



## The Virginia Farmers Market Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program Request For Participation

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February 7, 2011

Dear Farmers Market Coordinator,

Thank you for your interest in the Virginia Farmers Market Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is working to reduce chronic food shortages and increase access to healthy food options for all Virginians. This program will enable farmers markets, as well as individual farmers - who travel to markets or have roadside stands - the ability to accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) EBT cards.

With your help and participation, local produce and products will become more accessible throughout the Commonwealth.

We are excited to extend this opportunity to you, made possible with funding from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Enclosed you will find a project description which includes detailed information concerning what the project entails, as well as an [application](#) to participate.

***The deadline to file an application ([below](#)) to participate is: February 25, 2011.***

### **APPLICATION TIMELINE:**

**February 25, 2011** Application to participate is due to VDSS. Please contact Toni Washington at 804-726-7662 or [toni.washington@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:toni.washington@dss.virginia.gov) **before** this date if you cannot submit an application by the deadline.

**March 7, 2011** Markets will be selected. All applicants will be notified if their market has or has not been selected to join the Project.

**March 15, 2011** Applicant must have, or have applied for, an authorization number from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to accept SNAP benefits.

**[Note: This deadline is driven by the fact that the wireless point-of-sale (POS) devices for the market cannot be ordered until the market has an FNS number, and it takes up to four additional weeks for the equipment to arrive. Selected participants who fail to apply for an FNS authorization will lose their opportunity to participate in the program. Applications can be requested by phone: 1-877-823-4369 or online at: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm)]**

**Late March** Mandatory training for the markets and/or independent farmers selected to participate. The training will include instruction on the use of the wireless point of sale (POS) device, eligible SNAP (supplemental nutrition assistance program) items, increasing EBT sales at the market and participation requirements.

**[Note: Attendance for the training may require an overnight stay. Payment of hotel fees and meals will be covered by the state.]**

#### **PROJECT FUNDING:**

The project funding will cover the 2011 market season and will support the following infrastructure and resources as defined below:

- One Wireless EBT POS Device (which also can process standard credit cards (VISA, MasterCard) and bank issued debit cards)
- First Installment Of SNAP EBT Tokens (debit/credit tokens not included)
- Signage, Flyers, Posters And/Or Other Promotional Items
- Inclusion In Statewide Marketing Plan
- Technical And Programmatic Assistance

#### **PROJECT EVALUATION:**

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Current FNS Approval To Accept Federal SNAP Benefits
- Accessibility And Appeal Of Market/Farmer To Limited-Income Customers
- Availability Of A Wide Variety Of Product Offerings That Can Be Purchased With SNAP Benefits

- Participation In Other Food Access Programs (e.g. WIC And Senior Farmers Market Programs)
- Demonstrated Organizational Stability Of The Market
- For Markets - Availability Of Critical Infrastructure (e.g. The Ability To Receive Verizon Wireless Signal, Commitment Of An EBT Coordinator, Plans For EBT Project Outreach)
- For Individual Farmers - Availability Of Critical Infrastructure (e.g. The Ability To Receive Verizon Wireless Signal, Number Of Markets Attended Per Week, Location Of Roadside Stand, Plans For EBT Project Outreach)

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:

- For Market Participants, The Coordinator Can Be Anyone From The Market Community (e.g. Manager, Vendor, Board Member, Community Volunteer) Who Commits To Overseeing The Operations, Outreach, Promotions, And Budgeting Of The EBT Program
- This Person May Or May Not Be The Staff Operator Of The Wireless Device At The Market
- The Market Must Have A Reliable "Staff" Person Continuously Attending The Table Where Customers Swipe Their EBT/Debit Cards In Exchange For Tokens To Spend At The Market
- Market Coordinators And Individual Farmers Should Be Available To Meet With The Virginia Farmers Market Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program Committee 2-3 Times Per Year (Usually Via Phone Conferences)

#### QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions about the Virginia Farmers Market Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program, application process or need any assistance, please contact Toni Blue Washington by email at: [toni.washington@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:toni.washington@dss.virginia.gov) or by phone at: 804-726-7662.

Sincerely,



Toni Blue Washington, EBT Project Consultant  
Virginia Department of Social Services



The Virginia Farmers Market Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program  
Participation Application

**APPLICANT'S INFORMATION:**

Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Time and Days of Market/Roadside Stand: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (please include your area code): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Facebook Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Twitter Handle: \_\_\_\_\_

**[Note: Please answer the following questions, on separate paper if necessary.**

**If you have trouble completing and returning the application by February 25, 2011 please contact Toni Blue Washington at 804-726-7662 or [toni.washington@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:toni.washington@dss.virginia.gov)]**

**ACCESSIBILITY TO LIMITED INCOME POPULATIONS:**

1. Does your business conduct or participate in any other food access programs?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the location accessible to people who cannot drive or do not own cars?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the location near a bus or metro line?  Yes  No

If yes, approximately how close to a bus or metro line stop? \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

1. How long has the business been in operation? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the business financially stable and secure in the community? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many total vendors are at the market on a "typical" market day? \_\_\_\_\_ vendors

4. How many of those vendors sell products that would qualify for SNAP purchases (vegetable starter plants + all food and nonalcoholic beverages for human consumption except for prepared foods served hot at the market)? \_\_\_\_\_ vendors

5. Describe the variety of foods that are available at the market by selecting the applicable items below:

- |                          |                      |                          |                                |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Vegetables           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dairy Products                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fruits               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fruit and/or Vegetable Growers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Eggs                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Herb Growers                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cheese               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other:                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Meats and/or Poultry |                          |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Baked Goods          |                          |                                |

6. Roughly, how does the overall volume (not sales) of goods at the market split between food and nonfood products? \_\_\_\_\_ % Food products + \_\_\_\_\_ Non-food products = 100%
7. Can the business location transmit and receive wireless signals with Verizon service? (You can test this with a Verizon cell phone.)  Yes  No

#### EBT PROGRAM PLANS:

1. Is the business currently authorized by the USDA to accept SNAP benefits?  Yes  No

If yes, please list the FNS number here: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the market have a volunteer, staff or board member who is regularly at the market and is able to coordinate the EBT program (please see attached letter for the role that market contacts play)?  Yes  No

If so, who is this person and what is his/her role in the market? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. If not, what are the plans for finding/hiring an EBT coordinator? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe the market's plans for staffing the wireless POS device each market day? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How would the market promote the option for customers to use EBT cards there?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS:**

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