

Board/Commission Recommendation



Sustainable Food Policy Board

Recommendation Number: (20130826-4B2)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach/Incentives Budget Reconsideration Request

WHEREAS, 18 percent of Travis County residents and 24.2 percent of Travis County children face food insecurity on a regular basis, which is directly tied to poverty, and results in increased health care costs, lower educational success, and decreased workforce readiness; and

WHEREAS, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, has proven to be a federal nutrition program that effectively lifts many persons out of poverty; and

WHEREAS, with only 58 percent of eligible persons in Travis County enrolled in SNAP, and every \$1 in SNAP benefits generating \$1.79 in economic activity, \$298,388,273 in economic activity is lost to Travis County annually; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Food Policy Board in April 2012 recommended to the Austin City Council to implement an outreach and assistance effort to increase participation in the SNAP program as well as expand SNAP benefits at local farmers markets, thereby greatly benefitting our local economy; and

WHEREAS, in February 2013, the Sustainable Food Policy Board recommended to the Public Health and Human Services Committee of the Austin City Council to invest funding in SNAP outreach and expansion of benefits at farmers markets; and

WHEREAS, students at the LBJ School of Public Affairs reported in May 2013 that the Sustainable Food Center's Double Dollars Incentive Program had successfully generated increased purchases of fresh produce by SNAP recipients while benefitting local farmers; and

WHEREAS, in May 2013, the Sustainable Food Policy Board recommended, in relation to the Economic Impact of Austin's Food Sector Report, that the city minimize zoning barriers, permitting processes/fees, and incentivize adoption of EBT technology for redeeming nutrition assistance benefits to make farmers markets and farmstands sustainable, accessible and affordable venues for getting high quality, culturally appropriate food to all residents (including SNAP- and WIC-eligible) throughout the city.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board reiterates its recommendation that the Austin City Council in its 2013-2014 City of Austin budget provide \$50,000 to expand the Double Dollar Incentive Program and provide funding and staff support to increase outreach and assistance efforts towards SNAP enrollment and redemption.

Date of Approval: August 26, 2013

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 10-0 vote.

Attest: _____

Laura F. Terry