

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

HOW DO I ACCEPT FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS?

FARM FRESH FOOD FOR EVERYONE!

By accepting food assistance program benefits, your farmers market will be more inclusive to all members of the community regardless of their economic means. Beyond the community aspect, there are also economic benefits to participating in these programs. In 2016, the SNAP program alone represented \$66.5 billion spent on groceries across the country.

Farmers have an opportunity to partner with the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide farm fresh products to low-income Iowans. As part of the partnership, farmers receive wireless point-of-sale machines for use not only at farmers markets and roadside stands, but also on the farm. These machines allow farmers to accept Food Assistance Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.



"SNAP" SHOT:



“THE WIRELESS EBT PROJECT STARTED IN 2005. IT IS AN 'ALL WIN' OPPORTUNITY FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES, FARMERS, FARMERS MARKETS, AND COMMUNITIES.”

- IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Your market may not accept SNAP benefits, but that doesn't mean you can't as a vendor!

HERE'S HOW DONNA WARHOVER OF MORNING GLORY FARM DID IT:



"We attended four markets, two of which weren't SNAP retailers. It's part of Morning Glory's mission to make sure that good, healthy food is affordable for everyone in our community. We wanted to be able to take SNAP, so we contacted the Iowa DHS SNAP coordinator directly to make it happen. She was great. We talked numerous times on the phone and she even drove to our farm to do a training. I recommend that other vendors get set up during the off-season before markets begin. The process is simple and so worth it."

SNAP, WIC, & SENIOR

CAN YOU ACCEPT THESE BENEFITS?

IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY AND LOCAL PRODUCTS

SNAP Program

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program administered by the USDA Office of Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and managed by the **Iowa Department of**



Human Services (DHS). SNAP benefits can be used to purchase farm-fresh foods for the low-income household to eat, such as: breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish, and poultry; and dairy products. Seeds and plants that produce food can also be purchased.

1) Does your farmers market have a centralized SNAP station? (Often, these devices are at the table that has general market information.)

Yes: You're all set. Just ask the market manager to explain how the benefit system works at the market and learn what products can be purchased with SNAP dollars.

No: Even if your market doesn't have a centralized SNAP system, you can become a SNAP retailer yourself. As a general rule, farmers markets and vendors who qualify as "direct marketing farmers" are eligible to be authorized SNAP retailers. See Step 2.

2) How do I become a SNAP retailer myself?

Individual market vendors can apply to be a SNAP retailer. As such, they maintain their own POS (point of sale) and receive the consumer's benefits directly. To become a SNAP retailer, contact the SNAP Coordinator with the Iowa Wireless EBT Project at the Iowa Department of Human Services.

3) What about "Double Up Food Bucks?"

In Iowa, the Healthiest State Initiative manages the "Double Up Food Bucks" program, which offers SNAP recipients an opportunity to receive a dollar for dollar match up to \$10 when they purchase fruit and vegetables at the farmers market. Reach out them (below right) to learn more.



WIC & Senior Programs

The **Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)** manages the Iowa WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). WIC (Women, Infants & Children) provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding post-partum women, and infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk. The Senior FMNP provides low-income seniors with vouchers that can be exchanged for



eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs.

1) Is your farmers market certified to accept WIC and Senior FMNP vouchers?

Yes: If the market has been authorized by IDALS, farmers market vendors that grow and sell local produce can accept Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers once they complete required training and an annual application. See Step 2.

No: The market manager must complete an IDALS FMNP Farmers Market Assurance Statement and the market must meet the following requirements: 1) Operate a minimum of two consecutive hours each week for a majority of weeks of the season, June 1 through October 31. 2) Have a minimum of three eligible certified vendors indicating intent to participate in the farmers market for the majority of weeks of the season. 3) Post the market hours and days of operation.

2) My market is certified. I want to be, too.

You must meet the following requirements: 1) You are 18 years or older and reside and grow eligible foods fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs within Iowa or a county adjacent to Iowa's border. 2) Sell produce only grown locally (Iowa or a county adjacent to Iowa). 3) Submit a completed and signed agreement to IDALS. 3) Participate in an IDALS FMNP training on rules and procedures and be in compliance with the rules while selling as an FMNP vendor. Any interested farmers market vendors should contact IDALS for the most up-to-date information.

Important Contacts	Phone
IDALS (WIC/Senior FMNP)	(515) 281-5321
DHS (SNAP/Wireless EBT Project)	(515) 281-4935
Healthiest State (Double Up Food Bucks)	(515) 309-3227

Contact Information

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