



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Information about Farmers Markets and Direct Marketing Farmers Participation in SNAP

Accepting SNAP at your farmers market is a win-win situation. The Program gives you, the retailer, direct access to new customers and gives SNAP recipients access to healthy, locally-grown produce. The USDA has made it a priority to increase access to fresh produce for low-income Americans by helping farmers markets and direct marketing farmers become SNAP authorized.



How do I become SNAP-authorized?

The [SNAP application](#) is available on-line. The [Farmers Market Application Guidance](#) is a helpful resource that provides step-by-step directions to complete the SNAP application.

What documents do I need?

To complete the SNAP authorization application some paperwork is needed. In most cases, responsible official(s) (i.e., market owners, partners, board members) must provide copies of a photo I.D. and Social Security card. An applicant may also be required to submit a copy of its business license, and nonprofit organizations may need to submit a copy of the IRS Determination Letter, noting 501(c)(3) status. Government-owned markets must submit a letter, on letterhead, proving the government entity owns or sponsors the market.

How do I get SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) equipment?

EBT equipment is available for SNAP authorized direct marketing farmers and farmers markets. A farmers market is defined as two or more farmer-producers selling agricultural products directly to the public at a fixed location. Direct marketing farmers are individual producers of agricultural products that sell directly to the public. Learn more about the program by visiting the [SNAP EBT Program](#).

Are there funds available for EBT equipment and fees in my state?

States are required to make no-cost, EBT-only POS equipment available to retailers, such as farmers markets and direct-marketing farmers, that are exempt from the 2014 Farm Bill requirement that SNAP retailers pay for their EBT equipment. Although FNS encourages States to make this option wireless, that is not always the case. Please check with your [State SNAP Contact](#) to determine if this option may work for your market or farm.

Who do I call to update my point of contact information with FNS?

FNS Farmers' Market Hotline at: 312-353-6609.

Can non-profit organizations operate multiple SNAP-authorized farmers markets?

Non-profit organizations *can* operate more than one SNAP-authorized farmers market as a parent or umbrella organization; however the parent organization must obtain a new and unique SNAP authorization number (also referred to as an 'FNS number') and EBT equipment for each new farmers market and for any existing markets that want to participate in SNAP. The parent organization does not need separate bank accounts for each market.



My market is a nonprofit, do I need to include a social security number in my SNAP application?

No. Please see the [Application Guidance](#), which walks an applicant step-by-step through each section of the application and what information is needed.

My market is run by the city -- do we need to include a social security number?

No. Government Owned markets must submit an EIN. Please see the [Application Guidance](#), which walks an applicant step-by-step through each section of the application and what information is needed.

Do I need a new FNS number for every farmers market location?

Yes, this is to maintain program integrity. Since the founding of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the policy surrounding participation of “retailer food stores” in the Program has relied on a requirement that each store – that is, each location – apply for (and receive) its own authorization/license.

My market moves indoors in the winter -- do I need two FNS numbers?

FNS understands that market locations are often not as permanent as those of typical SNAP-authorized retailers, and that such moves are often for reasons beyond the markets’ control. Accordingly, FNS does not always require markets that move locations to obtain a new SNAP-authorization license. FNS considers the following factors when evaluating whether a market’s move materially changes the nature of the market and, therefore, whether a market must obtain a new SNAP-authorization license:

- Whether the market will serve essentially the same customer base at the new location.
- Distance from original location.
- Whether the market is an urban or rural setting.
- Whether the market moved willingly or was forced to do so.
- Whether the market is moving for seasonal reasons (i.e., winter indoors location vs. summer outdoor location; summer location moved nearer to school in the fall, etc.).
- Whether the market will continue to be managed by the same person(s) or organization.
- Whether administered by the same management team.
- Whether the vendors are substantially the same as at the original location.

FNS will evaluate the criteria above on a case-by-case basis to determine if a market has a need for a new SNAP-authorization license for one or more market locations. To maintain program integrity, all markets should update their location, day and time information as soon as there are any changes. Additionally, if the market’s responsible official, organization, or government point of contact changes, that too should be updated so that FNS is able to contact the management of the market. All changes in market information can be made by calling 312-353-6609.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

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