



Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

1. What is the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)?

The SFMNP awards grants to States, United States Territories, and Federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs. The majority of grant funds must be used for foods that are provided under the SFMNP; State agencies may use up to 10 percent of their grants for program administrative costs.

2. What is the purpose of the SFMNP?

The purposes of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program are to:

1. Provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey from farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors; and
2. Increase the consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding, developing, or aiding in the development and expansion of domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, and CSA programs.

3. Who is eligible for SFMNP benefits?

Low-income seniors, generally defined as individuals who are at least 60 years old and who have household incomes of not more than 185% of the Federal poverty income guidelines (published each year by the Department of Health and Human Services) are the targeted recipients of SFMNP benefits. Some State agencies accept proof of participation or enrollment in another means-tested program, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), for SFMNP eligibility.



4. How many recipients are served?

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, 863,097 people received SFMNP coupons.

5. Where does the SFMNP operate?

For FY 2011, 51 State agencies and Federally recognized Indian tribal governments received grants to operate the SFMNP: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Five Sandoval Pueblos (New Mexico), Florida, Georgia, the Grand Traverse Band /Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (Michigan), Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, the Osage Nation (Oklahoma), Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, San Felipe Pueblo (New Mexico), South Carolina, Standing Rock Sioux (ND), Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Not all State agencies operate the SFMNP on a statewide basis.

6. How does the SFMNP operate?

The SFMNP is administered by State agencies such as State Departments of Agriculture or Aging. As a prerequisite to receiving Federal funds for the SFMNP, each applying or participating State agency must submit an annual State Plan describing how the State agency intends to implement, operate and administer all aspects of the SFMNP within its jurisdiction. Coupons are issued to eligible SFMNP participants to buy eligible foods from farmers, farmers' markets, roadside stands, or CSAs that have been approved by the State agency to accept SFMNP coupons. The farmers, farmers' markets, roadside stands or CSAs then submit the redeemed SFMNP coupons to the bank or State agency for reimbursement.

The Federal SFMNP benefit level, whether a household or an individual, may not be less than \$20 per year or more than \$50 per year, except for certain State agencies that were grandfathered into the SFMNP using a different benefit level. State agencies may also supplement the Federal benefit level with State, local or private funds.

Nutrition education and information is provided to SFMNP recipients by the State agency, often through arrangements with the local WIC agency or other program partners. For example, Cooperative Extension Programs, local Area Agencies on Aging, local chefs, farmers or farmers' markets associations, and various other non-profit or for-profit organizations may provide nutrition education to SFMNP recipients. These educational arrangements help to encourage SFMNP recipients to improve and expand their diets by adding fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as to educate them on how to select, store and prepare the fresh fruits and vegetables they buy with their SFMNP coupons.

7. What foods are available through the SFMNP?

Fresh, nutritious, unprepared fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey may be purchased with SFMNP benefits. State agencies may limit SFMNP sales to specific foods that are locally grown in order to encourage SFMNP recipients to support the farmers in their own States.

8. How does a farmer or farmers' market become authorized to accept SFMNP?

Each State agency is responsible for authorizing individual farmers, farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSAs, or all of the above to participate in the SFMNP. Only farmers, farmers' markets, roadside stands and CSAs authorized by the State agency may accept and redeem SFMNP coupons. Individuals who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else, such as wholesale distributors, cannot be authorized to participate in the SFMNP.

9. How many farmers and farmers' markets participate in the SFMNP?

In FY 2011, the latest year for which data are available, 19,069 farmers at 4,598 farmers' markets as well 3,445 roadside stands and 141 community supported agriculture programs participated in the Program.

10. What is the current funding level?

The 2008 Farm Bill provided \$20.6 million annually to operate the Program through FY 2012.

11. How can I obtain further information?

The SFMNP contact person for each State agency can be found at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SFMNPcontacts.htm>. For further information, please visit our website at: www.fns.usda.gov/wic

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