



FARMERS' MARKET

FOOD ASSISTANCE GUIDE:

*CalFresh, WIC, and nutrition
incentive programs for
Los Angeles area market operators*

Farmers' Market Food Assistance Guide:

*CalFresh, WIC, and nutrition incentive programs
for Los Angeles area market operators*



2017

This publication was developed by the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College (UEPI). It is the product of a five-year collaboration with Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) and Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA) to investigate and implement strategies for streamlining the use of WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks (FVC) at farmers' markets. The content summarizes best practices that were identified to strengthen the acceptance of SNAP and WIC benefits and implement nutrition incentive programs at local markets.

UEPI is an applied research and advocacy center with the mission of advancing community-driven programs and policies to build healthy, thriving communities and achieve social, economic, and environmental justice. The institute has been a leader in food justice work in the Los Angeles area for the past 20 years, and has conducted a series of projects that highlight the potential of farmers' markets to grow and sustain local food economies while also addressing food insecurity in various populations. UEPI's farmers' market programs aim to close the gap between consumer and farmer needs and promote models for how farmers' markets can become thriving accessible spaces that serve all community members.

www.uepi.oxy.edu

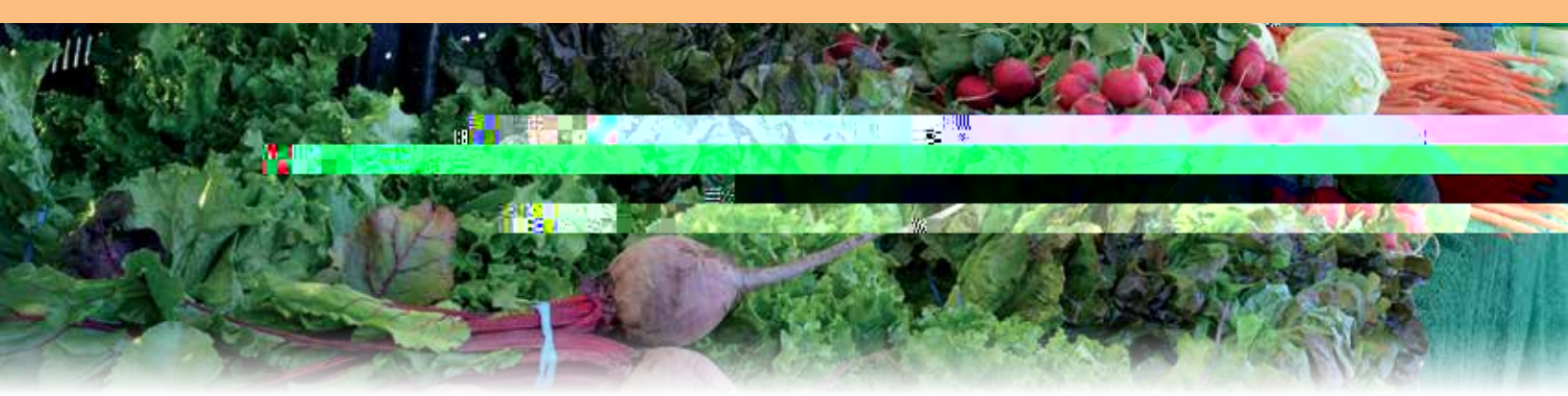
Authors and Contributors

Sharon Cech
Megan Bomba
Matthew Sharp
Frank Tamborello
Jackie Rivera-Krous
Maggie Smart-McCabe
Aili Oстераas-Constable



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
INTRODUCTION	2
SNAP/CALFRESH	6
WIC FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CHECKS (FVC)	12
WIC FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (FMNP)	16
MARKET MATCH (A NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM)	20
CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS	25



FOREWORD

More than ever, Americans are aware of both the increasing hunger in our communities and the need for people to eat healthier by increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables in their diets. Farmers' market operators have been leading the way in using available systems that help low income people share in the bounty of nutritious food that's grown by our small farms, many using sustainable methods that help the environment. The markets are feeding the hungry, making healthy food affordable, supporting the local economy, and supporting a happier Earth, and there are programs around to open those doors.

But these systems that bring food to less fortunate neighbors can be hard to navigate. You've seen an EBT machine at a market—how do you get one of those? How does it work? What kind of papers need to be filled out? You've seen similar colored coupons used for both moms and seniors—how do you tell them apart? How can your farmers start accepting those? What kind of reporting do you need to do to maintain these programs?

This guide will help you find your way around some of that mysterious world of benefit programs, both public and private, and get your market on the way to being an island of hope in a world where healthy choices can be hard to come by. It will help you learn not only how to become authorized to accept various benefits from community members, but how to promote your program and get the word out about why all people, rich or poor, should come to farmers' markets to get their fruits and vegetables. Let's get started!

—*Frank Tamborello, Hunger Action Los Angeles*



INTRODUCTION

Farmers' markets have the potential to reduce food insecurity and hunger in their neighborhoods by serving as a source of high-quality produce that is accessible to people of all income levels. Federal food assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women Infants and Children (WIC), and the National School Lunch Program, are designed to alleviate food insecurity and improve nutrition among vulnerable populations in the U.S. California farmers' markets have the ability to accept both SNAP (also known as "CalFresh" or "EBT") and WIC benefits, and an increasing number of the 144 certified farmers' markets operating across Los Angeles County are getting on board. In 2016, City of Los Angeles leaders required that all 55 farmers' markets in the City accept SNAP/CalFresh benefits.¹ Seventy LA County markets are now authorized to accept WIC,² and a significant number have also joined the California Market Match Consortium, offering additional financial incentives for low-income community members to shop for fresh produce at farmers' markets.³

This toolkit is a practical how-to guide for farmers' market operators on how to accept food assistance benefits and make farmers' markets an option for customers of all income levels. The guide provides an overview of each type of food assistance that can be accepted at a farmers' market (SNAP/CalFresh, WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks, and WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program checks, as well as Market Match), and explains how to integrate these programs into a market's regular operations. Specifically, for each type of food assistance, the guide offers step-by-step instructions for managers on what needs to be done "before," "during," and "after" the market. It also includes a list of helpful implementation resources to streamline the process and provide additional support.

Why Accept Federal Food Assistance at Your Market?

Before jumping into the details of how to accept food assistance at your market, you may be wondering whether the whole process is really worth the effort. *Can it really make a difference for my community? Will it help my farmers and market as a whole?* The short answer is "yes." Accepting food assistance is not only a community benefit, it can also improve the economic health and sustainability of your market. Markets that accommodate food assistance recipients can address food insecurity by offering a source of nutritious fruits and vegetables to populations that frequently have inadequate access to fresh produce. Additionally, by inviting customers who would not otherwise be able to afford farmers' market prices, you can broaden your customer base and increase overall sales. Welcoming customers of all income levels can also help transform your farmers' market into a valuable amenity for the entire community instead of just a select group. The following is a more detailed overview of the top three reasons to integrate food assistance programs into your farmers' market:

1. Improve Food Security and Access

The opportunity has never been greater for farmers' markets to address food insecurity, as it remains a pressing issue in Los Angeles County. A 2017 report disclosed that 1.2 million Angelenos, 40% of whom are children, currently struggle with food insecurity or hunger.⁴ Many food insecure populations also suffer from high rates of diet-related



SNAP/CalFresh

About SNAP/CalFresh

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly known as “food stamps,”—is a federal benefit program designed to improve the food security status and nutrition of people with limited or no income. This can include people who are unemployed, working part time, or working for low wages.

California’s program for administering SNAP is called “CalFresh.” CalFresh benefits are distributed through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which functions like a credit or debit card. CalFresh recipients receive a monthly dollar amount on their EBT cards to spend toward grocery purchases, and can redeem their benefits at any SNAP-authorized retailer. Even though “EBT” is technically the mechanism by which recipients access their benefits—not the benefit itself—SNAP/CalFresh is often simply referred to as “EBT.” For clarity, this guide will use the terms “SNAP/CalFresh” or just “CalFresh” for the program and “EBT” for the transactions. However, in your day-to-day communications and marketing efforts, “EBT” may be the best way to describe the program because it is such a widely used and well recognized term.

Accepting SNAP/CalFresh at Your Market

Farmers’ markets have been able to accept CalFresh since 2003, and since then the number of markets authorized for the program has continued to grow. Once authorized to accept CalFresh, markets can process EBT payments on site using a portable point-of-sale (POS) device, and some municipalities are now requiring that all markets have this system in place. For example, the City of Los Angeles adopted a law in May of 2016 mandating that all farmers’ markets operating on City property accept CalFresh.¹⁸

This section provides step-by-step guidance on how to become an authorized SNAP/CalFresh retailer and set up your market to successfully process EBT and serve CalFresh customers. It also directs you to additional resources that provide more detailed instructions for each step of the process. For example, the *Farmers’ Market EBT Program* run by the Ecology Center, a Berkeley-based nonprofit organization and farmers’ market operator, has extensive CalFresh/EBT resources for market operators and even offers direct support.

Ecology Center

- Farmers' Market EBT Program page





WIC FVC

About WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks (FVC)

The Women Infants and Children program, known as WIC, supports low-income

Accepting WIC FVC at Your Market

Accepting WIC FVC at your market is slightly more complicated than accepting SNAP/ CalFresh. This is because WIC is a more restrictive funding source, and because WIC benefits in California have not yet been transferred to an EBT system. For the convenience of both consumers and retailers, all states are required to make this transition by 2020. However, California is one of the last states to make this change, so farmers' markets will still have to deal with paper vouchers for the next few years. This section provides a detailed description of the steps to accepting WIC FVC at your market.

BEFORE THE MARKET

1. Become a WIC-authorized farmers' market

The first step in accepting WIC FVCs is to become a WIC-authorized market. This involves attending a training run by CDPH/WIC staff and submitting an application. The *WIC FVC Resources* at the end of this section include specific application instructions. (It should be noted that becoming authorized to accept FVCs automatically enables your market to accept FMNP checks as well.) Once your application is accepted, CDPH will send you a "notice of authorization packet" with all of the information needed to accept and transact WIC vouchers.

2. Farmer authorization

Any farmer accepting FVCs at a market must first become a WIC-authorized farmer-vendor. Like the market authorization, this involves attending a training with CDPH/WIC staff and submitting an application (also included in *WIC FVC Resources*). Farmers who go through this process must be certified producers (with a valid certified producer certificate) and can only accept FVCs when selling at WIC-authorized markets. WIC authorization for farmer-vendors must be renewed every three years.

DURING THE MARKET

3. Advertise that your market accepts WIC FVC

Once your market and FVC vendors are authorized to accept WIC checks, CDPH will send you an authorization sign to be displayed at your market. In addition to the sign, it is important to let WIC customers know that your market accepts WIC FVCs (as opposed to just FMNP checks) and also which specific vendors accept the checks. This can be done with clear on-site signage and staff support, as well as social media and other online promotion. (To get started, see "outreach and marketing materials" available from the California WIC Association in *WIC FVC Resources* at the end of this section.)

4. Farmers accept FVC checks

As was mentioned above, there are two types of WIC vouchers that can be redeemed



6. Deposit checks

Once a farmer-vendor or market manager receives approval from VWIX, FVC checks can be deposited at the bank. Remember to endorse each check before depositing. It is also important to double check and make sure 1) that the serial number was approved by VWIX, and 2) that the check is deposited before the last day to use. Otherwise the check will bounce and your bank may charge fees that are higher than the value of the check!

Some banks also charge fees after a certain number of checks have been deposited each month. You may be able to avoid these fees by sending your financial institution the California WIC Association's "Fee Waiver Letter to Banks" included in *WIC FVC Resources*.

Helpful Resources

WIC FVC

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- **WIC Program farmers' market page**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
- **Application instructions to become a WIC-authorized market**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "How to Apply")
- **Application instructions to become a WIC-authorized farmer**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "How to Apply")
- **Farmer and market manager training resources**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "Training Resources")
- **WIC FVC/FMNP "Know the Difference" flier**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "Farmer Resources")

California WIC Association

- **Farm2WIC page**
<http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>
- **Outreach and marketing materials**
<http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>
(located on Farm2WIC page under "For Market Managers & Vendors")
- **Fee Waiver Letter to Banks**
<http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>
(located on Farm2WIC page under "Letter to CA Banking Institutions")

State of California

- **VWIX website**
www.vwix.ca.gov



WIC FMNP

About WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

In 1992, Congress established the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which offers seasonal vouchers for WIC recipients that can only be spent on fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets.²¹ FMNP was created in response to pressure from WIC leaders and other stakeholders advocating for the WIC program to include fresh produce (which was significant because Fruit and Vegetable Checks were not introduced until 2009). FMNP is still not an official part of the WIC package, but is a supplemental benefit designed to encourage WIC recipients to shop at local farmers' markets and consume more fruits and vegetables.

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program runs from May 1–Nov. 30 each year. WIC recipients receive \$5 checks to spend on fruits and vegetables at WIC-authorized farmers' markets at any time during the FMNP season (unlike FVCs, which need to be redeemed within 45 days). Though the WIC program is only for new mothers and young children, FMNP also includes a seasonal voucher program for low-income seniors called "Senior FMNP." This program is also run by WIC and functions in exactly the same way, except that participating seniors receive \$4 checks. Because FMNP and Senior FMNP are handled in the same way at farmers' markets, "FMNP" refers to both types of checks.

Accepting WIC FMNP at Your Market

FMNP has fewer requirements than FVC, so introducing FMNP to your market is a simpler process overall. Though some steps are the same for both programs, this section still goes over each step required for including FMNP at your market.

BEFORE THE MARKET

1. Become a WIC-authorized farmers' market

Like FVC, the first step in accepting FMNP checks is to become a WIC-authorized market. This involves attending a training run by CDPH/WIC staff and submitting an application. (Application instructions are included in *FMNP Resources* at the end of this section.) There is a specific training for markets accepting only FMNPs. However, if your market is already authorized to accept FVCs, you do not need to repeat this step. Once your application is accepted, CDPH will send you a "notice of authorization packet" with all of the information needed to accept and transact FMNP checks.

2. Train farmers

Unlike the process for accepting FVCs, individual farmers do not need to be authorized to accept FMNP checks. However, it is still important for market managers to train farmers on the process of identifying and accepting these vouchers. Specifically, farmers must be familiar with the program, aware of which items are allowable, and know the process for handling the checks.

DURING THE MARKET

3. Advertise that your market accepts FMNP

Once your market is authorized for FMNP, CDPH will allow you to display a sign saying, "WIC & Senior Farmers' Market Checks Welcome." It is important to let WIC customers know that FMNP checks are accepted at your market and how to use them. This can be done with clear on-site signage and staff support, as well as social media and other online promotion. (To get started, see "outreach and marketing materials" available from the California WIC Association in *FMNP Resources* at the end of this section.)

Another good tactic to promote WIC at your market is to coordinate with your local WIC agency. FMNP redemption is highest when the checks are distributed on site at the market. Additionally, customers are more likely to use their FVC at farmers' markets if they are already making the trip to redeem FMNP checks. You can also coordinate with your local Area Agency on Aging to promote Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program distribution to low-income seniors.

4. Farmers accept FMNP checks

Because there are two types of WIC vouchers that can be redeemed at farmers' markets, the first step for a farmer accepting *any* WIC check is to identify which type of check it is. WIC FMNP checks are purple and have a value of \$5. Senior FMNP checks are blue and are worth \$4. If you see a green check, that is an FVC. The steps for processing those checks are slightly different, and are described in the previous section. However, if the check is purple or blue, it is an FMNP, and the next steps are as follows.

The **farmer** must:

- make sure that the items are allowable.
- accept checks only between May 1 and Nov. 30.
- stamp the check with the market's WIC ID#.

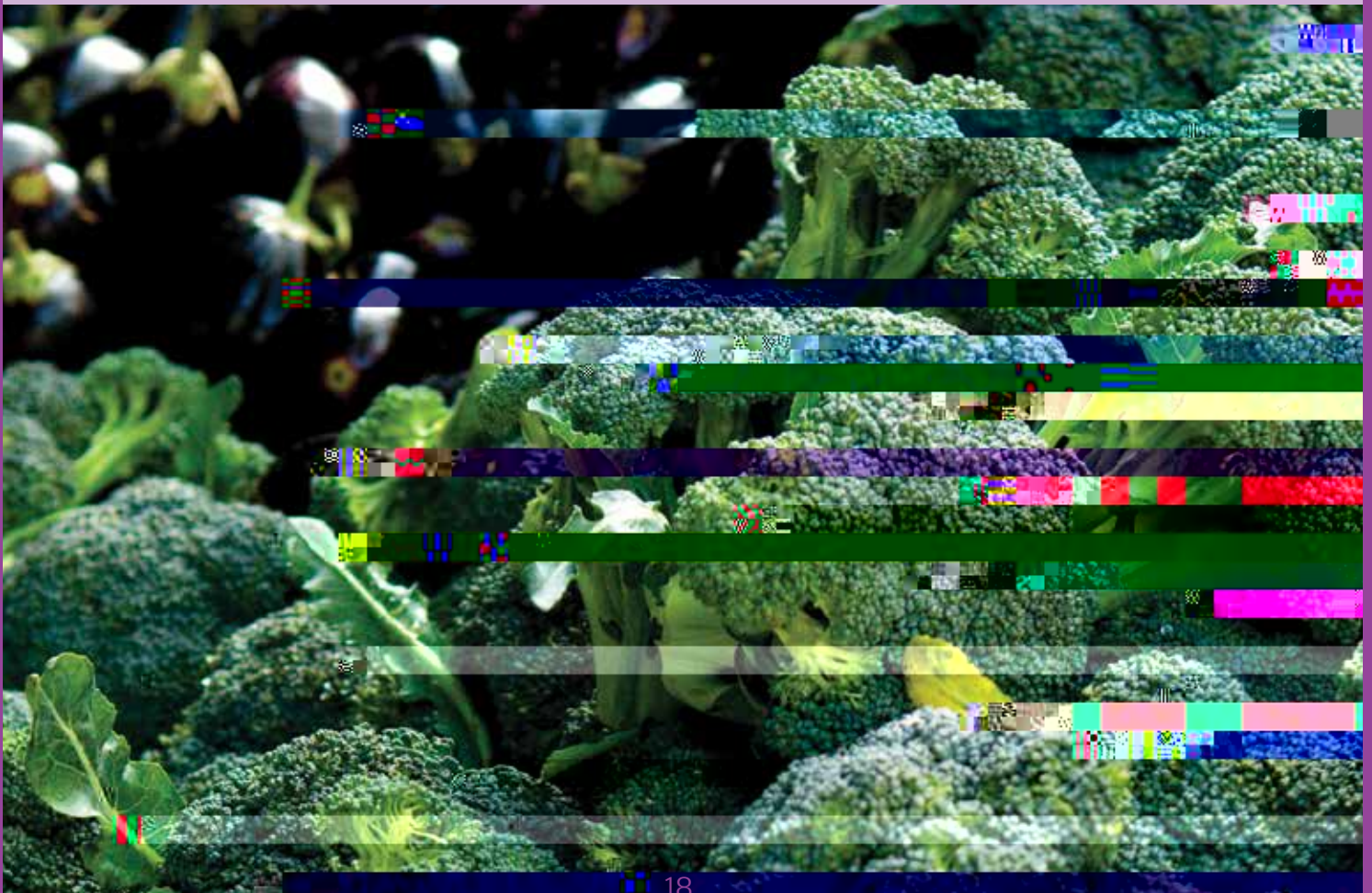
- store the FMNP checks in a safe place. Paper vouchers are like cash, so lost or stolen checks cannot be redeemed.
- give all FMNP checks to the market manager at the end of the market to be deposited at the bank.

AFTER THE MARKET

5. Deposit checks

Once FMNP checks are collected (between May 1 and Nov. 30) and stamped with the market's WIC ID#, they can be deposited any time before Dec. 31 of that year. However, waiting to deposit FMNP checks is not recommended as checks are like cash and there is no compensation if they are lost or stolen.

Some banks charge fees after a certain number of checks have been deposited each month. You may be able to avoid these fees by sending your financial institution the California WIC Association's "Fee Waiver Letter to Banks" featured in *FMNP Resources*.





Helpful Resources WIC FMNP

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- **WIC Program farmers' market page**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
- **Application instructions to become a WIC-authorized market**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "How to Apply")
- **Farmer and market manager training resources**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "Training Resources")
- **WIC FVC/FMNP "Know the Difference" flier**
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/FarmersMarkets.aspx
(located on the WIC Farmers' Market page under "Farmer Resources")

California WIC Association

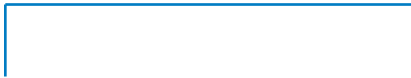
- **Farm2WIC page**
<http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>
- **Outreach and marketing materials**
<http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>
(located on Farm2WIC page under "For Market Managers & Vendors")
- **Fee Waiver Letter to Banks**
<http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>
(located on Farm2WIC page under "Letter to CA Banking Institutions")

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- **WIC FMNP Program page**
www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/overview
- **Senior FMNP Program page**
www.cdfa.ca.gov/SeniorFarmersMrktNutritionPrgm/



Los Angeles (SEE-LA), have combined local, state, and federal money to steadily scale up their Market Match programs.





2. Find the right source of Market Match funding

There are three primary ways to acquire funding for your Market Match program:

- *Apply for grant funding directly.* Market Match can be funded by any number of grant sources. Several government grants fund nutrition incentives, either through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), or directly through the USDA FINI program. Private foundations may also issue grants for these programs. However, applying for nutrition incentive grants can be complicated and requires strong administrative capacity. Grant recipients are typically large market operators with extensive experience managing government grants, so it is not recommended that small operations apply for funds directly.
- *Apply to be a partner with the Ecology Center.* The Ecology Center administers the largest source of federal funds for Market Match in California. Each year they put out a request for applications (RFA) for markets throughout the state to become Market Match partners. This is a good option for smaller market operations that would not have the capacity to apply for and manage a grant directly.
- *Partner with another market operator or nutrition assistance agency that is already running a Market Match program.* In Los Angeles, Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA) acts as a third party support organization, helping markets to set up and run Market Match programs, depending on available funding.

3. Decide how you will run your matching program

Depending on your funding source, there may be restrictions on which benefits you can match. For example, some funding sources match CalFresh dollars exclusively—in that case, only CalFresh recipients are eligible for the matching program and they can receive up to \$10 to match their CalFresh spending at the market. In other cases, funding sources may also allow you to match WIC benefits, or even cash from a customer who is simply eligible for CalFresh, WIC, or even SSI.

Before you start your program, it is always important to know the restrictions of your funding as well as your staff capacity. Markets may choose a more restrictive method just to reduce strain on staff, or you may choose a more open method in order to maximize the number of shoppers attending the market and receiving the benefits.

4. Create scrip for Market Match

Market Match is distributed at the market through “scrip”—an alternative “market dollar” currency—in much the same way as CalFresh. You will need to create a distinct and distinguishable scrip for Market Match so that the different funds don’t get mixed up. The majority of markets use paper market dollars for Market Match because they are least expensive. However, tokens are generally more durable. Regardless of the form, it is easiest for customers to handle scrip that is issued in \$1 denominations because, like CalFresh, change cannot be given.

When designing your scrip, it is important to have “For Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Only” written clearly on the paper or token. Depending on your preference, you may also include the name of the market. Similar to dealing with CalFresh, you will want to make sure that the scrip cannot be easily duplicated, either by having it printed on non-photocopyable paper or by including a “wet mark” (a stamp, seal, or other hand-written mark) as a fraud prevention measure.

DURING THE MARKET

5. Advertise Market Match at your market

To spread the word about Market Match, hang posters at and around the market and distribute fliers throughout the neighborhood. Consider asking local businesses, community centers, or schools to hang promotional materials. The best advertisements are clear, simple, and easy to read. To make posters accessible to non-English speakers, include text in Spanish and other appropriate languages, as well as bold graphics that can transcend a language barrier. If you partner with the Ecology Center or HALA to set up Market Match, you can access their existing marketing materials.

6. Distribute Scrip

Market Match scrip is distributed in the same way as CalFresh scrip. You will need to create a record or log of all customer transactions. It is always a good idea to capture the type(s) of benefits used (including the last 4 digits of a customer’s EBT card), and you may want to record their name as well. This is important for record keeping and is a good way to ensure that Market Match funds are distributed fairly (i.e., each customer only uses Market Match once per market).

AFTER THE MARKET

7. Distribute vendor reimbursements and maintain records

After the market, farmers must turn in all of the Market Match scrip payments that they received during the market to exchange for cash, a check, or a receipt for the scrip value that will be paid the following week. Make sure that your vendors understand the procedures in place at your market ahead of time and that you have a good system for ensuring timely payment if you are unable to pay them that day.

Keeping organized daily, monthly, and annual records of your Market Match sales is critical for tracking your program's success. It is also required by most funders. (See the Market Match website's "frequently asked questions for market operators" in *Market Match Resources* for additional tips and information on record keeping).

Helpful Resources MARKET MATCH

Hunger Action Los Angeles

- Market Match page
www.hungeractionla.org/marketmatch

Market Match website (a project of Ecology Center)

- Market Match partner application page
<http://marketmatch.org/become-a-market-match-partner-2017-18/>
- Frequently asked questions for market operators
<http://marketmatch.org/faq/>
(see section for "market operators and community partners")

Ecology Center

- Farmers' Market Finder
<https://ecologycenter.org/fmfinder/>

Office of Farm to Fork (California Department of Food and Agriculture)

- California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP)
www.cafarmtofork.com/CA_NutritionIncentiveProgram.htm

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- FINI Grant Program page
www.fns.usda.gov/snap/FINI-Grant-Program
- Bonus incentives
www.fns.usda.gov/eat/snap-and-farmers-markets
(located on SNAP Farmers' Market page under "Bonus Incentives")
- Scrip guidelines
www.fns.usda.gov/eat/snap-and-farmers-markets
(located on SNAP Farmers' Market page under "Scrip System [paper scrip, tokens or receipts]")



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

—by *Matthew Sharp*

Today, farmers' markets within the City of Los Angeles must accept CalFresh/EBT. WIC's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program recently celebrated 25 consecutive years of providing seasonal produce coupons to WIC families. USDA's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant to California is expanding Market Match in Los Angeles. These resources mean that there are real increases in access to farmers' markets for Angelenos receiving food assistance. These successes are growing in no small part due to the hard work of local food system advocates and partners in Los Angeles. There is an uncertain future as the Trump Administration threatens to make cuts to domestic safety net spending, including nutrition assistance. Additionally, the same families that depend on WIC and CalFresh are also facing threats to their health insurance, as well as escalating immigration enforcement.

In this highly uncertain and very anxious climate, here is a menu of opportunities to strengthen how nutrition assistance and farmers' markets can best work together to make healthy food more affordable to lo

Federales

SNAP provides \$70 billion in food purchasing assistance to Americans each year.²³ News coverage in January of 2017 and a House hearing on the nutritional quality of purchases made with SNAP benefits highlighted the need for additional strategies to strengthen the healthfulness of food choices of all Americans, including SNAP participants.²⁴ \$50 million in SNAP healthy eating incentives are being distributed through a variety of projects around the nation, and just over \$20 million was allocated to the Healthy Incentives Pilot for SNAP in 2014.²⁵

Many more resources need to be allocated to help close the affordability gap to give

Angelenos

With a vibrant network of food activists, entrepreneurs, engaged consumers, and philanthropic support, the Los Angeles region is at the forefront of making local food affordable for low-income residents. However, there are several challenges to address in the years ahead to ensure that all Angelenos can enjoy the bountiful harvest local farmers offer year-round.

In terms of local food access, farmers' markets are not available in many low-income neighborhoods across Los Angeles. When viewing a map of farmers' markets in Los Angeles, it is clear that disparities in market availability are significant.²⁷ Residents of the southeast cities along the 710 freeway, as well as those living in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys have to travel significantly farther to shop at a farmers' market. And, with only half the certified farmers' markets in the county authorized to accept WIC, low-income residents miss out on potential opportunities for fresh food access. A very recent state policy change authorizing farmers' market managers instead of individual farmers to accept WIC FVC should reduce some barriers, but more support is needed.

Locally, CalFresh participation and retention is a significant challenge facing LA County Department of Public Social Services. At the same time, WIC retention is a challenge facing PHFE WIC and the other six agencies that administer WIC in Los Angeles County.

How can food system champions in Los Angeles strengthen nutrition assistance at farmers' markets?

The LA Food Policy Council, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Hunger Action Los Angeles and Sustainable Economic Enterprises Los Angeles should engage LADPSS and PHFE WIC to develop shared priorities and specific action steps to close the gaps. Likely opportunities include:

- Business case study of the value of farmers' markets to persuade more cities and neighborhoods to host weekly farmers' markets in unserved areas of the county
- Ensure low-income Angelenos enroll and maintain nutrition assistance benefits, and are encouraged to redeem benefits at farmers' markets
- Support WIC agencies to distribute seasonal Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons on site at farmers' markets
- Coordinate training and technical assistance to farmers' market managers throughout the county to become authorized to accept CalFresh *and* WIC
- Develop a pilot project to seamlessly combine nutrition assistance and private subsidies into a more robust and easy-to-administer Market Match program

During the 35 years since the Santa Monica farmers' market launched the contemporary local farm fresh movement, hundreds of passionate stakeholders have emerged and converged around the simple and clear vision that nutritious, local produce must be available and affordable to all. Connecting more Angelenos to farmers' markets through nutrition assistance is a powerful unifying strategy to enact that vision in 2017. Join us.

GLOSSARY

CalFresh - the name for California's program for administering SNAP benefits within the state. It is overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

CDFA (California Department of Food and Agriculture) - the primary govern-

REFERENCES

1. Ferguson G. All Los Angeles farmers markets will now accept food stamps. Los Angeles Times. May 19, 2016. Available at www.latimes.com/food/dailydish/la-dd-farmers-markets-ebt-20160519-snap-story.html
2. California Department of Public Health. CA WIC and Senior Authorized Farmers' Market List. 2017. Available at www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FarmersMarkets/TrainingResources/WICAuthorizedMarkets.pdf
3. Market Match. Partners. 2017. Available at <https://marketmatch.org/partners/>
4. Feeding America. Map the Meal Gap 2017. 2017. Available at www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/2015-mapthemealgap-one-pager.pdf
5. Agrawal, N. How L.A. County is trying to sign more people up for food stamps—and why it's not easy. Los Angeles Times. May 29, 2017. Available at www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-food-stamps-20170529-story.html
6. Los Angeles County WIC Data. About Us. 2017. Available at <http://lawicdata.org/about/>
7. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Ed. 2015. Available at www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/wp-content/uploads/UserFiles/File/pdf/why/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf

8. yg/about/

7.wwy 29ion0.2 (pa.)2[wf(w)10 (wshes.)20.1 (ca)15 (om/si(o sign nartment-p(w)70 (.)20)10 /20)5 (17)20

8.

14. Market Match. Impact. 2016. Available at <http://marketmatch.org/impact/>
15. Los Angeles Food Policy Council. Why EBT at farmers markets? 2016. Available at <http://goodfoodla.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/EBT-FAQ-2.pdf>
16. Market Match. Impact. 2016. Available at <http://marketmatch.org/impact/>
17. McLaughlin P. Redeeming WIC benefits at California farmers' markets. United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. July 3, 2017. Available at www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2017/july/redeeming-wic-benefits-at-california-
18. Ferguson G. All Los Angeles farmers markets will now accept food stamps. Los Angeles Times. May 19, 2016. Available at www.latimes.com/food/dailydish/la-dd-farmers-markets-ebt-20160519-snap-story.html
19. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Scrip system (paper scrip, token or receipts). 2016. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/ebt/scrip-system-paper-scrip-token-or-receipts
20. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. WIC income eligibility guidelines. 2017. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-income-eligibility-guidelines
21. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. 2017. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program-fmnp
22. Market Match. Partners. 2017. Available at <https://marketmatch.org/partners/>
23. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. SNAP administrative costs. 2016. Available at www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/27601-0003-22.pdf
24. O'Connor A. In the shopping cart of a food stamp household: lots of soda. New York Times. January 13, 2017. Available at www.nytimes.com/2017/01/13/well/eat/food-stamp-snap-soda.html?_r=0
25. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. FINI grant program. 2017. Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/FINI-Grant-Program>
26. California WIC Association. Reaching millennials. 2016. Available at www.calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/reaching-millennials
27. Los Angeles Times. Explore your local farmers markets. 2017. Available at <http://projects.latimes.com/farmers-markets/>

