

Investing at the Root

STORIES FROM
COLORADO
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS



Transforming Food Systems

WHY STORIES MATTER



Federal investment, through grants, loans, monitoring, training, technical assistance, and more, is a powerful agent for community growth and prosperity across Colorado, with huge returns including thriving small farms and a healthy, well-fed population

Now, more than ever, Nourish Colorado is working to elevate the positive impacts of federal partnership in our communities

People **MATTER**. Investing federal dollars in communities means investing in people. The following are stories from real people in Colorado, who share why federal investments **MATTER**.



FARMERS MATTER



Noelle Trueheart

Common Name Farm - Lafayette, CO
Colorado's 2nd Congressional District

"I own a small vegetable farm business, I am a **SNAP** recipient, and I have a child in school. Between 1/4 and 1/2 of sales through my farm have gone to **WIC** in previous years, and my business is scrambling to accommodate that amount of sales this year with no funding. I myself am a SNAP recipient and although I am a farmer, I would run out of food for my family every month without it. Most of the children at my daughter's school are dependent on **school breakfast, lunch and snack** in order to battle hunger, and without this funding, most of her classmates would go hungry."

Grace Kelley

Further Up Farms - Elizabeth, CO
Colorado's 4th Congressional District

"I am both a farmer and a **SNAP** recipient myself. We have five children in school who also benefit from the free lunch program.

Many of our customers at the farmers market rely on SNAP and WIC to help feed their families---thanks to these federal programs we are able to help feed these families and keep the money in our local economy, with the help of the **Colorado SNAP Produce Bonus**. As a farm, we deeply believe that good food should be **ACCESSIBLE** and that is what these programs allow us to accomplish. Healthy, high quality pesticide and herbicide free food shouldn't only be accessible to the wealthy and the elite, and these programs allow us to serve families from all different socioeconomic classes and give them dignity and respect as they shop with us. Thanks to the CO Produce SNAP Bonus Program we **DOUBLED** our SNAP sales this past season.

SNAP has also been helpful for our family as we work hard to supply our community with fresh produce---as entrepreneurs in the early years of starting a business it can be hard financially, and SNAP has allowed us to keep purchasing groceries that we do not grow ourselves and would otherwise struggle to afford during this season of our life."



SNAP MATTERS

Lannea Hand*

Metro Caring - Denver, CO
Colorado's 1st Congressional District

"I work at Metro Caring, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending hunger at its root. **SNAP-Ed** funding fuels our community-led cooking and nutrition classes in Spanish and English, and lactation support for parents seeking to nourish their babies. These impactful initiatives not only equip and train leaders, provide nutritious food and recipes, and strengthen community bonds, but we've also demonstrated the impact of these programs on nutrition knowledge, cooking skills, and health outcomes for individuals and families."



*not pictured



Erin Meyer

Deep Health Coaching - Golden, CO
Colorado's 7th Congressional District

"Federal programs like **SNAP** have been a lifeline for me and many others in my community. Personally, I rely on SNAP after losing my job and while navigating an eating disorder, and I've seen firsthand how critical it is for maintaining food security and stability."

As someone who has worked extensively in food rescue and food security, I know that food pantries and food banks, while well-intentioned, are temporary solutions that cannot address the root causes of hunger. They rely on donations and inconsistent supply, often providing limited choices and not always meeting the

nutritional or cultural needs of those they serve. SNAP, on the other hand, is a proven, effective program that gives individuals and families the dignity of choosing their own food and directly reduces food insecurity on a large scale."



Chase Conlin

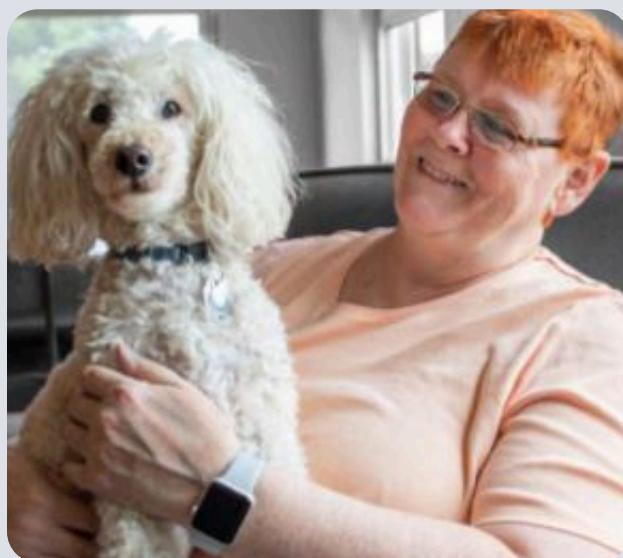
Colorado Health Network - Denver, CO
Colorado's 1st Congressional District

"I am a social worker and help people directly who are experiencing food insecurity. Because I work with a population that sees so many health disparities, food is essential to keeping them nourished and able to maintain their treatment plans, energy needs, and prevent worsening of chronic or acute conditions. Often times, I see clients who cannot afford any basic needs and **SNAP** is one of the few resources that help my clients stay alive."

Samantha Fields

Community advocate -
Colorado Springs, CO
Colorado's 5th Congressional District

"I'm a **Medicare** and **Medicaid** member, and while I know Medicaid is a state-run program, it's supported through essential federal funding that makes it possible for people like me to access care. These programs allow me to manage multiple chronic and rare illnesses by covering services I couldn't afford otherwise, like medications, doctor visits, and treatments. I also receive support through the Elderly, Blind, and Disabled (EBD) waiver and Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS), which help me stay safely in my home rather than being forced into a facility. Thanks to these programs, I'm able to live independently with dignity and stability."



As a **SNAP** recipient, I can buy the food I need to help manage my health. When you're living with chronic conditions, nutrition becomes part of your treatment plan, not an optional expense. SNAP makes it possible for me to afford healthier foods that support my well-being, and I know how vital this program is for so many others in my community facing food insecurity.

For me, these programs don't exist in isolation—they all work together to keep me going. I hope our legislators understand that federal programs like SSDI, Medicare, SNAP, subsidized housing, and the federal funding that makes Medicaid, the EBD waiver, and LTSS possible aren't extras or luxuries. They're essential lifelines. They provide stability, safety, and dignity to people who simply want the chance to live well and contribute to their communities.

Every dollar invested in these programs supports real people and builds stronger, healthier communities. I'm living proof."

SMALL BUSINESS MATTERS

Jess Hargest Go Farm - Golden, CO Colorado's 7th Congressional District

"I am going into my 13th season of working the land in some capacity. I work for a nonprofit that has a food access component. The [threat to] federal funding for **SNAP**, WIC and other federal food access programs will stop some of our clientele from accessing our services. This funding was essential for me to start my small farm 3 years ago and now that our beginning farmers no longer have access to this program, they are tasked with even more work to generate revenue in their first couple of years. This not only is harming them, but it, alongside the possibility of other funding streams being "damned" threatens to harm our organization as well. I would say, at the moment, I'm more concerned for members of our community not able to access fresh and nutritious food and still a little concerned for our org, especially if changes aren't made."



*not pictured

Max Gibson* San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition - Alamosa, CO Colorado's 3rd Congressional District

"The **USDA OPPE 2501 program** is a lifeline for the farmers at the Rio Grande Farm Park (RGFP), equipping them with critical business education and essential skills like pest management, crop planning, marketing, and soil health. This programming is necessary for their success, ensuring their farms can thrive and continue providing fresh, local food to our community. The funding pause is devastating,

effectively silencing crucial communication with farmers for whom English is a second language and stripping away the education they need to sustain and grow their businesses. Without this support, these small farms face significant barriers to success, threatening not only their livelihoods but also the community's access to fresh, locally grown food, including the regional food pantries who receive significant amounts of fresh food from these farmers.

Over the past three years, RGFP farmers have contributed more than 20,000 pounds of fresh produce to regional food pantries, directly supporting food-insecure families. At our on-site summertime farmers market, thousands of SNAP dollars and Double Up Food Bucks are redeemed annually, ensuring that fresh, organic produce remains accessible to all members of our community. This program is not just about food, but about health and economic opportunity as well. Without this funding, our ability to support farmers in accessing these critical markets will be severely diminished, reducing fresh food availability for those who need it most. The damage of losing funding is a direct blow to economic opportunity, food security, and the resilience of our local food system as a whole."

NUTRITION MATTERS

Meta Jo*

Walsh Community Grocery Store - Walsh, CO Colorado's 4th Congressional District

"I was the food service director at Walsh School for eight years. I am now the Store Manager at our community owned grocery store. We **sell to the local schools** and proudly help them in any way we can. I do not have any kiddos in the school system anymore but I will proudly claim the kiddos from our school!"

We are a very small rural area. The SNAP and school lunch programs have helped us in more ways than I can count! I know SNAP helps so many families in our area. The school lunch program helps our kiddos get healthy meals and snacks. This is a huge help to parents. We started the **Double Up Food Bucks** program last summer and have had many people raving about how it helps them eat healthier and their SNAP goes further each month."



*not pictured

Selena Ramirez

Decatur Fresh Market - Denver, CO Colorado's 1st Congressional District

"I'm a 25-year-old woman working in a low-income neighborhood—the same neighborhood where I grew up. Although I no longer live here, I've chosen to return to work and serve the people who raised me. It brings me great satisfaction to give back to the community that shaped who I am. I was raised by a single mother who escaped a domestic violence situation. Without **SNAP**, we simply wouldn't have survived. It provided us with essential support to put food on the table until my mother was able to find a job and get back on her feet."

SNAP is a vital and impactful program in our community. It provides many families in this neighborhood with access to healthy, fresh foods. At Decatur Fresh, we participate in the **Double Up Food Bucks** (DUFB) program, which allows SNAP users to receive up to \$20 a day in vouchers to spend specifically on fresh fruits and vegetables in our store.

Since implementing this program, we have seen a large increase in the number of families and individuals purchasing produce. Our produce section is constantly being restocked, and customers are making full use of the program. Many have personally thanked us, sharing how DUFB has helped them eat more fresh fruits and vegetables than ever before, and how they are learning new recipes to incorporate all of the produce they are buying with the DUFB vouchers."

