



State of Illinois
Department of Human Services

Illinois Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Training Manual and Handbook for Farmers



15 YEARS
PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITIES



**ILLINOIS WIC AND SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM
2013 Insert with participating counties**

- The “Farmers’ Market Checks Accepted Here” sign must be displayed during market hours
- No FMNP participant shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
- Checks can only be used to purchase items on the eligible food list (see training manual) only at approved market locations.
- No cash can be exchanged for checks
- No sales tax can be charged or included in the price of items purchased with FMNP checks
- The Department of Human Services must receive new farmer applications by August 31.
- The farmer **must** put his **ID# on the front of every check** and endorse the back of each check. If the check is deposited without this legible information, **our processor cannot pay you and you may be charged a fee from your bank if the check is rejected.**

For this 2013 season, there will be three (3) types of checks:

| Description | Color of check | First Day to Use by: | Last Day to Use by: | Must Deposit By: |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) WIC FMNP – June | ORANGE | June 1, 2013 | June 30, 2013 | July 31, 2013 |
| (2) WIC FMNP - Regular season | PURPLE | July 1, 2013 | October 31, 2013 | November 30, 2013 |
| (3) Senior FMNP - Regular season | GRAY | July 1, 2013 | October 31, 2013 | November 30, 2013 |

All checks will reflect the first and last day to use by dates. Please be sure to comply with the guidelines in the Illinois Farmers’ Market Training Manual and Handbook for Farmers and timelines to ensure payment.

2013 Illinois Farmers Market Approved Counties

Adams County Health Department
Boone County Health Department
Bureau County Health Department
Champaign County Public Health Department
Clinton County Health Department
Coles County Health Department
Cook County

- CEDA
- Roseland Hospital
- Sinai Community Institute
- TCA Health Inc.
- Catholic Charities of the Arch Diocese of Chicago

Edgar County Public Health Department
Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department
Jackson County Health Department
Jefferson County Health Department
Jersey County Health Department
Kankakee County Health Department
Knox County Health Department
Lake County Health Department
Logan County Health Department

Macon County Health Department
Madison County

- Coordinated Youth Services

Marion County Health Department
McDonough County Health Department
McHenry County Health Department
McLean County Health Department
Morgan County Health Department
Peoria City/County Health Department
Perry County Health Department
Rock Island County Health Department
St. Clair County

- St. Clair County Health Department
- East Side Health District

Sangamon County Department of Public Health
Tazewell County Health Department
Union County Health Department
Vermilion County Health Department
Washington County Health Department

Illinois Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Training Manual and Handbook for Farmers

The purpose of the training manual is to provide the rules and regulations of the Illinois Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

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ILLINOIS FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Illinois Farmers' Market Nutrition Program includes both the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, (operated since 1995,) and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (operated since 2000.)

Program Overview

What Is The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program?

The WIC Program is a USDA funded program that provides nutrition counseling and supplemental foods to low income, pregnant women, breastfeeding women, postpartum women, and children up to age five. The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WFMNP) provides participants in the WIC Program, except infants, with checks to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. WIC participants receive these nutritious foods in addition to the regular WIC food package.

The WFMNP is intended to improve the diet of WIC participants as well as provide an awareness of where farmers' markets are located. Farmers' markets offer a community resource of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

For the farmer, the program should serve to increase sales of fruits and vegetables as well as increase the number of customers using farmers' markets.

What Is The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program?

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) operates much like the WFMNP, but the checks are provided to low-income seniors. Low-income seniors are defined as individuals who are at least 60+ years old and who have household incomes of not more than 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines (published each year by the Department of Health and Human Services).

Why Provide Fresh Fruits And Vegetables?

The value of fresh fruits and vegetables has been recognized in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, issued jointly by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and by the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Academy of Sciences. Consumers need to eat more fruits and vegetables for optimum health and well-being, about five cups per day are currently recommended for most Americans.

Who Administers The Program?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the programs through its Food and Nutrition Section (FNS). In 1988, Congress authorized a three-year demonstration project to test the concept in ten states. The success of the demonstration project led Congress to enact the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-314), creating a permanent program within the agency.

Who Qualifies To Receive Illinois FMNP Checks?

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, and children from age one to age five participating in the WIC Program will receive checks during the summer months. These checks will be in \$3.00 denominations. Checks issued to WIC participants will clearly be labeled WIC.

Low-income seniors who reside in the approved service areas will also receive checks during the summer months. Checks issued to seniors will be clearly marked with the word "Senior". These checks will also be in \$3.00 denominations.

Is FMNP Available Statewide?

No, please refer to the insert which lists approved counties for the current season.

WIC local agencies distribute the WIC FMNP checks.

Illinois Area Agencies on Aging distribute the Senior FMNP checks. Catholic Charities distribute the Senior FMNP checks in Cook County.

Guidance for Farmers

How Does A Farmer Become an Approved Provider?

- The Department of Human Services follows a 3-year contract period. Farmers must apply, and once approved, sign a contract with the Illinois Department of Human Services in order to participate. Farmers applying in the first year will be approved for the full three year period. Farmers applying the second year will be approved for two years, and those who apply the 3rd year of the cycle will be approved for one year, and would need to re-apply the next year.
- Applications for contracts will not be accepted after August 31st for the current season. The FMNP checks may not be accepted until the contract is approved.
- Farmers participating in the FMNP must have grown a portion of the produce sold to WIC FMNP and Senior FMNP participants or, represent a non-profit organization to sell produce at a FMNP approved site on behalf of local farmers. Individuals, who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else, such as wholesale distributors, cannot be authorized to participate.
- New Farmers - Farmers new to the program FMNP must receive face-to-face training before becoming an approved farmer.
- All Farmers - all farmers must review the training manual each year.

How Are FMNP Checks Redeemed?

- WIC or Senior participants may redeem FMNP checks only with contracted farmers or their representatives at an authorized market for the purchase of eligible foods.
- Contracted farmers participating in the FMNP shall not refuse to accept properly presented FMNP checks in exchange for locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs and eligible forms of honey (honey for seniors only) and shall offer FMNP participants the same courtesies as other market customers.

- FMNP participants must use the checks between June 1 and October 31, of the year they are issued.
- The farmer should total the cost of the produce selected and inform the FMNP participant of the total.
- The FMNP participant should give the farmer the appropriate number of checks to pay for the produce.
 - Only checks from the current year may be accepted. Checks from prior years will not be reimbursed.
- If the total price of the produce selected is not in exact increments of \$3.00, the FMNP participant may select additional produce to bring the purchase total to exactly \$3.00.
 - Change must not be given if the amount of purchase is less than the full \$3.00.
 - FMNP participants must pay for any purchase over the amount of the checks redeemed.
- All redeemed checks must be deposited in the farmer's bank by November 30 of the year they are issued. Checks arriving at the bank on or after December 1 cannot be paid.

**Prices of fruits, vegetables and herbs sold to FMNP participants must not exceed prices to the general public for the same food item. Prices should be clearly marked to assist FMNP participants in using the full value of the checks.

In the event a problem occurs with reimbursement, the farmer should contact FMNP staff at DHS by calling 1-800-843-6154. The hotline will forward a message to the appropriate staff. You may also call our direct line 217-782-2166.

What Foods Are Eligible For Purchase With FMNP Checks?

- Only fresh, unprocessed, locally grown fruits, vegetables and cut herbs shall be purchased with FMNP checks.
 - Locally grown shall mean that the product was grown in Illinois or the six contiguous States (Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin).
- For Seniors only, the allowable forms of honey are: comb, cut comb, liquid, naturally crystallized, kosher, wild, organic, unflavored honey sticks (see list of eligible foods on Page 5). Honey in any form is not allowable for WIC participants.

Eligible Foods for Purchase with FMNP Checks Include but Not Limited To:

| <u>Fresh Vegetables</u> | | <u>Fresh Fruits</u> | <u>Honey (Seniors Only)</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Artichokes | Okra | Apples | Comb |
| Asparagus | Onions | Apricots | Cut comb |
| Beans | Parsley Root | Berries | Liquid |
| Beets | Parsnip | Cantaloup | Naturally crystallized |
| Bok Choi | Peas | Cherries | Kosher |
| Broccoli | Peppers | Currants | Wild |
| Brussels Sprouts | Potatoes | Grapes | Organic |
| Cabbage | Pumpkins (edible) | Melons | Unflavored honey sticks |
| Carrots | Radishes | Nectarines | |
| Cauliflower | Rhubarb | Peaches | |
| Celeriac | Rutabagas | Pears | |
| Celery | Scallions | Persimmons | |
| Corn | Shallots | Plums | |
| Cucumbers | Spinach | Rhubarb | |
| Eggplant | Sprouts | | |
| Fennel | Squash | | |
| Garlic | Sunchokes | | |
| Greens | Swiss Chard | | |
| Herbs (edible) | Tomatoes | | |
| Horseradish | Turnips | | |
| Kale | Tomatillos | | |
| Kohlrabi | Watercress | | |
| Leeks | Zucchini | | |
| Lettuce | | | |
| Mushrooms | | | |

What Foods Are Ineligible For Purchase With FMNP Checks?

- Prohibited purchases with FMNP checks shall include but are not limited to:
 - Non-locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables
 - Processed food items such as jams/jellies, juices/ciders, canned vegetables, baked goods, and fruit pies

- Other ineligible items shall include popcorn, nuts, dried beans/peas, honey, eggs, ornamental pumpkins/gourds/corn, flowers, potted plants and potted herb plants.

Items not allowed for purchase with FMNP checks:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Popcorn | Any processed food items such as: |
| Nuts | Jellies/Jams |
| Dried beans/peas | Juices/Cider |
| Eggs | Canned Vegetables |
| Ornamental Pumpkins/Gourds/Corn | Baked goods |
| Flowers | Fruit pies |
| Potted Plants/Herbs Plants | |

When Should the FMNP Sign Be Displayed?

During market hours, contracted FMNP farmers shall display a current FMNP sign, provided by IDHS, informing FMNP participants that checks may be redeemed. Signs for previous 3-year cycles should not be used. To receive additional signs contact staff at IDHS by calling 1-800-843-6154 or 217-782-2166 or by writing to:

Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program
 Illinois Department of Human Services
 815 / 823 E. Monroe
 Springfield, IL 62701

Can Cash, Change, Credits, Refunds Be Given?

- FMNP checks shall never be exchanged for cash.
- Change, credits, or refunds shall never be given to a participant using FMNP checks.
- FMNP participants may only receive fresh locally grown fruits and/or vegetables in exchange for FMNP checks.
- Contracted farmers are prohibited from cashing or receiving reimbursement for FMNP checks accepted by a non-contracted farmer.

****Potential Exception:**

In the event the participant reports to the farmer that they receive produce that was not of good quality the Department requests that the FMNP participant be treated like any other customer. In this case the farmer should provide the participant with additional “new” produce; however no exchange of money or credit may take place.

Can FMNP Participant’s be Charged Sales Tax?

Sales tax must not be charged on any items purchased with checks nor can the sales tax be included in the purchase price of items purchased with the checks.

Summary of Steps for Farmer Approval

- DHS follows a 3-year contract period. Farmers applying in the first year will be approved for the full three year period.

- For example: Farmer A applies in 2011. She will not need to reapply until 2014. Farmer B applies in 2012. He will need to reapply in 2014. Farmer C applies in 2013. She will need to apply again the next year at the beginning of the new cycle.
- Farmer reads current training manual/handbook for farmers and completes FMNP application for participation and mails to address on application.
- Application is reviewed by DHS/FMNP. Contract is mailed to farmer.
- Farmer completes and signs both contracts and returns both signed contracts to DHS.
- DHS/FMNP sends contracts to the Secretary for approval and signature.
- DHS/FMNP adds farmer to database and the Farmer number is added to the first page of the contract.
- DHS/FMNP mails one executed contract (with Farmer number) and two current FMNP signs to the approved farmer.
- Farmer can now accept WIC and Senior Farmers' Market checks and deposit the checks in their bank using the correct Farmer number located on the first page of their contract. This farmer number must be written or stamped clearly on each check. The back of the check must also be endorsed.
- Farmers are responsible for any changes to program policies and will be notified at the address on file.

Civil Rights and Program Oversight

The State of Illinois operates the WIC Program in full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. State and Local Agencies, vendors and other subcontractors shall not discriminate against any applicant or participant for reasons of race, color, national origin, age, sex, and disability, or as defined in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

What Is Considered Discrimination?

All FMNP participants must be treated with the same courtesy as any other market customer. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Civil Rights complaints may appear to be the same as a Program complaint: slow service, rudeness, excessive requirements; but as soon as someone alleges it is because they fall under one of the protected classes (race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap), it becomes a Civil Rights complaint.

How Should Complaints be Handled?

Any potential or current FMNP participant or farmer who feels she/he has been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability may file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action.

“In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Definitions Related to Civil Rights:

- Applicant - A person who submits in writing, electronically, verbally or through a designated representative requests participation in the FMNP.
- Current Participants - Those persons to whom assistance, services, or benefits are provided by a FMNP Program.
- Potential participants - Those persons who may be eligible to receive FMNP benefits and services but have not applied.
- Discrimination - Any distinction of one person or a group of persons from others, intentionally, by neglect, or by the effect of actions or lack of actions based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.
- Complaint - A verbal or written allegation of discrimination which indicates that any FMNP is administered or operated in such a manner that it results in disparity of treatment or services being provided to persons or groups of persons because of their protected basis.
- Complainant - A person or group of persons who allege discrimination in the delivery of program benefits or services by a State agency, local agency, or other sub-recipient.
- Civil Rights - The nonpolitical rights of a citizen; the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the 13th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and by acts of Congress.
- Civil Rights Act and Regulation - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other authorities as outlined in Section II above and in the program specific appendices.
- Disability - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of an individual’s major life activities, having a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such impairment.
- Investigation - Formal gathering of facts by the appropriate Office of Civil Rights (OCR) or other authorized government agency or private contractor that will refute or substantiate an allegation of discrimination.
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Persons - Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. Recipients of Federal financial assistance have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by person(s) with limited English proficiency.
- Preliminary Inquiry - An informal gathering of information that will refute or substantiate an allegation of discrimination.
- Noncompliance - The finding that any civil rights requirement, as interpreted by regulations, has not been satisfied.

- Program Compliance Reviews - An evaluation procedure used to determine if State agencies, local agencies, and other sub recipients are administering and operating FNS programs in accordance with program and civil rights regulations, instructions, policies, and guidance.

What are Monitoring Reviews?

State Agency representatives will make visits on market days during the months of operation to identify any problems or misunderstandings as well as determine if farmers or FMNP participants may need additional guidance. The monitor is there to offer face-to-face training during this visit as well.

What are the Penalties for Abuse?

Farmers identified and documented as having abused the program will be sanctioned. A sanction schedule follows.

ILLINOIS FARMERS' - MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM SCHEDULE OF PROGRAM ABUSES AND SANCTIONS

| Proven Abuse | Offense | Sanction/Duration | Payment Withheld |
|---|------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Acceptance of FMNP checks for non- local fruits or vegetables | 1st | Education | No |
| | 2nd | Warning | Yes |
| | 3rd | Termination/60 Days | Yes |
| | Additional | Termination/1 year | Yes |
| Acceptance of FMNP checks for food items other than fruits or vegetables | 1st | Warning | Yes |
| | 2nd | Termination/60 Days | Yes |
| | Additional | Termination/ 1 year | Yes |
| Charging the FMNP customer more than the price to the general public for the same food item. | 1st | Education | No |
| | 2nd | Warning | Yes |
| | 3rd | Termination/60 Days | Yes |
| | Additional | Termination/1 year | Yes |
| Exchange or refund of foods purchased with FMNP check(s) for cash, or non-FMNP eligible food, or other items. | 1st | Warning | Yes |
| | 2nd | Termination/60 Days | Yes |
| | Additional | Termination/1 Year | Yes |
| Acceptance of checks after the expiration date. | All | Check payment refused. | Yes |
| Acceptance of check(s) for food not yet received (e.g., rain checks, IOU's) | 1st | Termination/60 Days | Yes |
| | Additional | Termination/1 year | Yes |
| Acceptance of FMNP checks in exchange for cash or nonfood items from participant or from another | All | Termination/1 year | Yes |

**ILLINOIS FARMERS' - MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM SCHEDULE OF
PROGRAM ABUSES AND SANCTIONS**

| Proven Abuse | Offense | Sanction/Duration | Payment Withheld |
|---|----------------|--|-------------------------|
| farmer. | | | |
| Acceptance of FMNP checks without having a signed contract to participate in the program. <u>*Applications for contracts will not be accepted after August 31.</u> | 1st | Check payment refused until contract signed. | Yes |
| | 2nd | Termination/1 year | Yes |
| Failure to provide State Agency | | | |
| Representative's reasonable access to market premises, personnel, redeemed checks on hand, or other records pertinent to the Program during business hours. | 1st | Termination/60 Days | N/A |
| | 2nd | Termination/1 year | N/A |
| Failure to comply with Civil Rights Law (e.g., discrimination due to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability) | 1st | Termination/60 Days | N/A |
| | 2nd | Termination/1 year | N/A |



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