



# Washington State Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program

## Fruits and Vegetables: Just What the Doctor Ordered

Washington's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program connects the health care system and food system to help patients increase their consumption of healthy foods.

**Food is Medicine.** For chronically ill people, food is medicine. With adequate amounts of nutritious food, people who are sick have a better response to medication, maintain and gain strength, and have improved chances of recovery. Eating a nutritious and balanced diet rich in vegetables and fruits may help reduce the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers. Ultimately, access to healthy food leads to improved health outcomes and lower health care costs.

**Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions.** Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Programs are one emerging model which may be an effective method of improving nutrition and increasing consumption of healthy foods among patients. With support from the FINI program, a growing network of health care providers, community health workers, and community nutritionists are now able to "prescribe" fruits and vegetables to SNAP participants. The prescription is a printed voucher that patients can use like cash to buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and any Safeway store in Washington. In many program sites, participants also receive nutrition education and social support through group classes that teach healthy cooking methods and chronic disease management and one-on-one visits with providers.

**Participating Health Systems and Providers.** Centralia Women's Center with Providence Medical Group, Harborview Medical Center, Jefferson Healthcare, Moses Lake Community Health Center, MultiCare – Tacoma Family Medicine, Seattle Children's Odessa Brown Children's Clinic, Spokane Regional Health District, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, and Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital are all participating in the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program. As of July 2016, over 50 clinics and community health sites are distributing fruit and vegetable prescriptions. Department of Health, Safeway, and program partners are closely tracking process and outcome measures related to the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program. Program results will be available in early 2017.

## About WA's FINI Program

In 2015, the Washington State Department of Health and over 60 multi-sector partners statewide won the largest FINI grant in the nation. FINI funds support innovative strategies to make it easier for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to afford more fruits and vegetables. Washington is testing three incentive strategies to increase fruit and vegetable purchases by SNAP customers:

- Farmers Markets & CSA Match
- Fruit and Vegetable Prescriptions
- Grocery Store Rebates/Discounts

For more information, visit  
[www.doh.wa.gov/CompleteEats](http://www.doh.wa.gov/CompleteEats)

