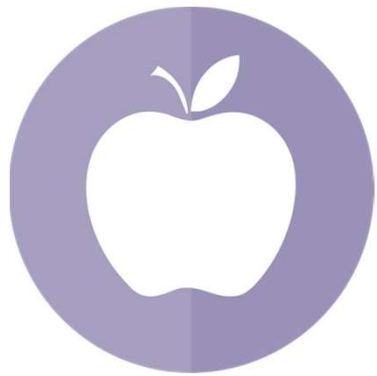
This work is supported by Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Grant Program grant no. 2021-70030-35797/project accession no. 1027395 and grant no. 2022-70423-38073/project accession no. 1029091 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA), and CommonSpirit Mission and Ministry Fund

About Us

- **CommonSpirit Health:** Over 1000 care sites in 24 states serving 20 million patients
 - **Mission:** As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.
 - **Vision:** A healthier future for all – inspired by faith, driven by innovation, and powered by our humanity.
 - **Values:** Compassion | Inclusion | Integrity | Excellence | Collaboration
- **Mountain Region Hospitals (20):** Colorado (12), Kansas (3), Utah (5)

How Households Cope with Food Insecurity

Limited household resources lead to tough choices



Food

VS



Utilities



Transportation



**Medical
Treatment**



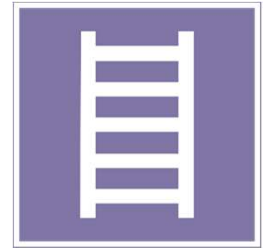
Housing



Education



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**Upward
Mobility**

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Current Markets: Suburban Pueblo Co. and Rural La Plata Co.



Location: Pueblo County

1 Clinic: So. CO Family Med. (Residency),

Funding: USDA GusNIP 2021; USDA GusNIP ARPA 2022

Target Enrollment: 200 pts by Sept 2025

Launch: June 2023

Partners: Save-a-Lot Foods (lg. grocery retail), Pueblo Farmers Market (2 locations)



Location: La Plata County

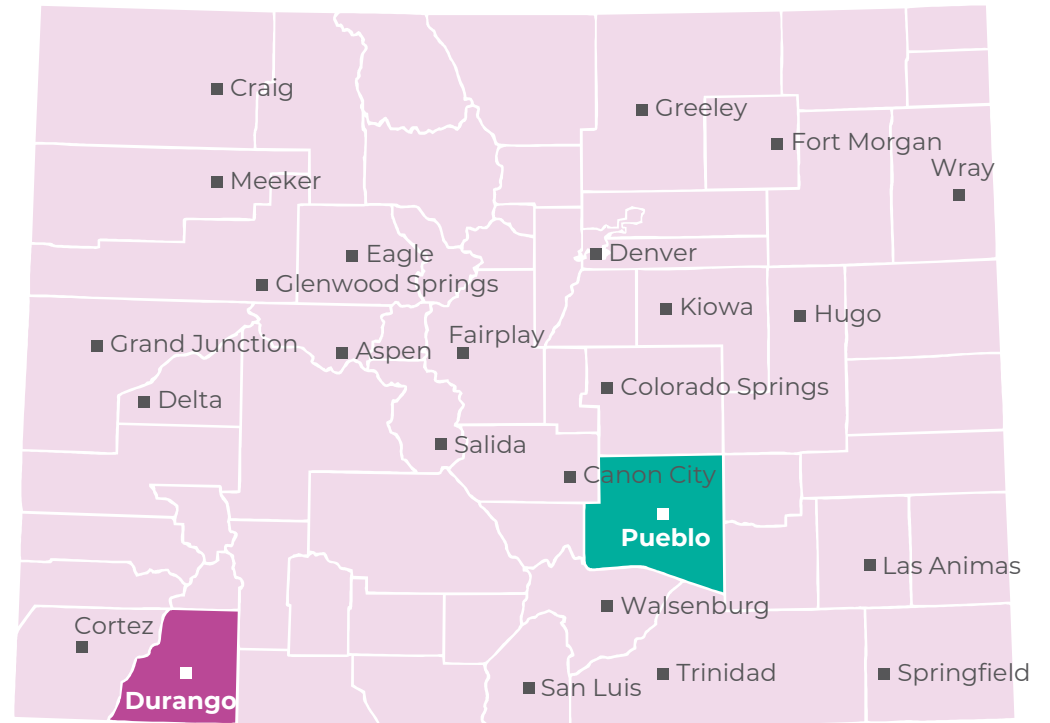
3 Clinics: Mercy Primary Care

Funding: CommonSpirit Mission and Ministry Fund 2021; USDA GusNIP ARPA 2022

Target Enrollment: 500 pts by Sept 2025

Launch: Sept. 2022

Partners: Durango Natural Foods, Durango Farmers Market, NW NM Growers Market Alliance Nourish Colorado



Program Overview



CommonSpirit 

- **Who:** Primary care patients in Durango and Pueblo, CO
 - Medicaid, SNAP or Food Insecure
 - Chronic condition or risk for one
- **What:** \$350 value of fresh fruit and vegetable vouchers for use at local food businesses
- **Why:** Test program experience and delivery, health outcomes and health care use, and viability for broad expansion
- **Program Delivery Vision:** Fresh to Flourish integration should be **as easy as possible** for Patients, Clinical Staff, and Food Businesses

Fresh to Flourish Prescription Materials

Vouchers (Issued to patient by clinics)



Fresh to Flourish

Comida Fresca para Salud Total/Fresh Food for Whole Health

\$10 Fresh Produce
Frutas y verduras frescas

Present to cashier after shopping (**retailers**) or market info booth before shopping (**farmers markets**) to apply towards the purchase of fresh produce.

Valid until 12/31/2025. Must be used on a single purchase. One-time use only. No refunds. No cash value.

Presente al cajero para solicitar la compra de frutas y verduras frescas.

Válido hasta 31/12/2025. Debe usarse en una sola compra. Uso de una sola vez. Sin reembolsos. Sin valor monetario.

UBICACIONES DE CANJE EN LA PARTE POSTERIOR

Mercy Family Medicine Three Springs Clinic
1 Mercado St #160, Durango, CO 81301

Expires 12/31/2025

CommonSpirit 

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Scrip/Bucks

- Issued by Farmers Markets @ Info Booth in exchange for vouchers
- Used with various market vendors

Why Paper?

Interoperability between food businesses, prioritize patient choice and local produce

Fresh to Flourish

Comida Fresca para Salud Total/
Fresh Food for Whole Health

CommonSpirit 



Program Impacts

As of April 2024

- 193 patients enrolled
 - 154 in La Plata since Sept 2022
 - 39 in Pueblo since June 2023
- Redemptions Since July 2023: Nearly \$20k
 - Durango Natural Foods = \$17,985.28
 - Durango Farmers Market = \$526
 - Pueblo Farmers Market = \$493
 - Save-a-Lot Foods, Pueblo, CO = \$904.35



Patient Quotes

- “I don’t have to survive on ramen and potatoes all the time. I’m able to eat something fresh every day. The difference in how I feel is amazing. It’s made such a difference in my life...Now I am getting out and about. I can be a part of my community, I’m getting my life back.”
- “I’ve had more regularity and so many good things happening to my body. The folks [at Durango Natural Foods] have been so kind, they’re so nice!”
- “I used to be able to buy this food, but not for a long time. The apples are juicy! The asparagus is so good!”
- It has made a huge difference in our family! Having funds dedicated to fresh fruits and veggies has made me reevaluate the way we eat and what we eat. I always knew how important veggies and fruits are, but on a budget it is easy to lean towards cheaper, more filling foods.”

Thank You, Partners!



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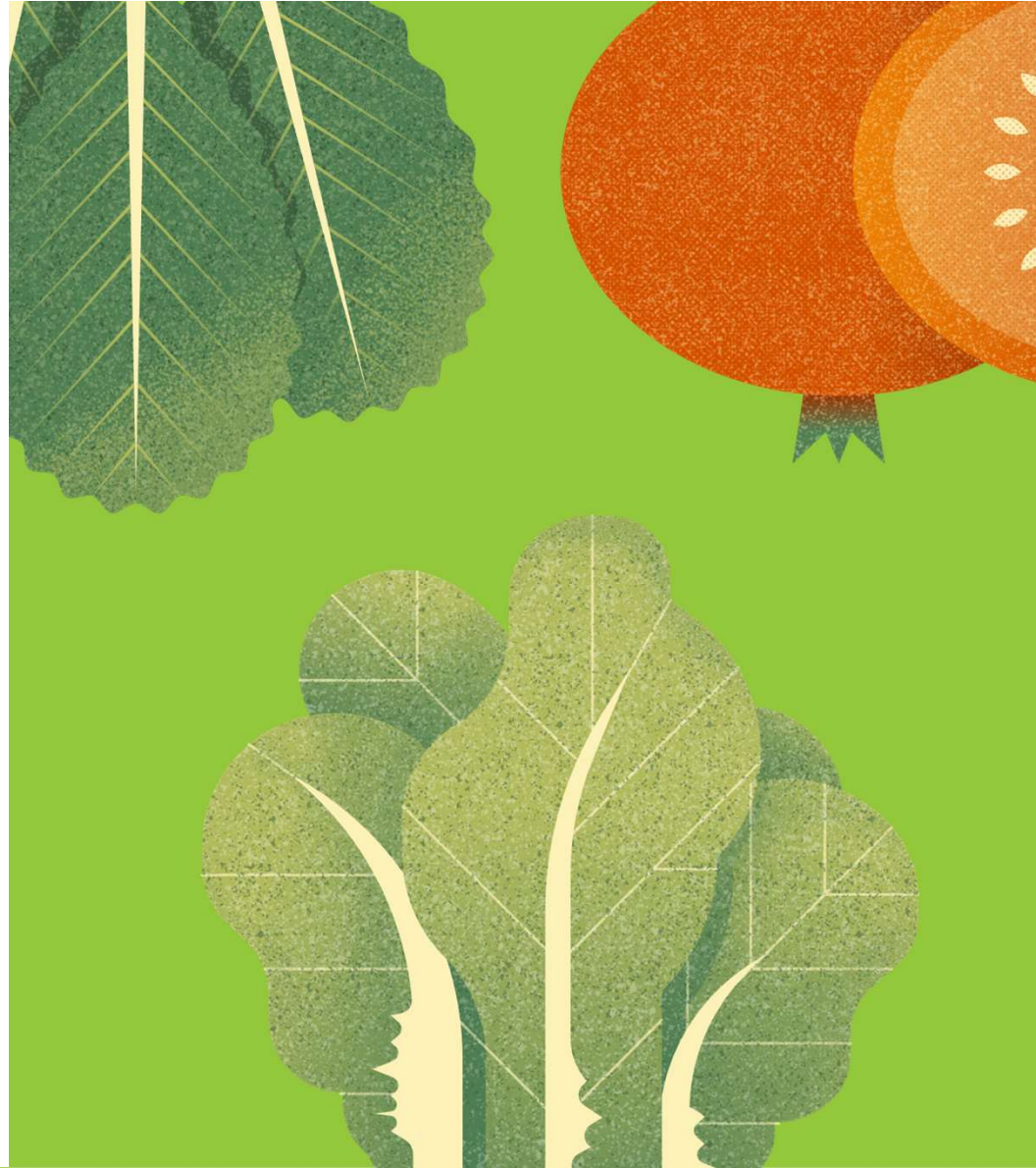


Transforming Food Systems

Organization Overview

Lonni Byrd, Food Access Senior Manager

June 2024



Nourish Colorado Programs & Initiatives

Healthy Food in Institutions - Nourish Colorado is helping institutional meal programs such as K12 School Districts, Early Care Programs, Older Adult Meal Programs and more, source and serve nutritious and delicious meals. Our Chef team provides training, resources, connections, and more to support our institutions with procuring, storing, prepping, and serving fresh, local foods through our Local Procurement Colorado (LoProCO) program and Culinary Trainings.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education

SNAP-Ed is the nutrition education component of SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), with the goal of improving the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles. Nourish Colorado is one of two SNAP-Ed implementing agencies in Colorado. We support this work by implementing Cooking Matters curriculum with partners across the state. Cooking Matters programs help parents and caregivers struggling with limited food budgets learn how to shop for and cook healthy, affordable meals.



COOKING MATTERS FOOD PANTRY TOOLKIT

September 2023



Nourish Colorado Programs & Initiatives

Healthy Food Incentives – Nourish Colorado improves food access through four nutrition incentive programs that help low-income families acquire nutritious and locally grown produce. These programs are Double Up Food Bucks, Colorado SNAP Produce Bonus, Colorado Nutrition Incentive Program, & Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Healthy Food Systems Policy - Nourish Colorado advances a comprehensive policy agenda that supports the transformation of our food system into one that is sustainable, equitable, and health-promoting where access to nutritious food is the norm. Our policy agenda is informed by partners across Colorado, including community coalitions, program partners, local, state and national organizations, and other policy experts.



How We Help The Colorado food System

We manage statewide initiatives that increase access to nutritious foods, through which we...



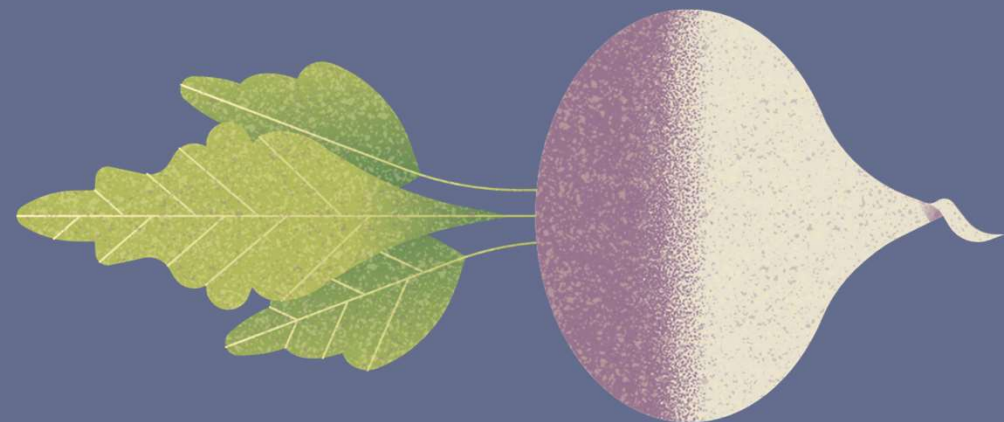
...learn together in community, in order to...



...advocate for public policies so that...



...this work becomes the cultural and political norm throughout the state of Colorado and beyond.



Healthy Food Incentives

Double Up Food Bucks

- SNAP incentive
- Provides \$1 for CO-grown produce for every \$1 in SNAP spent, up to \$20 each visit
- At farmers markets, farm stands, food hubs, corner stores, small retailers, and large retailers
- Available at over 100 locations in 31 counties
- 2023: \$998,000.00 to over 10,000 households in over 27 counties
- 83% of customers report buying more fruits and veggies, 84% report eating more fruits and veggies, and 74% report eating more fruits and veggies
- 65% of farmers report selling more fruits and vegetables and 76% agree the market is stronger with Double Up!



Double Up Food Bucks – Colorado

Rural Grocer Snapshot

- Created an equity map to see where gaps in DUFEB coverage to better help serve rural communities.
- Available at 11 Rural Grocers around the state.
- Actively recruiting 4 additional rural grocers over the next 6 months.
- 2023: \$333,000.00 investment in rural grocers in Colorado
- \$155,000.00 DUFEB redemption in SW Colorado at rural grocers.
- Piloting new SNAP incentive Colorado SNAP Produce Bonus Program that includes EBT integration technology.



2024 FOOD INCENTIVES

Durango Natural
Foods Co-op

Jordan Duncan, Front End Manager

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DURANGO NATURAL FOODS CO-OP: NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY

- **About Us**

- **Established in 1974:** Durango Natural Foods Co-op (DNF) has been serving our community for five decades.
- **Member-Owned:** We're a cooperative where everyone is welcome. Our members enjoy special benefits, including discounts and voting rights.
- **Local and Organic:** DNF Co-op is committed to providing access to locally sourced, organically grown produce and meats that might not be readily available elsewhere.
- **Social Responsibility:** We believe in food justice and equitable access to fresh, healthy produce.
- **Reducing Environmental Footprint:** By supporting local, small-scale agriculture, we contribute to a more sustainable food system.



EMBRACING FOOD INCENTIVES: SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

1

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS
(DUFEB) PROGRAM

2

FRESH TO FLOURISH
(FTF) PROGRAM

3

FOUR CORNERS SLOW
MONEY



WHAT IS DOUBLE UP?



- Double Up Food Bucks helps individuals bring home more healthy food by matching their SNAP (food stamps) dollars spent on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- [If someone receives SNAP benefits, they are automatically eligible for Double Up Food Bucks](#)

• **Benefits for Stores:**

- Customers are incentivized to shop for fresh produce, benefiting both the store and the community.
- Stores that offer Double Up Food Bucks build stronger relationships with their customers.
- Being part of the program demonstrates that the store cares about the well-being of its community.
- By promoting fresh fruits and vegetables, stores contribute to overall community health. They play a vital role in addressing food insecurity and promoting nutritious choices.



WHAT IS FRESH TO FLOURISH?

- Fresh to Flourish is a produce prescription program designed to address nutrition security
- It provides eligible patients with fruit and vegetable vouchers to purchase fresh produce at participating grocery stores and farmer's markets.

- 1. Local Produce:** Vouchers can be used at participating stores featuring locally grown produce.
- 2. Positive Impact:** Patients report trying new foods they couldn't afford before.
- 3. Healthier Choices:** Stores contribute to overall community health by promoting fresh produce.



COPE

Community Outreach &
Patient Empowerment

Olivia Muskett

Sr. Training and Community Outreach
Specialist
Nakaibito, Navajo Nation (NM)

June 2024

Community Outreach & Patient Empowerment (COPE)



COPE is an Indigenous-led 501(c)3 non-profit organization working across Navajo Nation that is based in Gallup, NM. COPE's goal is to reduce **health disparities and improve health outcomes** in Indigenous communities.



Since 2013, COPE has engaged in programmatic & policy initiatives to **increase access to healthy foods, including healthy traditional foods** on the Navajo Nation.

Where We Work: Navajo Nation

- Sovereign Indigenous Nation with land base of **27,000 sq. miles**, spanning AZ, NM, UT; **~400K enrolled citizens**
- Only **13 grocery stores**; families often **travel 1+ hours to buy groceries**
- USDA classifies Navajo Nation has having some of the **highest barriers to food access***
- Navajo Nation has also been a **leader in passing policy** to promote access to healthy food



*United States Department of Agriculture. Food Access Research Atlas. 2023. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>.



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COPE Launched the Navajo Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program (Navajo FVRx) in 2014

Navajo FVRx grew out of community feedback about priorities related to food access, nutrition and cultural teachings. The program seeks to promote:

- **Access to – and increased consumption of – healthy, locally-grown and traditional produce**
- Economic growth by **promoting the local sales of healthy foods** on Navajo Nation
- **Culturally-relevant nutrition education** and outreach to Navajo families
- **Clinic-community linkages** and collaboration among clinic-based and community-based health teams
- Building a rigorous evidence base to **catalyze policy & system change**



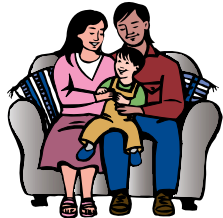
How FVRx Works

FVRx Stores/ Growers redeem FVRx vouchers when families shop as long as they are being used for qualifying items.



COPE trains FVRx teams; **COPE** processes reimbursements to participating stores and growers.

Enrolled Families receive health/nutrition coaching and use vouchers at participating stores or growers.



FVRx Teams (Clinics, Schools, CHWs) enroll families, provide them with monthly vouchers and health and nutrition coaching.



COPE's Working Relationship with Participating Retailers is Critical to Navajo FVRx Success

- COPE has worked with **31 retailers**, including grocery stores, farmers' markets, and **small stores closest to where families live**, such as convenience stores, gas stations and trading posts
- COPE **provides training** to staff at participating retailers and they receive **equipment upgrades** from COPE to properly **store and display produce**

Impact and Outcomes for Retailers

- Navajo FVRx has been successful in increasing the sales of fruits, vegetables and healthy traditional foods at participating retailers
- Produce purchases have increased overall as retailers stock more to meet FVRx demands



Ahéhee' to all our partners! Without them, the COPE Navajo FVRx program would not be possible!

We look forward to your questions and feedback
fvrx@copeprogram.org



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Field Interview



- Intention
 - Be a community resource by providing access to healthy fruits and vegetables, water, fuel, and traditional foods.
 - Purchases local items like piñon nuts, wool, mohair, fruits, vegetables, Navajo rugs, and Navajo jewelry to help the local economy.



**John McCulloch, Teec Nos Pos Trading Post Owner,
Navajo Nation, AZ**

<https://shorturl.at/SrokS>

For More Information

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