



# Utah Farmers Market SNAP

**Toolkit**

# Participating Extension Programs



Utah State University Extension provides research-based programs and resources with the goal of improving the lives of individuals, families and communities throughout Utah. USU Extension manages Create Better Health, Utah's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program, provides nutrition education and obesity prevention services to SNAP recipients and other eligible low-income individuals. Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed) offers a variety of classes to expand participants' knowledge of nutrition, budgeting, cooking, food safety, and physical activity.



Utah Farmers Market Network endeavors to enable greater communication and collaboration among Utah farmers market managers. UFMN provides market managers with a platform for exchanging ideas and news, as well as relevant training and funding opportunities.

## Partners



Utahns Against Hunger's mission is to increase access to food across Utah. UAH is Utah's only state-wide anti-hunger non-profit organization working on public policy and advocacy for federal nutrition programs. Since 1979, UAH has worked to expand the reach of nutrition programs.



Utah Department of Health's mission is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care and promoting healthy lifestyles.

# Table of Contents

<b>2</b>	<b>What is SNAP?</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Why Accept SNAP?</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>How does SNAP Work?</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>How to Get Started: 7 Steps to Success</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>1. Determine if your Market Has Capacity</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>2. Find Out if Your Market is Eligible</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>3. Become an Authorized Market</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>4. Get Equipment and a Service Provider</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>5. Create a Management Plan</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>6. Notify and Train Vendors</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>7. Develop an Outreach and Marketing Campaign</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Helpful Resources</b>



Food insecurity is often a hidden problem, and it impacts families and individuals in all communities, regardless of geography. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to sufficient food for an active, healthy life. More simply put, people who experience food insecurity cannot afford to buy enough food. Food insecurity rates in Utah are similar to the national average with **roughly 10% of Utah households, more than 300,000 people, experiencing food insecurity.**<sup>1</sup> While there are several variables that contribute to food insecurity, food access and cost are major factors. Farmers markets are critical in increasing access to healthy, local foods. One important way that farmers markets do this is by participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps families stretch their food dollars. This toolkit outlines how farmers markets can implement a SNAP program, and help combat food insecurity in their communities.



## What is SNAP?

SNAP, also known as Food Stamps, provides food assistance to low-income individuals and households experiencing food insecurity. In order to qualify for SNAP, participants need to be living at or below 130% of the poverty level. Funds are loaded onto an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card that individuals can use like a credit or debit card. In Utah, this card is known as the Horizon Card. SNAP is a federally funded program of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). In Utah, SNAP is administered by the Department of Workforce Services. Annually, SNAP helps over 80,000 Utah households put food on the table.<sup>2</sup>

>85%

of SNAP families have at least one working adult.

71%

of individuals who receive SNAP are children (53%) have disabilities (12%), or are seniors (6%).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2018, Economic Research Report No. (ERR-270)*

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Food & Nutrition Services, *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2017*

# Why Accept SNAP?

**SNAP increases financial stability and access to healthy food.** By accepting SNAP, your market is helping families stretch their food dollars and purchase more fresh, nutritious foods. SNAP helps participants become financially stable and provides needed support as they transition to self-sufficiency. Annually, SNAP lifts over 3 million people out of poverty, including roughly 1.5 million children nationally.<sup>2</sup>

**SNAP brings in new customers for your vendors.** SNAP can expand your customer base and increase your vendors' income. Every year, Utah SNAP customers receive over \$250 million benefits.<sup>2</sup> An increasing percentage of these dollars are being spent at farmers markets. According to the USDA, SNAP redemption at farmers markets and farm stands has increased dramatically over the past decade. SNAP sales at farmers markets across the country have increased over 35% from \$4.2 million in 2009 to \$24 million in 2018. In Utah, SNAP sales at farmers markets and by direct marketing farmers have increased by 434% since 2012.<sup>3</sup>

**SNAP stimulates the local economy.** The USDA estimates that for every billion dollars of retail food demand from SNAP, 3,300 farm jobs are generated. Additionally, for every \$1.00 of SNAP benefits spent, approximately \$1.79 is goes back into the local economy.<sup>4</sup>



*Making a commitment to support local businesses and eat healthy is not always the cheapest option, and we as farmers understand that. Having a farmers market that makes it easy for SNAP users to utilize their benefits on healthy, local foods is amazing. It's a win win for everyone.*

**- Thomas and Aysha Maddox, Maddox Family Farms**

*Over half of sales from the Sunnyvale Farmers Market are generated from customers using their SNAP benefits and our state funded match incentive. Accepting SNAP increases sales for our vendors, while also making the market more accessible. Farmers selling at our market come from refugee backgrounds and grow produce relevant to the communities living in the area. Accepting SNAP means farmers can receive market value for their crops even while selling to low-income populations. It means that our market based in a low-income/low-access area can actually operate and be successful!*

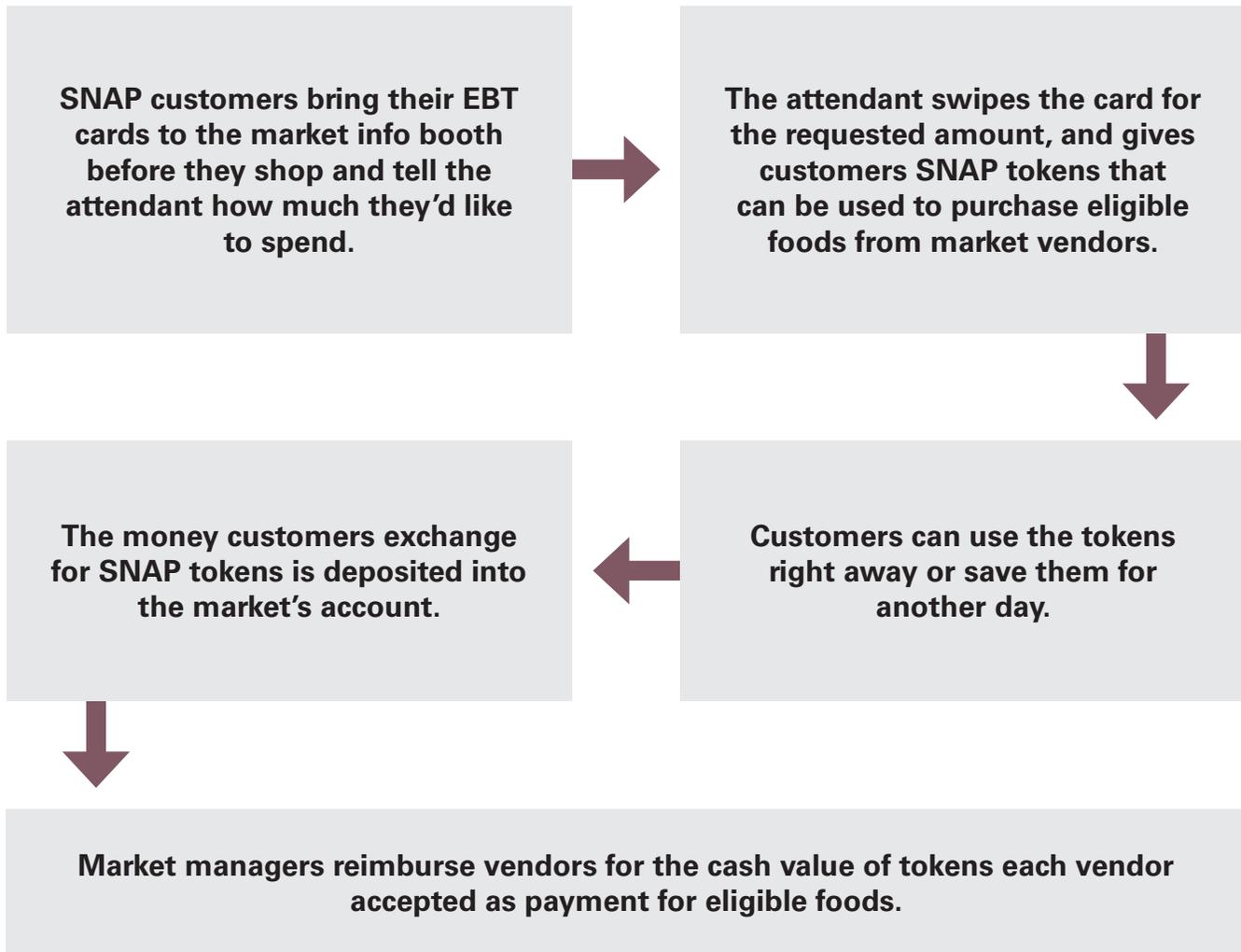
**- Margot Draeger, Sunnyvale Farmers Market**

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Food & Nutrition Services, *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2017*

<sup>3</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Food & Nutrition Services, *SNAP Redemptions Report, FY 2012-2018*

<sup>4</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, *The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP (Economic Research Report No. (ERR-103)*

# How does SNAP Work?



# How to Get Started: 7 Steps to Success

## STEP 1 - Determine if your Market Has Capacity

Before deciding to accept SNAP, consider if your market has the capacity to manage the following needs:

- **Staff time to manage SNAP at the info booth.** Larger markets usually hire a seasonal staff person while many smaller markets use reliable volunteers or pay interns a small stipend to help manage the program at their market. More details can be found in *Step 5 - Create a Management Plan*.
- **Budget for equipment and ongoing costs.** Your market will need a small budget to cover the start-up and ongoing costs of managing SNAP. Key start-up costs include a point of sale (POS) device to process EBT transactions and SNAP tokens. Ongoing costs include monthly wireless and transaction fees for the EBT POS device and staff salaries. More detail in *Step 5 - Create a Management Plan*.

### COSTS OF OBTAINING AND OPERATING AN EBT POS DEVICE

<https://farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/equipment-and-scrip/obtaining-a-point-of-sale-device/>

### PROGRAMS FOR FUNDING EQUIPMENT & START-UP COSTS

For the most up to date information on available grants contact [info@uah.org](mailto:info@uah.org).

Check out Marketlink, a program of the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP) that assists farmers and markets with accepting SNAP. [marketlink.org/](http://marketlink.org/)

- **Access to the internet.** In order to process SNAP, your market will need a reliable internet connection. Most farmers markets use wireless POS devices but some rural locations may need to connect manually to the internet.
- **Marketing SNAP.** The success of the program depends on how many people know that your market accepts SNAP. Think about how your current marketing campaign can include SNAP and what partnerships you can leverage to expand your marketing reach. You will also need to have a small budget to cover the printing of promotional materials such as signage and flyers. Some markets also choose to pay for social media ads to help get the word out.

**DIVE DEEPER:** Check out the Farmers Market Coalition in-depth guide outlining what to know before accepting SNAP at your market. [farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap/](http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap/)

## STEP 2 - Find Out if Your Market is Eligible

- A. Meet the FNS definition of a *farmers market* or a *direct marketing farmer* below.
- **Farmers Market:** Two or more farmers or producers that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public at one fixed location.
  - **Direct Marketing Farmers:** Farmers or producers that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public.
- B. Meet the 50% Rule or the Staple Food Groups Rule:
- **50% Rule:** More than 50% of the total dollar amount of your gross retail sales must come from the sale of eligible staple foods.
  - **Staple Food Groups Rule:** You must continually sell at least seven varieties of foods within each of the four staple food groups, which includes perishable foods in at least three of the categories.



## STEP 3 - Become an Authorized Market

To accept SNAP, your market needs to become an approved SNAP retailer by getting an FNS SNAP-authorization license and number through the USDA. Applying is free, and a simple three step process.

1. Create an eAuthentication USDA account.
2. Fill out a short online application.
3. Send in supporting documentation.

The application processing time can take up to 45 business days, so make sure to complete this well in advance of your market's opening.

### APPLY

[fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-apply](https://fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-apply)

### STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO APPLYING

[fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/Farmers-Market-Application-Guidance.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/Farmers-Market-Application-Guidance.pdf)

### HELPFUL LINK

Visit the Farmers Market Legal Toolkit for a more in-depth guide on how to apply.  
[farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/becoming-a-retailer/how-do-i-apply/](https://farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/becoming-a-retailer/how-do-i-apply/)

## STEP 4 - Get Equipment and a Service Provider

### **Rent or buy a point of sale (POS) device configured to accept SNAP EBT.**

Your POS device is used to process EBT transactions and ensure SNAP funds are deposited in your bank account. Equipment can range from \$250-\$1,000 depending on whether your market rents or purchases an EBT POS device. Not all POS devices are set up to accept SNAP/EBT, so it is important to confirm that any device you will use is configured to do so. In addition, there are other considerations to weigh when deciding what POS is right for your market. Luckily, the Farmers Market Legal Toolkit has broken down what you need to know about how to obtain equipment: [farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/equipment-and-scrip/obtaining-a-point-of-sale-device/](https://farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/equipment-and-scrip/obtaining-a-point-of-sale-device/)

### **Set up an account with an EBT service provider.**

An EBT service provider - also referred to as a “third-party processor” - is the entity that processes EBT, debit, and credit charges. Often, the company where you purchased your POS device from will also provide these services. You will need to sign an agreement and set up an account with an EBT service provider before your equipment is ready to go. They will ensure your FNS SNAP-authorization number is connected to your equipment so that the appropriate funds get deposited into your market’s bank account.



### **HOW TO CHOOSE A SERVICE PROVIDER**

[farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap/ebt-equipment-services/](https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap/ebt-equipment-services/)

### **FNS list of third-party processors**

[fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/SNAP-EBT-TPP-guidance.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/SNAP-EBT-TPP-guidance.pdf)

### **EQUIPMENT GRANTS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Contact Utahns Against Hunger at [info@uah.org](mailto:info@uah.org) to inquire about free equipment opportunities.

## STEP 5 - Create a Management Plan

The ongoing administration of the program includes managing staff and tokens, keeping track of transactions, and meeting reporting requirements. A management plan can ensure all these needs are met by outlining the following areas.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Identify who will be responsible for the key roles of the program outlined below.

- Ensure the program is operated according to FNS guidelines available at [fns.usda.gov](https://fns.usda.gov)
- Staff SNAP booth
- Manage tokens and vendor reimbursement
- Meet accounting and reporting requirements

### Set up SNAP Market Currency

You will need to design and purchase the tokens (or paper scrip) that SNAP customers will use to make purchases from vendors at your market. Most markets use market-branded wooden SNAP tokens in \$1 denominations. There are many token companies out there. You can use this calculator to determine how much tokens might cost your market - [ot-wooden-nickel.com/price-calculator](https://ot-wooden-nickel.com/price-calculator).

#### FNS SNAP SCRIP RULES

Know the regulations for managing SNAP scrip before creating your market currency. [fns.usda.gov/ebt/scrip-system-paper-scrip-token-or-receipts](https://fns.usda.gov/ebt/scrip-system-paper-scrip-token-or-receipts)

### Develop an Accounting System

Most importantly, you will need to develop an accounting system and method for reimbursing vendors for tokens or scrip. Your vendors will need to be trained in tokens/scrip redemption rules and procedures. UFMN has great templates for a vendor agreement and record sheets that you can use at [utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org](https://utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org). More comprehensive accounting spreadsheets and tools can be found at [farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/accounting-taxes/](https://farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org/snap/legal-topics/accounting-taxes/).

### Design a Budget and Fundraising Plan

Plugging all of your costs into a budget will help your market determine what is needed to operate your program and identify the best ways to secure ongoing funding. Sample budgets can be viewed at [utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org](https://utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org). From partnerships to donations, there is no shortage of creative ways to help fund your SNAP program. Funding may also be available to assist with your start up costs. For the most up-to-date information on available grants contact [info@uah.org](mailto:info@uah.org).

#### FARMERS MARKET COALITION'S TOP 10 WAYS TO FUND YOUR SNAP PROGRAM

[farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap/ten-ways-to-fund-snap-ebt/](https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/snap/ten-ways-to-fund-snap-ebt/)

## STEP 6 - Notify and Train Vendors

It is important to discuss accepting SNAP with your vendors as early as possible. You will want to educate your vendors on the benefits of becoming a SNAP-authorized market and provide them with the training and tools to ensure a successful market season.

Training topics should include:

- Informing vendors whether they are eligible or not eligible to accept SNAP tokens
- Getting reimbursed for the tokens they receive
- Vendor agreement form [utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org](http://utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org)
- Marketing SNAP at their booths [utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org](http://utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org)

### CONNECT

Join the *Utah Farmers Market Network* on Facebook and meet other market managers.

**Learn about other markets' experience** through the Utah Farmers Market Network listserv. Contact [utfarmersmarkets@usu.edu](mailto:utfarmersmarkets@usu.edu).

**Ask the experts** on the Farmers Market Coalition's listserv. Sign up here - [farmersmarketcoalition.org/networking/listserv](http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/networking/listserv)

## STEP 7 - Develop an Outreach and Marketing Campaign

Once your market is all set up, it's time to get the word out. The good news is that there are already great local organizations working to connect SNAP recipients with healthy, local food, so there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Here are some easy ways to get the word out about your SNAP program.

**Use promotional materials.** Signs, banners, and flyers already exist that can be used to promote SNAP at your market. Banners and signage should be prominently displayed at your SNAP booth and throughout the market. Every qualified vendor at your market should display a "SNAP Accepted" sign at their booth.

**Include SNAP in what you are already doing to promote your market.** Add the SNAP logo to your market's promotional materials. Start to



promote it through your social media pages. Social media has consistently emerged as one of the main places target populations are getting information. Don't forget to mention the SNAP program in your press releases, during press events, and in interviews.

**Enroll in an incentive program.** Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) is a state run produce incentive program that matches dollar for dollar of SNAP benefits spent at participating farmers markets and farm stands. By enrolling your market in DUFB, you will be included in all DUFB promotional materials. Participating markets may also be eligible for additional funding to cover the costs of equipment and materials to implement and promote DUFB at their markets. Contact [DoubleUp@utah.gov](mailto:DoubleUp@utah.gov) for more information.

**Leverage strategic partnerships.** Connect with local organizations working with SNAP recipients. These organizations can include you in the current outreach they are doing to target populations. Partner organizations often help by promoting SNAP programs in their materials and helping to distribute flyers to locations they already frequent. Highlighting these organizations at your market can also help bring in more SNAP customers.

Some examples of organizations that you can partner with:

- Utah State University - Contact the Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed) program and your county's extension agent - [extension.usu.edu/locations](http://extension.usu.edu/locations)
- Utah Farmers Market Network - Provides support to farmers markets through a statewide network and directory of markets. Contact them at [utfarmersmarkets@usu.edu](mailto:utfarmersmarkets@usu.edu) to learn about resources and training opportunities regarding SNAP and DUFB.
- Anchor vendors - Engage with your anchor vendors as they are most likely to benefit from your market accepting SNAP. Ask them to help with outreach and promoting SNAP by sharing social media posts, through newsletters they send out to their customers and by posting flyers at their farm stands or stores.
- Organizations and agencies providing services to the low-income populations- Reach out to food banks, Women, Infant and Children (WIC) offices, SNAP enrollment agencies, Department of Workforce Services, housing assistance organizations, free health clinics and similar social service locations might be willing to post flyers about your market accepting SNAP.

### **ENCOURAGING SNAP SHOPPER PARTICIPATION AT UTAH FARMERS MARKETS**

[extension.usu.edu/publications](http://extension.usu.edu/publications)



# Helpful Resources

## Local

- Utahns Against Hunger - [uah.org](http://uah.org)
- Utah Department of Workforce Services - [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov)
- Utah Farmers Market Network - [utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org](http://utahfarmersmarketnetwork.org)  
Email: [utfarmersmarkets@usu.edu](mailto:utfarmersmarkets@usu.edu)
- Utah State University Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed) - [extension.usu.edu/createbetterhealth/](http://extension.usu.edu/createbetterhealth/)
- Encouraging SNAP Shopper Participation at Utah Farmers Markets - [extension.usu.edu/publications](http://extension.usu.edu/publications)

## National

- Farmers Market Legal Toolkit - [farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org](http://farmersmarketlegaltoolkit.org)
- Farmers Market Coalition - [farmersmarketcoalition.org](http://farmersmarketcoalition.org)
- USDA Food and Nutrition Services - [fns.usda.gov](http://fns.usda.gov)



EXTENSION 

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