Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Chapter 7: Accepting "Multiple Currencies" at Your Farmers Market

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By Karen Kinney and Colleen Donovan



The Farmers Market
Nutrition Program, known as
"FMNP," is a federal
nutrition assistance
program, funded primarily
by the federal government
and administered by the
State. There are two FMNP
programs: one is the
Women, Infants and

Children or "WIC FMNP"; and the other is the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program or "Senior FMNP."

The purpose of FMNP is to:

- improve the health of participants by providing access to fresh, nutritious, unprepared locally grown fruits and vegetables; and
- raise awareness and increase sales at farmers markets and farm stores.

In Washington State, the **WIC FMNP** started in 1992 and is administered by the Department of Health. It primarily serves pregnant and breastfeeding women and children from age 1 to 5 who are enrolled in the WIC Program. WIC participants meet regularly with WIC staff to improve their nutrition and health. The **Senior FMNP** is part of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and serves low-income seniors (over 60). The WIC and Senior FMNP programs have different sources of funding, slightly different rules, and their own set of politics. WIC FMNP is currently funded through the federal "Child Nutrition and WIC

Reauthorization Act" while Senior FMNP is funded through the Farm Bill. Even though FMNP is a federal program, states are required to provide a financial match for WIC FMNP in order to receive federal funding each year.

The rules for FMNP and funding situation may change from one year to the next. Please check the WSFMA website for the latest information or talk to the DOH representative at the WSFMA's annual conference.

The Washington State
Farmers Market Association
actively works with the
state and partner
organizations to monitor
program and budget
changes and impacts to
markets each year.

In both the WIC and Senior FMNP programs, eligible recipients receive checks to spend during the farmers market season. FMNP checks can be used for fruits, vegetables and cut herbs. Senior FMNP checks can also be used to buy honey.

In 2016, seniors will receive one booklet with ten \$4 checks totaling \$40. And WIC clients receive a \$20 booklet per client (a mother and/or child over 12 months old).

2013 WIC FMNP sample



2013 Senior FMNP sample



The WIC FMNP checks and Senior FMNP checks are always different colors to reduce confusion.

Typically, FMNP checks are distributed to WIC clients and seniors from June to September and must be used by October 31.

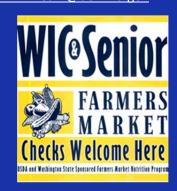
FMNP information online:

http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/FarmersMarket.aspx Or Google "FMNP DOH." The DOH's website has a section dedicated to FMNP resources, including state and local contacts, market and grower applications, nutrition information, FAQs and promotional materials in multiple languages. Be sure to ask for a copy of the "FMNP Information Manual."



To help streamline operations, training, contracting and monitoring of growers and markets, the WIC and Senior FMNP programs are jointly administered by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). For questions about applications, deadlines, rules, or any problems, please contact:

Katherine Flores
Farmers Market Nutrition
Program Lead
(360) 236-3721
(800) 841-1410
katherine.flores@doh.wa.gov
FMNPTeam@doh.wa.gov



Important FMNP Dates Please check DOH website to confirm deadline.	
April 1	Applications due from returning growers
April 1	Update form due from returning markets
May 1	Applications due from new markets
July 1	Applications due from new growers
June 1	FMNP season starts
Oct. 31	Last day to accept FMNP checks
Nov. 15	Last day to deposit FMNP checks

FMNP works with farmers and farmers markets

To be successful, the program depends on a partnership between market managers and the Washington State Department of Health. DOH authorizes growers, farmers markets, and farm stores to accept FMNP checks for a two year period. Note that both the farmers market and the farm vendor need to be approved based on eligibility rules. To participate, farmers markets need at least five produce farmers. Farmers must grow fruits and vegetables. If your market is not currently participating in FMNP and is interested, please contact Katherine Flores or email FMNPTeam@doh.wa.gov.

Managers are asked to stamp farmer checks, answer basic questions from farmers and relay problems to DOH staff. Farmers must deposit their checks in a timely manner to receive their money and have **all checks deposited by November 15.** If any farmers you work with have problems depositing checks, please refer them to Katherine Flores or email FMNPTeam@doh.wa.gov.

FMNP's Impact

The amount of the FMNP checks may seem small. However, the cumulative sales add up. According to the DOH, in 2014, 126 Washington farmers markets participated in FMNP and had combined sales of \$1,056,472 (WIC and Senior). In addition to increasing market sales and supporting farmers, participating in the FMNP program is a great community connection by promoting health and nutrition among low income mothers, children and seniors.

The "Accepted Here! Food Access Programs at Washington State Farmers Markets" report summarizes FMNP and SNAP trends from 2010 to 2014. The report is available online:

http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/marketing/ In addition, DOH has some of their annual data available by county on the "WIC Annual Summary Data" page: http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/HealthBehaviors/WIC



The WIC FMNP is sometimes confused with the larger WIC Nutrition Program, formally known as the "Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children."

WIC Nutrition Program benefits include monthly checks (\$6.00 for kids, \$10.00 for moms) to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at authorized grocery stores; these checks cannot be used at farmers markets.

In 2014, more than 307,000 clients were served by WIC programs and 47% of all babies born in Washington receive benefits from the WIC. There are local WIC clinics in every county in the state, as well as 14 tribal WIC clinics.

The Washington WIC
Nutrition Program is working
to convert from paper checks
to an EBT electronic card
system (like food stamps are
now). The program plans to
approve farmers to accept
these WIC EBT cards after
this new technology is rolled
out within the next few years.