Virginia Fresh Match: Proven Approaches for SNAP Success

Friday November 15th, 9:45-10:45am
Session Goals

• SNAP and Virginia Fresh Match
• SNAP incentives: American Heart Association national priority
• Perspectives from Regional Leads
• Questions and Group Discussion
SNAP and Nutrition Incentives at Virginia Farmers Markets

• SNAP at farmers markets:
  • Started in 2009
  • Expanded through regional leadership
  • Networked for greater impact
• Wholesome Wave funded nutrition incentives and VFM network
• Virginia Fresh Match developed to support SNAP and nutrition incentives
• FINI provides $1.8 M for network and incentives
• 75 participating markets and 4 retail sites
Virginia Fresh Match (VFM) is Virginia’s Statewide Nutrition Incentive Program

Why Nutrition Incentives?
• 10.1% of Virginia households struggle to put food on the table, especially nutritious fruits and vegetables
• Doubling the purchasing power of SNAP consumers unlocks affordable access to fruits and vegetables
• As a result, families can choose to eat better, reducing risk of diet-related illness and improving community health

VFM Nutrition Incentives
• $1 for $1 match on any SNAP purchase, match to spend on fruits and vegetables
• Results in more income for farmers from both SNAP and match
• When people can afford produce, they buy it!
Why:

• 2/3 of SNAP participants are children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

• Every $5 spent using SNAP generates as much as $9 in economic activity.
SNAP/Match Incentive and Infrastructure Policy Goals

Support increasing the ability of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to use their benefits at markets

INFRASTRUCTURE

Support funding for programs that significantly increase SNAP benefits when used on fruits and vegetables

INCENTIVES
SNAP Incentive and Infrastructure Success Stories & Legislative Ask

- South Carolina
- Massachusetts
- Michigan

Legislative Ask:
At least $3 million for SNAP Incentives and Infrastructure with at least $1 million for infrastructure.

Champion: Senator Stanley
VFM Network Impacts

**Markets**
- Expand food access + equity
- Attract customers, build farmer income
- Get VFM resources + network support + FINI funding
- Contribute to VA collective impact

**Producers**
- Gain new income and new customers
- Keep benefit $$ local
- Subsidy for small, midsize direct market farmers
- Maintain and expand production

**Customers**
- Maximize limited benefits, often $16 to $40 per month
- Spend wisely by doubling with VFM
- Get freshest VA foods, better quality diet for less $$
- Give back to community, support nearby family farms

**Stakeholders**
- Target food security efforts with proven incentive programs
- Integrate with other food access programs
- Maximize impact of local investment across VA
Reaching More Virginians With Healthy Food

SNAP sales from all Virginia farmers markets reached $172,225 in 2018

$220,330 in SNAP and incentive redemtions at Virginia Fresh Match Markets

555 Virginia producers engaged with Virginia Fresh Match

2,904 Customers

55 sites currently offer matching programs — find them at VirginiaFreshMatch.org

7,019 Transactions
VFM Network Map

Shenandoah Region: Harrisonburg Farmers Market

Blue Ridge Region: Local Environmental Agriculture Project

Northern Virginia Region: Community Foodworks

Central Region: Virginia Community Food Connections

Southwest Region: Appalachian Sustainable Development

Capital Region: Shalom Farms

Coastal Region: Williamsburg Farmers Market

Southside Region: Martinsville Uptown Farmers Market
Growth & Cultivation

SNAP Incentives

✔ 273 Virginia Farmers Markets

✔ 126 Authorized to accept SNAP

✔ 75+ VFM partner markets

✔ 64 VA Markets active in July 2019

✔ 4 Retail Markets
VFM Barriers & Facilitators

**Market Barriers:**
- Low capacity markets with volunteer (20%) or part time market managers (32%)
- Program admin and outreach
- Market operator or farmer support

**Market Facilitators:**
- Network and outreach resources
- Region Leads/Peer to peer learning
- Common data collection
- Funding support

**Customer Barriers:**
- Awareness of VFM
- Transportation
- Available benefits
- Price perception

**Customer Facilitators:**
- Common messaging - You SNAP We Match
- Extend benefits through doubling
Upcoming work with Virginia Fresh Match

• 2019:
  • Added 20 farmers markets to VFM network
  • Launched at 2 new grocery retail sites
  • Innovative marketing pilots (TV, direct mail, distribution to WIC and Senior)
  • Build and strengthen cross-sector alliances

• 2020
  • Add additional 20 farmers markets and 3 grocery retail sites
  • Leverage FINI funds for greater impact
  • Targeted focus on low capacity regions and markets
  • Pilot additional best practices
  • Secure $3M in state-level funding for VFM incentives and infrastructure
Onboarding markets is typically a conversation of values and means:

- Food access and the ‘bottom line’
- Different stakeholders
- SNAP processing coverage in NOVA
Meeting partners where they are:

- Market culture - reporting
- Staff and admin capacity
- Data collection
POP Plus Incentives, Tracy Frey, Coastal Region

• Piloting a new incentive
• Reaching the target audience
• Measuring outcomes
Effective Outreach - Beth Austin, Central Region
Virginia Community Food Connections

- Why is outreach so important?
- Partnering with community organizations
  - Department of Social Services
  - VDH WIC
  - Schools
  - Area food bank and food pantries
  - And so many more...
- Tabling, events and at the market
- Timing matters
- Just do it!
Alternative marketing - Sam Lev, Blue Ridge Region, LEAP

- Regional Ad Campaign with WFXR
  - Coverage area included entire VFM Blue Ridge and Southside Region
  - In-studio visits let us tell our story in our own words
  - Casting a wide net: 8 week commercial campaign reached estimated 323,000 adults, average adult saw commercial 4 times (according to station’s data)
  - Banner ads led to click-throughs to VFM market map
- Measuring success
- Shareable content on social media
- Led to improved relationship with station
• By fundraising together, you can work smarter not harder
  • Are there opportunities like locality funds that might pay for multiple markets’ Partner Market Fees?
• Framing support as a sponsorship, not just a donation
VFM Resources - Katie Struble, VFM

- Website
- Newsletter
- VFM ListServ
- Social Media – FB/IG
- Network Training & Webinars
## Contact Information

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