



May 26, 2026

Senate Finance Committee

State of Rhode Island General Assembly

82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02908

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate the chance to submit this written testimony in emphatic support of Senate Resolution S3312. This proposed bill would provide \$4.8 million in funds to the Eat Well, Be Well program.

Working with the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, the Rhode Island Public Health Institute served as the lead evaluator of the Eat Well, Be Well pilot, collecting feedback from nearly 3,500 Rhode Islanders over the course of the program's activities to date.

Eat Well, Be Well is Rhode Island's pilot SNAP incentive program. It works by providing 50% of SNAP participants' EBT funds spent on fruits and vegetables at participating retailers back to their accounts—effectively doubling the value of their dollars spent on fresh produce.

Over the last two years, Eat Well, Be Well—the nation's only statewide program of its kind—has shown to be widely successful. A sample of some of our most important findings are below. To date:

- 70% of users reported this program actively helped them eat more fruits and vegetables overall, while 70% of parents said it helped their children eat healthier.
- 61% of users stated this helped save money in their monthly budgets, allowing them to increase their grocery budgets
- On average, SNAP participants earned \$5.17 per grocery trip in SNAP funds using Eat Well, Be Well.

Most crucially, nearly \$10 million in incentives have been earned by SNAP participants. These funds show purchasing healthy food on SNAP is possible when programs are put in place to create equitable access. Eat Well, Be Well has been among the most impactful program we have worked on in our careers in public health. This program has touched over 140,000 Rhode Islanders across 106,000 households so far. While there is more work to further increase the impact of this program by making these incentives permanent, extending the funding for the pilot phase is an important first step.

We encourage the members of the committee and the Senate to pass this resolution, so that this program's wide impact can continue to be felt across the state.

Sincerely,



Dr. Amy Nunn

Chief Executive Officer
Rhode Island Public Health Institute



Max Erbe, MPH

Programs and Research Director
Rhode Island Public Health Institute

Eat Well, Be Well: Statewide Retail SNAP Incentive Program

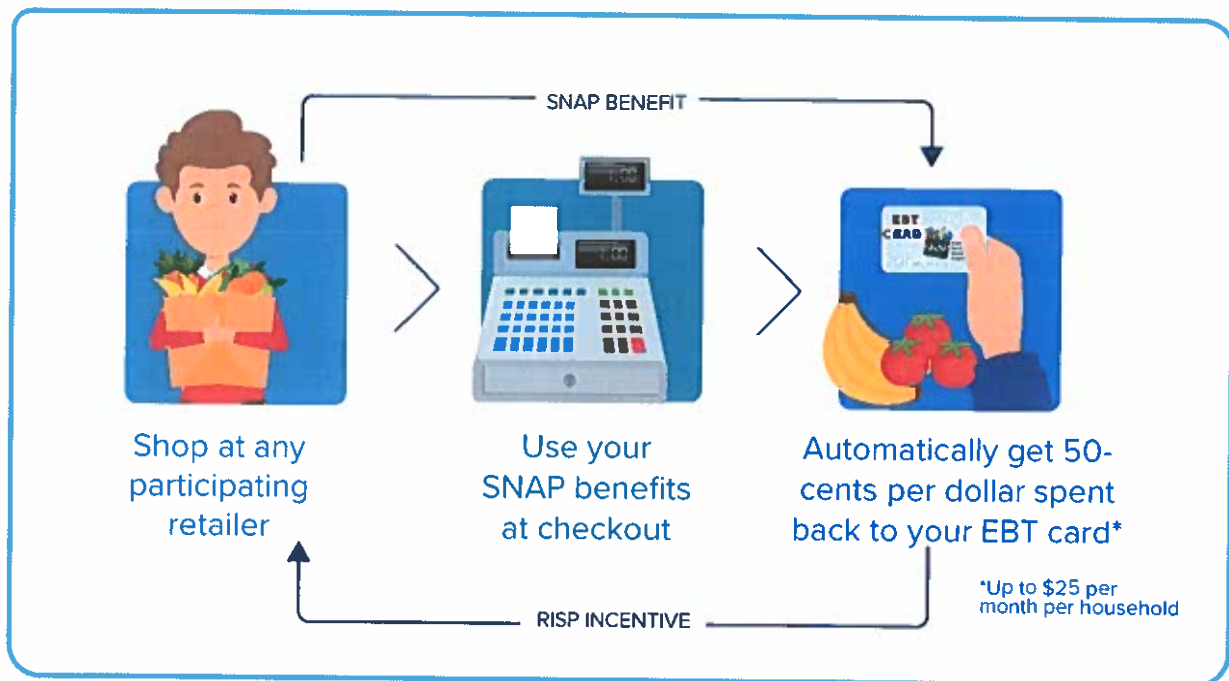
With the dual goals of addressing food insecurity and increasing access to healthy food in vulnerable Rhode Island communities, Eat Well, Be Well was funded in 2022 with an **\$11.5 million appropriation** from the RI legislature with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The program was piloted in January of 2024 as the nation's first statewide retail SNAP incentive program to be made available in grocery settings.

Eat Well, Be Well automatically provides financial incentives to all SNAP users when they buy fresh fruits and vegetables at participating grocery stores. SNAP users receive a 50-cent reimbursement applied to their EBT card after checkout for each dollar they spend on fresh produce at 36 participating retailers, including all Walmart and Stop & Shop locations in Rhode Island.

Essentially, this program doubles SNAP users' purchasing power in the produce aisle of participating grocery stores.

As of May 2026, the original pilot funding for this program is nearly exhausted.

How a Retail SNAP Incentive Program Works



Executive Summary



The Eat Well, Be Well program's planning, implementation, and execution was a **resounding success**.



The goal of Eat Well, Be Well was to make purchasing fresh produce **more affordable** while also **promoting healthy eating**.



By earning a 50-cent reimbursement for each \$1 they spent on fresh produce, SNAP users received **\$10 million in incentives** over the course of the program to buy additional food.



Over 106,000 Rhode Island households benefitted from Eat Well, Be Well.



This program was **highlighted by a highly successful** public-private partnership that operates seamlessly with millions of produce transactions statewide.



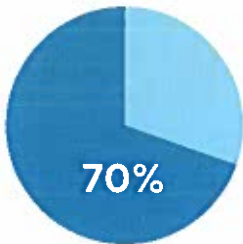
There were **36 Eat Well, Be Well Retailer locations** across Rhode Island, including all Stop & Shop and Walmart locations.



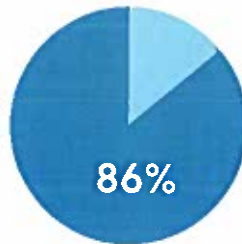
73% of all households used the program, and **over 60%** used it regularly.



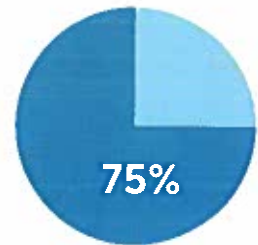
SNAP users earned approximately **\$5.17 per grocery trip** when using Eat Well, Be Well.



70% of users said they ate more fruits and vegetables because of the program



86% of users said they would be likely to recommend the program to a friend



75% of users reported a positive experience

70%

of parents said it helped their kids eat more fruits and vegetables

61%

of users reported that the program helped them save money in their monthly budget

Money Saved Using Eat Well, Be Well Was Spent On:



More groceries (88%)



Bills (17%)



Transportation (6%)

