



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Reminds Seniors and Families about Farmers Market Nutrition Program for Access to Fresh, Local Produce

Harrisburg, PA – At the PA Open Air Farmers Market at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg today, Wolf Administration officials reminded Pennsylvania’s low-income seniors and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program recipients to obtain and use their vouchers from the Pennsylvania Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to purchase fresh and local fruits, vegetables, and herbs from FMNP-approved farmers at farmers markets and farm stands across the commonwealth.

“The Farmers Market Nutrition Program supports the health and wellbeing of seniors and families and helps facilitate even more connections and conversations between local farmers and communities, bringing neighbors together for nourishment,” said Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “I encourage everyone with program vouchers to use them to pick up some local foods and know that you’re supporting a local farm family when you do.”

From June through September, the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs provide low-income seniors and eligible participants in the WIC program with vouchers to purchase Pennsylvania-grown fruits, vegetables, and fresh-cut herbs from approved farm markets and farm stands across the commonwealth. In an effort to protect vulnerable Pennsylvanians, vouchers are distributed to participants from WIC clinics and Area Agencies on Aging.

The value of vouchers redeemed through the FMNP program and dollars directly supporting Pennsylvania farmers who participate in the program are more than \$3 million annually.

“Many older Pennsylvanians live on fixed incomes. With the increasing costs of food and other necessities, these farmers market vouchers help support seniors by providing them with access to fresh, nutritious foods that are beneficial for their health and well-being,” said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. “I encourage eligible seniors who have not yet received their free farmers market vouchers to contact their local Area Agency on Aging for any assistance they may require to obtain them.”

To be eligible, seniors must be 60 years old by December 31, 2022, and have incomes that do not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty level, which is currently \$25,142 per year for a single person or \$33,874 for a household of two. Eligible seniors can contact their local [Senior FMNP Agency](#) for additional information regarding how to apply for vouchers. Women, and children ages 6 months to 4 years, who are participating in WIC are eligible to receive vouchers under the WIC FMNP. For more information on how to receive their vouchers, WIC recipients should contact their local WIC agency. Each eligible recipient receives four \$6.00 checks to spend throughout the season. Participants may redeem vouchers from June 1 through November 30, 2022.

"We know that providing access to healthy, affordable food is essential to help families across Pennsylvania," Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson said. "The WIC program provides Pennsylvanians the opportunity to learn, develop and form healthy eating habits that can have life-long benefits. This program is one example of how the work of local farmers and available resources provides families with access to fresh fruits, vegetables and other food that promote healthy lifestyles."

The Department of Human Services has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to support access to fresh, healthy foods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients while supporting Pennsylvania's agricultural economy. Interested market owners should apply to be an authorized SNAP retailer [through FNS](#). Once authorized to accept SNAP, vendors can contact Pennsylvania's electronic benefit transfer (EBT) provider Conduent at 1-888-736-6328 to request free wireless EBT processing equipment. The grant also covers set-up costs and one year of SNAP transaction fees.

"By taking advantage of the opportunity for free EBT equipment to accept SNAP, farmers markets can offer a new avenue for Pennsylvanians who rely on SNAP to spend their benefits on fresh, nutritious food," said DHS Deputy Executive Secretary Andrew Barnes. "And by helping Pennsylvanians keep food on the table, we are supporting local food retailers and producers, easing demand on charitable food systems, and, most importantly, helping people achieve a better quality of life that they deserve."

Applications for the SNAP and other public assistance programs can be submitted online at www.compass.state.pa.us or by phone at 1-866-550-4355. On-site [County Assistance Office](#) (CAO) services are available if clients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers at 215-560-7226 for Philadelphia clients or 1-877-395-8930 for clients in all other counties.

The Department of Agriculture has a free FMNP Market Locator app for iOS and Android devices. The app is available for download in both the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#). Once loaded on a mobile device, users can either enable their location services on the phone or manually enter a location (city, town, zip code) to find participating markets or farm stands nearby. The app will show the market location, address, directions, phone number, and hours.

Pennsylvania farmers interested in participating in FMNP and being part of the solution to food insecurity in the community are encouraged to [apply](#). Currently, there are more than 1,050 approved farmers at 828 farm stands and 344 farmers' markets across the state.

For more information on FMNP or other food security resources in Pennsylvania, visit agriculture.pa.gov/foodsecurity.

Note: Photos and video from this event will be available at PAcast.com.

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