



Farmers Market Access to Equipment to Process SNAP Transactions

Talking Points

The [Michigan Farmers Market Association \(MIFMA\)](#) envisions that all farmers markets will receive policy support to assist, and not hinder, our mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. As a [2017 Advocacy Priority](#), MIFMA is working to ensure that all farmers markets and direct marketing farmers authorized to accept SNAP in Michigan have access to the equipment they need to process transactions at no cost. This is important to expand healthy food access through Michigan farmers markets.

As you are speaking with legislators, the media, and/or your market stakeholders, please utilize the following talking points to share the message about why this initiative is important to yourself and to MIFMA.

- Farmers markets and direct marketing farmers provide access to **fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables**, often in underserved areas where access is limited.
- In order to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, a farmers market or a direct marketing farmer must have a point-of-sale device with which to process transactions.
- To operate SNAP incentive programs like Double Up Food Bucks, a market must first be able to accept SNAP. **Growing and sustaining SNAP acceptance at Michigan farmers markets is one way to support the Double Up Food Bucks program.**
- Free hardwired devices are available to farmers markets and direct marketing farmers through Michigan's State EBT Contract. However, farmers markets take place in locations where electricity and phone lines are not commonly available. **Access to wireless devices is absolutely necessary to sustain and grow the ability of farmers markets and direct marketing farmers to accept SNAP benefits.**
- Farmers markets need access to equipment that is free to acquire and utilize because markets often operate on a minimal, to nonexistent, budget. Eliminating expenses will help grow and sustain a market or farmer's ability to accept SNAP.
- Ensuring access to this equipment is **a priority of the [Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan Coalition](#)**, a coalition that represents hundreds of organizations in Michigan working together to reduce childhood obesity.
- In August 2016, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service notified states that they could provide wireless equipment to farmers markets and direct marketing farmers, and doing so was **an allowable administrative expense that would be split 50/50 between the state and the USDA.**
- At least 18 states already provide free wireless equipment to farmers markets, including California, South Carolina, and Indiana.
- MIFMA has been working with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to amend the State EBT Contract to include free wireless devices for farmers markets and direct marketing farmers.
- The fiscal year 2018 (FY18) Senate budget for MDHHS includes a placeholder to provide funding to wireless devices for farmers markets and direct marketing farmers authorized to accept SNAP. We need legislators in both the Senate and the House of Representatives to support including funding for wireless devices for farmers markets in the state's FY18 final budget.

How does this issue effect you? Include in your conversation why this issue is important to you. Are you a market manager who knows the costs your market incurs to accept SNAP? Are you a direct marketing farmer that has not started accepting SNAP because the costs are too high? Or are you a health advocate that wants to ensure your community has access to nutrition fruits and vegetables? *Remember to tell your story and why this is important to you!*