

**EBT TOOL-KIT:  
LAUNCHING, MANAGING,  
MARKETING AND  
EVALUATING YOUR EBT  
PROGRAM**

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# Family Nutrition Program

□ We work statewide, funded by SNAP-Ed and EFNEP

● We serve low-income Virginians by supporting them to make healthy choices

● We teach basic nutrition, budget food shopping, and food safety to both youth and adults across the state

● We are a Virginia Cooperative Extension program



# Food Security Project

Created in response to the Food and Nutrition Service's call for community based programs. Work towards ensuring all of our participants have access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food.

We do this through focusing on:

- providing technical and programmatic support to farmers markets managers,
- educating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) consumers on how and why to shop at farmers markets
- supporting gardening by SNAP families.

# SNAP/EBT at Farmers Markets

- EBT is the name of the system that delivers benefits to SNAP participants (similar to a debit card system). SNAP and EBT are often used interchangeably in regards to farmers markets.
- In Virginia over \$100 Million dollars in SNAP benefits were issued in October 2014 alone.
- Only \$105,000 (.0037%) of the \$1.4B in SNAP distributed in VA was redeemed at farmers markets in 2013.





# Why start a program?

- Social benefit
  - SNAP programs at farmers markets increase access to healthy, local food for low income families.
- ECONOMIC benefit
  - Accepting SNAP allows vendors to serve more of the consumers in their communities, widening their customer base.
  - SNAP at farmers markets keep these dollars flowing in the local economy, unlike SNAP benefits spent at national chains.

# Roadblocks to EBT at Farmers Markets

- Previously identified
  - After speaking with several market managers across the state we realized that many are in need of a lot of support to make their EBT programs viable.
  - Many markets had done the work to get a EBT machine but were then unable to launch their program.
- Identified through market manager survey
  - To find out more about what managers need in order to have a strong EBT program we did a statewide survey in the summer of 2014.

# Statewide Survey

- We partnered with Wholesome Wave and Elizabeth Borst of The Farmers Market.co who are working on building EBT capacity in Virginia.
- The survey was sent to local food organizations and market managers.
- Asked about the challenges and successes they had experienced with EBT and administrative details about how current EBT programs were structured.
- 79 responded (50 market managers and 29 local food organizations).



# Survey Main Findings

- Top challenges with EBT identified through the survey:
  - Outreach and Marketing (22%)
  - Staffing (16%)
  - Accounting (16%)
  
- Top identifiers of a successful EBT program:
  - Program growth
  - Growth in vendor sales
  - Increased Awareness of the program



# Tool Development

- The EBT Tool Kit **will** be housed on the new Virginia Farmers Market Managers Association's website [www.vfmma.org](http://www.vfmma.org)
- This website will serve as a hub for all kinds of information for farmers market managers across Virginia.
- The EBT Tool Kit will have a wide range of materials in it for both markets just starting their EBT program and markets looking to grow their EBT program.

# Launching Your EBT Program

- EBT Manual
  - ▣ This is a manual specific to Virginia that explains the very basics of SNAP is and how to start accepting it.



# EBT Manual Content

- Glossary of Terms
- Market Day Procedures
- EBT, Credit/Debit Transactions
- Vendor Redemption and Payment
- Accounting Procedures
- Vendor Education
- Customer Education and Program Marketing
- Steps for Getting Authorized
- Getting your POS Machine
- Determine if Your Market is Eligible
- Fiscal Sponsorship
- Become Authorized by FNS to accept SNAP
- Choose your free EBT Machine Provider
- Purchasing Market Tokens
- Resources
- Case Studies
  - Two Non-Profit Markets
  - Two Municipally Run Markets
  - For-Profit Market

# EBT Program Administration

## □ Spreadsheets

- We collected examples of accounting spreadsheets used by the managers in the Case Studies, along with other forms such as token envelope forms, vendor training Power Points, and marketing tools.

- Best practices- Video series

In order to show case programs and ideas that are working around the state we are creating a series of videos for market managers that allow them to learn from each other's experiences, as they often work alone.



# Marketing Materials

- We created a set of marketing materials for managers to use to advertise their EBT program:
  - ▣ Posters
  - ▣ Banners
  - ▣ Brochures and post cards for consumers that explain how to use an EBT card at a farmers market
  - ▣ SNAP consumer friendly social media content for Facebook and Twitter
  - ▣ Tiered price menus for each season



# Program Evaluation

- Some of the accounting tools will serve as program evaluation tools.
- Creating tools to help managers collect different kinds of data to show the impact of their program.
  - Market's board
  - Program funders
  - Local government
  - Possible data sources include testimonials and dot surveys.



# Information about SNAP-Incentive Programs

- SNAP Incentive Programs are funded differently from market to market in Virginia.
- Tips from interviews with representative funders on compelling grant/funding applications are available.
  - Non-profit health organizations, churches, and financial institutions.
  - Other basic grant writing tips are also available.

# Future materials

- We will be collecting feedback from market managers.
- Adjust the Tool Kit over time to respond to the state's changing needs.
- Use the VFMMMA's website forum section.



# Next Steps

- VFMMA website will fully launch
- Continue to create ongoing content such as Best Practices video series
- Send us your feedback!
- The Tool Kit is a living document

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