



SNAP Benefits at Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are making real strides in increasing fresh food access for low-income Americans.

What is SNAP?

The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, is the nation's largest nutrition assistance program. The program is managed at the federal level by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Food vendors are required to be authorized by FNS before accepting SNAP benefits for approved food items.

SNAP benefits can be used to purchase any approved food item for human consumption, as well as seeds and plants that produce food. Clients receive their benefits via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system that works like a debit card to transfer their benefits to the food retailer.

Why get authorized to accept SNAP Benefits?

- Increased customer base
- Increased economic benefits for you and your communities
- Healthy and nutritious options for SNAP recipients
- Approximately \$195 million SNAP Benefits were issued each month in Virginia for Federal Fiscal Year 2023*
- **NEW** - Summer EBT program begins 2024 adding additional benefits

Who can become a SNAP retailer?

In order to accept SNAP benefits, businesses first need to apply for SNAP authorization. USDA authorizes business, farmers markets, direct marketing farmers and non-profit food buying cooperatives. To participate in SNAP, all businesses must meet the basic FNS authorization eligibility criteria, which can be viewed at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer/eligible>.

What is a Farmers' Market?

A farmers' market is a multi-stall market where farmer-producers sell agricultural products, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables (but also meat products, dairy products, and/or grains), directly to consumers at a central or fixed location.

What is a Direct Marketing Farmer?

Direct marketing farmers are individual producers of agricultural products that sell their food and farm products directly to consumers without using an intermediary.

Why should I accept SNAP?

As an authorized SNAP retailer, you will increase your customer base, see increased economic benefits for you

and your communities, and provide healthy and nutritious options for SNAP recipients.

How do I apply?

Apply online to accept SNAP benefits at your farmers' market or farm stand. Applying to accept SNAP benefits at your farm stand or farmers' market is a three- step process: get a USDA account, fill out an application online, and mail us your supporting documentation to complete your application. Also, by applying through the secure online portal, you can check the real-time status of your application via your USDA account.

Complete your application online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply-to-accept>. You can also request a paper application by calling our toll-free telephone number at: 1-877-823-4369; the paper application package is usually received within 3-4 business days. Lastly, you can attend a SNAP EBT sign up event to apply.

How do I get the equipment to take SNAP benefits? I heard it was free.

Markets and farmers are currently able to receive free wireless EBT-only equipment through the Virginia SNAP agency.

To receive a free wireless point of sale (POS) device, [complete this form](#) or email the information requested on the form to ask_vafm@dss.virginia.gov after approved to accept SNAP.

Who can I contact with questions?

For additional information call on applying for SNAP: (312) 353-6609

For general information, visit our SNAP Farmers' Market webpage:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/farmer-producer>.

NEW - To learn how Direct Marketing Farmers can become SNAP online authorized visit:

<https://www.marketlink.org>.

NEW - 2024 Summer EBT

A permanent summer EBT program begins this summer! Once authorized, you'll be able to accept Summer EBT cards just like you would with SNAP EBT. USDA estimates that nearly 21 million children are expected to receive food benefits this summer with the new permanent federal program. Families will receive \$40 per month per eligible child (or \$120 for the summer per child) beginning this year. In total, that's approximately \$2.5 billion in grocery benefits.

***Source: National Data Bank as of 2/22/2024**
