



## Accepting Food Assistance Benefits at the Farmers Markets at the Capitol

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) will facilitate acceptance of multiple forms of food assistance benefits at the Farmers Markets at the Capitol. Vendors who sell eligible food items are strongly encouraged to accept these benefits.

### **Bridge Cards- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

The SNAP program helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. Formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, it is the nation's largest nutrition assistance program. Benefits are distributed monthly through the use of an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system that utilizes a plastic card similar to a bank debit card to deduct food purchases from the shoppers food account.

#### ***Eligible Food Items***

Households **CAN** use SNAP Bridge Cards to buy foods for the household to eat, such as:

- Breads and cereals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meats, fish and poultry
- Dairy products
- Seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat

Households **CANNOT** use SNAP Bridge Cards to buy: beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco; or

- Any nonfood items, such as pet foods
- Soaps, paper products
- Household supplies
- Vitamins and medicines
- Food that will be, or is meant to be, eaten immediately at the market
- Hot prepared foods

#### ***Becoming a Participating Vendor***

If you will be selling any approved food items at the Farmers Markets at the Capitol you are strongly encouraged to accept SNAP Bridge Cards. If you are not currently an authorized retailer with the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service who has their own point of sale device, you will need to sign a "SNAP Vendor agreement" to accept SNAP Bridge Cards. The "SNAP Vendor Agreement" can be downloaded from the MIFMA website. This agreement must be signed and submitted with the vendor application for any vendor who plans to sell eligible food items. Providing an electronic signature on the online vendor application is also acceptable. On the day of the event, a sign will be provided to you to post advertising that you accept SNAP Bridge Cards.

#### ***How to Accept Benefits***

Customers will take their SNAP Bridge Card to the MIFMA tent at the event (near the corner of Capitol Ave and Michigan Ave). There, they will request that a certain amount of benefits be transferred from their federal food assistance account to the farmers market's account. In return for this transfer of benefits, clients will receive paper scrip equal to the amount of benefits that were approved to be withdrawn.

The paper scrip will appear as follows:



The paper scrip will either be worth \$1 or \$5. Clients can then use this paper scrip to purchase eligible food items from participating vendors. As a vendor, you will accept this scrip for its face value for eligible food items **only**. **Cash change cannot be given for paper scrip**. You can make change for \$5 paper scrip with \$1 paper scrip.

At the end of the event, return the paper scrip you have collected to the MIFMA tent. You will receive a receipt for the dollar amount. **MIFMA will retain 5% of all scrip-based sales in order to offset the costs of administering the program at the market** which includes costs associated with operating the point of sale device, staff time, reimbursement accounting, and paper scrip maintenance. Checks reimbursing you for all SNAP scrip sales, less the 5% administrative fee, will be issued by MIFMA and mailed to the address you provide on your vendor application either after each market or after all three markets are over, whichever the vendor chooses.

## **Double Up**

Double Up is an incentive program that matches SNAP Bridge Card benefits spent at participating farmers markets with tokens that can be spent on fresh, unprepared, Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables. When customers receive SNAP Bridge Card scrip, as above, they will ALSO receive an equal value of Double Up tokens worth \$2.00 each. The program is sponsored by Fair Food Network, a nonprofit based in Ann Arbor. More information is available at [www.doubleupfoodbucks.org](http://www.doubleupfoodbucks.org) or by calling 734-213-3999 x 203. The tokens are aluminum and look like the following:



## ***Eligible Food Items***

Fresh fruit and vegetables **grown in Michigan**.

## ***Becoming an Eligible Vendor***

If you will be selling fresh, Michigan grown fruit and vegetables at the Farmers Markets at the Capitol you will be strongly encouraged to accept Double Up. Vendors who are eligible to participate must sign a "Double Up Vendor

Agreement” to participate. The form can be downloaded from the MIFMA website and must be signed and submitted with the vendor application for any vendor who plans to sell eligible food items. Providing an electronic signature on the online vendor application is acceptable. On the day of the event, a sign will be provided to you to post advertising that you accept Double Up.

### ***How to Accept Benefits***

Clients can use their tokens to purchase Michigan grown fruits and vegetables from participating vendors. As a vendor, you will accept these tokens for their face value for eligible food items **only. Change cannot be given for Double Up tokens.** At the end of the day, you will return your Double Up tokens to the MIFMA tent. You will receive a receipt for the dollar amount. **MIFMA will retain 5% of all Double Up token sales in order to offset the costs of administering the program at the market** which includes costs associated with implementing the program, staff time, and reimbursement accounting. Checks reimbursing you for all Double Up token sales, less the 5% administrative fee, will be issued by MIFMA and mailed to the address you provide on your vendor application either after each market or after all three markets are over, whichever the vendor chooses.

### **WIC Project FRESH and Market FRESH (for seniors)**

WIC Project FRESH and Market FRESH are programs that provide seniors and WIC clients with fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables with the goal of expanding the awareness, use of and sales at farmers markets. Eligible seniors and WIC clients receive coupons with a value of \$2.00 each.

### ***Eligible Food Items***

Fresh fruits and vegetables **grown in Michigan** including fresh herbs. Additionally, Market FRESH coupons can also be used to purchase honey.

### ***Becoming an Eligible Vendor***

If you will be selling any approved food items at the Farmers Markets at the Capitol you will be strongly encouraged to accept WIC Project FRESH and Market FRESH vouchers. To receive reimbursement for these vouchers, you will need to have a contract with either the Michigan Department of Community Health WIC Division to accept WIC Project FRESH or the Michigan Aging & Adult Services Agency to accept Market FRESH. Enrolled vendors can collect vouchers and submit them in accordance with the program guidelines. Participating vendors are expecting to post signage provided by each program to advertise that they accept one or both of these types of vouchers.

### ***How to Accept Benefits***

Clients can use their coupons to purchase eligible food items from participating vendors. As a vendor, you will accept these coupons for their face value for eligible food items **only. Change cannot be given for these vouchers.** When you accept a voucher(s), you should confirm that the voucher(s) is signed and that the signature on the voucher(s) matches the signature on the front of their voucher book cover. This ensures that the person using the voucher(s) is the client they were issued to, or someone approved to shop on their behalf.

You will submit voucher(s) you have collected to the appropriate state agency and receive reimbursement directly from the State of Michigan.