

Grant Writing Tips from Interviews of Funders of SNAP Incentive Programs in Virginia

Tips for applying for funding from a religious group

- Instead of just reports and numbers, share stories about customers who have benefitted or could possibly benefit from your program. How does funding your SNAP incentive program benefit your local community, instead of just benefitting your farmers market?
- Applying to a congregation you have a relationship with increases your chances of being funded. Many congregations in Virginia support local food pantries, or run their own, and receive donated produce from their local farmers market. A relationship like this strengthens your request, especially as many congregations are providing relief to families that have an income just above the poverty line and may not be eligible for SNAP. Congregations may have a past history of working with pantries, and know that partnership can be successful so you should consider ways of building a similar relationship.
- For some congregations it is very important to them that your application directly state how your work reflects their faith's values. Look carefully at their application, if this is mentioned specifically and does not match your organization's mission think twice about applying.

Tips for applying for funding from a non-profit health care organizations

- Every nonprofit health care organization must complete a Community Health Needs Assessment every 3 years, and many of these Needs Assessments have findings that match up with the missions of farmers markets. Become familiar with the organization's Needs Assessment (usually found on their website) before applying for funding, and make clear how your market's program will help the health care organization with their goals. Remember, these community assessments can be used as data resources for applications to other funders as well. ([Click here for an article explaining Community Health Needs Assessments](#))
- How will your program benefit the organization's most vulnerable patients? How will it help your community's health?
- Collaboration with other community organizations strengthens your application. Look at organizations working in other related areas; are similar services being provided to your community that you can add to? You could reach out to existing providers and enhance/collaborate with them on nutrition education, cooking skills programs, food growing skills programs, farm to institution programs, outreach and marketing, etc. These funders want to help make community connections so communities do not duplicate resources.
- Access to healthy food for low income families is a main priority for many of these funders; applications should be able to demonstrate that people shopping at your market are in need. How are you evaluating your program and its benefits/reach? Many markets ask for data at the point of sale, such as recording the zip code of SNAP incentive program participants.

Tips for applying for funding from a local financial organization (banks and credit unions)

- Many of these organizations have target areas that they are looking to fund. Research the areas in their community they are trying affect change in before applying. Some are taking a holistic approach to balance household finances- access to healthy foods, affordable health care, housing, etc. Can your program affect more than one of these areas?
- The potential funder may be looking to support an organization they can really get involved with, more than just give financial support to. Can their staff or customers volunteer with you, or interact in some way?
- How is your program beneficial to the population that they're trying to reach out to?
- These funders may be interested in where their contribution to your market will be recognized, such as putting their logo on merchandise or your website.
- These funders are often not looking to fill an operating budget gap, but rather aid any already well thought out program that can come together quickly.

Other Resources:

Economic impact of SNAP and SNAP incentives

[SNAP spending at farmers markets benefits the local economy](#)

[USDA Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study](#)

[Virginia Farm to Table plan](#)

Hunger/Health Statistics for Virginia

[USDA Food Environment Map](#)

[Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap](#)

[Feeding America Southwest Virginia's "Hunger in America" Key Findings \(2014\)](#)

[Virginia Atlas of Community Health](#)

[Virginia SNAP participation rates by county/year](#)

Grant Writing Basics

[Foundation Center's recorded webinar "Grant writing 101" \(free\)](#)

[Grantmanship Center: "Getting the Grant"](#)

[Purdue OWL: Introduction to Grant Writing](#)

Fiscal Sponsorship

[Grantmanship Center: Can I get funding for my non-profit while I am in the process of incorporating or applying for tax-exempt status?](#)

[Grantmanship Center: What is fiscal sponsorship? How do I find a fiscal sponsor?](#)



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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material is funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP which provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your county or city Department of Social Services or to locate your county office call toll-free: 1-800-552-3431 (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays). By calling your local DSS office, you can get other useful information about services.

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