



United States Department of Agriculture

Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study

Nutrition Assistance Program Report
Food and Nutrition Service
Office of Policy Support

March 2014

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Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study

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This study was conducted under Contract number AG-3198-B-10-0029 with the Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

Suggested Citation:

King, Melissa, Sujata Dixit-Joshi, Keith MacAllum, Michael Steketee, and Stephen Leard. *Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study*. Prepared by Westat, Inc. For the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, March 2014. Available online at www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis

Acknowledgments

There are many individuals from the broad community associated with SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) at farmers markets (FMs) that contributed to the USDA FNS Farmers Market Incentive Program Study (FMIPS). Just after contract award, a Technical Working Group (TWG) consisting of four well-versed representatives of organizations associated with SBIPs at FMs was convened to review and provide input on the final FMIPS Research Plan. Westat then held an in-person meeting to discuss the feedback more thoroughly with the TWG members, FNS, and representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). Concepts that resulted from discussions with the TWG members during this final phase of the planning were significant and it was in no small part due to the thoughtful insight of these members: **Alyson Abrami - NY City Health Department, Healthy Bucks Program; Rachel Chadderdon Bair - Fair Food Network, Michigan; Anna Curtin - Portland Farmers' Market, Oregon; and Jezra Thompson** – who at the time of her work on the TWG was with *Roots of Change, California*. **Stacy Miller of the Farmers Market Coalition** served as a consultant to Westat. In addition to participation in these early meetings and discussions, Ms. Miller assisted with

phrasing of specific interview questions, and in identifying individuals for pretesting.

The study team would like to thank the generous organizations that took the time out of their demanding schedules to participate in the FMIPS. Through the interviews that were conducted with key organizational representatives, these organizations provided the opportunity for the FMIPS to develop a better understanding of how each organization contributes to the functioning of SBIPs, and individually contributes to the SBIP network of partnerships that are currently needed for implementing, operating, and maintaining SBIPs for FMs. Extra appreciation is extended to those organizations that were willing to share market-level self-evaluation data to help better understand the types of tracking data currently available and compiled on SBIP programs in FMs for the purposes of assessing their programs.

The study team would also like to acknowledge **Ted Macaluso** for his thoughtful review of the findings draft report, and his input during the drafting of the final report. Finally, thank you to the many other staff at Westat who contributed to the completion of this work: **Mary Butler, Earlayna Batch, Holly Bozeman, Allison Roeser, Sara Woodruff, John Burke, and Hongsheng Hao**.

Thank you to these organizations

Access of West Michigan
Agricultural Institute of Marin
Alchemist Community Development Corporation
Allen Street Farmers Market
Baltimore Food Policy Initiative
Beans & Greens
Benton County Health Department
Better Health through Better Food Project
Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota
Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness
Boston Public Health Commission
Bowdoin Street Health Center
Bristol, Tennessee, Parks and Recreation
Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas
Catholic Charities Spokane
Catholic Charities USA
Central New York Food Bank
Church Health Center Farmers Market
Citizens Planning and Housing Association, Inc.
City Market
City of Seattle Office of Sustainability and the Environment
CityCenter Danbury (Danbury Farmer's Market)
Cleveland Foundation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Community Farmers Markets
Community Foundation of Greater Memphis
Community Health Works
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
Connecticut Community Foundation
Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children
Cooper-Young Community Farmers Market
Corvallis/Albany Farmers Markets
Downeast Business Alliance/Washington
Hancock Community Agency
Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market/MSU Extension Service
Ecology Center
Essential Needs Task Force - Food and Nutrition Coalition
Fair Food Network
Fair Food Philly
Fairfield County Community Foundation
Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Farmers Market Federation of New York
Federation of Massachusetts Farmer's Markets
Food for People
Food Gatherers
Food Trust
Forsyth Farmers' Market
Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
Friends of Wagner Farms
Grassland Farmers
Greater Somerset Health Collaborative
Greenmarket/GrowNYC
Growing Hope
GrowMemphis
Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation
Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City
Health Trust
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Illinois Farmers Market Association
Independence Market
Just Food
Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic, Community Benefits
Kansas State Extension Office
Kent County Health Department

Maine Federation of Farmer's Market
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Maryland Department of Agriculture
Maryland Department of Human Resources
Memphis Farmers Market downtown
Menorah Legacy Foundation
Michigan Department of Human Services
Michigan Farmers Market Association
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Monterey Park Farmers Market
Neighborhood Farmers Markets
New Mexico Farmers Market Association
New York City Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene
Newport Farmers Market/Lincoln County
Small Farmers Association
Nob Hill Grower's Market
North Coast Growers' Association
Northeast Organic Farmers Association
Vermont
Northfield Township Food Pantry
Norwalk Community Health Center
Oak Park Farmers' Market
Ohio State University Extension

Overland Park
Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association
Regional YMCA of Western Connecticut
Roots of Change
Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute
Skowhegan Farmers Market
South Memphis Farmers Market/The
Works, Inc.
Swoon Atlanta Farmers Market
Ten Rivers Food Web
The George Gund Foundation
Townshend Common Farmers Market
United Way of Western Connecticut
Volunteers of East LA
Washington State Farmers Market
Association
Washtenaw County Public Health
Department
Waverly 32nd Street Farmers Market
Wholesome Wave
Wholesome Wave Georgia
YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids
Ypsilanti Depot Town Farmers Market

Packard Health
Philadelphia Department of Public Health

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Executive Summary

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to expanding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients' access to fresh fruits and vegetables through farmers markets (FMs).¹ To reduce fraud, in October 2002 the program began to transition from a paper voucher system to an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system to issue benefits to SNAP participant. However, this transition resulted in a steep decline in the number of SNAP redemptions at FMs due to lack of infrastructure and qualified staff to implement the EBT technology. To address the infrastructure and staffing barriers, FNS and the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) implemented Farmers Market Promotion Program grants and educational/training materials for EBT implementation.² Several private organizations operating FMs sought or provided funding to equip markets with EBT terminals.^{3,4}

As early as 2005 in New York, to attract SNAP participants to their markets, organizations that operated several FMs launched conditional cash transfer programs or incentive programs. At their most basic level, SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) at FMs provide SNAP participants with matching funds to purchase SNAP-eligible food items. SBIPs vary in the matching funds they provide; for example, some programs provide a dollar-to-dollar match while others may provide a dollar for every \$5 spent at the market on a given market day. Markets that offer a dollar-to-dollar match typically set a limit for such a match (i.e., the match is provided up to \$10 or \$20 per day). Since these SBIPs were explicitly directed at SNAP participants, participating programs are required to inform FNS about the program and comply with the FNS rules and regulations to participate in SNAP. However, USDA does not provide any support (funding or resources) to implement these SBIPs; they are funded and managed entirely by private foundations, nonprofit organizations, and local governments.

¹ FNS Communications. (2013). USDA expands support for farmers markets to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. FNS-0008.13. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2013/fns-000813>.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013). Farmers Markets and Local Food Marketing, Farmers Market Promotion Program. Available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=FMPP&description=Farmers%20Market%20Promotion%20Program&acct=fmpp>.

³ Mercier S. (2012). Review of U.S. Nutrition Assistance Policy: Programs and issues. Available at <http://foodandagpolicy.org/sites/default/files/AGree%20Review%20of%20US%20Nutrition%20Assistance%20Policy.pdf>.

⁴ Wasserman, W., Tropp, D., Lakins, V., Foley, C., DeNinno, M., Thompson, J., Owens, N., and Williams, K. (2010). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at farmers markets: A how-to handbook*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, June 2010. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/MS039.06-2010>.

For example, in Minnesota the City of Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, Blue Cross (a private health insurance company), and other community-based organizations collaborated to bring EBT to FMs. Within a year, the partnership had resulted in an increase in the number of markets with EBT technology and an increase in the number of FMs accepting SNAP benefits.⁵ This partnership subsequently led to the implementation of their first SBIP, Market Bucks.

SBIPs attract SNAP recipients and farmers to the market, resulting in a favorable impact on increasing SNAP redemptions and overall FM sales. As documented in several evaluations,^{6, 7,8,9,10} however, little information is available on why organizations support SBIP, funding streams for incentives, implementation approaches, specific roles performed within and across collaborating organizations, perspectives regarding long-term goals for SBIP, and the data collection and evaluation systems in place to monitor the use and impact of incentives at various markets. To address these gaps in knowledge, the FNS Farmers Market Incentive Program Study (FMIPS) focused on:

1. Understanding the characteristics of organizations involved with SBIPs, their SBIP objectives, role in SBIP implementation, and involvement in SBIP monitoring and evaluations.
2. Exploring the relationships among SBIP organizations and between these organizations and FMs.
3. Examining and assessing SBIP organization self-evaluation data to measure the impacts of SBIPs on the individual FMs.

⁵ Fee, R., and Meléndez, M.L. (2013). *2011 Electronic Benefit Transfer and Farmers Market Initiative Evaluation Report*. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Available at http://www.preventionminnesota.com/objects/pdfs/2011EBT_FarmersMarketEvaluationReport.pdf.

⁶ Fair Food Network. (2012). *Double Up Food Bucks Program 2011 evaluation report*. Available at http://www.doubleupfoodbucks.org/sites/default/files/files/FFN_DUFB_Evaluation_2011_04_10_12.pdf.

⁷ Oberholtzer, L., Dimitri, C., and Schumacher, G. (2012). Linking farmers, healthy foods, and underserved communities: exploring the impact of nutrition incentive programs on farmers and farmers markets. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. July 2012. Available at <http://www.agdevjournal.com/volume-2-issue-4/271-linking-farmers-healthy-foods-and-underserved-consumers.html?catid=111%3Aopen-call-papers>.

⁸ Abrami, A. (2011). *Healthy Bucks Program*. Presentation March 4, 2011. Available at www.nyfarmersmarket.com/powerpoint2011/NYHealthBucks.pptx.

⁹ MarketMatch (for EBT cardholder) starts July 16th. July 2011. <http://www.npnola.com/associations/organizations/sub/114/marketumbrellaorg/news-archive/>.

¹⁰ Kramer, M., and Zakaras, M. (2011). *Improving nutrition for SNAP recipients: A roadmap for the Double Value Coupon Program*. Prepared for WholeSome Wave. March 2011. Available at www.innovations.harvard.edu/download-doc.html?id=1714473.

I. Methodology

Sample

The sampling frame was developed using FM managers' responses to a question in the first FNS FM study, *Nutrition Assistance at Farmers Markets: Understanding Current Operations*¹¹ which asked for names of organizations that provided or administered SNAP incentives at their markets. A referral-based sampling strategy was used to ensure representation from three types of organizations, based on funding and size. These included Type I organizations – large umbrella organizations that provide grants for SBIPs and technical assistance to smaller organizations; Type II organizations – smaller organizations that distribute the grant money to FMs and administer the programs; and Type III organizations – local organizations that provide grant money for SBIPs. Seventeen Type I organizations were purposefully selected with attention to FNS geographic region; their general descriptive category for the organization (e.g., nonprofit, foundation, insurance company, city government); and the communities they serve. Upon agreement to participate, these organizations were then asked to name other organizations that they partnered with on SBIPs and, through this referral process, other categories of organizations were identified and interviewed (e.g., Type II and Type III) and, in turn, they reported collaborations and/or referred other organizations with whom they work.

Analysis of qualitative responses provided by representatives from all organizations led to the development of a function-based typology that emphasized the organizations' primary roles and functions in supporting the SBIP. Specifically, SBIP organizations were categorized as:

- **Funders** – organizations whose primary role is to provide funding to SBIPs;
- **Coordinators** – organizations that are the main proponents behind designing, supporting, and implementing an SBIP. They establish the SBIP, coordinate participation (including the decision process to support other organizations/markets), and are the principal fundraisers;
- **Supporters** – organizations that are key partners, providing various support services for the implementation or support of SBIPs; and
- **Operators** – organizations that implement SBIPs at the market level.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis. (2013). *Nutrition assistance in farmers markets: Understanding current operations* by Sujata Dixit-Joshi et al. Project Officer: Eric Sean Williams, Alexandria, VA: April 2013. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis>.

Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 141 representatives from 103 organizations (see Appendices A, B, and C). Detailed responses were collected on the primary mission of the organizations and their history with SNAP; source of the financial support for SBIPs; the relationship to FMs; and characteristics of successful SBIPs. Qualitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze interview responses regarding their mission and goal, their role in SBIP implementation, and evaluation activities they participated in. Responses were compared to identify similarities and differences across organization types.

Social network analysis was used to examine the relationships among the organizations. In particular, the four-fold analysis assessed (a) the relationship between organizations and FMs where the SBIP was implemented; (b) whether organizations that provide or administer SNAP incentives have relationships with other organizations, and if so, which organizations; (c) the similarity of the types of organizations that have relationships with one another; and (d) whether specific patterns or models of relationships between organizations exist.

Of the 103 participating organizations, 56 indicated that their organization collected or tracked program performance data to assess various aspects of their SBIP at the market level. Fourteen organizations provided market-level tracking measures for the FMIPS, which represented 222 FMs. Of the 14 SBIP organizations that provided data, with the exception of one Operator organization, all were Coordinator organizations. Descriptive quantitative analysis was used to assess the general market characteristics.

II. Results

SBIP Organizational Characteristics

For a majority of organizations, involvement with SBIPs at FMs is not their sole activity. Representatives from participating organizations cited a range of missions that included alleviating social inequities, supporting farmers, and addressing economic and community development. Typically, Funder organizations focused on improving health and community development, while Coordinator and Operator organizations focused on alleviating social inequities and supporting farmers.

Organizations perceive SBIPs as one approach to achieving their organizational mission of increasing access to healthy food, increasing business for farmers, and/or addressing health disparities. The long-term goals of SBIPs were also closely tied to the organization's overall mission, with almost one-half of the representatives from all organization types indicating one long-term goal for their organization was to expand the SBIP at more markets and find ways to make the program sustainable.

The budget allocation for the SBIPs within each organization was generally 25 percent or less of the overall operating budget. Across all four organization types, SBIP activities were typically absorbed into the existing organizational structure, with existing staff members taking on SBIP activities (i.e., dedicated staff members were not hired for SBIP activities). Organizations relied on multiple funding sources to implement the activities necessary to achieve their mission. The most frequently cited funding streams included philanthropic donations, foundations, grants (public and private), and vendor fees. Funder organizations relied more on philanthropic donations and private foundations; Coordinator and Support organizations relied more on grants; and Operator organizations relied more on vendor fees.

Application and Selection Process for SBIP Support. SBIPs are seldom operated by a single organization; partnerships and collaborations are critical to SBIP success. Almost all SBIPs represent partnerships between an Operator organization and Supporter, Coordinator, or Funder organizations. In many instances, SBIPs include collaboration of all four organization types. The decisions for the SBIPs to partner and collaborate are often driven by geography, mission alignment, history with SNAP programs, and applicants' capacity to implement SNAP. Generally, organizations partner to serve a given community and view the collaboration with the SBIP as one approach to achieve their individual organization's goals. Funder and Coordinator organizations, in particular, prefer established partner organizations that have experience with implementing EBT at farmers markets.

Some organizations used an application process to select partner organizations, but the rigor of the process often varied. Most representatives from Funder organizations indicated they had a formal application process but, for some organizations, the process was more invitational and informal because of a limited applicant pool in the geographic area of interest. A few Funder organizations said they supported a market or collaborated with a partner organization because there were no other players in that geographic area. On the other hand, a majority of the representatives from Coordinator organizations indicated that their organization employed a mix

of application and informal processes, and representatives from the Support organizations reported using an informal process to select partners.

SBIP Implementation Activities. The function-based typology to classify organizations depicts the primary role performed by organization types (i.e., Funder organizations provided funds, Coordinator and Support organizations provided resources and staff to support various activities, and Operator organizations provided the platform [staff, vendors, and participants]). However, organizations' involvement in the implementation of SBIPs was not limited solely to their primary function; with the exception of Funder organizations, all other organization types engaged in identifying funding sources, marketing and outreach, providing technical assistance and training, and program operations. Funder organizations typically participated in identifying financial resources, and marketing and outreach. Each of these activities was considered necessary for a SBIP to succeed.

SBIP Implementation Challenges. Representatives from all four SBIP organization types expressed funding as a challenge in the context of earmarked funding, excess demand for limited resources, and funder fatigue. Representatives from Funder, Coordinator, and Support organizations explained that funds were often earmarked for the incentive itself and additional sources were required for administrative activities. Further, they reported that donations and grants were typically limited to fund start the program but not to maintain the SBIP. Representatives also experienced Funder fatigue, wherein donors and Funders were willing to provide initial funding to test the concept but were reticent to fund ongoing subsidies. In the face of these challenges, representatives indicated they were always in fundraising mode and stated that public funding would be necessary to sustain SBIPs. Some representatives made program modifications in response to funding challenges they experienced, which included changes to their staffing structure such as an increased dependency on volunteers, reducing the incentive amount per customer, shortening the incentive duration (from entire market season to a few months), and expanding the fundraising capability and efforts. A few representatives said the role of SBIPs was to draw customers to the market, and once they were at the market, they would continue shopping there even if the incentive was not offered. However, this view was not universal, with a few representatives indicating that if incentives were not offered, shopping behaviors would not persist.

Staffing and accounting were cited as major challenges encountered in SBIP implementation. These representatives articulated the need to have dedicated staff with time and expertise to track the SBIP and reconcile the accounts at the end of each market day. Coordinator and Support

organizations mentioned difficulties in training the market staff and getting the most out of a volunteer-run market. Funder representatives captured the essence of accounting challenges, stating that while bookkeeping was not a challenge, the use of multiple forms of currency and the use of token systems to implement the SBIP added to accounting tasks.

Data Used for Self-Evaluation of SBIP. A majority of the representatives indicated that their organization participated in collecting, analyzing, or disseminating program data to assess the reach of the program and to guide future implementation. Fewer than 10 percent of the organizations conducted formal evaluations. For the most part, organizations relied on the value of SNAP and incentive redemptions to assess impact. However, considerable variability was noted in the tracking of redemptions. Some representatives tracked the amount of SNAP benefits deducted from EBT cards while others tracked the reimbursements provided to vendors in exchange for tokens redeemed at the market.

In addition to quantitative data, representatives from all four organization types engaged in informal discussions with SNAP participants and vendors to gather input on their experience with the program. A small number of Coordinator and Support organizations conducted formal evaluations to assess shopping behaviors and fruit and vegetable consumption.

Operator organizations indicated that they collected redemption data primarily for reporting purposes and used qualitative input from SNAP customers and vendors to increase community support. Funder, Coordinator, and Support organizations used evaluation data to assess progress towards their goal and to secure additional funding for program improvement and expansion. Coordinator and Support organizations also used these data for advocacy and policy discussions.

In Calendar Year 2012, the total median value of SNAP and incentive redemptions at FMs was \$1,122 and \$565, respectively. Newly SNAP-authorized FMs had lower median SNAP and incentive redemptions than those that were authorized for more than 3 years. Market maturation and the amount of incentive matched at the market may have jointly influenced SNAP redemptions.

The value of self-reported SNAP redemptions was lower than the value derived from an extract of the FNS Anti-Fraud Locator for EBT Redemption Transactions (ALERT), a system which records every SNAP transaction. ALERT data and SBIP organization self-evaluation data differed with regard to the value of SNAP redemptions at the FMs. The value of SNAP redemptions recorded in ALERT always represents the exact amount of SNAP benefits deducted

from the participant's account based on the individual point-of-sale transaction. However, the self-reported data may not always be reporting the participant transaction amount but, instead, are reporting amounts reimbursed to FM vendors. Thus, the difference may be attributable to the different way SBIPs may record or operationalize SNAP redemption data.

SNAP Misuse and Fraud. At outlets that accept SNAP, SNAP benefits are deducted from the EBT card for the amount of the purchases made. However, due to the availability of only one EBT machine at each market, SNAP benefits are exchanged for tokens to be used at the market. Despite the use of a model to redeem SNAP benefits not viewed as ideal, about 80 percent of the representatives indicated that SNAP misuse was not a major issue at FMs. Among those that perceived it to be an issue, representatives cited unintentional misuse (e.g., vendor ignorance on what can be purchased) more than intentional misuse (e.g., participants sharing tokens). While education for market managers and vendors to review SNAP allowable food purchase was cited as an approach to reducing unintentional misuse, use of technology (instead of token system) was cited as an approach to reducing intentional misuse.

1.1 Overview

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food and nutrition assistance programs reach 1 in 4 people in the US; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest of the nutrition assistance programs designed to provide a nutrition safety net and reduce food insecurity to low-income households. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is pursuing several initiatives to improve access to healthy foods for SNAP participants; one such initiative is to support the availability of farmers markets (FMs) and direct access to farm products.¹²

In 2011, the *Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study* (FMIPS) was initiated as part of a portfolio of studies funded to support access to fresh fruits and vegetables through FMs for individuals participating in SNAP. The FNS Farmers Market research portfolio includes studies regarding SNAP participation in three major parts of the industry: FMs, SNAP participants who shop at FMs, and organizations supporting SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) for SNAP participants shopping at FMs. The first of these studies, the *Nutrition Assistance in Farmers Markets: Understanding Current Operations* explored characteristics and logistical processes, and the motivation and challenges of accepting SNAP benefits.¹³ The second study, *Nutrition Assistance in Farmers Markets: Understanding the Shopping Patterns of SNAP Participants* is currently underway and will evaluate the characteristics and motivations of SNAP participants who use and do not use FMs. This report presents findings from the third study, the *Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study* or FMIPS. This study assessed how organizations design, operate, and evaluate SBIPs; the collaborative partnerships that exist between organizations; and the impact of SBIPs at individual markets.

¹² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Services. (2013). Farmers markets and local food marketing. Available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/farmersmarkets>.

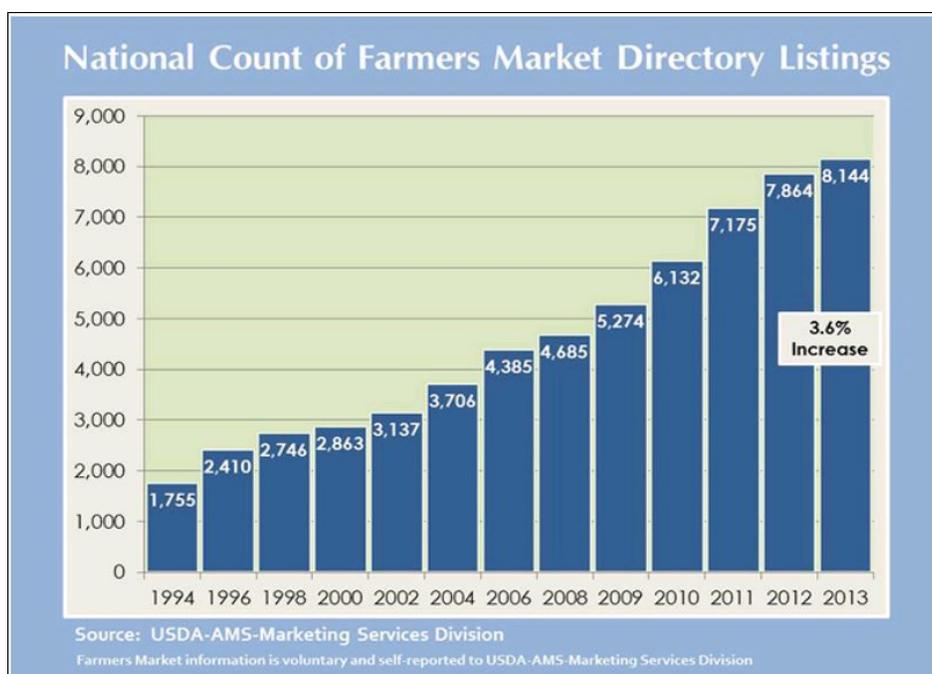
¹³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis. (2013). *Nutrition assistance in farmers markets: Understanding current operations* by Sujata Dixit-Joshi et al. Project Officer: Eric Sean Williams, Alexandria, VA: April 2013. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis>.

1.2 SNAP at Farmers Markets

The food and nutrition assistance programs administered by the USDA are intended to reduce hunger and improve the health and well-being of Americans. In recent years, the number of FMs has increased rapidly, thereby potentially increasing access to farm products for nutrition assistance program participants.

Since 2009, the number of FMs listed in the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) directory has increased by 74 percent, with an annual increase of 3.6 percent from 2012 to 2013 (see Figure 1-1).¹⁴ Multiple factors have contributed to the growth of FMs across the nation, including efforts to connect farmers to consumers. Besides the USDA, not-for-profit and private organizations have been involved in promoting FMs among consumers.

Figure 1-1. USDA AMS National Count FM Directory Listing Graph: 1994-2013



In 1994, 27.5 percent of FMs accepted food stamps or SNAP. At that time, food stamp participants received their benefits in the form of paper coupons; these coupons could be

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service. (2013). National count of farmers market directory listings graph: 1994-2013. Available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateS&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=WFMFarmersMarketGrowth&description=Farmers%2520Market%2520Growth>.

redeemed at food stamp authorized retailers to purchase eligible food items. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 mandated a shift from paper coupons to electronic benefit transfer (EBT) systems so as to increase SNAP efficiency, reduce participation stigma, and reduce fraud. By 2004, food stamp coupons were replaced with EBT cards in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. With EBT, benefits are added to eligible participants' SNAP accounts. To use access and shop for food using their benefits, participants swipe their EBT card at the SNAP authorized vendors' point-of-sale (POS) machines and enter their personal identification number (PIN) to pay for their food purchases.¹⁵ However, the high cost of EBT equipment and logistical requirements needed to implement the EBT system (e.g., POS machines, electricity, telephone lines, trained staff)¹⁶ had a drastic effect on the number of SNAP participants shopping for SNAP-eligible food items at FMs. FMs could not afford the EBT system infrastructure and thus, at its lowest point in 2004, only 8 percent of authorized FMs redeemed SNAP benefits.¹⁷

In 2006, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) first awarded Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grants to assist farmers in reaching consumers and to aid in the development and promotion of FMs. The FMPP was authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill to improve, expand, and develop direct marketing opportunities for farmers. At the market level, these grants enable farmers to expand their staff, increase advertising, outreach and engagement activities, and expand the hours and days of operation. Since FMPP began launching its activities, specifically as it relates to EBT activities, there has been a four-fold increase in SNAP sales at FMs, from \$4,173,323 in fiscal year 2009 to \$16,598,255 in fiscal year 2012.¹⁸

Independent of the FMPP grants funding mechanism, USDA provided states with funding to expand the use of wireless technology at FMs. Over the past 5 years, the FNS has provided information on alternative ways to process SNAP-related sales, guidance on the SNAP authorization process, and marketing materials that can be distributed to SNAP participants at FMs. The introduction of affordable EBT machines and the ongoing development of new technologies that allows farmers and FMs to use mobile devices rather than traditional EBT POS

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis, (2011). *Benefit redemption patterns in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* by Laura Castner and Juliette Henke. Project officer: Anita Singh, Alexandria, VA: February 2011.

¹⁶ Wasserman, W., Tropp, D., Lakins, V., Foley, C., DeNinno, M., Thompson, J., Owens, N., and Williams, K. (2010). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at farmers markets: A how-to handbook*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, June 2010. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/MS039.06-2010>.

¹⁷ Briggs, S., Fisher, A., Lott, M., Miller, S., and Tessman, N. (2010). *Real food, real choice: Connecting SNAP recipients with farmers markets*. Community Food Security Coalition and Farmers Market Coalition, June 2010.

¹⁸ Miller, S., and Roper, N. (2013). *Farmers Market Promotion Program: Grant activities and impacts 2006-2011*. Farmers Market Coalition in Partnership with Market Umbrella. June 2013.

machines have resulted in a steady increase in the number of FMs that redeem SNAP benefits. In 2009, nearly 18 percent of FMs accepted SNAP and, by 2011, the share had grown to approximately 35 percent.¹⁹

The successful implementation of SNAP at FMs can also be attributed to the model used to redeem SNAP benefits. In the model used at most SNAP-authorized retailers, an exact amount of SNAP benefits is deducted from the SNAP participants' account based on the point-of-sale (POS) transaction with the vendor. However, in many FM models, the FM obtains a SNAP license and allows eligible farmers in the market to accept SNAP benefits typically using one of two scrip systems. More commonly the system used adopts the use of paper scrip or tokens as the accepted FM currency for SNAP participants to use for shopping with the vendors. In this system, market staff use a centralized POS device to provide SNAP participants with the system currency in use, paper scrip or tokens, by swiping the participants EBT card to debit the amount requested by the participant and, in exchange, provide the participant with the equivalent amount in the scrip currency. The participant can use this to shop at all eligible food booths in the market. The scrip currency is then redeemed at participating farm vendors to purchase SNAP eligible products; farmers trade the currency with market staff for payment. Unspent FM currency may be redeemed at subsequent visits to the FM. The additional step of converting the benefits to FM currency allows a FM to use a single EBT machine for the entire market and SNAP benefits to be redeemed by multiple participating vendors within a market (or at participating markets).

Another scrip system in place at FMs relies on receipts. In this FM model, SNAP participants do not need to use a market currency such as paper scrip or tokens and actually pay for the exact purchase using their EBT card and thus their account is debited for an exact amount rather than an anticipated amount. In this model, the SNAP participant shops at the market and sets aside selected food at a farmer's booth. The farmer gives the customer a list of the selected items. The customer then takes the list to the centralized POS device, uses their EBT card to pay for the items, and receives a receipt of payment. The SNAP participant gives the farmer the receipt in exchange for the selected food items. The market staff keeps track of the receipts and reimburses the farmers based on the day's purchases, which are reconciled with the farmers' receipts.²⁰

¹⁹ Fee, R., and Meléndez, M.L. (2013). *2011 Electronic Benefit Transfer and Farmers Market Initiative Evaluation Report*. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Available at http://www.preventionminnesota.com/objects/pdfs/2011EBT_FarmersMarketEvaluationReport.pdf.

²⁰ EBT: Scrip System-paper scrip, token, or receipts. (n.d.). Retrieved December 10, 2013, from USDA Food and Nutrition Service: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ebt/scrip-system-paper-scrip-token-or-receipts>

1.3 SNAP-Based Incentive Programs at Farmers Markets

Recent emergence of FM SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) that are funded by private, public, and nonprofit organizations are intended to address access and affordability issues for SNAP participants.²¹ New York City Health Bucks, the Double Up Food Bucks in Michigan, and the nationwide Wholesome Wave Double Value Coupon Program (DVCP) are examples of SBIPs that provide SNAP customers additional funds to spend on SNAP-eligible farm products at FMs.

Since these programs are relatively young, however, research on the impact of these incentives on consumer behavior is limited. Available evidence suggests that incentives are effective in bringing SNAP consumers to the markets. The Health Bucks program found that markets in the New York City area that offered the SBIP (\$2 for every \$5 spent) had more than twice as many EBT sales as those that did not offer the program.²² An analysis of the Minnesota MarketMatch program (with matches up to \$25 per visit) showed a 91 percent increase in the number of transactions in 2010 compared to 2009 when the program was initiated.²³

Further, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources reported that SNAP redemption at FMs using Boston Bounty Bucks (a DVCP) increased by 500 percent in the 2010 season compared to 2009.²⁴ In addition to these encouraging reports, there is also evidence that once low-income families enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are exposed to FMs through incentive programs, they increase their purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables at those markets.^{25,26} Data from the Double Up Food Bucks program in

²¹ Oberholtzer, L., Dimitri, C., and Schumacher, G. (2012). Linking farmers, healthy foods, and underserved communities: exploring the impact of nutrition incentive programs on farmers and farmers markets. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. July 2012. Available at <http://www.agdevjournal.com/volume-2-issue-4/271-linking-farmers-healthy-foods-and-underserved-consumers.html?catid=111%3Aopen-call-papers>.

²² Abrami, A. (2011). *Healthy Bucks Program*. Presentation March 4, 2011. Available at www.nyfarmersmarket.com/powerpoint2011/NYHealthBucks.pptx.

²³ MarketMatch (for EBT cardholder) starts July 16th. July 2011. <http://www.npnola.com/associations/organizations/sub/114/marketumbrellaorg/news-archive/>.

²⁴ Kramer, M., and Zakaras, M. (2011). *Improving nutrition for SNAP recipients: A roadmap for the Double Value Coupon Program*. Prepared for WholeSome Wave. March 2011. Available at www.innovations.harvard.edu/download-doc.html?id=1714473.

²⁵ Herman, D.R., Harrison, G.G., Afifi, A.A., and Jenks, E. (2008). Effect of a targeted subsidy on intake of fruits and vegetables among low-income women in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. *Am J Public Health*, 98(1).

²⁶ Racine, E.F., Smith Vaughn, A., and Laditka, S.B. (2010). Farmers' market use among African-American women participating in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 110(3), 441-6. Accessed on August 26, 2013.

Michigan indicate that the average number of SNAP participant visits per market tripled between 2009 and 2012, from 299 SNAP participant visits per market to 1,192, respectively.²⁷

1.4 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to gather data to develop a better understanding and picture of how SBIPs at FMs are designed, implemented, and evaluated by a variety of non-government organizations that fund or administer funds for SBIPs at SNAP authorized FMs. The broad research objectives were to:

1. Understand the characteristics of organizations involved with SBIPs, their SBIP objectives, role in SBIP implementation, and involvement in SBIP monitoring and evaluations;
2. Characterize relationships between SBIP organizations and between SBIP organizations and FMs; and
3. Examine the outcomes, performance, and/or the impacts of SBIP operations at the market-level based on self-evaluation information of programs that organizations have in place.

FMs play a role in carrying out FNS strategic initiatives to improve access and nutrition in the populations the FNS serves. This study further defines that role, which has not been well documented to date.

1.5 Report Organization

This report presents the findings from qualitative interviews conducted with organization representatives and self-reported quantitative market level evaluation measures provided by them. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the methodology used to conduct the study, including the sampling approach, data collection, and analysis procedures. Chapters 3 through 8 present the findings distilled from the qualitative interviews and market level evaluation data. Each finding chapter starts with an overview of the specific research question addressed followed by key findings and detailed results. Gaps in the data and current processes for evaluating SBIPs are presented, as well as potential study limitations that could be addressed by future research. Given

²⁷ Donovan, J., Madore, A., Randall, M., and Vickery, K. (2013). *Farmers Market Incentive Programs: Vehicles for increasing local food access among nutrition assistance beneficiaries, Policy recommendations for Austin, Texas*. May 21, 2013.

the exploratory and qualitative approach used in this study, numbers and percentages are not presented; rather, the emphasis is on the themes that emerged. In addition, findings are presented to highlight the continuum of activities represented across the four organization types and, when appropriate, similarities and differences in activities by organization type. Finally, Chapter 9 presents the conclusions from the *Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study*. Direct quotes from various organization representatives interviewed are provided throughout the report to illustrate the findings.

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology for conducting the *Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study* (FMIPS). It describes the critical aspects of the study design, including sample selection, data collection, and analytic methods. Characteristics of responding organizations are also presented.

To address the FMIPS research objectives, data were collected between February and June 2013 from organizations involved in administering, supporting, and funding SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) at farmers markets (FMs). Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from these organizations. Extant data regarding FMs funded by SBIP organizations were collected when available. Data were also extracted from the FNS SNAP Anti-Fraud Locator for EBT Redemption Transaction (ALERT) system for a subset of markets for calendar years 2011 and 2012.

2.2 Sampling

Goals for the Sample

The primary objective of the sampling strategy was to ensure representation from three categories of organizations that were identified a priori, based on their size and relative responsibility associated with funding and administration of SBIPs at FMs. These included:

- **Type I organizations** – large umbrella organizations that provide grants for SBIPs and technical assistance to smaller organizations;
- **Type II organizations** – smaller organizations that distribute the grant money to FMs and administer the programs; and
- **Type III organizations** – local organizations that provide grant money for SBIPs.

However, sampling based on this strict organizational classification was limited because the type of organizations involved in providing or administering funds for SBIPs varies significantly within and between communities and in different parts of the country. There was also significant overlap between categories, and the classification scheme also excluded the role of FMs themselves and other organizations that serve as program operators. Thus, a revised sampling strategy was developed to help ensure representation of the full variety of organizations involved in the FMIPS (See Section 2.4.1).

Primary Sampling Frame of SBIP Organizations

The *Nutrition Assistance at Farmers Markets: Understand Current Operations*²⁸ served as the sampling frame for the FMIPS. This study, which surveyed market managers about farmers market operations, included a specific question about whether they received financial support to administer SNAP incentives at their markets and, if they did, to list the names of organizations that provided or administered SNAP incentives at their markets. Many FM managers provided names of more than one organization and, thus, duplicated organizations were removed from the frame. Federal and State entities were excluded from the primary sample because the objectives of the FMIPS were to assess the influence of non-Federal funds used for the purposes of SBIPs at SNAP authorized FMs. However, city governments were retained, leaving a final pool of 172 organizations. Seventeen Type I organizations, approximately half of those identified in the *Nutrition Assistance at Farmers Markets: Understand Current Operations* survey, were selected from this final pool of organizations, based on the frequency of reporting by managers on the survey. These 17 selected organizations comprised approximately half of the Type I organizations identified in the FMIPS sampling frame and were purposely chosen selected to ensure geographic representation and a mix of organizational categories (e.g., nonprofit, foundation, insurance company, city government, etc.).

FMIPS Sampling Plan

A referral-based sampling strategy was employed for the FMIPS. This strategy allowed for direct exploration and study of partnerships and organizational clusters that work together on SBIPs at

²⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis. (2013). *Nutrition assistance in farmers markets: Understanding current operations – National Survey of Farmers Market Managers and Direct Marketing Farmers*. Sujata Dixit-Joshi, John Burke, Barnali Das, Michael Steketee. Project Officer: Eric Sean Williams. February 2013.

FMs. At the conclusion of each telephone interview, organizations were asked to name other organizations with whom they partnered on SBIPs. Through this referral process, additional organizations were identified, interviewed and, in turn, asked to report on collaborations and/or to refer other organizations with whom they worked. The goal was to enroll approximately 100 organizations and conduct approximately 210 telephone interviews with representatives from these organizations. Interviews were conducted with one to three individuals in leadership roles at each organization, including the executive directors and/or SBIP program managers. It should be noted that although excluded from the primary sampling frame, through the referral process Federal- and State- funded entities initially excluded were named as collaborators in SBIPs.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between February and June 2013. This included conducting the qualitative interviews described above and obtaining any available self-evaluation data that organizations were willing to provide.

Semi-Structured Interviews with Organizations

Organizations selected or referred to participate in the study were emailed an invitation to participate. The email outlined FMIPS objectives, described the consent procedures, and estimated the time burden required to complete the interview. Telephone interviews were scheduled based on participant availability and conducted by qualitative interviewers.

Semi-structured interview guides were developed with input from experts knowledgeable about SBIPs, and reviewed by FNS. A telephone pretest was conducted with a panel of seven representatives who previously worked with SBIP organizations. The final interview guides were reviewed and approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and used for interviewing representatives of SBIP organizations participating in the FMIPS (Appendix C).

The interview guides were developed to capture information about participating organizations and SBIP characteristics. The interviews gathered information to better understand:

- The primary mission of the organizations and their history with SNAP;
- The source of financial support for the organization's SBIP;
- The relationship of organizations to FMs that receive incentive funds for SNAP customers and the selection process and requirements for participating FMs;
- The number of FMs a specific organization supported in 2012;
- Whether other financial and nonfinancial types of support are provided or offered by the organization to the FMs;
- Factors that make it difficult to implement and manage SBIPs; and
- Characteristics of successful SBIPs.

At the close of data collection, 144 interviews were completed with representatives from 106 organizations. Data in this report represent 141 interviews from 103 organizations.²⁹ For most organizations (N=70), interviews were conducted with only one representative. Typically, two or more interviews were conducted with key organizational representatives for the purposes of obtaining data from the person most knowledgeable about the topic being discussed.

Collection of SBIP Self-Evaluation Data from Organizations

Of the 103 organizations interviewed, 56 reported collecting data to conduct some form of self-evaluation for the purpose of assessing various aspects of their SBIP at the market level. These organizations were asked to share any market-level data that they maintained on their SBIPs to assist in identifying differences across SBIPs that might impact fruit and vegetable sales at SNAP authorized FMs. The market-level data requested for the FMIPS included:

For each market where the organization supported the SBIP:

- SNAP authorization date for the market; and
- SBIP start date at the market.

²⁹The audio file from one interview was unavailable for transcription and two of the interviewed organizations were [later determined to not be] eligible for participation.

Calendar Year (CY) 2012 data:

- The specific food items that could be purchased with the incentives (fruits, vegetables, meat/fish/poultry, dairy products, seeds and plants that produce foods for the household to eat, and other food items);
- Duration of market season;
- Duration of incentive season;
- Number of vendors;
- Number of vendors accepting SNAP;
- Total number of SNAP shoppers;
- Average number of visits per SNAP shopper;
- Number of SNAP customers who received incentives;
- Dollar value of incentives redeemed;
- Dollar value of SNAP benefits spent;
- Dollar value of food sales; and
- Proportion of SNAP shoppers who paid cash to make purchases.

Change measures from 2011 to 2012 (more, less, or the same):

- Total number of SNAP customers at the market;
- Total sales of SNAP-eligible foods at the market;
- Total sales of all goods at the market; and
- Total value of incentives redeemed at the market.

Of the 56 organizations who reported collecting self-evaluation data, 14 provided data. These 14 organizations provided data for 222 FMs that were part of their SBIPs. Four other organizations agreed to provide data but did not have any. Only one organization refused outright. The remainder did not respond to repeated requests.

FNS ALERT Data

To conduct market-level analysis, an extract of the SNAP ALERT data for CY 2011 and CY 2012 was requested from FNS to supplement quantitative data from the FMIPS and the *Understanding Nutrition Assistance at Farmers Markets: Understanding Current Operations* survey. This analysis was conducted to assess change in SNAP redemptions at these FMs between CYs and across months to examine the impact SBIPs had on redemptions for the subset of markets (n=82) that participated in both the FMIPS and the *Understanding Nutrition Assistance at Farmers Markets: Understanding Current Operations* survey.

2.4 Analytic Methods

This section presents the approach to analyzing the qualitative interview transcripts and the market level quantitative measures. The function-based organizational typology that emerged from the interviews was utilized to examine the themes. This function-based typology is reflective of the organization's primary role in SBIPs.

2.4.1 Organizational Typology and Classification

As stated in Section 2.2, the original classification scheme was deemed limited and did not reflect the true nature of responding organizations. A revised organizational typology was developed, which consists of four categories emphasizing the organization's primary function: Funders, Coordinators, Supporters, and Operators. As described further in Chapter 4, almost all organizations performed two or more of these functions. However, each organization tended to focus its resources and energies in fulfillment of one of these primary functions. Table 2-1 presents the definitions of these function-based organizational categories along with verbatim excerpts from interviews that illustrate the rationale for placing organizations in the selected category based on organizational typology.

Table 2-1. Organizational typology based on SBIP function and supporting verbatim quotes

	Organizational function classification	SBIP role
1	FUNDERS	Provide funding to SBIPs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ...we are a funder. We aren't in the day-to-day operations of anything that we fund. ■ The [Primary SBIP Coordinator has] been relying on us for funding every year...We are a funder. ■ We had really been primarily a funder. We have a fairly strong partnership with [Primary SBIP Coordinator]. They have been our primary partner in really looking at increasing SNAP redemption at farmer's markets. ■ [Our decision to become involved] was more a funder coming to us with an idea, and wanted a collaboration with us as another funder. It was something we saw value in. ■ However, I'd say day-to-day with the [SBIP], the way that we mostly work with it is in terms of our grants. 	
2	COORDINATORS	Design, support, and implement SBIPs. They establish the SBIPs, coordinate participation (including the decision process to support other organizations/markets), and fundraise.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Our local Farmers Markets are not connected under any single umbrella and so any sort of program that's going to be run through multiple markets needs an agency that's willing to coordinate, because the markets haven't been able to do that on their own in the past – because of them not being connected. Our role is to coordinate between the markets. We're the chief fundraiser for the program. We're the ones going after grants and doing grass roots fundraising for the program. Also, we're the connection between the data that comes out from the markets and our primary funder, that's our biggest role. So, we're responsible for ensuring that the markets have the appropriate funding to implement the program...We do all of the advertising and outreach for the program that needs to be coordinated in conjunction with the markets. Other than that, the markets handle the day-to-day running of the program at the markets, we're not there. Essentially we ensure that all the data is being collected properly, that the program's being implemented properly, that sort of stuff. ■ ...consistent coordination, consistent funding, and a very dedicated resource that's worked out all of the kinks in the whole process. From communication about the availability of the funds, to training at market. They have a good system in place at [Primary SBIP Coordinator] to make sure that the program runs smoothly. It takes a lot of effort on the part one of their staff members to track down all of that information, because it is coordinated. ■ [Interviewer]: ...in addressing the multi-organizational aspect, it sounds like one organization has to take the lead in a coordinating capacity, sort of the umbrella organization. [Coordinator] "Absolutely." 	

Table 2-1. Organizational typology based on SBIP function and supporting verbatim quotes (continued)

3	SUPPORTERS	Provide support services for the implementation or support of SBIPs ranging from critical (technical assistance, logistical support, financial assistance, evaluation) to auxiliary (marketing/outreach, SNAP education, additional training).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Probably the most important role that we provide is technical assistance to markets who are past participants in the program, and technical assistance to those who are newly implementing EBT at farmers' markets. ■ With the one in [city], our role was helping, over a course of numerous meetings, developing the concept of how the [SBIP] would work, what the match would be, what the eligible foods would be, and then identifying an appropriate farmers market organization that would be a good one to pilot a program like this that the city wanted to do. It was an advisory and design role. ■ Our role, it's really promoting the program out in the community, introducing the clients for the program as much as we can. It's also having an infrastructure in which the customers are used to coming to our information booths. ■ ...the [Coordinator] is doing the administrative work for the [SBIP] itself. Our on-the-ground role is in helping to create marketing materials and distribute them. 	
4	OPERATORS	Implement SBIPs at the local or market level.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The market is authorized as the SNAP provider, so we actually operate the machines, hand out the tokens. ■ we accept [SBIP] and SNAP benefits in addition to [Project name] at our market and on our veggie van...We try to collaborate with [the SBIP Coordinator] whenever possible on marketing efforts directed toward the low income community in particular ■ We're the ones who administer it every week and monitor it and try to educate the farmers about how and why we do it – and the community...we're the ones actually swiping the cards at the market and handing out the tokens. 	

2.4.2 Analyzing Data from the Organizational Interviews

Coding and analysis of the interviews conducted with SBIP organizational representatives enabled the development of major themes by the type of organization. Emergent issues from organizational representatives across all organizations and organization types were assessed and compared on specific measures for the broadest possible data summary. For example, the issues amongst Funders were assessed and compared, and amongst Coordinators, and so on.

Interviews were scheduled to allow for adequate discussion time with each representative, and follow-up calls were arranged when an interview could not be completed in one telephone call.

Qualitative interviews were generally conducted with one to three representatives from each organization; thus, multiple responses may exist for organizations where more than one representative was interviewed. When analyzing qualitative interview data, it is anticipated that responses on a particular topic may not be mutually exclusive but instead actually highlight important issues among multiple related themes. Throughout the FMIPS, frequent team meetings were conducted during the coding and analysis phase to manage interpretations of the data appropriately to ensure these themes were accounted for and a high level of inter-rater reliability.

2.4.3 Analyzing SBIP Self-Evaluation Data

Market-level self-evaluation data were provided by 14 organizations on 222 markets. Organizations varied in the market-level measures they collected and provided to the research team; therefore, some analyses were undertaken with fewer than 222 markets. Descriptive analyses were performed to assess general market characteristics, specific items related to SNAP sales, and the value of incentives redeemed.

2.4.4 Social Network Mapping of SBIP Organizations

Social network analysis was used to study relationships among organizations that fund, coordinate, support, and implement SBIPs at FMs. These analyses assessed:

- Relationships between organizations and FMs where SBIP was implemented;
- Whether organizations that fund or administer SBIPs had relationships with other organizations, and if so, which organizations;
- The similarity, or homogeneity of the types of organizations that had relationships with one another;
- Relationships between various types of organizations that provided financial and nonfinancial support to FMs themselves; and
- Whether specific patterns or models of relationships between organizations existed.

The analysis was driven by responses to questions during the interviews with the SBIP organizations regarding their formal or informal partnerships with other organizations or entities funding, administering, or supporting SBIPs at FMs. The social network data was analyzed in

aggregate and focused on characteristics of the organizations and the characteristics of partnerships.

2.5 Characteristics of Responding Organizations

The analysis utilized data from a total of 141 interviews conducted with representatives from 103 organizations. Using the function-based organization typology, 13 organizations were classified as Funders, 34 as Coordinators, 29 as Supporters, and 27 as Operators.

Number of Employees and SBIP Budget Allocation

The responding organizations were generally not very large and allocated a relatively small proportion of their budget to SBIPs. Only 14 organizations had more than 75 employees and about one-half of the organizations had fewer than 10 employees.³⁰ Funder and Coordinator organizations tended to have more employees than Support or Operator organizations. The majority of organizations (82 of 103) allocated less than 25 percent of their budget to the implementation of SBIPs (Table 2-2). Thus, for most of the responding organizations, funding, support and/or operation of SBIPs represented only a small part of the organization's overall activities.

Table 2-2. Proportion of organization's total budget allocated to SBIPs

	Proportion of Total Budget Allocated to SBIP					Total
	<25%	25-50%	51-75%	>75%	NA/DK*	
Funder	11	0	0	1	1	13
Coordinator	25	7	0	1	1	34
Supporter	25	3	0	0	1	29
Operator	21	4	0	1	1	27
TOTAL	82	14	0	3	4	103

*NA/DK = Not Applicable/Don't Know

³⁰ Operators (i.e., FMs) often rely on volunteer staff not counted as employees. Nevertheless, the number of these volunteers is almost always limited to one or two individuals.

Geographic Location and Coverage

Organizations from all FNS regions were included in the sample (see Table 2-3). The majority of participating organizations involved in SBIPs in this sample were located in the Midwest, Northeast, and Western regions of the United States.

Table 2-3. Distribution of responding organizations by FNS geographic region

FNS Geographic Region	# Organizations
Mid-Atlantic	11
Midwest	22
Mountain Plains	8
Northeast	26
Southeast	12
Southwest	2
Western	22
Total	103

Organizations varied in their service area with some serving a local city to some others serving several states, with most organizations funding or supporting SBIP operations within their home state. Only two organizations indicated that they provided supports at the national level. The majority of participating organizations were focused on providing services and supports to SBIPs at the local level, either within a particular city, several cities, or one of several counties within a state (Table 2-4). An additional 23 organizations provided support throughout their home state.

Table 2-4. Service area of responding organizations

Geographic service area	Organizations
Local (City/County/Multicity)	75
State	23
Regional	3
National	2
Total	103

Characteristics of Organizational Representatives Interviewed – Title and Time in Position

Interviews were conducted with individuals who were in executive or managerial positions within each organization, and a small number of representatives in varying positions. Executive positions included executive directors, chairpersons of advisory boards or coalitions, presidents, CEOs, vice presidents, and similar executive positions. Managerial positions included program managers, coordinators, and market managers. The roles and responsibilities often overlapped for the representatives in the executive and managerial categories. The smaller the organization, the more likely a representative was to have multiple roles within the context of their official position. Representatives in non-managerial and non-executive positions included community food organizers, resource developers, data analysts, and nutrition and health educators. These roles were generally analogous to managerial positions, with a more specific focus on an area such as health education or data collection and evaluation.

Representatives in executive positions had served in their current role for a longer period than those in managerial positions. Most representatives had been in their current position with the organization between 1 and 3 years, with increasing rates of turnover after 4 years.

The Design of SBIPs: Organizational Influences on Their Characteristics

3

3.1 Overview and Key Findings

Overview

To explore how organizations design SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs), it was important to become better acquainted with the types of organizations that are active participants in SBIPs, what their organizations' missions, and corresponding motivations and goals are for being involved with SBIPs. This was considered important because, fundamentally, an organization's role and involvement with SBIPs is influenced by its perspectives and initial motivations for establishing, administering, implementing or operating a SBIP at a SNAP-authorized farmers market (FM). This is the information that provides the context for the design of the programs in terms of how they are funded; the mechanisms for identifying and/or awarding partners (i.e., the application process); the administrative and operating activities required for implementing and maintaining the programs; and issues surrounding program sustainability.

This chapter presents and describes the FMIPS findings regarding SBIP organizations:

- Missions and characteristics – overall and in terms of roles and functions with SBIPs, and involvement with SNAP;
- Sources of financial support, for the organization as a whole and for the SBIP specifically;
- Strategic partnerships for the SBIP; and
- Application and decision-making process for obtaining and awarding support and/or funding to organizations participating in SBIPs.

Key Findings

Key themes of the specific areas addressed in this chapter are highlighted here. Additional detail on these themes and others are presented in subsequent sections.

- For a majority of participating organizations, involvement in SNAP and SBIPs was relatively recent.
- SBIP activities undertaken by the organizations tended to align well with one or more of the organizations' missions of increasing access to healthy foods, improving health outcomes, addressing social inequity, and/or improving the local economy. Thus, SBIPs benefit multiple stakeholders, including SBIP organizations, SNAP participants, farmers who participate in the program, and the communities in which the participating markets are located.
- SBIPs were funded through multiple public and private sources. Overall funding streams were similar for all types of organization involved with SBIPs; however, more Funder organizations relied on private funding and more Operator organizations relied on vendor fees.
- Funder organizations tended to utilize an application process to select and award partnering organizations, but consistency with regard to the rigor of the process and the guidelines varied. Coordinators employed a mix of application and informal processes while Support organizations tended to report informal processes to select partners.
- The following factors were considered most frequently when making decisions about funding and partnership development: geography, mission alignment, history with SNAP programs, and organizational capacity to implement the SBIPs.
- Excess demand for the program, earmarked funding, and a limited desire by Funders to provide multiple years of funding were common challenges faced by organizations. Sustainability of funding for SBIPs was a major issue reported by many of the organizational representatives. Coping strategies to address funding and support challenges included changes to the program structure or delivery, staffing structure, reducing the incentive amount, and building fundraising capacity.

3.2 Characteristics and Missions of Organizations Involved with SBIPs

3.2.1 Organizational History with SBIPs and SNAP

For the vast majority of organizations, involvement in the implementation and support of SBIPs was relatively recent (i.e., starting in 2009 or after). The earliest that organizations in the FMIPS reported that they became involved with SBIPs was 2005. Very few organizational representatives reported involvement with SNAP or SBIPs prior to 2008.

It should also be noted that the FMIPS referral-based sampling technique employed to identify organizations for participation likely skewed the sample towards organizations most actively engaged in SBIP work. Based on this, the actual national average tenure of organizations involved in SBIPs may be even younger than what is reported here.

3.2.2 Mission of Organizations

The FMIPS assessed the mission of the organizations in an effort to better understand the reasons or motivations for their involvement with SBIPs at FMs. Responses from organizational representatives indicated that their missions encompassed several objectives. Coordinator and Operator organizational representatives more frequently cited their mission as alleviating social inequity followed by supporting farmers. In contrast, Funders cited improving health followed by addressing economic and community development. Of all organization types, only representatives from Funder organizations did not cite supporting farmers as a mission.

However, a pervading theme of all organizations was that SBIPs benefit multiple parties: SNAP participants, farmers, and the broader community. In this sense, SBIPs were viewed as providing compounding returns. They reach beyond the direct and immediate benefit for the SNAP participant in the form of increased spending power, but are also indirectly benefiting the authorized farmers whose sales are increasing and the community by putting money back into the local economy and building one-on-one community relationships between farmers and shoppers. Organizational representatives often spoke of SBIPs as “win-win-win.”

3.2.3 Organizational Motivations for Forming or Participating in an SBIP

Regardless of organizational type, the most frequently cited reason reported for organizations to become involved with SBIPs was to increase access to healthy food, followed by increasing business for farmers. Addressing health disparities was also a goal shared across the full range of all organizational types. However, while all representatives indicated that improving health and reducing health disparities was an ongoing concern for their organizations, only a quarter of them indicated this was the reason or motivation for their involvement with SBIPs. A few representatives cited other reasons for their organizations to become involved in SBIPs. These included augmenting an underlying objective to enroll more participants in SNAP and the opportunity to contribute to a SBIP had become available when an appropriate partner had presented itself.

With the exception of one, none of the organizations participating in the FMIPS were formed for the sole purpose of funding, administering, or supporting SBIPs. Instead, overall motivations for organizational involvement with SBIPs aligned closely with the overall missions of the organization. A number of representatives of Operator organizations revealed that they were motivated to simply improve market access for SNAP participants.

“...to improve the health and wellness of the communities where we work and play.” [Funder]

“...to work in partnership with the community to allow each resident of [our service area] to achieve their optimal state of health.” [Supporter]

“...to increase access to fresh, locally grown foods in historically excluded or low income communities.” [Coordinator]

“...to provide a means for small, local farmers to sell directly to the public without any middlemen, and to make available, a variety of quality, fresh food, produce basically, to an urban area of the city that does contain a rather large, what we call, underserved community.” [Operator]

3.3 Organization Budgets for SBIPs and Funding Sources

The FMIPS sought to better understand what financial resources were available to organizations involved with funding, administering, supporting, and operating SBIPs at FMs. This section describes findings on the commonalities and differences across organizational types with regards to the size of organizational SBIP budgets and the funding sources of their money.

3.3.1 Organizational Program Structure and Budgets for SBIP

For the majority of organizations, representatives reported that SBIP activities were absorbed into the organizations' existing structure. About a third of Coordinator representatives reported a new component of the organization was designated or tasked specifically for SBIPs at FMs. Depending on the organization, representatives reported that it may have been managed by the hiring of one or two additional staff or by creating an entirely new unit within the organization. Regardless, the budgetary allocation for the majority of organizational SBIP budgets was relatively small, typically amounting to a quarter or less of the organizations' overall operating budgets and in many cases "a whole lot less."

3.3.2 Sources of Funding

The main themes regarding the source of funds for SBIPs were that multiple sources of financial resources are required from a variety of different types of Funders. While all SBIP organizational representatives reported the need for "multiple sources of funding," Funder organizations were most likely to provide an explicit number of sources required for funding at any one time and also to report the greatest number of sources required, which is intuitive given that their role in the SBIP framework is to provide the financial support for SBIPs. Funder organizations were more likely to report having anywhere between four and seven funding sources at any one time compared to two or three sources typically cited by the other organizational types.

Across all types, the most common sources of funding cited by representatives for both their SBIPs and the organizations in which they reside were philanthropic donations, public funding, and grants. Philanthropic donations encompassed donations from individual donors, community-based organizations, and the private sector. It was this latter group of philanthropic donations, those from the private sector, that were the most important sources of funding across all organizational types. These included support from major foundations, corporate foundations, as well as the individual donors, and local nonprofits. The other two frequently cited sources of funding for the SBIPs were public funding and grants. Public funding included money from one or more local, State or Federal agency, and grants were funds reported as being obtained explicitly by a grant mechanism as reported by the organizational representative. It should be noted, however, that some public grants included support from municipal agencies as well as State and Federal level grants, including the Specialty Crop Block Grant, thus there is some overlap with the public funding category.

Operators were the most likely to rely on other sources of funding that were revealed such as vendor fees, fees for service, or subcontractor fees. For example, Operator organizational representatives collected fees generated from payments collected from vendors for the use of the market stall, from membership fees for associations and member organizations, as well as fees for service and contractual work.

Coordinator and Supporter organizations frequently cited public funding as an important source of support. For these types of organizations, fundraising, typically conducted at the local level consumed a large amount of their time, year round, as needed to generate new streams of funding support in order to be able to sustain the program. It included planning of special types of events, sales of merchandise, or direct solicitations to individuals or organizations to raise awareness of the program and the need for money. Coordinator, Support, and Operator organizations also relied on grants much more than Funder organizations. This was characterized as required since seed money was often provided to begin a SBIP, and the stream of funds was not permanent. Even funding organizations were continually looking for new sources of funds. To this end, while private funding was commonly reported as a source of support for Funder organizations, and there is currently a great dependence upon private sector funders, some representatives expressed that only public funding will be able to sustain SBIP efforts for the long term. The FMIPS found that no Funder organizations rely solely on public funding currently for their SBIPs.

3.3.3 Challenges of Funding SBIPs

Organizational representatives involved with funding SBIPs expressed three clear themes regarding challenges and obstacles for organizations trying to fund SBIPs:

- **Excess Demand/Insufficient Funding:** There is an excess demand for SBIPs but there are limited financial resources to meet the needs of SBIPs.
- **Constraining Awards:** Sources of SBIP funding, whether they be philanthropists, public or private funders, or grants, often earmark the money, which defines exactly how the money must be used and leaves little flexibility for SBIP budgeting.
- **Funder-Fatigue:** Sources suffered from “funder fatigue,” meaning they provided initial funds or seed money to get an initiative up and running but had less of a desire to maintain even successful programs; must spread the wealth and could not make repeated awards to the same organization; or the Board of Directors may have made a decision that they were no longer interested in SBIPs.

The pervasive challenge of insufficient funding was expressed repeatedly by Funder, Coordinator, and Operator organizations. Many felt that limited and uncertain funding dampened the ability of the programs to expand and reach more customers. Inadequate levels of funding, combined with a lack of dependability on even the current streams of funding, generated numerous concerns about growth, the ability of the markets to consistently deliver incentives, and effectively plan how to communicate with and support their communities and farmer vendors. Only representatives from Supporter organizations reported that they were unaware of or had no experience with specific challenges that their organization faced with respect to obtaining funding. However, these representatives and their respective Operator organizations were likely to be the furthest removed from the financial support and fundraising aspects of program operations.

Organizational representatives articulated that while the actual incentives represent the most visible need for funding, they account for only a portion of program and administrative costs. This theme was heavily threaded throughout the interviews, for example, with representatives from Coordinator organizations explicitly stating that the available funding did not always cover administrative costs, which made it difficult to secure the critical resources to staff program operations.

“As we continue to grow, our needs for fundraising continue to grow as well. And we’re not the only player in this game. There are a lot of other farmers’ markets and local food organizations. They’re all typically going after the same funding sources.” [Coordinator]

“At this point, we have about \$175,000.00 in match and we could easily use three or four or five hundred thousand dollars ... [Interviewer: So, your reach is limited by the amount of money that can be allocated towards the match?] Absolutely, and that is our major bottleneck today.” [Coordinator]

“In our area here, and I don’t know if you’ve spoken to anyone else, but there’s a lot of markets that want to take on the program. But there’s not enough funding to go around.” [Operator]

“I wish there was more funding for it because we could definitely go the whole year. We’re open all year, even in the winter months. The customers get a little discouraged.” [Operator]

“I do think multiple sources are necessary for the market operations, because the vendor fees alone are not enough to cover our yearly operational budget, much less any type of expansion or growth, or new programs that we would want to do.” [Operator]

Funder and Coordinator representatives indicated that insufficient funding was further exacerbated by the tendency of philanthropic organizations to tie funding to specific program activities that are exclusive of other activities. For example, awards may have been provided for the actual financial incentive but it was contingent that the money may not be used for any of the program's other costs such as staffing, accounting, marketing and outreach, or other costs considered important to operating a successful SBIP. Representatives articulated that while the actual incentives are the most visible need for funding, they represented only a portion of program and administrative costs. This theme was heavily threaded throughout the interviews with representatives from Coordinator organizations who explicitly stated that the available funding did not always cover administrative costs, which made it difficult to secure the critical resources to staff program operations.

“The funding that’s provided doesn’t cover our administrative costs. We’ve been able to, supplement that historically. At this point, that’s the way our funding looks [we are not going to be able to supplement it beyond 2013. In terms of a long-term solution, that is our biggest [problem].”
[Coordinator]

“A lot of it circles around capacity and then tied to that is fundraising. Like I said before, it’s much more challenging for markets and our program partners to raise funds to cover staff capacity than it is for direct incentives, so those two kind of go hand in hand.”
[Funder]

“It’s the reality of grant funding. I mean some funders will only fund you one time for one part of one project. We just try to diversify and get several funders in on the game and then we always know that we’ll cover our bases one way or another.”
[Operator]

Funder fatigue reflects the desire among some Funders to provide initial funds to get an initiative or program up and running but less of a desire to maintain funding for it even if it is successful. While not unique to SBIPs, the effect was particularly acute given the tension inherent in the very definition of the word “incentive”. The term “incentive” was often interpreted to mean an encouragement or intervention mechanism designed to incite action or cause change. It was typically considered temporary in contrast to ongoing or permanent subsidies that may also be designed to achieve similar goals. SBIP organizational representatives suggested that Funders may be more willing to test the concept and therefore provide initial funding for a SBIP; however, they were reticent to fund ongoing “subsidies.”

These responses highlighted the uncertainty of philanthropic funding and the concerns among SBIP organizations regarding the sustainability of funds for these programs. They also revealed the differences in philosophy concerning the use of ongoing incentives to promote the purchase of fruits and vegetables at FMs among SNAP participants.

On the one hand, some SBIP Funder organizations saw the role of incentives as a mechanism to initially attract new SNAP shoppers to FMs for the purpose of having them continue to shop at the market even after the financial incentive is removed. At the same time, these same Funder organizations downplayed the likelihood that they would withhold funding in the near future, acknowledging instead that positive shopping behaviors observed would not likely persist if the financial incentives were to disappear.

Nevertheless, most Funder organizations were faced with managing a limited amount of resources and directing them across multiple and competing entities. Therefore, SBIP organizations that have experienced funder fatigue were taking steps to prepare for the contingency that financial support from current funding streams could stop at any time.

3.3.4 Managing SBIPs in a Funding-Challenged Environment

Coordinator, Supporter, and Operator organizations that already experienced or were anticipating upcoming challenges with sustaining their SBIP funding levels shared their experiences and strategies for managing and mitigating potential consequences. Representatives of Funder organizations were not asked about this during their interviews.

“I know that the need is extremely high. The positive behavior of, now, utilizing the fresh foods in their meals has been established. I would think that would continue. But, whether it would be able to continue without the incentives at that level, I don't know. From what I've seen, it's been, for the most part, a very high needs population. I'm sure it would certainly impact their ability to do that.” [Funder]

“Even if they wanted to shop there, I don't think they could. That's the whole thing. They want to eat healthy food now but they can't afford it, and there's nothing they can do to make that money go further unless the prices are more affordable. I don't know what the right answer is...I don't know how you ultimately make fresh produce more affordable without the incentive.” [Funder]

“I think you'd have a really hard time creating that new behavior change for low-income communities. I think that the incentive programs give individuals that push to try something new. I think it's a push and incentive that needs to be there for low-income communities.” [Funder]

Representatives from Coordinator, Operator, and Support organizations indicated that in the face of funding challenges, changes had been made to their SBIPs. The majority of these cases were reported by representatives of Coordinator and Operator organizations since many Supporter organizations are less likely to be directly impacted by changes in funding. The main themes that emerged with regard to changes made to the SBIP, included:

- Change in SBIP structure or delivery;
- Change in the staffing structure;
- Reduction in incentive amount; and
- Development of a fundraising capability and/or expansion of existing fundraising efforts.

Well over half of Operator organizations reported that the impact of inadequate funding resulted in a counterproductive change to the SBIP structure or delivery. This coincided with over half of organizational representatives most frequently characterizing the change as delayed or reduced program implementation and the majority of these responses were from Coordinator representatives.

In other words, representatives of Operator organizations and Coordinator organizations were generally in agreement about the impact of inadequate funding, which was delayed or cancelled delivery or implementation of the program at the FM.

“We are actually offering the incentive for a slightly shorter period. Last year, when we started it, we promised to maintain it through the end of the calendar year. This year we’re promising only to maintain it through October 31.” [Coordinator]

Some organizations’ representatives indicated that funding challenges had a noticeable effect on the organization’s staffing structure. For example, it was mentioned that key staff, such as market managers, had to move from full to part time or hiring for a full-time position had to be postponed. Operator organizational representatives at the market-level appeared to take these challenges in stride without allowing changes to have a significant impact on program delivery.

A representative from a Supporter organization stated that they had lost their funding in 2009 but carried on through volunteerism, literally without the benefit of resources to cover the time of their personnel.

“We were funded through the ____ Foundation. That funding ended in 2009. We really have not been with funding since then. We’ve just been a volunteer, collaboration of agencies, that’s really worked without funding. The last two years, we’ve gathered some small amount of money just from our member agencies...” [Supporter]

A small portion of the organizational representatives indicated their incentive amounts had to be reduced due to a lack of funding. In these cases, the Coordinator and Operator organizations chose to decrease the amount of incentives each customer received in favor of extending incentives to as large a pool of SNAP participants as possible.

The vast majority of organizational representatives facing funding challenges reported that their processes for fundraising had changed significantly over time. These changes could be categorized as a development of the capability to conduct fundraising in and of itself or an expansion of current efforts. Regarding the latter types of changes, representatives recognized that to sustain their SBIPs, much less grow them, they needed to reach beyond traditional funders and those that had already given in the past.

Representatives from some Coordinator organizations suggested the need to diversify funding to create a financially healthy organization, again with the idea that there was not an abundance of dependence on any one Funder organization. In doing this, SBIPs develop broad and deep networks of support. Respondent comments inferred that such investments lead to deeper community buy-in and organizational commitment, which in turn demonstrate to other potential funders the priority the local community has placed on the SBIP initiative.

Further, representatives discussed a trend that placed an increased emphasis on identifying and securing resources more locally, which shifts more and more responsibility for fundraising on the local program Operator organizations. This appeared to be in response to recent decreases in major funding from State and regional entities.

“The [funders are] putting more of the fundraising efforts onto the markets. That makes perfect sense because it’s not sustainable for them either to be growing exponentially, and continue to look for funding sources.” [Operator]

“As we’ve matured as an organization, we’ve been able to tap into some of the private funding, particularly from local family foundations that a new organization without a track record necessarily couldn’t have had access to. So, I think early on, a lot of the public grant funds were a bigger portion of our budget than they are now, simply because of that.” [Operator]

“I would say we began operation of the program with grant funding exclusively, to kind of kick it off and get started with the mindset that we would [add] more sustainable methods that are kind of community driven for each market, and so, some were quicker to that than others. So that has sort of been how it’s changed. We’re trying to push to have all markets be driven by themselves that kind of fundraising mechanism, and also be tapping into the community.” [Coordinator]

“I’d say fundraising has definitely grown, and we have a really generous community in those respects, and we’ve really developed our fundraising plans into a really creative and robust program.” [Supporter]

3.4 Organizational Partnerships and Their Roles with SBIPs

Almost all organizational representatives from the SBIP organizations reported strategic partnerships and alliances for the purposes of not only funding the SBIPs but also for providing nonfinancial in-kind support, as well. SBIP representatives indicated that their organizations' missions could not be accomplished without the critical support of other organizations that share mutual or complementary objectives. The partnerships were with a range of entities from private business to city and state governments. Of the partnerships reported, six main types of entities with whom SBIP organizations collaborated were:

- **Nonprofit organizations:** included additional funders, however, references to community-based organizations tended to be the most frequent.
- **Association-based organizations:** included state or regional FM associations.
- **Educational organizations:** primarily consisted of extension services and universities conducting program evaluation.
- **Health-based organizations:** encompassed health centers, health care providers, and hospitals.
- **Municipal agencies:** included local and state departments of health, human services, and social services, as well as city governments.
- **Business organizations:** included banks and a variety of other local businesses.

Regardless of the entity with which they were partnering, the most frequently cited partner role was outreach and marketing support followed by funding support. Other roles included logistical support (e.g., token distribution at local food banks), advisory support from larger organizations coordinating more established SBIPs, collaboration with food policy councils to establish best practices, and technical assistance from FM associations. The full analysis of these relationships and partnerships are presented in Chapter 4.

3.5 Long-Term Goals of SBIP Organizations

To understand the full picture of the organizations involved with SBIPs the FMIPS assessed the long-term goals for these organizations regarding their role with SBIPs. Over half of all SBIP organizational representatives reported goals that fell into two overarching categories, including meaningfully impacting individuals and refining and/or enhancing SBIP procedures and supports.

SBIP organizational representatives shared a variety of intentions that was fairly evenly echoed across organizational types with regard to meaningfully impacting individuals. However, the definition of what it meant to meaningfully impact individuals varied by SBIP organizational function. For Funder organizations, the majority of representatives most frequently mentioned increasing access to healthy foods as a long-term goal for their organizations. For Operators, representatives most often discussed the desire to increase the number of shoppers at the markets by reaching out to new customers and enticing more repeat visits by existing customers. Among Coordinator organizations, representatives mentioned increasing farmer sales just slightly more frequently than increasing access to healthy foods, followed by easing the implementation at FMs as their most important long-term goals.

Supporter organizations' representatives reported a fairly even split on a desire to impact shopping behavior by increasing customers to the FMs, increasing the purchases of fresh produce, thereby effecting change on eating habits; increasing the utilization of SNAP benefits at the markets; and changing perceptions about FMs in regard to what is offered for purchase, the affordability of what is offered, and the diversity of food selections and customers.

More than half of organizational representatives indicated the need to refine or enhance how they implement their SBIP and/or the supports needed to do so effectively. In some cases this was in defined in terms of identifying better ways to scale up or expand the SBIP to more FMs while in a smaller portion of cases it meant development of transition plans to hand the SBIP over to organizations better equipped to continue operating the SBIP long-term over time.

“This is a really important way for them to make that connection. They get some nutrition education. They’re doing behavior change because they’re coming to the farmers’ market and they’re not just getting exposed to being able to purchase different foods, but they’re learning about different recipes that they can use and that these foods are available, and they can buy them from their local farmer.”
[Coordinator]

“Long-term, we would like to see that the incentive is something that we could find a way to incorporate into our standard operating procedure. Either as something that always happens consistently for a number of months, or perhaps it’s the second week of every month is our incentive. Some way of consistently providing that type of incentive, because of the commitment that it shows to our communities that we serve. I don’t know what shape that’s going to take, but I think that’s our goal, to integrate it in a way so that it’s something that we anticipate doing every year.” [Coordinator]

A number of organizational representatives expressed the need to refine the program's procedures to make it more automated and sustainable. A considerable number also expressed the need to generate increased federal support through funding, operational support, and standardization of processes.

“Our current program is, of course, to increase the fruit and vegetable consumption, but eventually to help steer the Farm Bill to larger benefit. To make sure that we have the benefit first because there's a lot talk about discontinuing or reducing benefits. To help change the Farm Bill policy to ensure that SNAP benefits are a benefit to our community. That right now, like I said, they've been working on how to get the incentive into select grocery stores to measure that impact- if it's larger than farmers' markets going forward.” [Supporter]

“Well, at some point in time that is the hope, is that there is a third party that will take over [the SBIP]. I'm already starting to work on it. So it is a future for us, there is going to be someone else to own this. I do have to let it go.” [Funder]

3.6 SBIP Organizations' Processes and Procedures for Awards

The organizations that provide or administer funds for SBIPs routinely make decisions about which FMs or organizations to support. To make these decisions, the FMIPS ascertained the processes and procedures established and implemented among SBIP organizations for making choices about which potential partnering organizations to fund, in terms of the incentive and all other aspects of the operation. These processes and procedures were also assessed in the context of non-financial support, or technical support that is the training, administrative, logistical, and methodological support that informs and contributes to successful SBIP operation.

3.6.1 Eligibility Criteria for Awarding Funding or Allocating Support Services

Not surprisingly, the eligibility criteria to allocate funding and support services varied across the four SBIP organization types. For SBIP Funder organizations, geographic location emerged as a frequent eligibility criterion for allocating funds. Representatives explained that they were committed to providing the program in areas where residents did not have many other food options. Funder organizations also wanted to avoid saturation, or clustering of several markets near each other, and were interested in spreading them out and increasing geographic access.

This intention held true in both rural and urban environments and seemed to be driven by the tenets of their organizations' missions, which indirectly addressed social justice and access to food by eliminating food deserts. Only one of the Funder organizations had a national scope of activities; the rest were regional, state or local in their service areas. Hence, geography was often a driving factor determining eligibility. On the other hand, geography can limit the eligibility pool of potential awardees for funds if the Funder's emphasis is too focused on serving a certain geographical area. In one case, a Funder representative reported that given his organization's focus on a specific geographic area, there was only a single choice for whom to allocate the funds.

For Coordinator organizations, organizational capacity emerged as the important criterion for selection and allocation of resources. These organizations sought to gauge capacity with respect to the market's ability to conduct EBT transactions, prior experience with SNAP procedures, and organizational staff capacity. In terms of organizational capacity, representatives from all SBIP organization types indicated that the capacity to conduct EBT transactions and experience with SNAP was an important factor in considering which organization to support.

"Of course, geographical location has to fit into this. They have to be in our service area." [Funder]

"The Department of Health set up district public health offices, in three areas of [the city], where studies showed that there was...we're calling them fresh food deserts. There's a huge lack of access to fresh produce, locally grown but even just fresh produce in general in those communities....The [SBIP] was created by the Department of Health for markets that are based in those communities supporting markets there and incentivizing people to use their SNAP dollars at the markets." [Funder]

"I think [the organization administering the local program] are pretty much the only game in town. ...They've used the term "food desert" here and I think that was pretty much the case. They really spearheaded the initial farmer's market and some of these matching benefits programs to build on that, but before that there was really nothing." [Funder]

"When the market manager is the treasurer, the market manager, the vendor, the everything, it becomes very difficult for them to have the capacity to run a SNAP program. That was a consideration that we would look at in terms of it seemed like a viable route." [Coordinator]

"They had to demonstrate clarity on how they could actually increase SNAP utilization at the markets if there was incentives provided. They also had to demonstrate how they were going to do outreach to bring more eligible folks into the SNAP and WIC systems as beneficiaries. There were definite criteria that we utilized to assess who could become a partner in the consortium or not." [Coordinator]

"... they have to be EBT-capable. And that means having an FNS number, getting setup with either a wired or wireless terminal, and having the capability to accept the EBT card with that alternative currency." [Funder]

For Funder and Coordinator organizations, capacity included the ability to track incentives and submit evaluation measures. Some Coordinator organizations also mentioned that a consideration for them in terms of eligibility criteria for award was whether the applicant had community-based matching funds. Representatives explained that they wanted to ensure that these organizations had thought through what it actually took to implement an SBIP and had made a realistic appraisal to determine if the amount of the potential award would be sufficient for a successful program.

Supporter organizations were the least discriminating regarding eligibility criteria. About half the Supporter representatives reported that their intention was to provide support to as many organizations that they could help whose programmatic goals aligned with their mission.

“We don't really discriminate, so we support all programs that advance farmers' markets and farmers.” [Supporter]

“I think that there are no eligibility requirements, with respect to the provision of technical assistance.” [Supporter]

3.6.2 Application Process

The criterion for the selection of award recipients appears to be purposefully planned for most SBIP organizations as presented in Section 3.6.1. However, the actual application process appears to be somewhat less consistent across SBIP organizations. For example, representatives from Funder and Coordinator organizations indicated that the application process was rather informal but in many instances went on to explain that over time the application process has evolved. Historically, representatives explained that organizations began with an informal process, often based on word of mouth, existing relationships, or limited partnership options in the service area of interest. Representatives from Funder organizations went on to explain, however, that they adjusted their application process to fit the changing needs and communities they served and to account for the entry of new players in the market.

Currently, most representatives from Funder organizations reported a formal application process was in place for awarding funds to SBIP applicants. Depending on the situation, the rigor of the competitive process itself once the application was received varied though depending on the number of applicants. As explained, this was driven by whether criteria such as geographic eligibility limits the pool of applicants, which in more cases than not, resulted in Funder

organizations seeking applicants rather than being directly approached by them. This made the application process less competitive and at times more informal.

More rigorous review and decision making was reported by representatives from Funder organizations that have provided multiple years of funding to specific applicants. These representatives reported that as community interest in the SBIP grew and more players entered the arena, the application and review process became more formal. Specifically, a domino effect occurred with increased community interest comes an increased awareness of the SBIP and an increase in stakeholders and collaborations. This resulted in an increased competition for the limited funds available; hence, a natural need for a more rigorous and competitive application process. Coordinator organizations tended to report the use of a more balanced mix of informal and formal application processes. Over half of the representatives from Support organizations reported no application process; they made their mission known and allowed markets to approach them and seek their support. Operator organization representatives, on the other hand, tended identify partners informally and rarely cited any process at all for identifying partners.

4.1 Overview and Key Findings

Social network analysis was used to assess relationships between organizations involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs). This analysis explored multiple aspects of network structures using maps to depict relationships and collaborative partnerships among groups of organizations and entities in a quantifiable way,^{31,32} and enabling the identification of emergent properties and characteristics within a network, or cluster, of SBIP organizations.³³ As presented in Chapter 3, collaborations and partnerships were identified as necessary to obtain and sustain funding for SBIPs. These partnerships were also characterized as necessary for other critical aspects of SBIP design and implementation, as described later in this report. Through social network analysis, SBIP organizations and cited partners or referrals were studied to:

- Assess whether organizations that provide or administer SBIPs have collaborative relationships with other organizations;
- Characterize these relationships in terms of how similar or different the organizations are from one another;
- Characterize the relationships between organizations that provide financial and non-financial support to farmers markets (FMs); and
- Identify specific patterns or models of relationships between organizations.

Representatives from the FMIPS sample of 103 organizations described over 300 collaborative partnerships with other organizations related to work with FMs and SBIPs, including descriptions of partnering organizations' missions, objectives, and roles. These numerous collaborations among the 103 SBIP organizations participating in the FMIPS and the additional organizations discussed by them were analyzed to examine the characteristics of the

³¹Smith, Marc A., et al. (2009). *Analyzing (social media) networks with NodeXL*. Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Communities and Technologies. ACM, 2009.

³²Hanneman, R.A., and Riddle, M. (2005). *Introduction to social network methods*. Riverside, CA: University of California, Riverside (published in digital form at <http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/>).

³³Easley, D., and Kleinberg, J. (2010). *Networks, crowds, and markets: Reasoning about a highly connected world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Key Findings

- FMIPS social network analysis revealed a complex, localized, and synergistic structure of organizational partnerships for SBIP networks. SBIP partnership networks tended to be complementary and collaborative structures, with a high degree of interfunctional partnerships across all four types of organizations: Funder, Coordinator, Supporter, and Operator organizations.
- The vast majority of partnerships occurred within FNS geographic regions, rather than across regions (Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Mountain Plains, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and Western).
- A common SBIP network structure included one organization that served as a primary SBIP Coordinator, typically a nonprofit organization embedded within a network of Supporter organizations working within a local service area in collaboration with other local partners.
- Formal relationships were often established with Funders and participating markets, but large informal networks of partnerships often propagated best practices and knowledge sharing.
- While there were multiple funding streams for SBIPs, foundations, nonprofits, and governmental agencies emerged as the primary funders. Local educational institutions and university extension services often provided consumer education and program evaluation support, while food banks, local health departments, and local social service agencies supported outreach and marketing efforts. State FM associations' provided guidance in program design, technical assistance, training, and additional networking with markets.

4.2 Analytic Categories

Organizational networks were analyzed based on *organizational* characteristics and *partnership* characteristics. Organizational characteristics included each organization's primary function, the type of partnership they had with the SBIP, and their geographic region. The partnership characteristics included the nature of the partnerships and the type of support provided.

Primary Function

Primary functions, as described earlier, include supporting or administering a SBIP as a Funder, Coordinator, Supporter, or Operator. For the purposes of the social network analysis additional

organizations named by the 103 SBIP organizations that participated in the FMIPS interviews that could not be categorized into this SBIP functional typology, an “unspecified partner” category was created.

Type of Partnerships

The organizations were classified also into one of 18 types of partnerships based on descriptions provided during the FMIPS interviews. These were created to facilitate identification of common patterns or models for SBIP support.

In certain instances, SBIP organizational representatives used the terms “formal” and “informal” when characterizing relationships with collaborating organizations. Based on this, collaborative partnerships were coded as formal, informal, both, or unspecified.

Geographic Regions

The USDA FNS geographic regions include Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Mountain Plains, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, and Western. The geographic location of SBIP organizations and partnerships by these regions were analyzed to assess the geographic coverage of the organizational networks.

Support Type

To understand partnerships between organizations providing support to FMs and SBIPs, partnerships were further classified by support type -- financial support, nonfinancial support, and unspecified support. Financial support included not only providing funds but also support with writing grants; nonfinancial support included assistance with SBIP design and general business support, logistical support, and network support; and unspecified support was where key partnerships were

4.3 Clusters and Networks of SBIP Organizations: A Look at the Relationships of FMIPS Organizations to Each Other

Virtually all participating organizations (96 percent) described collaborative partnerships. Although there was considerable variation, with a range of 0-22³⁵ organizations and a mode of 3 (20.4 percent of participating organizations described 3 partnerships), the average number of partnerships was 2.2, including organizations described without a specified SBIP function. Of the 18 types of organizations with whom partnerships could be formed, the most common were with nonprofit organizations, followed by state governmental agencies (10.4 percent), city governmental agencies (9.8 percent), and foundations (9 percent). The average number of collaborative partnerships also varied by SBIP organization type; representatives from Coordinator organizations mentioned collaborative relationships with an average of five organizations and those from Supporter organizations mentioned collaborative relationships with an average of four organizations. Representatives from both Funder and Operator organizations mentioned collaborative relationships with an average of three organizations.

4.4 Organizational Composition of a SBIP Network

Partner Types within the Network

Collaborative partnerships usually involved a network or cluster of multiple partner types. The majority of collaborative partnerships (90.5 percent) were between organizations classified into different partner types, e.g., nonprofits collaborating with state governments or FM associations collaborating with extension services. Collaborative partnerships between organizations of the same partner type (e.g., food banks with other food banks) comprised 9.5 percent of collaborative relationships.

Geographic Coverage of SBIP Network

The majority of collaborative partnerships within SBIP networks occur within a shared FNS Geographic Region. Table 4-1 and Figure 4-2 below illustrate the high degree of intraregional partnerships between organizations (i.e., partnerships *within* regions). The vast majority (94.4

³⁵Nine organizations did not describe specific collaborative partnerships in response to this question in the FMIPS interview.

percent) of collaborative partnerships occurred between organizations in the same geographic region. This may be explained by the observation that 72.8 percent of participating organizations maintain a local focus at the city or county level and an additional 22.3 percent operate at the state level. On average, there was one interregional partnership per region, with the Northeast region demonstrating the highest prevalence of interregional collaborations—15 of 105 collaborative partnerships involving organizations in the Northeast were with organizations outside the Northeast.

Table 4-1 presents a symmetric matrix of inter- and intra-regional ties between organizations by FNS geographic region. Cells summarize collaborative partnerships between each region in the corresponding row and column. The table shows the vast majority of partnerships occur within geographic regions. Figure 4-2 displays collaborative partnerships sorted by labeled FNS geographic region. Relationships within each region are depicted by connections across the circle's diameter.³⁶ Figures displaying individual collaborative partnerships between organizations, grouped by FNS geographic regions, are available in Appendix D.

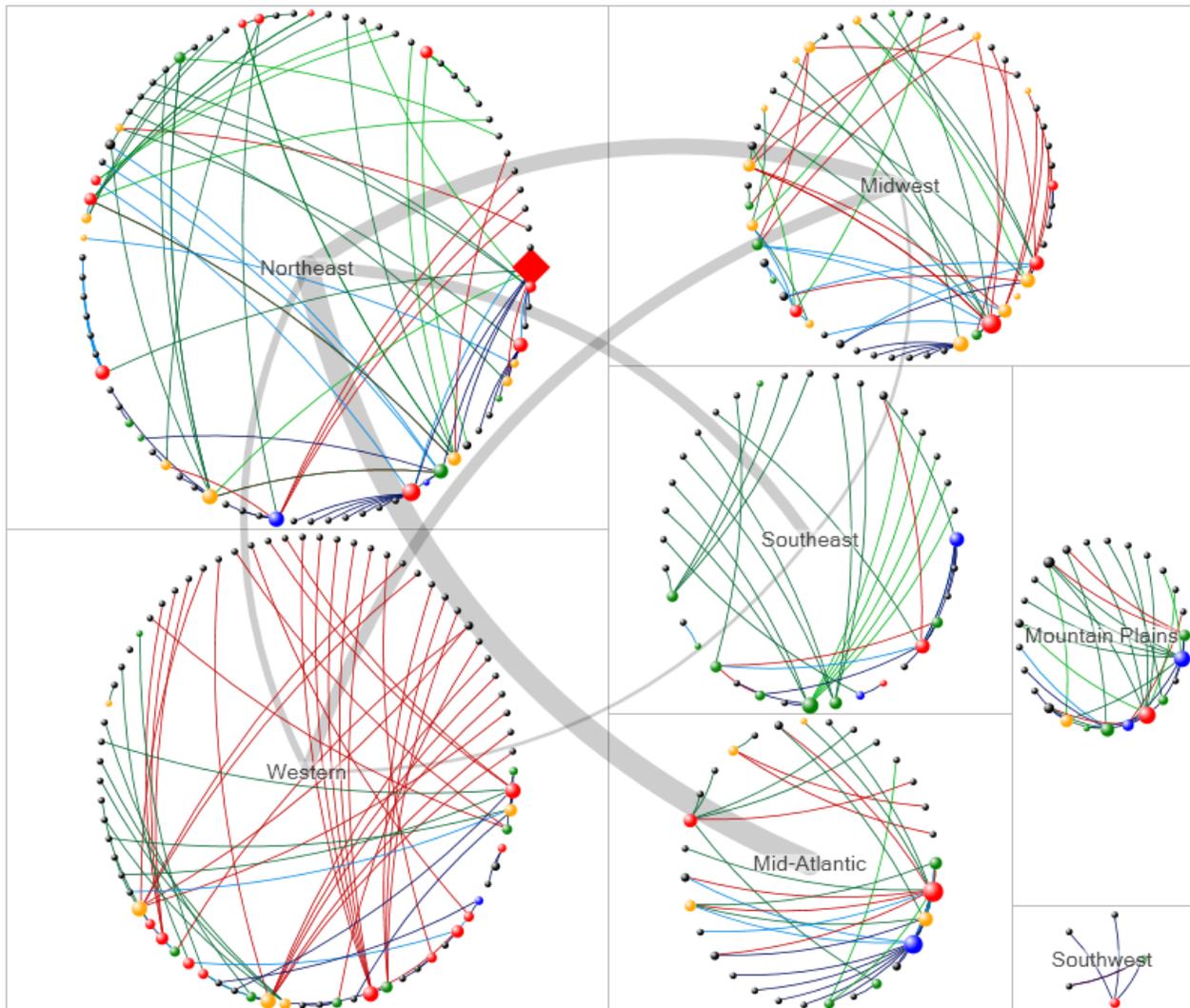
Table 4-1. Connection matrix: Organizations by FNS geographic region

Region (n = 342)	Northeast	Western	Midwest	Southeast	Mid-Atlantic	Mountain Plains	Southwest
Northeast (n = 91)	90	2	4	3	6	0	0
Western (n = 80)	-	72	3	1	0	0	0
Midwest (n = 63)	-	-	59	1	0	0	0
Southeast (n = 38)	-	-	-	36	0	0	0
Mid-Atlantic (n = 36)	-	-	-	-	41	0	0
Mountain Plains (n = 25)	-	-	-	-	-	33	0
Southwest (n = 9)	-	-	-	-	-	-	5

Note: Table 4-3 is a symmetric matrix—dashes (-) in the lower-left portion reflect equivalent values in corresponding cells of the upper-right portion. Values within rows represent number of connections, while n-values represent the number of organizations in each region. Having more or fewer connections than the n-values are both possible.

³⁶Smith, M., Milic-Frayling, N., Shneiderman, B., Mendes Rodrigues, E., Leskovec, J., and Dunne, C. (2010). *NodeXL: A free and open network overview, discovery and exploration add-in for Excel 2007/2010*, <http://nodexl.codeplex.com/> from the Social Media Research Foundation, <http://www.smrfoundation.org>.

Figure 4-2. Collaborative partnerships by FNS geographic region



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership, and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a FNS geographic region. Connections between FNS geographic regions (intergroup) are combined and sized based on number of connections. See Appendix for figures with individual intergroup connections displayed.

Sphere color denotes **Organizational Function:**

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified Partners

Line color denotes **Support Type:**

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

Composition of SBIP Network by Function of SBIP Organization

Overall, representatives described more collaborative partnerships between SBIP functional types (interfunctional) than within SBIP functional types (intrafunctional). This is exhibited in Table 4-2. Coordinator organizations were at the “hub” of SBIP networks, and most collaborative partnerships exist between SBIP Coordinators and Supporters (37.7 percent of interfunctional collaborations). Coordinator organizations also had the greatest number of intrafunctional collaborative partnerships, with 20 partnerships between 34 organizations (58.8 percent). It should be noted that Coordinator and Supporter organizations are the two largest functional groups represented, increasing the likelihood of these groups having many partnerships.

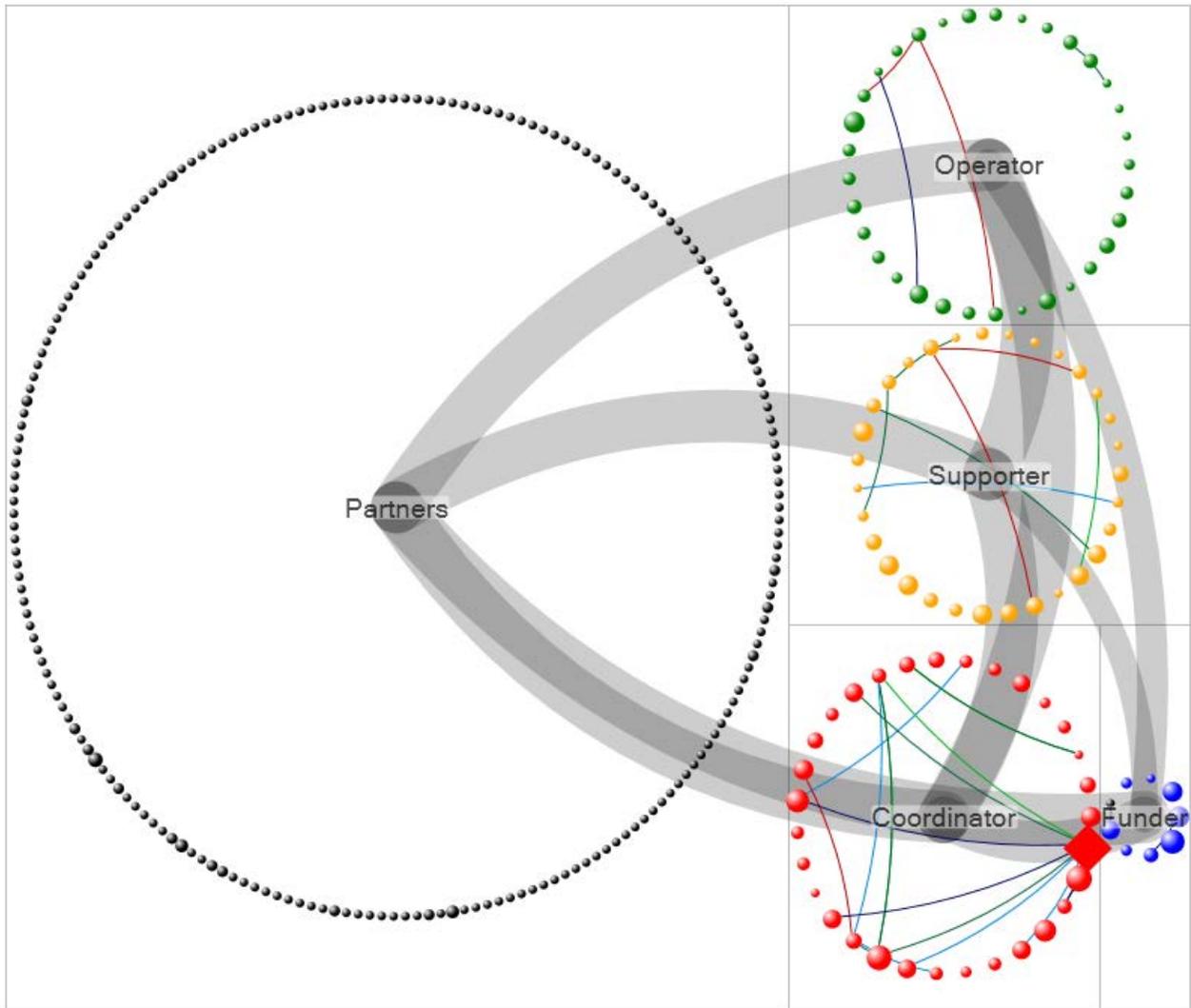
Table 4-2 presents a symmetric matrix of partnerships between organizations by SBIP functional type. Cells summarize collaborative partnerships between each functional group in the corresponding row and column. The column titled “Partners” refers to partner organizations with an unspecified SBIP function. Partnerships by organizational function are illustrated in Figure 4-3 and Figure 4-4. Figure 4-3 includes nonspecific Partners, and Figure 4-4 excludes nonspecific Partners. Together this table and figure illustrate a high degree of intergroup partnerships across all organizational functions, suggesting highly synergistic, rather than hierarchical, collaboration. Figures displaying individual collaborative partnerships between organizations, grouped by organizational function, are available in Appendix D.

Table 4-2. Connection matrix: Organizations by SBIP function

Function	Funder	Coordinator	Supporter	Operator	Partner
Number of partnerships					
Funder	2	8	5	6	25
Coordinator	-	20	37	28	88
Supporter	-	-	7	14	60
Operator	-	-	-	4	52

Note: Table 4-2 is a symmetric matrix. Dashes (-) in the lower-left portion of the table reflect equivalent values in corresponding cells of the upper-right portion. Values within rows represent number of connections, while n-values represent the number of organizations by each function. Having more or fewer connections than the n-values are both possible.

Figure 4-3. Collaborative partnerships by organizational function, including nonspecific partners



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Function. Connections between functional groups (intergroup) are combined and sized based on number of connections. See Appendix D for figures with individual intergroup connections displayed.

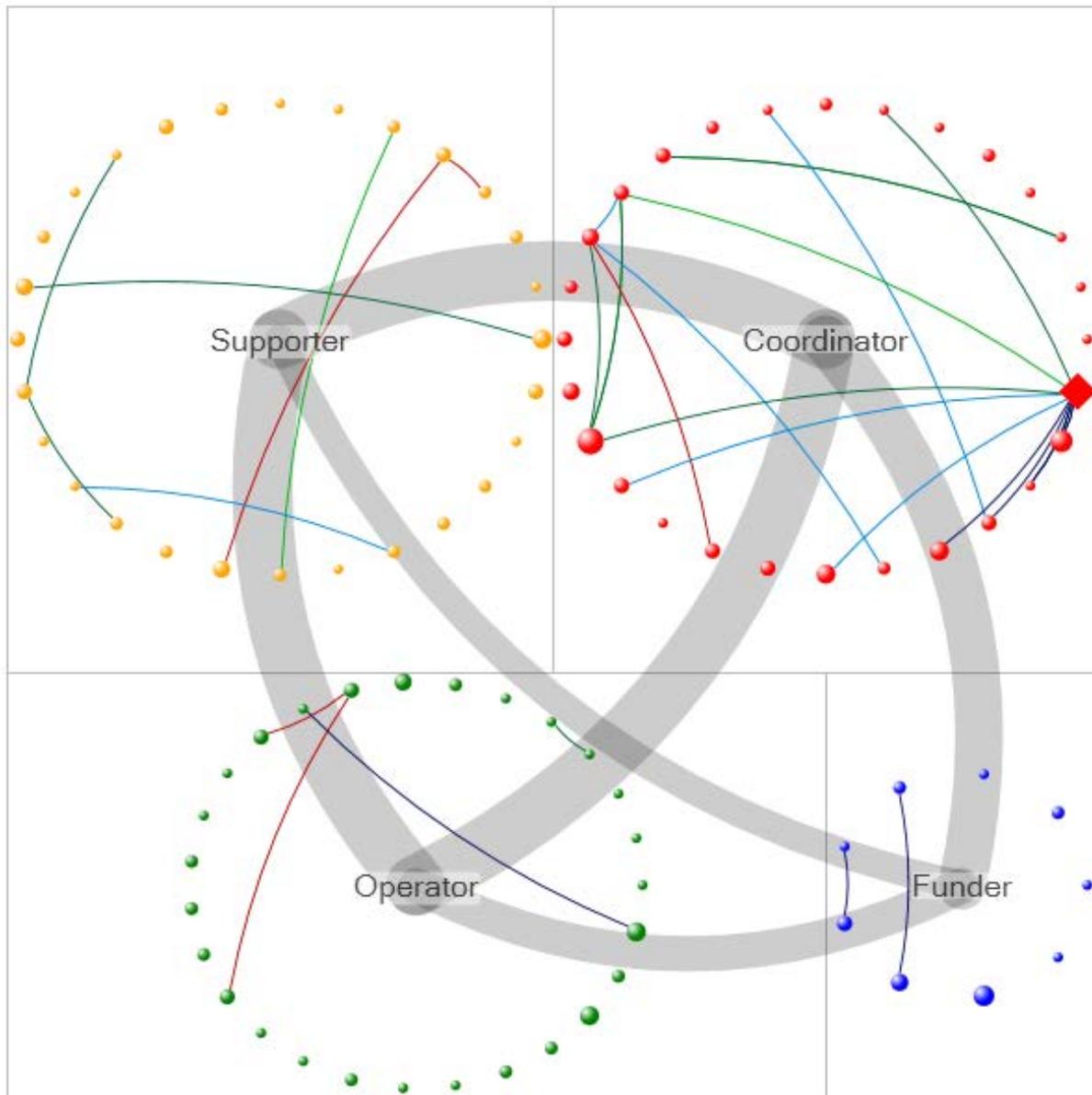
Sphere color denotes Organizational Function:

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified Partners

Line color denotes Support Type:

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

Figure 4-4. Collaborative partnerships by organizational function, excluding nonspecific partners



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Function. Connections between functional groups (intergroup) are combined and sized based on number of connections. See Appendix D for figures with individual intergroup connections displayed.

Sphere color denotes Organizational Function:

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified Partners

Line color denotes Support Type:

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

Patterns and Models of Relationships Between SBIP Organizations

Partner types most involved in collaborative partnerships are nonprofits, governmental agencies, FM associations, foundations, health organizations, market organizations, coalitions, educational organizations, extension services, and food banks (Table 4-3 and Figure 4-5). The principal roles of these organizations and the types of support they provide are outlined in Table 4-3. For example, foundations mainly provide financial support, educational organizations/extension services mainly provide logistical support, and coalitions mainly provide networking support. Partner types comprising fewer than 3 percent of collaborative partnerships are not displayed in Table 4-3. These include faith-based organizations, businesses, banks, food producers, and the Federal government.

Figure 4-6 presents the FMIPS collaborative network, grouped by partner type. Few individual connections are displayed within each partner type, demonstrating a high degree of collaboration between partner types—all partner types exhibited a high degree of intergroup partnerships. Figures displaying individual collaborative partnerships between organizations, grouped by partner type, are available in Appendix D.

Table 4-3. Support type provided by partner type

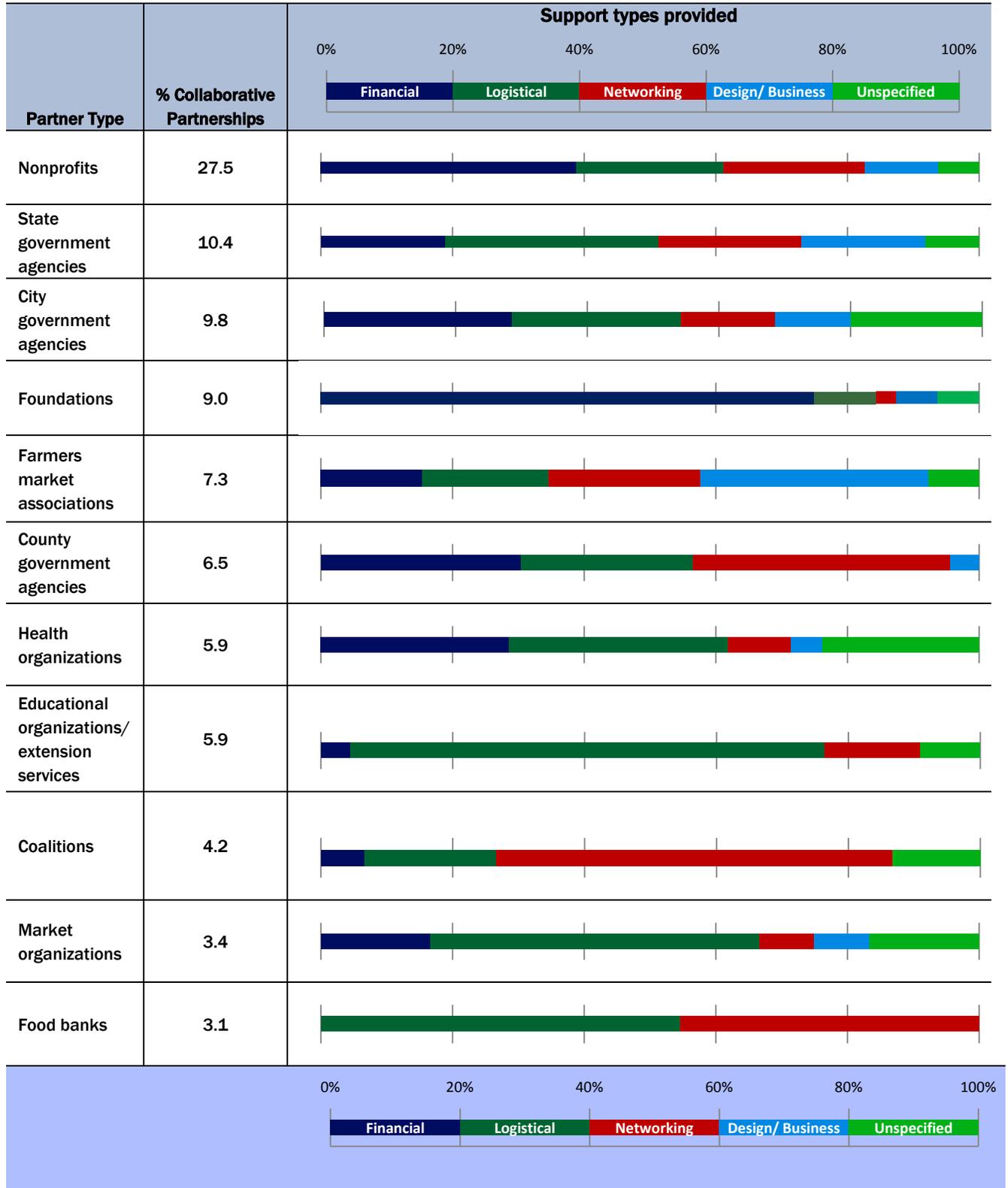
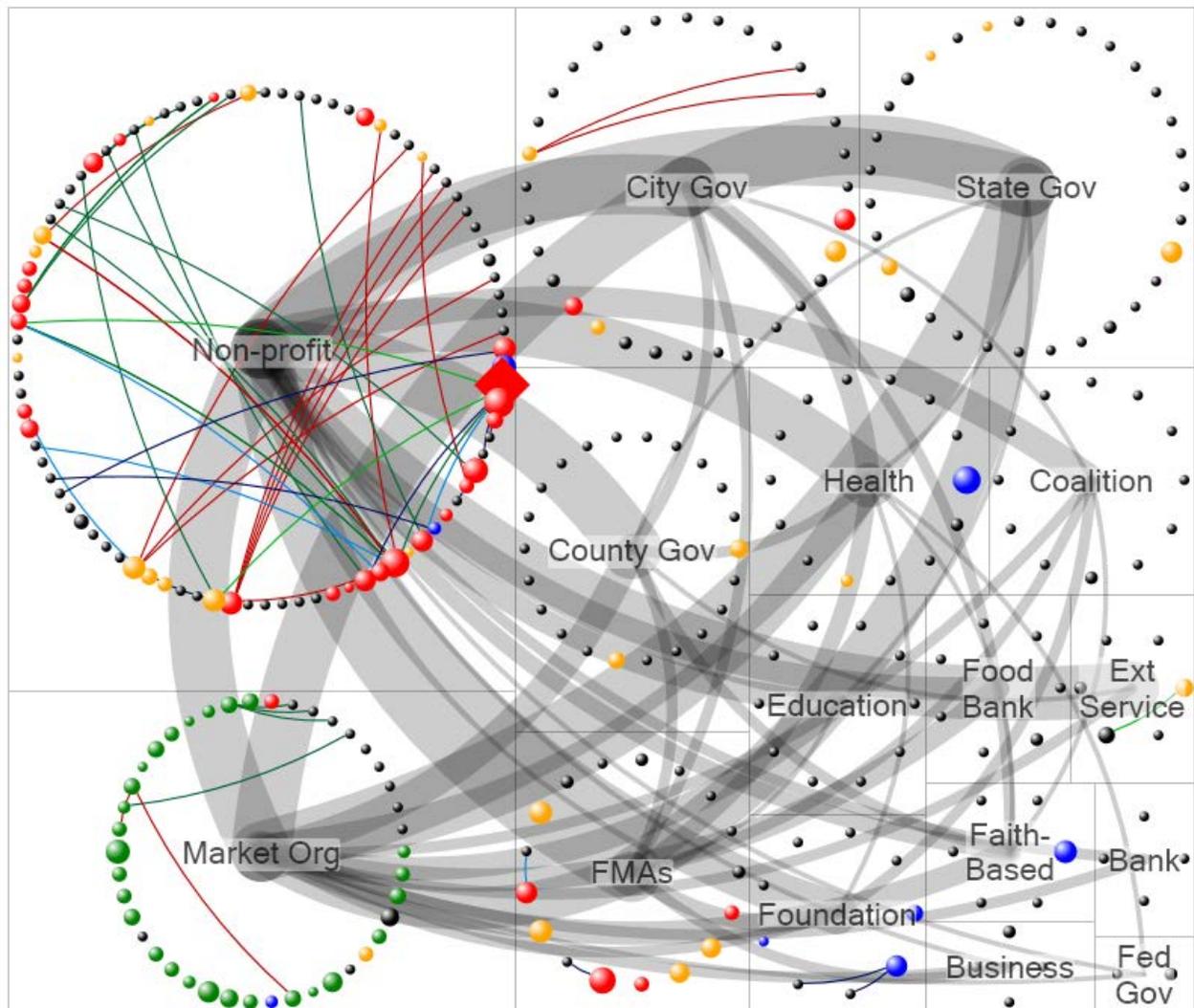


Figure 4-5. Collaborative partnerships by partner types



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Partner type. Connections between partner types (intergroup) are combined and sized based on number of connections. See Appendix for figures with individual intergroup connections displayed.

Sphere color denotes **Organizational Function:**

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified partners

Line color denotes **Support Type:**

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

4.5 Nature of Relationships Between SBIP Organizations as Funders, Coordinators, Supporters, and Operators

Common Relationships

Figure 4-6 presents the FMIPS collaborative network disaggregated by support type. Each subfigure represents a subset of the total network, displaying a specific support type. The largest groups of collaborative partnerships were financial supports (31.2 percent), followed by logistical supports (27.8 percent), and network supports (21.1 percent). Financial support was most often provided by nonprofit organizations (34.2 percent of coded funding partnerships) and foundations (21.6 percent), followed by city (9 percent), county (6.3 percent), and state governmental agencies (6.3 percent).

Logistical support was most often provided by nonprofits, state governments, city governments (9.1 percent), and/or educational institutions (8.1 percent) and extension services (7.1 percent). Primary forms of logistical partnerships include communication and customer education, program implementation, and data collection and program evaluation. Network support was most often provided and received by nonprofit organizations and included networking collaborations to establish partnerships (53.3 percent), outreach support (38.7 percent), policy collaboration (5.3 percent), and advisory support (2.7 percent). These data are not presented graphically.

Figure 4-7 disaggregates the FMIPS collaborative network based on partnership formality. Collaborations were described by representatives as formal, informal, or a combination of both. Each subfigure represents a subset of the total network by formality. In the majority of cases, relationship formality was unspecified (62.9 percent of coded collaborations). The majority of formal partnerships involved funding support (66.7 percent of formal partnerships), and informal partnerships generally involved outreach partners (32 percent of informal partnerships) or networking collaborations to establish partnerships (26 percent). Formal partnerships most often existed between market organizations, nonprofits, and foundations. Informal partnerships most often existed between nonprofits, FM associations, and county or city governmental agencies.

Figure 4-6. Partnerships by support type

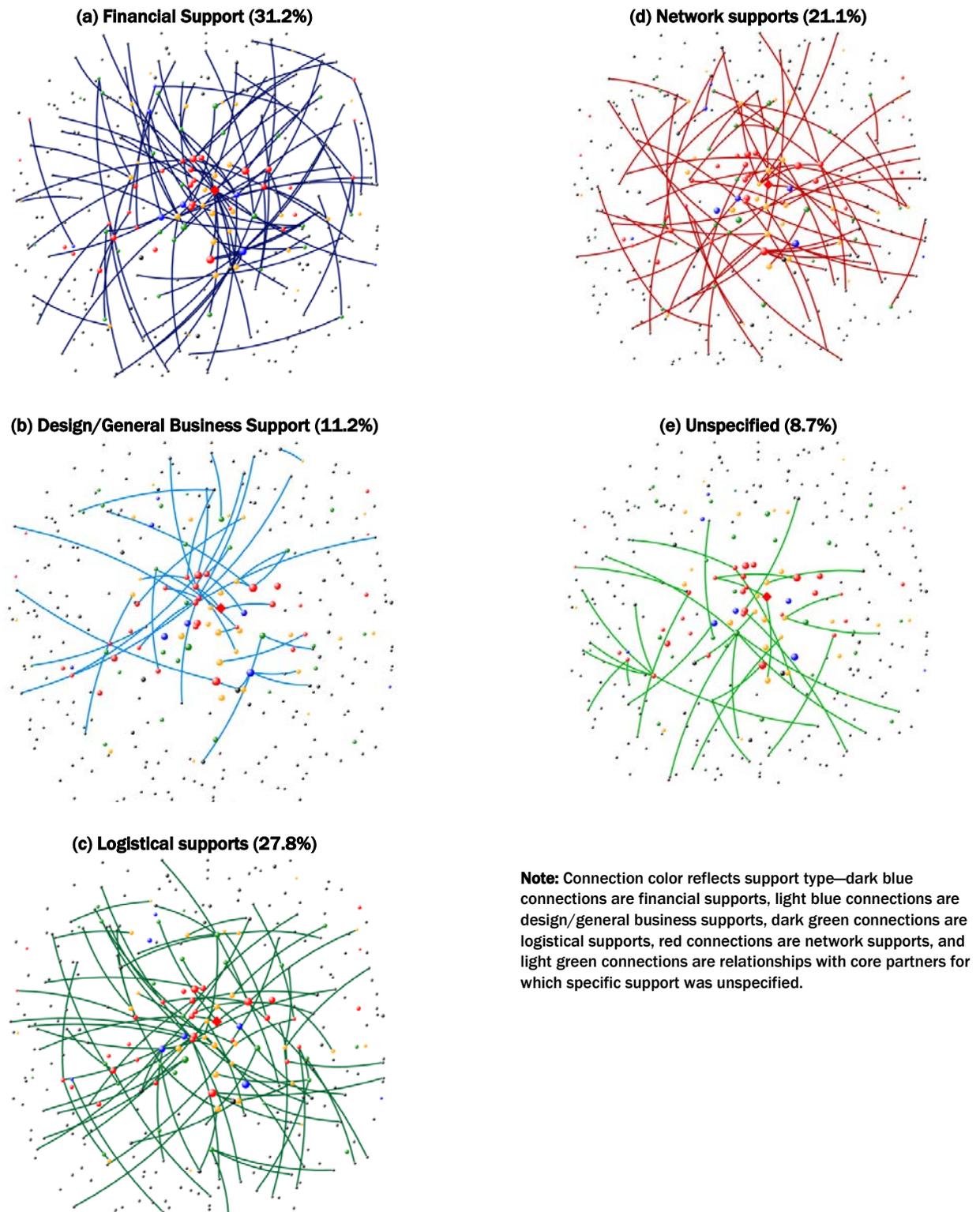
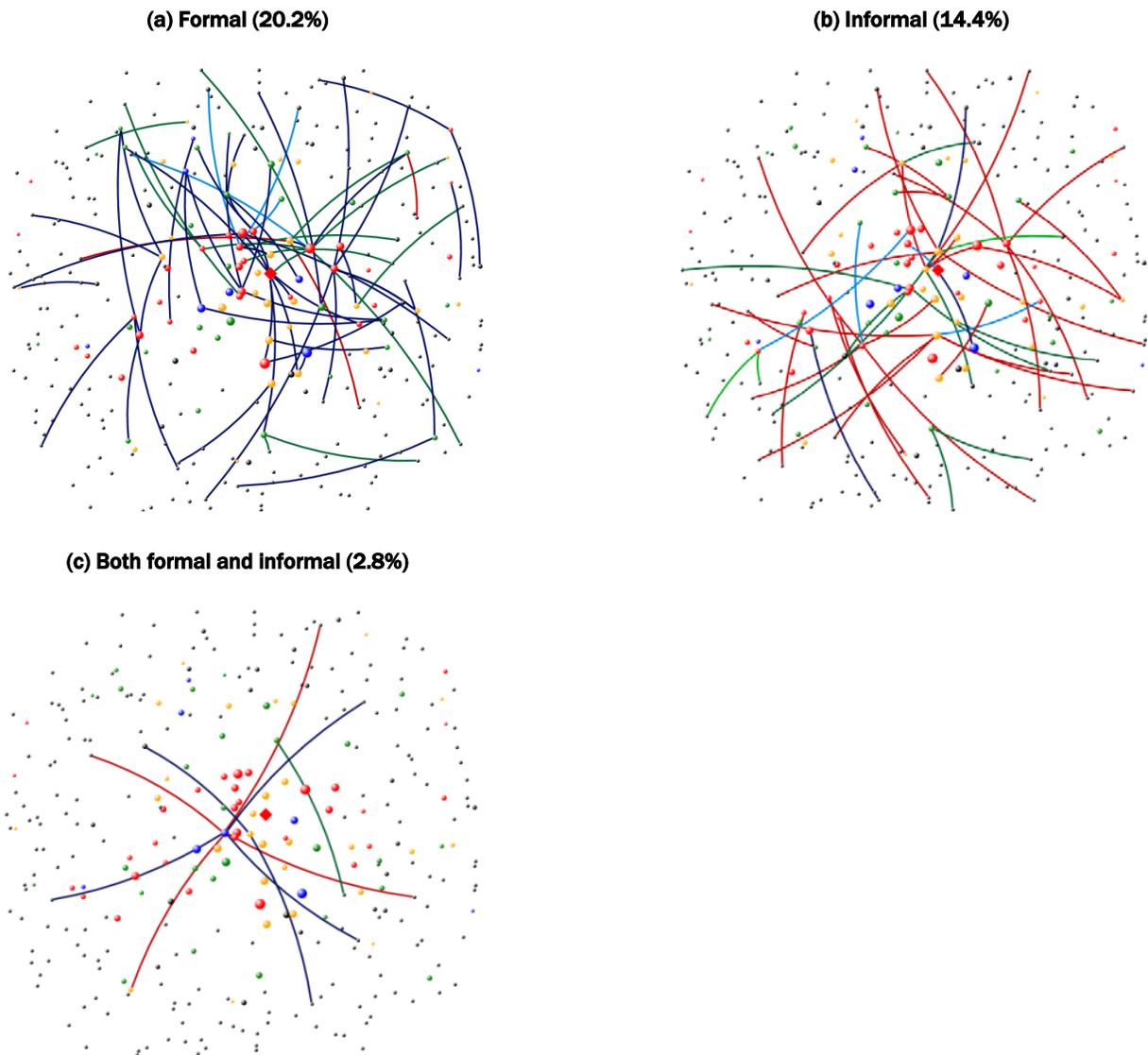


Figure 4-7. Partnerships by formality, based on representative description



Note: Connection color reflects support type—dark blue connections are financial supports, light blue connections are design/general business supports, dark green connections are logistical supports, red connections are network supports, and light green connections are relationships with core partners for which specific support was unspecified. Formality was not specified for the majority of collaborative partnerships (62.9%).

How Organizations Implement SNAP-Based Incentive Programs

5

5.1 Overview and Key Findings

Organizations involved in funding, supporting, or operating SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) do so because of their belief that SBIPs represent a viable approach to achieving the organization's mission – to increase access to healthy foods, support farmers, or strengthen local communities. Organizations may venture into SBIPs either by themselves (e.g., operators) or forge partnerships and collaborations to implement the SBIP. Some organizations may be the primary source of funding while others may provide assistance with staffing, technical assistance, marketing, and monitoring or evaluation activities.

The findings reported in this chapter are based on organization type (i.e., their primary role in SBIP implementation). As indicated in Chapter 2, the organizational typology used in this report was based on their primary role in supporting SBIPs. For each organization, the role that emerged was used to classify them as a Funder, Coordinator, Supporter, or Operator organization. Thus, Funder organizations provide financial support; Coordinator organizations are the principal fundraisers and establish, design, and coordinate the market's participation in SBIPs; Supporter organizations provide support services for implementation, and Operator organizations implement SBIPs.

However, organizations typically participate in several SBIP activities and for organizations seeking a role with the farmers markets (FMs), this chapter captures the spectrum of activities necessary for SBIP implementation. The findings reported in this chapter provide a framework for organizations interested in participating in SBIPs. Interested organizations may find it useful to review these activities and consider their resources without consideration to organizational typology.

This chapter presents and describes the FMIPS findings regarding the:

- Organization's role in implementation of SBIPs;
- Factors that contribute to successful SBIP implementation;

- Challenges faced in SBIP implementation; and
- Long-term goals for SBIP.

Key Findings

Key themes of the specific areas addressed in this chapter are highlighted here. Additional detail on these themes and others are presented in the sections that follow.

- Organizations participated in multiple activities to implement the SBIP, ranging from fundraising to data collection and evaluation. Within each domain (e.g., funding), organizations provided staff or financial support to administer the program.
- All four organization types indicated that a major challenge to implement the SBIP was inadequate funding, followed by staffing and market capacity, and marketing and outreach.
- Funding challenges were reported more frequently by representatives from Funder organizations than any other organization type; they indicated that funding was provided for the incentive itself, the funds were insufficient for program administration.
- A similar proportion of representatives from the Coordinator, Operator, and Supporter organizations to Funder organizations reported accounting challenges. More representatives from Coordinator and Supporter organizations than Operator organizations reported staffing and market capacity as a challenge; these representatives indicated that they needed dedicated staff to track the SBIP and reconcile the accounts at the end of each market day.
- The indicators of success reported by SBIP organizational representatives aligned well with the organization mission. All four organization types indicated that utilization by the community was a key indicator to assess SBIP success.
- While increasing sales and EBT transactions was the second most important indicator of success, fewer representatives from Funder organizations than Coordinator, Supporter, and Operator organizations reported its use. It is possible that increasing sales and EBT transactions are considered an aspect of utilization by representatives of Funder organizations.
- All four organization types indicated that for SBIPs to succeed, critical areas to be addressed included marketing and outreach, followed by staffing capacity, and funding. Representatives emphasized that getting the word out and promoting the SBIPs are a critical factor for their success.

5.2 Organization Role in SBIP Implementation

SBIPs are perceived to have the ability to increase SNAP participant access to high quality farm products by addressing cost barriers to shopping at FMs. However, information on implementation of SBIPs is limited. To this end, the FMIPs assessed the roles and support provided by organizations that are involved with SBIPs through the qualitative interviews. As indicated in Chapter 2, the organizational typology used in this report was based on their primary role in supporting the SBIP. For each organization, the role that emerged as the most prominent was used to classify them as a Funder, Coordinator, Supporter, or Operator organizations. Thus, Funder organizations provide financial support; Coordinator organizations establish, design, and coordinate the market's participation in the SBIP; Supporter organizations provide support services for implementation; and Operator organizations implement the SBIP.

It is worth noting, however, that organizations were multidimensional in the services they provide and, in many cases, performed overlapping functions. For any given implementation activity (e.g., financing or marketing and communication), different organization types may make unique staff or resource contributions or pool their staff and resources for program delivery. The specific services and support provided by each organization type fall within a continuum of broadly defined support or service activities. Given the various categories of support, activities undertaken by each organization type can also be considered complementary in nature. It was evident that the support provided by each organization type was situational, hinging on the unique circumstances of the program, the network within which the program is embedded, and the distinctive capabilities of the participating organization.

The role and support activities reported by representatives were pooled across the four organization types to generate a comprehensive list of activities undertaken to implement SBIPs. These activities included financial support, communication and marketing, technical assistance and training, program operations, and data collection and evaluation. As evident from the list, the emerging activities encompass the end-to-end aspects of program implementation. Based on the available staff and resources within an organization, additional partnerships may need to be formed to support necessary activities that they are unable to undertake.

Financial Support

Implementing SBIPs requires funding for the incentive itself, distribution of the incentives, and administration of the overall program. While smaller Operator organizations levied vendor fees to support the incentive and the administration, larger FMs networked with other organizations to receive financial support for the incentive itself, administration, or both. In this study, Funder organizations were most engaged in providing financial support for the incentive and sometimes for the administration of the SBIP.

While a few Funder representatives indicated that their organization was the major or sole funder for the SBIP, some others indicated that they funded a specific component of the program such as development or management of financial tracking systems. In contrast, a substantial number of representatives from Coordinator organizations indicated that they were the primary fundraisers and assisted with grant writing activities undertaken by Operator organizations. Coordinator organizations provided financial support to SBIPs both through direct funding and through indirect fundraising efforts by brokering relationships with donors and funding agencies and soliciting resources. To a much lesser degree, Supporter organizations also provided some financial support, by serving as a pass-through, assisting with proposals and fundraising, and also by covering the costs of specific program elements such as the cost of EBT machines or wireless access fees for one or more FM.

We work with them not only to fund it, but also to help build those partnerships in the community, to identify locations for new farmer's markets in communities where there's a need for them. Then we've also addressed it from a policies perspective. We've worked within the city to change policies around how farmer's markets open in the city. [Funder]

"So, we are a funder. We aren't in the day to day operations of anything that we fund." [Funder]

We provide financial support for whatever the needs might be, whether it be the purchase of machine, staffing, marketing and communications. We've even helped build a little shed for one of our farmers markets to protect the tokens from getting wet in the rain. [Funder]

Our organization raises the funds that are used to pay for the vouchers, the reimbursements to the farmers. We sign an MOU, with each of the markets that we're working with. At some markets, they're doing the distribution, and some of them have also contributed with some of the fundraising efforts, which we'll probably talk about later on. We're disbursing the money to the market operators, and they disburse it to the individual vendors. [Coordinator]

In terms of day-to-day operations, [we're] the operator, the fund raiser, the grant reporter, the promoter. I feel like, within our association, we pretty much do it all. [Coordinator]

Communications and Marketing

Communication and marketing of SBIP is necessary to inform, influence, and motivate SNAP participants to attend the market and avail themselves of the SBIP. Developing effective multilevel communication and marketing strategies involves tailoring messages at the individual level, targeted messages at the group level, social marketing at the community level, media advocacy at the policy level, and media campaigns at the population level.³⁷ Well-conceived and implemented communication and marketing efforts have the capacity to influence behavior changes of the target audience. In the context of SBIP, communication and marketing activities that were mentioned included statewide marketing campaigns; presentations at venues such as schools, community meetings, and FMs; outreach using signage, brochures, flier distribution and posting at various locations including social service agencies, food pantries, and local businesses; and communication with vendors on the alternative currencies used at the market.

In general, Funder organizations play a critical role in communicating the program need to potential donors, but they are the least engaged in communications and marketing aspects of SBIP described in the preceding paragraph. While one representative from Funder organization indicated that marketing and communications was one of the many ways its funds were utilized by the market, another indicated that “they tried a whole host of different marketing techniques, and one of the most important was getting the county to mail to SNAP participants a flyer.” Coordinator organizations are instrumental in developing a system or a structure and working with the market managers and vendors to promote the program.

Coordinator organizations serve as messengers to broadcast market success stories and challenges to the broader community including the media and other organizations so as to increase the reach of the program through additional funding for a given market or for additional markets.

Representatives from Coordinator organizations were engaged in writing press releases and discussing the program with other

We also tried a whole host of different marketing techniques, and one of the most important was getting our county to mail to SNAP recipients a flyer. They mailed everybody who was within a mile of one of these markets a flyer saying that they were accepting SNAP benefits at the markets and that the incentive existed. I think that was really helpful in getting the word out. [Funder]

We attended that [meeting], as did our local senator, to talk about some the work they’ve done locally with the farmer’s market and the greenhouses and other stuff, and to show our support for the organization, to help them get additional funds. [Funder]

It’s a lot of stuff like that, just kind of trying to create

³⁷ Bernhardt, J.M. (2004). Communication at the core of effective public health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(12): 2051–2053. PMID: PMC1448586. Available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448586/>.

agencies and organizations; developing and posting signage, brochures, fliers at various locations including translations in local languages, discussing healthy eating habits with SNAP participants, and encouraging them to shop at local FMs.

Responses from representatives from Coordinator, Supporter, and Operator organizations suggest that FMs and SBIPs at FMs were discussed in the context of developing healthy eating behaviors. Cooking classes and demonstrations at different locations including the market were often used as a vehicle to communicate the availability of different produce at the market, along with the message that these markets offer an SBIP for SNAP participants. Supporter organizations also promoted the program to the community and provided on the ground support to develop and distribute marketing materials. Interestingly, one representative from the Supporter organization highlighted the collaboration across different organizations in marketing campaigns and outreach.

Though not as prevalent as Coordinator, Supporter, or Funder organizations, Operators did mention posting fliers at local businesses (e.g., coffee shops, barber shops, etc.) and leaving postcards at community centers. The representatives from Operator organizations discussed communication and marketing in the context of promoting different currency options and seeking buy-in from more vendors at the market.

a system that's easy to replicate, so that when we have meetings with managers or farmers we have tools in place to explain the process and, you know, signage and little cheat sheets and handy, you know, little messaging that we can all share and use and our employees can understand and communicate to our customers. [Coordinator]

We provide the actual signs for Market Match for the thirteen markets with which we work. [Coordinator]

Our role is, it's really promoting the program out in the community introducing the clients for the program as much as we can. It's also having an infrastructure in which the customers are used to coming to our information booths. We facilitate the information booths so that the customers can redeem these vouchers. [Supporter]

Our on-the-ground role is in helping to create marketing materials and distribute them. We've worked recently with the ____ Grower's Association to create some packets that go out to WIC and Senior Farmers Market voucher recipients. That includes this whole packet of information about [the SBIP]. Also, we've created a schedule this summer of special Cal Fresh clinics that will be included in these packets. I will be doing Cal Fresh application clinics at a variety of sites throughout the county." [Supporter]

We've been doing a lot of work with them to figure out ways to target SNAP recipients to try to increase education about the program to make sure that everyone with SNAP benefits knows that they can use them at the Farmer's Market and that there is that benefit of the ...coupons. [Operator]

We have a whole communications department and they've just made a point to put information about [the incentive program] in all of our Farmers' Market flyers, anything we're distributing, and any kinds of postcards we're sending out. We're trying to get it known that way as well. [Operator]

"The training is really a matter of communicating with our vendors at the beginning of the season as to what the different types of alternative currencies are that will be coming in, what they can do with them, making sure that they have that information, and then just checking in periodically to make sure that nobody has any questions on it. I don't think there's any formal training that we provide" [Operator]

Technical Assistance and Training

FMs with a long history of SNAP authorization and seasoned vendors and market managers may be well versed with the process to setup EBT machines, convert SNAP funds to tokens or scrip, and redeem SNAP and incentive benefits. However, markets considering SNAP authorization and SBIPs require guidance in establishing the needed infrastructure and the processes for implementing SNAP and SBIPs. This technical assistance and training is critical to inexperienced vendors and an important component of preventing the misuse of SNAP funds and fraud.

In this study, Supporter organizations were the most engaged and Funder as well as Operator organizations were the least engaged in providing training and technical assistance to implement the SBIP. Since Operator organizations implement the EBT and SBIPs, training and technical assistance is targeted at staff in their organization. One representative from the Funder organization mentioned that they provided training to the market managers to process invoices and setup e-fund accounts.

Representatives from both Coordinator and Supporter organizations discussed providing: the technology (EBT machines) and the training to use the EBT machines; guidance and assistance in setting up the infrastructure for the incentives; and help troubleshooting when problems arise.

Probably the most important role is that we provide technical assistance to markets who are past participants in the program, and technical assistance to those who are newly implementing EBT at farmers' markets. That's things like helping markets get through the FNS SNAP Retailer Authorization Application and figuring out their accounting programs, helping them order supplies, helping them get set up with a card services provider or merchant services provider, generally holding their hand with that kind of thing. [Supporter]

I'm still providing technical assistance to the farmers' market manager. I updated the training guide, the vendor agreement, and all of the supporting documentation that's needed to train the vendors. [Supporter]

We've created an Accepting Federal Nutrition Assistance Benefits at Farmer's Markets Guide, a guide for markets. We've shared that statewide so markets in other parts of the state, whether it's _____ county or _____ county. They'll often call us, and we do provide some technical assistance. Then we also refer them to either the State Department of Agriculture [Coordinator]

At the market level, we made sure that the group had clarity on what they were trying to do. We worked with each member of the consortium to clarify the mission which was to increase the market place for specialty crops, while insuring that low-income folks had access to those specialty crops, within the farmers' markets, and an incentive to do that. [Coordinator]

Representatives who stated that their organization provided technical assistance and training indicated that their audience included program staff (e.g., administrative support or establishing partnerships) and their approach was face-to-face interactions. Those who indicated providing technical support reported also interacted with market managers but they were not necessarily directly involved with program delivery and therefore interacted by telephone with the managers.

Program Operations

Operating the SNAP and SBIPs at FMs involves setting up the infrastructure (i.e., design), obtaining the EBT machine and tokens, handling SNAP transactions, and distributing the SNAP and incentive tokens. Representatives from all Operator organizations were engaged in every aspect of program operation. Funding organizations were the farthest removed from program operations with only one Funder representative indicating that organization's involvement in purchasing tokens and distributing these across their grantee markets.

Representatives from Coordinator and Supporter organizations were involved with program management; they indicated staffing the program to EBT machine and manage the FM token system being used (see Section 1.2). In addition to their coordinator role, representatives from Coordinator organizations provided on-the-ground operational support, often in the form of supplemental staffing; the level and scope of support they provided was extensive and encompassed several aspects of program operation. A few representatives from Coordinator and Supporter organizations also indicated support of data collection, record keeping, sharing of best practices, and data reporting to other stakeholders. One Coordinating organization representative stated that they created tools and forms to assist market managers with program implementation and another from a Supporter organization indicated they developed online manuals for FMs and farmers.

[We] were not provided a lot of, you know, templates or instructions on best practices of how to run the program day-to-day when it first started, because everyone was so new to the concept within the group exchange consortium. So we created tracking forms and reporting structures and tokens, the systems that our managers could keep up with [Coordinator].

[We] want to make sure that we get the program out, and sometimes the requirements per market, per market manager, are so different, and for one I have to man a machine, I have to be there, present, all the time, and if this market is three times a day, three times a week, that takes up a huge chunk of my time. After that you also have to do the reporting for the week, for the month, just so you can keep on top of things, for when the reports are due... everything is where it needs to be. And then also meeting with the farmer market managers, talking with the vendors, with the farmer's, everything, it just takes a very long time. You need to supplement it with something else, or else it would be impossible. [Coordinator]

Then we're responsible for formatting what sort of data is being collected, providing support for how bookkeeping was being done by the three markets, and ultimately aggregating all of the data that was collected over the course of the pilot. That will continue to be done as we move forward with our summer season, aggregating that, assessing it, and reporting on it. [Coordinator]

5.3 Challenges in SBIP Implementation

SBIP implementation can present unique challenges ranging from marketing and outreach to management of incentive tokens. Anticipating challenges and developing strategies to mitigate issues or problems are important when considering best practices for SBIP implementation. To this end, the FMIPS interviews included discussions with the organizational representatives on challenges their organizations had experienced when implementing SBIPs.

The four commonly cited challenges across all organization types were marketing and outreach, funding, staffing and market capacity, and accounting. Market culture and growing pains were also reported as challenges by some representatives. Coordinator organization representatives cited multiple challenges; this can be attributed to the comprehensive and diverse role of Coordinator organizations in program implementation. In contrast, representatives from Funder organizations reported marketing and outreach as a definite challenge, with some also citing challenges with accounting, staffing, or market capacity. Many representatives from Supporter organizations discussed concerns about sustainability of the program's funding and/or fluctuating availability and sources of funding to support the program. Representatives from Operator organizations reported that having to constantly fundraise in addition to operating the market was challenging and burdensome. When these challenges are considered together, it is apparent that SBIP implementation represents collaboration from several organizations, with no single organization having the capacity to perform all activities or tasks.

Marketing and Outreach

Marketing and Outreach emerged as one of the top challenges for all four organization types. Representatives from each organization type reported different aspects of the challenges to marketing and outreach; Funder organizations described the challenge as identifying populations to serve; Coordinator organizations described challenges with program branding and recognition; Supporter organizations described it in the context of

Folks that live in underserved communities and are dealing with lower incomes and are physically the ones that are hardest to get to in terms of getting your message out there and finding them where they are and in their place and appealing to them with what we do.
[Funder]

...providing clear communication and branding of the program, something that will make sense both to the market but especially to our SNAP participants. Something that they'll understand, especially that people from one county will understand as much as the people in another county will understand. That's something that's a challenge that we've encountered.
[Coordinator]

limited outreach due to financial limits; and Operators defined the challenge as “getting the word out” due to staffing issues.

The challenge is in marketing and getting the word out and farmers markets not having enough budget to do a proper job of getting the word out that this program exists. [Supporter]

A lot of people in our area aren't even aware that we have a farmers' market. They're especially not aware that we accept EBT, and have even more incentives beyond just EBT. It's an issue of getting the word out. Also, staffing is an issue because our staffing is limited, being a nonprofit. It's basically one person in charge of running all of that. [Operator]

Funding

Funding challenges were cited more frequently by representatives from Funder and Coordinator organizations than by representatives from Supporter and Operator organizations. Representatives from Funder organizations discussed funding challenges in the context of lack of funding for program administration; representatives from Coordinator organizations discussed funding as a supply and demand issue with high demand and insufficient funding supply; those from the Supporter organizations discussed sustainability in funding as a challenge; Operators discussed funding from a staffing perspective (i.e., staff time to undertake fundraising activities).

One of the things I think is important is that people who fund the incentive program also need to fund the administration of the incentive program. [Funder]

Our biggest market, we've always run out of incentive funds halfway through the Summer. That's a present challenge. [Coordinator]

There are some private foundations that are involved in funding, and there might be some corporate support going on. I think that's the biggest challenge, how to increase the funding base. [Supporter]

The hard part is having an eye toward all the things we have to do to run and have a successful market. Adding fund-raising on top of that is another set of skills and another focus area for us. So that is challenging but I think we're growing in our capacity to do that over time. [Operators]

Staffing and Market Capacity

Staffing and market capacity was mentioned more frequently by representatives from Coordinators and Supporter organization than from those in the Funder and Operator organizations. Representatives from Coordinator organizations clearly articulated staffing needs, stating “what is needed is a person with the time and expertise to manage this program.” Both Coordinators and Supporters mentioned the difficulties of training the market staff and getting the most out of a completely volunteer-run market.

It really became obvious that we needed to have somebody dedicated who could accurately keep track and also reconcile the books at the end of every day so that we didn't have vendors not being paid back correct amount, et cetera. It just was a lot of accounting needing to happen there. [Coordinator]

And then we have new farmers and vendors that we sign on to season and then having to, particularly in the low income neighborhoods you have to kind of train them on how to sell to residents in those areas and they might need to change their product mix depending on ethnicity and what the cultural preferences are. So that's a big fun challenge. [Supporter]

Accounting

Accounting challenges including tracking the number and volume of transactions relating to the SBIP and these challenges were reported primarily by representatives from Operator organizations. Accounting challenges cited by representatives from Operator organizations ranged from being very general, “*all the accountability measures have been some challenges,*” to very specific (e.g., tracking of paper coupons), with the most of accounting concerns revolving around reporting or bookkeeping issues. Most Operator organizations clearly stated that accounting was necessary since they had to report their transaction sales and numbers to the Funders. Responses from Coordinator organization representatives suggested that that these organizations had to bear the brunt of the

We want to know exactly what each vendor's getting, what's getting turned in, and we document everything. It's very time-consuming. I often wonder what I did before the match. [laughs] I don't know. When you deal with an outside agency like the ___ Foundation, they need special documentation also. We deal with the city and our accounting company that deals with the market, they have to have special documentation. The paperwork inside of it was the hardest part of implementing everything. [Operator]

There were some very real transactional issues early on. Do we use wooden coins? What do we do? What's the proper way to do this? How do we distribute it, how do people get reimbursed? All those issues around just creating systems, were figured out [by Coordinator staff]. That was really her expertise and her job to do that. It took a while to make sure everything was running smoothly. [Funder]

Accounting and bookkeeping of the incentives, added a lot of volume to the already [laughs] tedious nature of our system. [Coordinator]

One of the big things has been, particularly when we brought in a new partner, particularly if they were a small association in a low-income community,

reporting and bookkeeping, primarily because they supported the market managers by providing administrative support for SBIP implementation.

Representatives from Funder organizations provided some insight into the factors contributing to the accounting challenges, they stated that while bookkeeping was not a challenge by itself, the use of multiple forms of currency and the use of token systems to implement the SBIP added to the accounting tasks.

helping them build the capacity to do the paperwork to be involved with a government agency. Specialty crop money requires a ton of paperwork in terms of documenting all of your invoices. Our first year we were audited and we're being audited again this year, for the third year of operation. For the two of the four years that we're going to run this program we're being audited. That requires, and keeps our minds clearly focused on, the need for good documentation. We have spent a tremendous amount of time helping our smallest partners, least-capacity partners, to provide the documentation that we need.
[Coordinator]

5.4 Definition of a Successful SBIP and Factors Contributing to Program Success

5.4.1 Definition of a Successful SBIP

Organizational representatives presented multiple indicators in their definition of success. Three different indicators of success emerged and these were in keeping with the organizational missions or roles. The most frequently cited definitions of success were utilization by the community, followed by increased sales and EBT transactions, and increased access to healthy foods. Representatives from Operator organizations defined success by the ability to increase the FM audience, increase SNAP transactions, and increase access to healthy foods. Coordinators organizations generally agreed with Operator representatives, however more of these agree with Funders and deemed an increase of sales for farmers or vendors as a strong measure of success. Finally, Supporter organizations provided the most diverse collection of definitions for SBIP success, much of which overlaps with the other three organization types. However, Supporter organizations considered producing repeat customers or a consistent market audience as important to measuring the success of the SBIP as the other prominent indicators of success (e.g., increase access to healthy foods, increase sales for farmers or vendors) mentioned by other organizations.

Utilization by the Community

Increasing the local economy, increasing the customer base or audience, increasing the vendor pool, and producing repeat customers or a consistent market audience were considered elements to define utilization of the FM and SBIP by the community. The term “community” was used as a catch-all term to include the city or town, in which the FM resided, the farmers who sold their produce at the markets, and both repeat and unique customers.

The majority of representatives indicated that being utilized and by extension being valued by the community is what defines a successful SBIP. Commonly cited indicators of a successful SBIP included continued increase in its audience pool, repeat customers, and a strong customer base, and increase in the vendor pool. Some representatives stated that being able to meet the community needs (e.g., offer needed products, impact the community’s local economy) is also an indicator of success.

I would say that pieces of success for a program at a farmer’s market would be getting to every eligible participant that currently uses SNAP in our county [Supporter]

People becoming repeat customers meaning people who make us a part of their daily lives and their family’s lives, that is a measure of success. [Coordinator]

From an economic perspective that helps you understand that every one dollar sold from farm order, the financial impact in the local economy. Ultimately, over the course of years the SNAP incentives that we’ve offered have had over a million dollars of impact in the local economic system. [Coordinator]

Increased Sales and EBT Transactions

Increased sales and EBT transactions included responses such as more sales for farmers or vendors, and a greater number of SNAP transactions at the market. Defining success by an increase in sales and EBT transaction was mentioned by approximately a half of the representatives from all four organization types. For Coordinator organizations increased redemptions and transactions at the market was the largest measure of success.

The more money the farmers make, the more farmers want to come to the market. I only make money if I have farmers. The more farmers I have the more money I make, because my costs are pretty much fixed. I’ve got _ number of parking spaces. If I fill a parking spot up every day, I generate more income than if I have half of them. Mine’s all based on the more farmers I get, the more money I make. [Operator]

One that is providing additional sales for the farmers to help make them and the farmers market more viable. [Coordinator]

About a quarter of the representatives indicated that impacting FM revenue positively was an indicator of success. Increasing sales make the markets more viable and attractive to other potential vendors.

More specifically, about a quarter of the representatives indicated that the increase of SNAP transactions (not sales overall), both within and across FMs, is a valid measure of the success of SBIPs at FMs.

Lots of people come to use their SNAP benefit at the market. People are eating more fresh fruits and vegetables locally grown, that the vendors are happy, that it's profitable for the vendors, which it is, that the system works smoothly so they can move through the system easily. [Coordinator]

If we look at last year, or if we look at 2011 versus 2012, you can see an increase in participation. Certainly, from 2012 going in to the season this year, 2013, I'm pretty certain there's going to be an increase in markets accepting SNAP dollars. But in terms of the incentives, that's an area that still is slowly building up. [Supporter]

This indicator of success lends itself to being measured in two different ways—the value of SNAP transactions or the value of reimbursements provided to the vendors. While not explicitly discussed, organizations with a mission to serve farmers may be more inclined to define success based on the value of reimbursements provided to the farmers. If SNAP participants exchange their benefits for a scrip based market currency, whether paper or tokens, the market gets reimbursed for the entire value provided but the SNAP participant may have unused scrip currency. Thus, unused scrip currency may benefit the market but not necessarily the vendors or SNAP participants.

Increase Access to Healthy Food

Responses such as providing access to fresh, healthy, and or organic food options at the market were considered indicative of increasing access to healthy foods. Thirty percent of representatives indicated that being able to increase access to healthy foods is an indicator of success.

Encourage more customers to use their SNAP benefits at farmers markets, and to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to stretch their benefits dollars so that they can purchase healthier foods. [Coordinator]

My definition of a successful program...I would think just enabling low income folks to access healthy produce and doing outreach to get them to this market, the fact that they're also being educated on how to go about eating healthy. [Operator]

Other less frequently cited indicators of success included influencing public policy; impacting health outcomes of customers; and gaining financial sustainability.

Increase access to healthy food in underserved areas for persons receiving food assistance. If you can do that and you can show you've done that, you've pretty much done 50 percent of the job. [Funder]

5.4.2 Factors Contributing to Successful SBIPs

Organizational representatives shared their opinions regarding several facets of the concept of SBIP success. These discussions were important for the development of a comprehensive understanding of factors and types of support most important to ensuring a successful SBIP.

Representatives cited several important factors necessary for a successful SBIP; these factors involved activities in funding, marketing and outreach, program operations, and data collection and evaluation activities.

I do think funding is important, I can't say that enough. Funding would be important because you can do the marketing, you can also guarantee that there is the personnel there that's needed to do that, and to carry it out as it grows. [Operator]

Approximately a third of the representatives cited funding or financial support (direct or indirect) and community buy-in (from farmers, customers, and the local community) as factors most important to a successful SBIP.

I think other successes involve really having a lot of farmer buy-in. It's important that the producers in the market understand the benefit of the program, so that they can help to promote it and to be a part of the success as well. [Coordinator]

Nearly two-thirds of the representatives stated that activities undertaken for marketing, outreach, promotion, “getting the word out,” advertising or education are critical to succeed in the SBIP implementation. More representatives from Funder, Coordinator, and Supporter organizations than Operator organizations considered marketing and communications activities as critical factors for program success.

The challenge with market associations sometimes is that they are very much seen as an outsider from a community. When you're bringing a market into a low-income community, there very much needs to be a sense of ownership and the market meeting the demands of the consumer. [Funder]

I think finding ways to be creative in promoting the awareness of the incentive outside of the market, to places that the low-income families may already be gathering and shopping or seeking information, so that you can encourage to give farmers market a try. [Operator]

I would say the ability to outreach and promote on a statewide, centralized level, to have good connections with both state and county offices that can help to promote the SNAP-based incentives at farmers' markets. We're finding that they're most successful in communities that have good relationships and champions in their Department of Social Services that can help create outreach materials or distribute

In the context of program operations, slightly less than a half of the representatives indicated that staff capacity was critical to success and this included having the right people in the right positions, to be able to hire individuals with the necessary skills sets (e.g., accountants), providing training and technical assistance to staff as needed, and simply utilizing and enhancing a market's human capital. Fewer representative from Funder organizations than from Operator, Supporter, and Coordinator organizations emphasized these factors as critical to success.

Slightly more than a third of the representatives indicated partnerships are crucial to the success of a SBIP. These representatives articulated that successful SBIP implementation depended on action of many kinds of groups with different capabilities in implementing and sustaining the program. An agreement alone was not enough. Partners must act together to produce something that would not exist without them.

outreach materials to the community, the target community specifically.[Coordinator]

It would be really helpful to have funding for staff. They're barely able to do everything that they need to do at the market, let alone have time to do outreach stuff. It would be wonderful if they had the time to do that but, like I said, most of them are volunteers, they have full-time jobs doing other things. There's just not enough time. [Coordinator]

That adds considerable burden to markets, if they don't have a market manager or somebody to run the EBT machine and keep track of all that. Lastly, I think you need somebody there on site -- at least initially, when you're getting a new group of people coming in -- to really coax them through the process of how the market works, of how the point of purchase setup is. So that people aren't coming into that and intimidated by not knowing. And dealing with the embarrassment that comes along with that, where you see everybody else coming in and out, doing their own thing.[Supporter]

For example, the organization that runs one of our local Farmer's Markets also does a lot of community education around community gardening. [Supporter]

I will say the foundation has an interesting role in the community. Sometimes we can convene people...people return my calls because I'm connected to money. It's just the way this job works. So sometimes if there's an issue at a particular market or we're having a problem, I can convene a meeting and get people to come to the meeting and we can really address that immediately and work on it. [Funder]

How Organizations Evaluate SBIPS

6

6.1 Overview and Key Findings

Performance data provide a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of almost any program. Findings from program evaluation can help planners and implementers identify the aspects of the program that are working well and the components that require improvement. As indicated in Chapter 1, SNAP-based incentive program (SBIP) evaluations conducted to date have mainly reported program impact in terms of the dollar value of SNAP and incentive redemptions. Some evaluation reports have also noted challenges to SBIP implementation. To develop a complete understanding of the organizations involved in conducting and utilizing performance and impact evaluation data, the organizational representative interviews inquired about whether their respective SBIPs participated in self-evaluation and if so, whether their organization was involved in the process. If their organizations were involved with the process, further discussion with organizational representatives was conducted to establish:

- What, if any program performance and evaluation data were collected (e.g., SNAP benefits and incentives redeemed, vendor satisfaction, customer satisfaction, etc.);
- How the data were used;
- What if any data were collected regarding the impact of the SBIP on sales and SNAP redemptions at the market level; and
- Whether the organization would provide the FMIPS access to these data.

This chapter focuses on how organizations evaluate SBIPs and addresses the following evaluation activities:

- Collection of program performance data;
- Types of program performance data collected;
- Dissemination and use of evaluation data; and
- Support or participation in formal evaluations.

Key Findings

Key themes for the specific areas addressed in this chapter are highlighted here. Additional detail on these themes and others are presented in the sections that follow.

- Of the 75 representatives responding to the question on collection of performance data, most indicated that their organization was involved in collecting SBIP performance data. At the organizations that collected performance data, about a third of the representatives indicated that their organization was involved in the annual evaluation conducted by a large national funding and coordinating organization. These representatives were from Coordinator, Supporter, and Operator organizations. Supporter organizations engaged in more formal evaluations comprised of university faculty and/or students, whereas Funder organizations often engaged in informal evaluations involving anecdotal feedback from SNAP participants. Some Funders expressed interest in obtaining more rigorous metrics of program performance.
- The degree to which organizations collect data, the dimensions examined, and the rigor applied to the data collection and examination process varied widely. Quantitative electronic benefit transfer (EBT) and incentive sales and transactions data were collected routinely by Operator organizations and disseminated to Funder, Coordinator, and Supporter organizations and other stakeholders. A majority of the organizations indicated that EBT transaction data were tracked to represent the amount of SNAP benefits deducted from the participant's account, but a small number tracked the reimbursements provided to the vendors in lieu of purchases made using SNAP benefits. In some instances, organizations indicated tracking both, the EBT benefits deducted and the reimbursements provided to the vendors.
- About two-thirds of representatives indicated that their organization collected information on customer participation or satisfaction. Most of these representatives indicated that their organizations collected anecdotal qualitative data to understand program implementation and reach. Some Coordinator and Funder organizations conducted customer surveys to assess their FM purchases and fruit and vegetable consumption behavior. These surveys were done infrequently and varied in the rigor with which they were conducted.
- The performance data were used to improve program delivery, obtain additional funding, and enable regulatory reporting. Operator organizations viewed quantitative measures (i.e., EBT and incentive redemption values) as a reporting requirement and relied on qualitative assessments to increase community buy-in to shop at farmers markets (FMs). Coordinator, Supporter, and Funder organizations used quantitative and qualitative performance measures (i.e., EBT and incentive redemption values and customer feedback) to assess progress in relation to their goals, to make program improvements, and to secure additional funding for program improvement and expansion. Coordinator and Supporter organizations also indicated that performance data were used for SBIP policy discussions and advocacy.

6.2 Organizations Engaged in Collecting Data on SBIP Performance and Impact

A total of 74 representatives answered the question as to whether or not their organization collected program performance data and 58 indicated that their organization did collect some type of performance data. Among the organizations that collected SBIP performance and/or impact data, the types of measures utilized and the approaches to collecting and analyzing these data differed. Organizations worked together as well as relied on each other to collect evaluation measures. While Funder organizations relied on Operator and Supporter organizations for routine (e.g., number and dollar value of SNAP and incentive redemptions) quantitative program performance data, they also conducted their own quantitative and qualitative surveys to obtain non-routine performance data (e.g., consumer or vendor surveys).

Representatives from Funder organizations indicated that their organization set expectations or established reporting requirements. Those from Coordinating organizations reported that they managed the assessment process, collated the data from across multiple markets, and were often responsible for reporting data to Funders. The Operators, who implement the SBIP and manage SNAP EBT and incentive transactions, emerged as the front-line managers of data collection. Representatives from Supporter organizations, particularly those based within educational institutions indicated that they were occasionally tasked with the role of gathering and analyzing data not captured through EBT transactions (i.e., customer surveys). A few representatives from Supporter organizations indicated that they served as external evaluators and conducted formal evaluations.

Virtually all representatives from Funder organizations indicated that they expected the participants of their funding to report how resources were used and to what effect (i.e., performance data). However, a few representatives from Funder organizations expressed disappointment with the reporting they received and expressed an interest in obtaining more rigorous metrics of program performance, with some exploring the value of underwriting future external evaluations.

We track market-level data. It's like new customers per market, where the dollars are being spent, how many farmers we're reaching, that sort of stuff. We're also looking at partnering with the University's Food and Nutrition service on analyzing our individual customer's data, which is provided to us by the state EBT office. They want to look at zip codes and benefit allotment and dates of birth and purchasing trends and habits based on individual card numbers. That's something we're really excited about looking at. We've never had the opportunity to do that, so if that comes to fruition that some more evaluation that we can take a look at. [Funder]

Representatives indicated that the importance of such data were not simply to fulfill an administrative requirement but were useful to identify strategies for program expansion or to inform future funding decisions.

Approximately two-thirds of the representatives from Funder organizations reported that they “received” such data from their grantees, and more specifically, from the Program Coordinator. Although most Funders are not explicitly engaged in collecting the data directly, about two-thirds of the representatives from Funder organizations reported that they were actively involved in collecting performance data for the SBIP programs that they fund. But in most cases, these measures were informal, amounting to little more than the gathering of anecdotal feedback from customers.

Slightly less than one-half of the Supporter organization representatives interviewed indicated that they were involved in data collection and/or analysis of performance data. Among the Supporter organizations that reported this activity, a handful of representatives indicated that such data collection was actually their primary role or responsibility. Supporter organizations, typically educational institutions or extension offices, indicated that they were sometimes approached specifically to conduct an external third party evaluation.

I always try to talk to folks at the market and just get an understanding. Some of my best conversations are with folks about this, because you realize how important it is. I think we need a formal interview process, just to understand. The surveys have been incredibly helpful in helping us understand where people first learned about the program, and where they're coming from. [Funder]

We have a lot of data that gets collected about [the incentive program]. What we're going to be specifically involved in this year are the sales records, both tracking customer transactions as well as vendor redemptions. As far as customer transactions they'll track first-time SNAP customers at the market, whether or not they came to the market specifically because of [the incentive program], and then obviously the amount of SNAP used and the amount of [incentives] used. [Supporter]

We feel like the incentives are probably contributing to that increase in SNAP in farmers' markets. We try to support that assumption, through participant interviews and other data collection methods involving participant interviews, meaning SNAP users at the farmers' markets, vendors that are participating in the program at the farmers' markets, and market managers. So we try to support that conclusion with information that we gather through those types of interviews and surveys. [Supporter]

All but two Operator organizations representatives reported that their organization did not collect performance data. Given that virtually all Operator organizations are directly involved in the administration and management of SNAP transaction data (i.e., the number of transactions and SNAP sales, both of which are considered critical performance measures), it is possible that these two representatives did not consider routinely collected sales and transaction data to be “performance” measures. For program Supporters and Coordinators, collecting performance data was an integral part of program operations.

We keep track of which farms get which amount of dollars. Every transaction gets entered into Excel. We also keep track of how much gets swiped on their card versus how much comes out of our incentive grant money. It’s just all hard numbers. [Operator]

We record every check that’s given out to those vendors, we even know we’re even able to tell where our SNAP customers are spending their money. Because one vendor will be all produce, another will be all fruits. Some of them will be meats, some of them will be baked goods and things like that. [Operator]

Because we were asked by our incentive funders what the percentages were, and we found out that 78 percent of our SNAP customers are spending their money on fresh fruit and vegetables, and smaller percentages on meat and baked goods. [Operator]

Well we track the data of how much EBT was spent, how much [incentive] is spent, how many [incentive] customers were there, how many new customers were there. Then occasionally, we’ve done surveys to ask people if it’s impacted their diet, if the incentive program has caused them to buy it, purchase more fruits and vegetables, and some of their general comments about the program. [Coordinator]

Perceived Impact on Shopping Behavior if Incentive was Eliminated

Representatives were asked to reflect on their SBIP and provide their perceptions on how this program impacted shopping behaviors and whether or not these behaviors will persist if the incentive was eliminated. Although a wide range of responses were provided such as “yes, it will persist but not for everyone” or “no, it will not persist for the majority of people,” the modal response was that shopping behavior would be curtailed if the incentive were eliminated. Disaggregating these responses by organization type suggested that representatives from a given organization type

From what we’ve seen, they actually are. We have kept track of some SNAP transactions at some of the markets. From what I’ve seen, there’s a slight dip in the amount of people...they need certain changes, that largely persist. You see people stop going to the market, but the people who continue largely spend more money, making up, basically compensating for the money that they’re no longer getting from the SNAP incentive program. [Coordinator]

The question is what happens to an individual’s behavior if the incentives go away, it depends on how long they’ve been shopping at Market. If they were previously a shopper and they became EBT eligible and they started getting the benefit, they’re going to continue being a Market shopper. [Coordinator]

responded similarly. For example, Funders and Coordinators tend to be more cautious by indicating that there is not enough data or information to determine an outcome if the incentive was eliminated. Both Operators and Supporters tended to lean more on the optimistic side with half respectively indicating that SNAP participants will indeed continue to shop at FMs despite the lack of incentive. While representatives from all four organization types ultimately appeared to be in agreement that there would be a decline in SNAP use at FMs if the incentive was eliminated, there was a difference in the perceived significance of the decline across representatives.

6.3 SBIP Performance and Impact Measures Collected by Organizations

Among the organizations that collected performance measures/performance data, representatives indicated that multiple measures or indicators were collected to assess the performance and impact of the SBIP programs. The four measures that were commonly gathered included: EBT sales or transactions; customer participation and/or satisfaction; incentives distributed; and incentives redeemed.

Of the 75 organizations that responded to the question on collection of SBIP performance and impact measures, nearly 80 percent of reported that they collect EBT redemptions or transaction data; these are the most fundamental measures that are also a part of standard operating procedure. These EBT sales or transaction data provide a quantitative

We have tracked usage all along the way, so we can show that there's a significant increase over time and we've also been able to track people who come back. We know if we're getting repeat customers at these markets, and we are, and we're really excited about that. [Funder]

We tracked growth and spending per market but that was about all we did [Coordinator]

The evaluation has been done by the [Coordinator]. There's probably a couple levels of evaluation. Part of is looking at the financial evaluation of it. Like,

assessment concerning the use of incentives (e.g., by how many and how much). More Operator and Coordinator organizations than Funder or Supporter organizations collected information on EBT sales and SBIP transactions. A small number of Operator organization representatives indicated that their organization tracked redemptions at the vendor level by tracking reimbursements provided to each vendor.

Nearly two-thirds of all organizations actively collected data from the users' perspective as key dimensions of performance. Customer participation and satisfaction surveys were the second most commonly cited performance measures. These measures were collected using a variety of data collection procedures, ranging from carefully administered surveys to informal collection of anecdotal data. Informal assessments ranged from casual discussions to unsolicited feedback provided by customers. Sometimes Supporter partners assisted with these activities (e.g., from education-based organizations) and more in-depth surveys were administered to gather qualitative and quantitative measures.

A few Coordinator and Funder organizations conducted customer surveys to assess the dietary, health, or lifestyle effects of SBIP participants.

are people using it? Are they spending more?
[Supporter]

In addition to tracking the redemption of the coupons and tokens from our vendors, we also track sales by category. We look at what was the total of Ag products sold at the market on a given day? What was the total of craft products that were sold and what was the total of prepared food items that were sold. That enables us to see and understand that the Ag products are really the driving force in our market. That's what our customers are coming for. Having been able to see the increase in farmers and have that mapped to the increase in sales that we've seen, tells us that our market is still growing and is healthy, and probably can continue to grow at a more modest rate. [Operator]

We've done occasional market assessments, where we're getting four questions answered with a dot survey by the customers that happen to come through the market that day. [Operator]

...we haven't done any formalized, quantitative data gathering. We haven't surveyed customers, but we have gathered qualitative voluntary statements kinds of things. Anecdotes from individuals. We've just had grateful customers. We've had people who were so appreciative of the program, from the customer's side. Those add to the stories that we can tell about the incentive program. We have people who were coming to the market even late in the season last year saying, "Wish I had known about this sooner. It would have really made a big difference for me." [Operator]

We have done interviews, and the [university's] School of Health was interested in our program, and last year as SNAP customers would come to the wireless machine, there was a grad student from the school, who would conduct a survey, "How far did you travel? Why did you come here? How many times do you come to the market, now?" [Operator]

We've done consumer surveys in the past and, of course, it's validated questions around purchasing habits, that type of thing. Of course, people are going to respond positively in those surveys. One of the things, as an organization, we're looking at -- it's a no-brainer that if you double people's dollars they're going to come to you so it makes sense the amount of

distribution of benefits we're giving out is rising -- but what we're really interested in are we truly impacting health measures and health outcomes? [Coordinator]

We also survey our program participants, the actual shoppers. We do a round of consumer surveys every year that kind of gives us a really good picture on the kind of effects we're having on people's diets and eating behaviors that ask questions like "How many times do you shop at the Farmers Market? How much money do you spend each time? Have you seen your food and vegetable consumption increase since you've shopped at the Farmers Market?" so on and so on. [Funder]

Usually, once a year, we'll survey the vendors. They're basically very happy with the program. It's brought them a great deal of money. It's brought them more income. [Operator]

We did have a vendor survey where we asked how they felt about the program. There was a significant amount of support. Obviously the fresh fruit and vegetable producers felt the program the most, but because SNAP was up in general, other vendors also found an increase in sales from the program, and really appreciated it. [Operator]

We also do surveys at one point or another with a farmer that pertains to what they feel is helping them in the program, what part of the program is very helpful to them. [Supporter]

Then we also do an in-depth vendor survey for all of our market vendors. We, among the things related to SNAP and that incentive, we ask them their perception of how that has impacted their business. [Coordinator]

We also use it as an opportunity to check-in with our [farmer] partners, and hear how their seasons went, what their primary challenges were, so that we can continue to keep a pulse on the national network and identify areas that we should be focusing our technical support on for the coming year, and for the national convening that we hold each spring. [Coordinator]

We survey the farmers who participate, and we survey the markets, to get their input on what they're seeing happen, how we can make improvements, or adjustments, or what's going right there. [Funder]

Approximately one-third of all representatives from all organization types indicated that they collected SBIP participation and satisfaction data from vendors or farmers. Representatives from Operator organizations indicated that such data collection was integral to evaluating the market procedures and operations and to assess and improve program implementation. Representatives from Coordinator organizations indicated that such data was helpful to plan technical support and assistance activities.

The third and fourth most frequently gathered performance measures were the value of incentives redeemed and the value of incentives distributed to SNAP customers. These quantitative measures may be tracked more frequently since they can be integrated in the system used to track SNAP transactions and redemptions.

Demographic characteristics and SNAP card numbers of SNAP customers were gathered by Supporter organizations. These measures were gathered to assess utilization of FMs by unique and repeat customers.

We track how much each market has swiped and distributed, we also track, of course, how much they were reimbursed because that's what we base our reimbursements to them upon. We can see the difference between what's been swiped and what's been reimbursed. [Funder]

We provide each farmers market with these tracking sheets, and we require them to fill the tracking sheets out every market day, and submit them to us monthly, or regularly...With that data, we calculate the number of individual users who come to the farmers market...well, the number of individual SNAP participants listed under a SNAP incentive program monthly and for the whole season. We also just essentially add up the monetary value of both the SNAP benefits fund, and SNAP incentives funds. [Coordinator]

As part of the requirements for the grant, every partner submits an evaluation form each month and that tracks the number of [incentives] distributed and redeemed. Those are the core numbers. [Coordinator]

We track the outgoing tokens. We have a spreadsheet where we track how many transactions we do each market and how many of those use the incentive, just once a week, per consumer. That's how much goes out in SNAP tokens themselves, then how many SNAP incentive tokens are distributed each week. [Operator]

We know exactly how many people were involved in the program and how many coupons were given and how many redeemed and then also cashed in at the market. [Supporter]

6.4 Dissemination and/or Use of Performance Data

Organizations used performance data to be compliant with reporting requirements, for program improvement, to secure funding, and for advocacy and policy. Often, these measures were also used to assess progress in relation to their organization's goals related to SBIP.

Compliance with Reporting Requirements

Almost two-thirds of the representatives from Supporter organizations and one-half of the representatives from Coordinator and Operator organizations indicated that they collected performance measures to report progress to stakeholders and funders – including governmental organizations, with many representatives identifying it as a regulatory or Funder/stakeholder requirement.

Then really what our Finance Department requires are the reports from the machine from you guys wanting to know how much revenue was there in transaction versus how much are we paying out for vendors. That's what finance likes to see. Because if we're paying out a hundred-thousand dollars but we only had \$80,000 worth of transaction, there are some red flags there. [Operator]

We used to have to turn it into the state. We reported to them. Now we do it for us and because it helps when we go to try to get more donors or grants. [Operator]

We collect what's called a cert. It's a self-certification form. What it does, it allows us to prove to the Federal Government that we're doing our job. [Supporter]

[for the Health Department] we record all of the Health Bucks and the amount that are distributed every day. [Supporter]

[That information goes to] the community and any agency that's helping to support it. Of course it's shared with funders. It shared with agencies like DHS so that they can look at how the incentive program is working as well. [Supporter]

Every year we report back to the Human Resources Administration, how the program did the prior year with our redemption numbers, and the reach and impact we've had with the evaluation mechanisms that we're able to do. [Coordinator]

Program Improvement

Over one-half of the representatives from Funder, Coordinator, and Operator organizations indicated that they used performance data to guide program improvement and/or modify program delivery. Specifically, organizational representatives mentioned that such data were used to identify barriers in to attaining their goals, activities that worked or did not work in the context of their daily operations, outreach strategies for recruitment of additional vendors and shoppers, ways to reach their target audience and engage the community, and to improve their program delivery.

I think the data is so that we can obviously make the program run better. We want to do that. It's to understand who's using it and when. [Funder]

We generate reports about how well we're doing and whether we're meeting our goals, and share that with farmers to try to help them to change what they're bringing in response to different things that we see happening in the numbers. This year, for example, we scheduled our special events based on the attendance numbers at certain weeks last year to try to be responsive to what we see happening on the ground as we go forward with planning. [Coordinator]

One big piece of it is to inform program improvement. Let me give you a good example. When we learned about how negatively the lack of public transportation was impacting people's ability to go to the market, through the [Coalition], the group started working with the local public transportation authority to see if routes could be added. [Coordinator]

At our outreach sites, we survey and primarily it's questions like "will you try this recipe at home? What skills did you learn today?" Mostly, we use that information internally to improve our programs and tweak how we're serving our community. Which recipes are the most effective for reaching children versus teenagers? Which programs have the highest level of engagement and enthusiasm? [Operator]

Basically, we have compared it. We use it see the success of the program and to report the success or not. Obviously, keeping track to make sure we have funds to still do the incentive. Mostly, we're collecting the data to see how it's impacted the market, and be able report that to the board, and to our members, as far as how things are working. [Operator]

Secure Funding

Representatives from Coordinator and Supporter organizations also utilized performance data to obtain ongoing funding for the incentive itself and for program implementation. A few representatives from Operator organizations elaborated that collecting and disseminating the data to stakeholders helped them realize the value of using performance data and improve their understanding of how it can help them to monitor the program or secure additional funding.

These data enabled them to assess how long they could continue with the program. As a result of this realization, representatives from Operator organizations indicated that they no longer perceived these reporting requirements as a regulatory burden. Representatives from Support, Coordinator, and Funder organizations clearly stated that performance data enabled them to secure additional funding to refine, continue, or expand the SBIP. These data were also used to make decisions to expand or scale back the program.

Pretty much what we used it for was we used it to try to get additional funding, to show how effective the incentive was. [Coordinator]

We use it in fundraising and, because of that, I know that our SNAP match has increased steadily over the last three years. [Coordinator]

It's also a helpful fundraising tool. I can't stress that enough. If you can show people that we've seen an increase in the usage, of staff. There's just a lot that you can show and, depending on the foundation, philanthropy really likes data. That's very helpful. [Funder]

It can't be understated, the value of having really good tracking systems for what you're doing, otherwise, you can't look back and say, "Well, look how awesome we are," and pass that on to the people that might be interested in supporting your program and helping it grow. [Funder]

Program Advocacy and Policy Debate

About one-half of the representatives from Supporter organization and one-third of the representatives from the Coordinator organizations interviewed used the performance data to promote and advance policy debate concerning SBIPs, particularly in the context of program expansion and sustainability.

We shared it with all of the partners who were involved. We've shared it with our state health department. We've shared it at conferences, like the Public Health Association, the State's premiere Public Health Conference, with Health care organizations and various coalitions of folks that are interested in doing a similar type of program. We have shared it with some of our local elected officials. We are starting to share it a little more now with some civic organizations. With entities within the health care system that are making their plans for implementation of the Affordable Care Act. [Supporter]

We give a lot of presentations to groups throughout the city. I had to speak before the [State] Public Health Association, at their annual meeting. It's the region public health associations, health departments, groups of physicians or clinicians interested in what we're doing, funders obviously. I sent some data to a lobbyist in Washington who was working on advocating for a nutrition incentive funding piece of the Farm Bill, which I don't think was approved. She wanted as much information as she could get from us on how to support nutrition incentive programs across the country. I get calls from other cities who are interested in doing this, I talk at conferences. [Supporter]

It's also used for policy education, in order to inform the movement and the eventual goal of having an incentive like this, become more a permanent part of food assistance programs. [Coordinator]

I love to have data that I can share with media to help sell the story, to get them to realize how important this is, and to help get them to help build some momentum for this. [Coordinator]

6.5 Support or Participation in Formal Evaluations

Less than 10 percent of all organizations reported involvement in a formal program evaluation. It is likely, however, that Operator and Supporter organizations may not be fully aware of their contribution to evaluation (i.e., the provision of routine data) conducted by Funder and Coordinator organizations. Representatives from Operator and Coordinator organizations participating in formal evaluations specified that these evaluations tended to gather data from multiple markets. Typically these data included: weekly federal nutrition benefit usage; incentive dollars distributed and redeemed by corresponding program; total incentive dollars redeemed at all FMs they supported; the number of farmers redeeming federal benefits; and vendors unable to redeem federal benefits for each market. Representatives reported sharing these data and subsequent analyses with the lead Coordinators, Funders, and other stakeholders including the government.

Representatives from Operator and Coordinator organizations discussed three models for data exchange across organization types. Under the first model, market managers and coordinators provided data to the Funders; in the second model, individual vendors uploaded or shared their sales directly to with the Funder organization and in the third model, local universities and academicians were engaged in collecting and analyzing the data.

Through [our Coordinator Organization] we receive funding from the [National Funder Organization]. We provide them with data about usage at the market. For general markets, they specifically look at token distribution versus redemption and the amounts, and how that changes over time in a market. [Operator]

We're collecting data. We are reporting that back to [the National Funder Organization]. [Operator]

Actually, we probably don't do as good a job of that as [FNS] would like. We collect what we need to make our funders happy. [National Funder Organization] has an online portal where the farmers actually enter all their information themselves, as far as their sales and things like that. We don't track a lot extra. [Coordinator]

At the end of the season getting the farmers to submit their data to [the National Funder Organization] which they do directly, not through us. I think that took some time, as well. Kind of nagging and reminding them that even though they're busy with harvest, [Funder] wants to know how much they've sold. That was a bit of a harder piece, too, administratively. [Coordinator]

We've done some work with [our] State University. I think I mentioned them earlier. They did 400 surveys at our market over about four or five months, trying to get some customer feedback for us. It helped us evaluate some of those things that we're interested in. Who's coming, how far they are coming from, do they feel welcome, and what would they like to see there. [Operator]

Then we have a part-time Ph.D. on staff that does all of our evaluations, so I'm kind of the outsider on that. We have an extensive data collection process and evaluation process to evaluate these things. [Coordinator]

In addition to these evaluations, approximately nine Operator, seven Coordinator, and two Supporter organization representatives indicated that their organization participated in the relatively standardized data collection that was conducted by a large national organization. This national organization provided funding, coordination, and technical assistance for SBIP implementation and required or expected the funded participants to participate in ongoing data collection activity. Given its reach and resources, this national funder organization is able to manage an annual data collection and analysis summarizing the findings across scores of SBIPs nationwide.

Most representatives characterized participation in this national evaluation as fairly straightforward with minimal data collection effort, yet a few commented on the difficulties associated with data collection, especially the considerable need for follow-up with vendors. These different perspectives on participation probably reflect differences in organizational capacity and the clarity with which expectations concerning data collection are conveyed.

Coordinator organizations tended to serve as the link between the national funder organization and the local markets. While some representatives from Supporter organizations recognized the value of performance data, Supporter organizations within most SBIP networks were not directly involved in the data collection process, and Supporter organizations directly involved in data collection were of a specific partner type, either educational institutions or extension services. (Stratification by partner type is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7).

In keeping with the general tendency to be distanced from data collection, only two representatives from Supporter organizations mentioned any involvement with the national evaluation conducted by a National Funder Organization. And as the accompanying quote indicates, for non-academic Supporter organizations, the support role did not include actual data collection; in this case these activities were conducted by a partner from an educational institution.

[Our educational institution partner] is gathering data for [National Funder Organization]. I think we all know that you need to count transactions. You need to show results. The important thing is to capture that information. [Supporter]

6.6 Program Monitoring and Evaluation of SBIPs: A Closer Look

Representatives affirming that their organization collected program performance data were asked whether their organization was able to provide the study team with market level performance data for all markets where they supported the SBIP. The purpose of securing these market level data was to develop a comprehensive list of the performance measures that are available and to examine program impact using the most commonly available measures.

Performance measures data were provided by 14 organizations representing a total of 222 markets. Specifically, 10 Coordinators provided data for 217 markets and four Operators provided data for five markets. Some organizations were not agreeable to sharing self-evaluation data for a variety of reasons. The most commonly cited reasons were that they did not have authority to share the data and/or these data were not available to be shared with the public; they were collected for use by their funding or coordinating organization.

Of the 14 responding organizations, Coordinators varied considerably in the number of markets in which they supported SBIPs, ranging from one to 71 markets. In contrast, Operator organizations typically administered incentives in a single market. Only one Operator organization administered incentives in two markets (Table 6-1).

Table 6-1. Number of markets for whom quantitative data were provided by organization function

	Overall	Coordinator	Operator
Number of organizations	14	10	4
Number of markets where incentive was supported in 2012	222	217	5
Number of organizations supporting incentives at:			
Only 1 market	4	1	3
2 to 10 markets	3	3	1
11 to 20 markets	3	3	-
20 to 80 markets	4	3	-

Product purchases permitted using incentives

SNAP participants can use their benefits to purchase a wide range of food products including breads, cereals, vegetables, meat, and dairy. Edible plants (such as herbs) and seeds are also allowed. Organizations were asked which of the following food items could be purchased with incentives provided to SNAP customers – fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, breads, and seeds.

All Coordinator and Operator representatives reported that incentives could be used for purchase of fruits and vegetables. However, only two Coordinators and one Operator organizational representative indicated that purchases were limited exclusively to fruits and vegetables. Four Coordinators and three Operators did not pose any restrictions on use of incentive funds (i.e., the incentives could be used towards purchase of all SNAP-eligible products sold at the market [Table 6-2]). For any given organization, the types of product purchases permitted did not vary across markets (i.e., organizations had a set of standard allowable purchase policies that were implemented across all markets).

While incentive providers were not asked about their approach to developing a list of allowable product purchases using incentive funds, a small number of representatives indicated that they allowed incentive funds to be used for all SNAP eligible food products sold at the market since they did not have the resources to monitor the use of incentive funds if allowable products were limited to only fruits and vegetables (Table 6-2).

Table 6-2. Types of products purchase permitted using incentives at farmers markets

Types of Products*	Overall (N=14)	Coordinator (N=10)	Operator (N=4)
Fruits and vegetables only	3	2	1
Fruits, vegetables, and seeds	2	2	-
Fruits, vegetables, seeds, other	1	1	-
Fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, bread, seeds, and other	7	4	3
Fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, bread, seeds, other – No seeds	1	1	-

*Other products purchases permitted using with incentives included jams, jellies, honey, nuts, and baked goods other than bread. The other products permitted varied by incentive provider, some permitted nuts only whereas some others permitted only honey, jams, and jellies. One organization permitted purchase of baked goods.

Organizations Making Changes to Evaluation and Additional Measures Collected

To understand the scope and depth of monitoring and evaluations undertaken by the incentive providers, representatives from participating organizations were asked if and how their organization’s evaluation process of SBIPs at FMs changed over time. A total of six

Coordinators and two Operator organizations reported that they had made changes to their evaluation (Table 6-3) so as to understand the characteristics of incentive users and to improve data accuracy (Table 6-3). One representative from the Coordinator organization indicated that that the new evaluation (i.e., the change that was made) would provide them with the information necessary to obtain additional funding and to refine their outreach efforts. Similarly, a representative from one Operator organization indicated that the change in evaluation would enable them to plan community outreach efforts. While six Coordinator organizations collected additional quantitative performance data to evaluate their incentives, none of the Operator organizations did so. Three Coordinators conducted customer surveys to assess changes in their shopping and/or consumption patterns and three tracked the number of unique, new, and/or repeat customers at the market. The number of unique and repeat customers was tracked using the SNAP card numbers collected by these organizations.

Table 6-3. Type of change and reason for change in incentive evaluation by organization type

Organization	Type of Change	Reason for change
Coordinators		
1	Started tracking unique customers at one of the markets, and new vs. repeat customers for few months at one market	Details on new/unique customers and to get a sense of where the study team is drawing new customers, how many new customers were coming back. These data would allow a tailored approach to outreach and soliciting funding.
2	Began creating database of individual EBT transactions	To track how often the study team sees same shoppers, new shoppers, and average spending per shopper.
3	Originally were following partner template, changed definition of new customer	Change in reporting parameters from partner collaborator
4	Number of SNAP customers	NOT PROVIDED
5	Complete and accurate data, individual customer information; recording last 4 digits of their EBT card number	To accurately record information and eliminate duplicates
6	To understand if they have really visited a farmers' market as we define one, ask customers what other farmers' markets they have visited.	Improve data accuracy; understand how the study team's definition of FM corresponds with public perception of a FM; help marketing/promotion efforts; and understanding customers' other food sources.

Table 6-3. Type of change and reason for change in incentive evaluation by organization type (continued)

Organization	Type of Change	Reason for change
Operators		
7	Started counting the number of SBIP transactions and used it to come up with the number of unique customers.	To gather more specific information. It's good to know if you are helping same people over and over again. Would like to use it for outreach plans.
8	None given.	Began accepting [EBT cards] in 2005. Began accepting debit/credit cards, WIC coupons in 2006.

Market-Level Performance Measures for SBIPs

7

7.1 Overview and Key Findings

One major aspect of this Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) research initiative study was to describe and compare the performance, outcomes and/or impacts of SNAP-Based Incentive Programs (SBIPs) operating during Calendar Year (CY) 2012 using FNS' Anti-Fraud Locator for EBT Redemption Transactions (ALERT) data and, if possible, available the self-evaluation data provided by the organizations participating in this study. This chapter presents findings from the analysis of the ALERT data and the self-evaluation data.

As indicated in Chapter 5, representatives were asked if their organizations maintained performance data on their SBIP. If representatives confirmed that such market-level performance indicators or measures were available within their organization, the study team asked them to share these data for all markets that supported the SBIP.

Fifty-six organizations indicated that they tracked market-level performance data; 14 organizations provided one or more performance measures for CY 2012 on 222 markets. Ten of these 14 were Coordinator organizations and represented 217 farmers markets (FMs). The remaining four were Operator organizations that provided one or more measures for five markets. While most representatives provided market-level data verbally or in a spreadsheet, a few representatives referred the study team to relevant web reports and publications containing market-level data. This chapter presents tables stratified by organization type, but the discussion of the findings is limited solely to markets supported by Coordinator organizations, because only five markets were supported by Operator organizations.

The market-level measures most frequently provided by organization representatives were the total dollar value of incentive and SNAP redemptions—two measures commonly tracked for the purpose of reimbursement to vendors. Typically, FM managers process the EBT card and provide SNAP participants with tokens that can be used to purchase SNAP-eligible products. At the end of each market day, the vendors return all redeemed tokens to the market manager for reimbursement. Given that measures of the total amount of SBIP and SNAP benefits redeemed are integral to vendor reimbursement, it is not surprising that these transaction measures are the

most frequently provided market-level measures. Published evaluations that assess the impact of FMs on SNAP participants typically report these two quantitative measures, with a few evaluations including client surveys or vendor surveys.^{38,39,40,41,42}

Of the 10 Coordinator organizations, only three provided information on the average number of visits per SNAP customer or the dollar value of food sales (i.e., sale of SNAP and non-SNAP food items) at the market. Nine Coordinator organizations provided market-level data on the change in total sale of SNAP eligible foods between CY 2011 and 2012.

Fewer Coordinator organizations provided data on the number of SNAP transactions than the dollar value of SNAP benefits redeemed. This is likely due to limited staffing or required administrative activities that interfere with managers' ability to track the number of SNAP transactions. The individual markets may also choose not to track the total number of SNAP transactions based on a philosophy that not all SNAP tokens may be redeemed on a given day and, therefore, the number of daily SNAP transactions may not accurately reflect the number of SNAP shoppers at the market (i.e., not all incentive funds may be utilized on the day they were obtained and these SNAP participants may spend their SNAP and incentive funds at a later date. Counting the number of SNAP transactions may, therefore, be an undercount of the number of SNAP shoppers at the market).

Finally, some organizations started implementing the programs at FMs in 2012. Therefore, data on changes in specific measures between 2011 and 2012 were provided only for markets that had the SBIP in both 2011 and 2012 (Table 7-1).

³⁸ Donovan, J., Madore, A., Randall, M., and Vickery, K. (2013). *Farmers Market Incentive Programs. Vehicles for increasing local food access among nutrition assistance beneficiaries*. Policy recommendation for Austin, Texas. Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. May 2013.

³⁹ Fair Food Network. *Healthy Food Incentives. Cluster Evaluation. 2011 Final Report*.
http://www.fairfoodnetwork.org/sites/default/files/HealthyFoodIncentives_ClusterEvaluationReport_2011_sm.pdf

⁴⁰ Amuda, A. (2011). *Boston Farmers Market Incentive Programs: Increasing access to fresh and local produce*. The Food Project. February 2011.

⁴¹ New York City Health Department Farmers Market Programs.

⁴² Oberholtzer, L., Dimitri, C., and Schumacher, G. (2012). Linking farmers, healthy foods, and underserved consumers: Exploring the impact of nutrition incentive programs on farmers and farmers markets. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2012.024.002>, pp. 63–77.

Table 7-1. Market-level quantitative monitoring and evaluation data

	Number of organizations providing market level data (N=14)	Number of markets with data (N=222)
CY2012 market-level measures:		
Dollar value of incentives redeemed	13	183
Dollar value of SNAP benefits redeemed	12	195
Total number of SNAP shoppers	9	170
Number of SNAP customers who received incentives	7	62
Number of SNAP transactions	7	71
Average number of visits per SNAP shopper	3	8
Dollar value of food sales	3	31
Measures to assess change from 2011 to 2012:		
Total number of SNAP customers at the market	9	106
Total sales of SNAP eligible foods at the market	9	81
Total value of incentives redeemed at the market	8	68
Total number of customers at the market	5	45
Total sales of all goods at the market	3	26

Key Findings

- Newly SNAP-authorized FMs implemented the SBIP in the same year they received SNAP authorization. As noted in Chapter 3, organizations prefer to partner with markets that have experience with SNAP. This suggests that for Coordinator organizations, geography and mission alignment may be more important considerations than experience with SNAP implementation.
- Newly SNAP-authorized FMs had lower median value of SNAP and incentive redemptions than those who had been authorized for 3 or more years; market maturation may influence SNAP redemptions comparison of self-reported data with ALERT extract data on SNAP redemptions indicated that self-reported values were lower than those from ALERT extract. The difference in SNAP redemption estimates derived from ALERT and self-report may be due to the approach used by market managers to track SNAP redemptions or the limitations in disentangling individual market schedules and extracting market-level data for a cluster of markets with a common FNS number.

7.2 Characteristics of Farmers Markets Operating a SBIP

Representatives from responding organizations provided data on the characteristics of FMs, along with the self-evaluation data. As stated earlier, organizations varied in the completeness of data for a given market and across markets.

For the subset of markets with these data, it is evident that incentives are offered at markets with varying duration of market season and number of vendors. Over 70 percent of FMs that offered an SBIP were open for 3 to 8 months per season; about 9 percent were open for less than 3 months, and nearly 20 percent were open for 9 months or more in 2012. Similarly, FMs varied in the number of vendors attending the market with approximately one-fourth hosting less than five vendors and one-fourth hosting 40 or more (Table 7-2). In 2012, nearly 75 percent of the vendors at these SNAP-authorized FMs accepted SNAP.⁴³

Table 7-2. Characteristics of farmers markets operating the SBIP by organization type

Market characteristic	Coordinator supported markets (%)	Operator supported markets (%)
Market season	(N=187)	(N=4)
Less than 3 months	9.1	0.0
3 to less than 6 months	50.8	25.0
6 to less than 9 months	19.8	75.0
9 to 12 months	20.3	0.0
Vendor size	(N=144)	(N=5)
Less than 5	24.3	0.0
5 to 19	25.0	20.0
20 to 39	27.1	0.0
40 or more	23.6	80.0
Year market received SNAP authorization	(N=55)	(N=5)
2010 or prior	63.6	100.0
2011	23.6	0.0
2012	12.8	0.0
Year organization began supporting Incentives at the market	(N=148)	(N=5)
2005 to 2010	26.4	60.0
2011	14.9	20.0
2012	58.8	20.0
Incentive period in relation to market season	(N=166)	(N=3)
Incentive offered for entire market season	64.5	100.0
Incentive offered for fewer months than market season	35.5	0.0

⁴³ Note, not all individual vendors participate in SNAP even if the FM is SNAP-authorized.

Data for a subset of markets (N=20) suggests that organizations support SBIPs at markets in the same year they receive SNAP authorization. All seven markets that received SNAP authorization in 2012 and more than 75 percent (10 out of 13) of markets that received SNAP authorization in 2011 implemented a SBIP in the same year. These data are in keeping with the qualitative interview responses indicating that newly SNAP-authorized FMs implement SBIPs but may not have experience in implementing SNAP.

Slightly more than one-third of the FMs did not offer incentives for the entire market season. While the study team did not ask the reasons for shorter incentive periods at these markets, the responses from qualitative interviews (Chapter 3) suggest that limited funding hinders the ability of the organizations to expand the program and reach more customers. Representatives from Coordinator organizations often reported that inability to receive funding reduced program implementation; FMs reduced the size of the incentive at first and then ended the incentive when funds were no longer available.

7.3 SNAP Transactions and Redemptions at Farmers Markets with SBIP

Analysis of the market level data on SNAP transactions and annual SNAP and SBIP redemptions indicate that, in CY 2012, the median number of transactions at each market was approximately 140 and the annual median values of SNAP and incentive redemptions were \$1,112 and \$565, respectively (Table 7-3).

Data from a subset of markets suggests that recently authorized markets (SNAP authorization dates after CY 2010) had fewer SNAP transactions and lower annual SNAP and incentive redemptions than markets with 2 or more years since SNAP authorization (SNAP authorization dates of 2010 or prior). Markets within each SNAP authorization year category differed considerably in the number of transactions and value of SNAP and incentive redemptions, as reflected in the wide ranges for these measures (Table 7-4). Due to the small number of markets and the lack of variability in the amount of incentives offered at each market (e.g., \$1 for every \$5 spent or \$2 for every \$5 spent, etc.), the study team could not examine the role of the incentive amount on transactions and redemptions.

Table 7-3. SBIP Self-Evaluation Data: Self-Reported Market Level SNAP transactions, SNAP redemptions, and incentive redemptions in CY2012 by organization type

Market characteristic	Coordinator supported markets (%)	Operator supported markets (%)
Number of SNAP transactions at the market in CY 2012	(N=68)	(N=3)
Median	140	725
Range	1 to 4,809	645 to 918
Value of SNAP redemptions at the market in CY 2012	(N=179)	(N=4)
Median	\$1,122	\$29,722
Range	\$14 to \$82,178	\$8,742 to \$36,908
Value of incentives redeemed at the market in CY 2012	(N=191)	(N=3)
Median	\$565	\$5,508
Range	\$6 to \$55,412	\$3,870 to \$21,622

Table 7-4. SBIP Self-Evaluation Data: Self-Reported Market Level Median SNAP transactions and SNAP redemptions by SNAP authorization year

SNAP authorization year	Overall	
	Median (IQR*)	Range
Number SNAP transactions at the market in CY 2012		
2010 or prior (N=21)	354 (441)	22 - 3916
2011 (N=1)	164 (164)	164 - 164
2012 (N=4)	107 (125)	19 - 256
Value of SNAP redemptions at the market in CY 2012		
2010 or prior (N=39)	\$1,913 (1,066-5,316)	\$178 - \$36,908
2011 (N=12)	\$2,027 (1,281-2,604)	\$159 - \$28,775
2012 (N=7)	\$1,113 (321-3,619)	\$52 - \$4,880
Value of incentives redemptions at the market in CY 2012		
2010 or prior (N=42)	\$1,708 (3,294)	\$129 - \$31,917
2011 (N=12)	\$1,145 (1,759)	\$38 - \$3,971
2012 (N=7)	\$678 (717)	\$114 - \$1,452

* Interquartile range (difference between value of 1st and 3rd quartile) provides a measure of statistical dispersion around the median.

7.4 Monthly Change in SNAP Redemptions at Farmers Markets Derived from ALERT Extract

The study team asked organizations that provided quantitative self-evaluation data to provide FNS numbers for all markets where they supported the SBIP. Of the 222 markets for which self-evaluation data were received, FNS numbers were provided for only 33 markets. As indicated in Chapter 2 (methodology section), the study team used the ALERT extract containing the value of SNAP redemptions at these 33 markets in CY 2011 and 2012 to compute annual SNAP redemptions and percentage of monthly changes in SNAP redemptions for each market in 2012. The study team also compared the ALERT and self-reported market-level annual SNAP redemptions in 2012.

The analysis of the ALERT extract indicates that most FMs were seasonal, with less than one-third of the 33 markets open year-round (based upon the number of markets with monthly ALERT data). The overall value of SNAP redemptions was higher in 2012 than 2011 as reflected in the positive percentage change value of about 78 percent in SNAP redemptions. In both CY 2011 and 2012, compared with SNAP redemptions in each preceding month, markets experienced a positive monthly change in the percentage of SNAP redemptions (mean) in all months from February to September, and a negative monthly change in the percentage of SNAP redemptions in October, November, and December. In other words, SNAP redemptions at markets were higher in each subsequent month during the period January to September (Table 7-5). However, it is likely that this increase is due the larger number of markets that are open as the year progresses while the decline is due to the smaller number of markets that stay open during the winter months. It is also likely that the total number of vendors (and SNAP accepting vendors) may decline during winter and early spring months.

Table 7-5. Percentage change in month-to-month SNAP redemptions at a sample of farmers markets in 2011 and 2012 based on ALERT extract

Percent change overall	n	Mean	SD	Median
Annual Change (2011 to 2012)	33	77.8	137.1	32.1
2011 Monthly Change				
January to February 2011	7	18.1	53.6	34.9
February to March 2011	7	88.8	94.2	94.1
March to April 2011	7	89.5	141.5	1.7
April to May 2011	8	235.9	628.0	10.9
May to June 2011	18	128.8	213.6	53.4
June to July 2011	26	172.4	317.9	41.0
July to August 2011	32	32.1	73.5	6.1
August to September 2011	33	14.5	87.3	-1.8

Table 7-5. Percentage change in month-to-month SNAP redemptions at a sample of farmers markets in 2011 and 2012 based on ALERT extract (continued)

Percent change overall	n	Mean	SD	Median
September to October 2011	27	-11.4	68.6	-29.0
October to November 2011	15	-21.3	57.1	-38.8
November to December 2011	9	-13.0	68.3	-36.1
2012 Monthly Change				
January to February 2012	8	13.5	61.8	15.2
February to March 2012	7	71.0	108.8	17.1
March to April 2012	6	22.3	104.8	-6.4
April to May 2012	8	846.3	1,874.1	86.9
May to June 2012*	18	2,016.6	8,145.2	67.3
June to July 2012	28	121.1	426.1	13.8
July to August 2012	33	70.5	173.7	17.2
August to September 2012	33	1.0	44.1	-2.6
September to October 2012	29	-21.5	37.5	-29.8
October to November 2012	17	-35.9	37.8	-37.8
November to December 2012	9	-33.7	35.5	-28.8

*One market reported SNAP sales of \$10 and \$3,475 in May and June respectively, affecting the mean change in SNAP sales from May to June.

For 29 FMs, CY 2012 SNAP redemption data were available from both, ALERT and self-reports; SNAP redemptions were \$2,648 and \$1,364 respectively from ALERT and self-reported data, respectively. The difference in SNAP redemption estimates derived from ALERT and self-report may be due to the approach used by market managers to track SNAP redemptions or the limitations in disentangling individual market schedules and extracting market-level data for a cluster of markets with a common FNS number.

The SNAP redemption data from ALERT reflects the funds redeemed at the market while the self-reported data may reflect SNAP reimbursements provided to vendors. Thus, the estimate of SNAP redemptions based on reimbursement to vendors (self-report) may be less than the computation using the value of tokens provided to the customers (ALERT data). This study did not ascertain if the self-reported SNAP redemptions were based on the dollar value of tokens provided to SNAP participants or the dollar value of SNAP reimbursements provided to the vendors.

The process of extracting SNAP redemptions for individual markets from a cluster of markets with a common FNS number requires information on the market's operating schedule (months, days, and hours of operation). The market's operating schedule is necessary to identify and assign individual transactions to a specific market. For example, if Market A operates on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Market B operates on Thursday

and Saturday from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., transactions made on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday will be attributed to Market A and those on Thursday and Saturday to Market B. Since this study was conducted in 2013 and detailed market schedules were needed for CY 2012, researchers relied on web searches to obtain the CY 2012 schedule. It is very likely that the market schedules obtained from the web searchers may not be accurate. While FNS is requiring that FMs seeking SNAP authorization should obtain their own EBT machine, prior authorized markets that are a part of a cluster still continue to use one EBT machine.

7.5 Perceptions of SNAP and SBIP Growth at Farmers Markets

Since the extent to which market-level measures would be provided to the FMIPS was not known, we asked representatives about their perceptions on the impact of the incentives. Specifically, perception of change in specific market-level characteristics from CY2011 to CY2012 were assessed using graded responses options (less, more, or the same). Perceptions of change responses were available in 49 markets that implemented a SBIP in both 2011 and 2012; more markets had data on change in total sales of SNAP eligible foods and value of incentives redeemed than data on the change in total number of customers or the total number of SNAP customers. Compared to CY 2011, most Coordinator organization supported markets experienced an increase in the value of SNAP eligible food sales, and the value of incentives redeemed in CY 2012 (Table 7-6). The perception of increase in total sales of SNAP eligible foods is consistent with the analysis of the ALERT data; for the subset of markets with SNAP redemption data in 2011 and 2012, the annual median SNAP redemptions were \$1,791 and \$3,543 respectively.⁴⁴

Table 7-6. Perceived change in performance measures from CY 2011 to CY 2012

Market characteristic	Number of Coordinator supported markets (N=45)	Number of Operator supported markets (N=4)
Change in total number of customers 2011 to 2012		
Less in 2012 than 2011	11	-
More in 2012 than 2011	29	1
Same in 2012 and 2011	1	-
Not reported	4	3
Change in total number of SNAP customers 2011 to 2012		
Less in 2012 than 2011	-	1
More in 2012 than 2011	22	3
Same in 2012 and 2011	-	-
Not reported	23	-

⁴⁴Source: ALERT extract. Data on SNAP redemptions in CY2011 and CY2012 were available for 34 and 33 markets respectively.

Table 7-6. Perceived change in performance measures from CY 2011 to CY 2012

Market characteristic	Number of Coordinator supported markets (N=45)	Number of Operator supported markets (N=4)
Change in total sales of SNAP eligible foods 2011 to 2012		
Less in 2012 than 2011	7	-
More in 2012 than 2011	38	3
Same in 2012 and 2011	-	-
Not reported	0	1
Change in value of incentives redeemed at the market 2011 to 2012		
Less in 2012 than 2011	7	-
More in 2012 than 2011	38	3
Same in 2012 and 2011	-	-
Not reported	0	1

8.1 Overview and Key Findings

SNAP authorized farmers markets (FMs) are required to have a card reader in place to accept electronic benefit transfer (EBT) benefits. SNAP misuse is a concern at FMs because the model of SNAP redemptions is different at FMs than at other store types. While the EBT card is swiped to debit the exact amount of SNAP purchase at other stores, FMs typically have a central card reader and a token or scrip system that enables SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase SNAP authorized products. SNAP recipients who shop at FMs first arrive at the central location and inform the market manager the dollar value of SNAP benefits they would like to use at the market. The manager then swipes the EBT card for the specified amount and the SNAP recipient is given tokens for the amount withdrawn from the EBT card. At markets that offer an incentive, the manager also gives incentives in the form of paper coupons or tokens. The SNAP recipient then uses the SNAP and incentive tokens to make purchases at participating vendor booths. Vendors are not permitted to give change for the SNAP or incentive tokens; in addition, any unused SNAP or incentive tokens may be used at the market on a later date. At the end of each market day, vendors return the SNAP and incentive tokens/vouchers to the market manager who may reimburse them on the same day or at the next market day.

SNAP trafficking or fraud at FMs may occur when SNAP benefits are bought, sold, or traded for cash and when benefits are used to pay for products that are not SNAP eligible. In 2011, SNAP redemptions at FMs totaled \$11,725,316 and represented 0.02 percent of total SNAP redemptions.⁴⁵ Data from 2009 to 2011 indicate that approximately 10.5 percent of all authorized SNAP stores engaged in trafficking and approximately 1.3 percent of total SNAP benefits were trafficked.⁴⁶ USDA classifies FMs into other store types; while trafficking estimates are not

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2012). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Benefit Redemption Division, 2011 Annual Report*. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/SNAP/retailers/pdfs/2011-annual-report-revised.pdf>.

⁴⁶ <http://origin.drupaluat.fns.usda.gov/extent-trafficking-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-2009-2011-august-2013>

available for FMs, the estimated trafficking rate in 2009-2011 for other store types was 2.72 percent.⁴⁷

To assess awareness, perceived prevalence, and experience with SNAP misuse in the context of SBIPs, interviews with organization representatives explored measures that organizations have in place to prevent misuse of SNAP at farmers markets. The interviews captured their thoughts about this issue in the context of the markets or organizations that they support, which parts of the SBIP was potentially the most vulnerable to misuse, and the steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of SNAP misuse within FMs and SBIPs.

This chapter focuses on how organizations evaluate SBIPs and addresses the following evaluation activities:

- Perspectives on SNAP misuse in the context of SBIPs with attention to intentional vs. unintentional misuse;
- Measures implemented to prevent SNAP misuse; and
- Measures recommended for preventing SNAP misuse.

Key Findings

- The majority of the representatives indicated that SNAP misuse within the SBIP context was not a problem or that they had never experienced it. A few representatives cited incidents of misuse and characterized these as isolated events rather than indicative of an ongoing pattern.
- Most representatives distinguished between intentional and unintentional misuse (i.e., incidents where an error in procedure occurred due to lack of knowledge or inadvertent oversight). Representatives indicated that sharing benefits or tokens were the most common example of intentional misuse. Representatives indicated that lack of knowledge or inadvertent oversight led to the vendors at point of sale being the most vulnerable to misuse. Training for market managers and vendor education were mentioned most frequently as recommended steps to reduce the already low risk of misuse include followed by development of specialized redemption systems and the increased use of technology.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013). Farmers Markets and Local Food Marketing, Farmers Market Promotion Program. Available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=FMPP&description=Farmers%20Market%20Promotion%20Program&acct=fmpp>.

- Among the factors cited to account for such low rates of SNAP misuse was the very nature of FMs as tight knit communities that reinforce a culture of self-policing.
- Recommended strategies to prevent SNAP misuse mirrored those being implemented to prevent SNAP misuse. These included vendor and market manager education/training tracking mechanisms for incentives and counterfeit prevention systems.

8.2 Stakeholder Perspectives on the SNAP Misuse in the Context of FMs

While the potential misuse of SNAP benefits was taken very seriously by organizational representatives, it was regarded more as a topic of conceptual concern rather than a practical problem. Almost 80 percent of the representatives stated that SNAP misuse was not a problem or that they had never experienced it; these representatives discussed hypothetical scenarios, indicating that certain types of misuse may certainly be possible, and provided anecdotes on possible misuse scenarios.

For example, a representative from the Supporter organization described how selling tokens may work though there are obstacles which make this type of misuse very difficult.

“I’ve heard, maybe, a couple of rumors -- and I’ve been here for five years -- about people trying to trade. It’s not people going around a corner, it’s more people trying to trade the farmers the tokens for cash. But, of course, our farmers’ livelihood is connected to their ability to sell at the farmers’ markets. So, they...refuse, because the jeopardy is too great. Why wouldn’t they just sell them product? There’s no reason to do that. I’ve heard a couple of rumors once about tokens being sold, but only a couple rumors twice in my five years about that happening.” [Supporter]

About 20 percent of the representatives characterized their experiences with SNAP misuse as “minor” problems that were considered isolated events rather than indicative of an ongoing pattern. To underscore this point, none of the representatives classified their experience with the misuse of SNAP benefits as moderate or major.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Representatives to this question were given a forced choice set of three responses to characterize the degree of misuse experienced: “Minor,” “Moderate,” and “Major.”

In understanding representatives' perspectives on the topic of SNAP misuse, representatives discussed and distinguished intentional misuse (which can be considered fraud) and unintentional misuse. Representatives that characterized misuse as “minor,” attributed these incidents to errors in practice or procedure due to lack of knowledge or inadvertent oversight. Five representatives described unintentional misuse as “not following the proper process,” using tokens for ineligible items and accounting errors when dealing with tokens mentioned. In contrast, examples to illustrate intentional SNAP misuse included “sharing benefits or tokens” followed by “misrepresenting identity” and selling benefits or tokens (Table 8-1).

Table 8-1. Hypothetical and experienced SNAP misuse reported by representatives

SNAP misuse reported by representatives *		
Type of misuse	Number of representatives /Total number of representatives (%)** N=53	Number of representatives /Total number of representatives experiencing misuse (%) N=35
Intentional Misuse		
Sharing benefits or tokens	13	7
Selling benefits or tokens	8	3
Misrepresenting identity	7	4
Counterfeiting tokens or vouchers	3	2
Customers reselling produce	2	1
Excess EBT funds	1	1
Stealing of vouchers	1	1
Holding onto unused vouchers- not turning in benefits	5	1
Unintentional Misuse		
Not following proper process (due to lack of education or understanding)	6	6
Using tokens for ineligible products	16	7
Inaccurate accounting of tokens	2	2

Notes: * Representatives may report more than one type of misuse.

** Displayed responses reflect described misuse, including hypothetical or experienced.

When asked to identify aspects of SBIPs that were perceived to be most vulnerable to misuse, vendors at point-of-sale was most frequently cited, followed by the SNAP participants themselves. A small number of representatives indicated that the large size of the FMs made it difficult to monitor SNAP misuse (Table 8-2).

Table 8-2. Aspects of SBIPs most vulnerable to misuse

Aspect most vulnerable to misuse	Number of representatives that mentioned Item/Total number of representatives from this section (%) N=50
Vendors at point of sale	25
SNAP participants inside program	14
Vendors at point of accounting and redemption	6
Token system	6
Unknown or not sure	5
Large markets	3

8.3 Measures Implemented to Prevent SNAP Misuse

A total of 117 representatives responded to this question with almost all of them indicating that their SBIP had measures in place to prevent SNAP misuse.

These representatives attributed the low prevalence of SNAP misuse to several factors including a tight knit community of FMs, small market size that created an environment of trust, and a culture of self-policing by vendors and market managers. The physical space, layout, and having a small number of vendors enabled managers and vendors to see each other's work along with customer interactions. Such a setting also resulted in addressing vendor questions "on the spot," thereby reducing confusion around token exchange or appropriate use of incentive fund.

I know FNS understands that and I think they've accurately hit on it. The market is a consortium of individuals who are independent. Therefore, looking over each other's shoulders is not the right word, but there's enough people there to observe, and monitor each other and not only point out inadvertent misuse and correct the situation right then and there on the spot so it doesn't happen again, but also to point out potential fraud. [Supporter]

Most of the farmers, or most of the vendors, that is the community of farmers' markets, is a highly-ethical community. We're all interested in these programs and interested that they're done right. Vendors will point out to market managers and to each other, "Hey, this customer, there's something shady going on here." That type of thing. [Supporter]

We don't have lot of issues... There a sort of self-governing body within the market, where there is a membership that understands what the rules are, and checks other members. [Operator]

Vendor education was cited as the number one strategy by all organization types other than Funder. Several representatives from Operator and Coordinator organizations stated they worked hard to train vendors and customers to understand what is eligible through use of SNAP and the SBIPs.

More representatives from Funder organizations than the Operator, Supporter, or Coordinator organizations emphasized the need to have tracking mechanisms. While representatives from Coordinator organizations discussed their use of counterfeit prevention systems, those from Operator organizations emphasized their use of specialized incentive systems to prevent SNAP misuse.

The majority of Operators attributed the low percentage experiencing misuse to having counterfeit reduction measures in place. Using paper instead of wood tokens; number, stamp, apply a barcode, hologram, or emboss them; employ different color tokens for debit, credit, bonus and SNAP –Tokens; label them clearly as eligible for “fresh fruits and vegetables only” were considered specialized tracking systems by Operator organizations and counterfeit prevention measures by Coordinator organizations. Approximately six representatives recommended the development of a specialized redemption system as a strategy to reduce SNAP misuse.

A few representatives indicated that to prevent and reduce SNAP misuse, they warned the vendor for their first offense of accepting tokens for items that were not SNAP eligible; market managers withheld reimbursements for subsequent violations.

We provide [tokens] to the markets here and I see them in operation. It's cumbersome. The best of all worlds would be some sort of electronic card that provided incentives when people purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. There would be some way of coding a vendor, who's only a specialty crop farmer, and giving them some sort of a cube on their phone, because I'm buying now more and more of my stuff at farmers' markets from farmers who have the cube on their iPhones. I eventually see that as the best way to really avoid all this human error and any potential types of graft and corruption people are afraid of. That would be a great way to do it. [Operator]

The easiest thing I think would be to get away from having to do the whole coupon system. If there was a system or a process for it at the state level, and you weren't essentially dealing with Monopoly money, for lack of a better example, then I think that that would reduce it. My understanding for part of the reason for moving to an electronic EBT card for SNAP redemption was the same thing, that there was misuse in how it was previously administered. [Funder]

One thing that we are cautious of is persons buying non-SNAP eligible products in the market. The way that we impart that is once a producer accepts the token, the only way they can get reimbursed for those is through our market manager. If, for instance, a bakery were to accept our green tokens which are marked for fruits and vegetables only, our general rule is that we will accept them one time, educate the producer or the employee. Also warn them that the next time if you take them, they can turn the tokens over to us but they're not going to be paid for them. That ticket becomes a lost sale. You can make the sale but you're ending up with pieces of plastic that you don't get paid for. [Coordinator]

Other less frequently cited measures included provision of administrative support for market managers, legal agreements with markets and vendors, market observations, monitoring customer purchases, planting secret shoppers, posting signage, and customer education. The following quotes illustrate the prevention measures reported by representatives from Operator and Coordinator organizations.

Vendors have a lot of curiosity or concern about whether their products are SNAP eligible or not. So we're constantly working, both with individuals and vendors as well, discussing specific products to make sure that the vendors are clear on that, and the market staff is clear on that. [Operator]

We provide signage and tips for farmers to make sure they understand the rules, reminders about what's eligible, what's not, about giving change, all that kind of thing. [Coordinator]

I think that we worked out a lot of the kinks and some of that has to do with having uniform education for producers in the market and market managers so that everyone involved understands the parameters of the program and how it works and what the restrictions are. [Coordinator]

Finally, many representatives perceived a relatively small reward or potential gain from customer or vendor misuse. Along these lines, representatives explained that using SNAP benefits in FMs can be stigmatizing for customers. Representatives felt that the issue was not SNAP misuse as much as it was to get SNAP-eligible customers to the market and creating an environment that was warm and friendly to foster continued use.

8.4 Measures Recommended to Prevent SNAP Misuse

Representatives from Coordinator, Funder, and Operator organizations had several recommendations that were in keeping with the strategies currently in use to prevent SNAP misuse. These included forming a tight-knit community, vendor and market manager education/training, and a specialized redemption system.

Representatives recommended the need to forge partnerships between vendors and market managers. One representative stated that “good partnerships create open lines of communication that help personnel to identify any issues and make processes more efficient.” Finally, a few representatives recommended the use of secret shoppers to observe processes and make improvements to create a process that is simple and seamless for customers was also identified as a potential strategy.

Several organizational representatives recommended vendor education as an important strategy to reduce SNAP misuse. Specific training topics that were suggested such as providing verbal

and written documentation, having vendor agreements signed after a training, signage for vendors and managers to keep on hand in addition to a guide, offered in multiple languages. A few representatives also recommended ongoing training that would allow for continued feedback to vendors and market managers and allow them to address issues in a “hands-on” manner as they arise. A few representatives recommended customer education through brochures, signage displaying eligible food items at each vendor stall, and on-site staff to answer questions about token use and redemption.

These strategies were also recommended by several representatives who stated that, “the increased use of technology would provide helpful solutions to more accurately measure transactions, such as a ‘cube’ on an iPhone to replace the use of tokens” and “the use of technology would streamline the incentive process and reduce error” that resulted due to the use of (cumbersome) wooden tokens or vouchers. When comparing current measures in place to suggestions for the future, representatives recommended a uniform specialized redemption system with use of technology to streamline processes. The experiences with use of tokens was mixed; many representatives said it was very simple and an easy way to record and distribute incentives, while others found it unwieldy (particularly when coupled with other government programs at the same market) and would like to see the incentives distributed electronically, similar to how EBT funds are disbursed.

SNAP-based incentive programs (SBIPs) connect SNAP recipients with farmers markets (FMs) and benefit these recipients, farmers selling at these markets, and the community at large. In recent years, the number of markets with SBIPs has risen steadily, along with publications documenting the positive impact on purchase behaviors of participants. These evaluations have ranged in scope from assessment of the program at a single market to pooled data across markets with differing amount of incentives.

This study was undertaken to develop a more complete picture of SBIPs starting with the characteristics of organizations involved in SBIPs, their roles in SBIP implementation, and their approach to collecting and tracking performance indicators to evaluate the success of the SBIP. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 141 representatives from 103 organizations involved with SBIPs. The primary role performed by organizations was used to develop a function-based organization typology and responses provided by representatives were examined by organization typology. Quantitative market-level measures were requested from organizations that indicated these measures were available; 14 organizations provided market-level measures for a total of 222 markets. Descriptive statistics were employed to examine the market-level data. Data gathered from this study indicate considerable variability in how SBIPs are implemented and evaluated. This variability may be attributable to the mix of organizations engaged in the program, the roles performed by them, and the capital and human resources available. The key findings are as follows:

- **Organizations engage in SBIP to achieve their mission.** While the partnering of organizations involved in the SBIP serve the entire community or specific community segments (e.g., low-income residents, farmers, local businesses, etc.), SBIPs provide a common ground to achieve each of the individual organization's own goals. Organizations seek partners familiar with electronic benefits transfer (EBT) and SBIPs, but new programs are sometimes funded and initiated by organizations with no prior experience. Partnerships are typically formed based on geography, and the process to allocate funding varies considerably from a formal application process to an informal process.
- **A majority of the organizations allocate 25 percent or less of their total budget to the SBIP.** Partnering organizations contribute financial and nonfinancial support to implement the SBIP. The sources of financial support include philanthropic

donations, foundations, grants, and vendor fees. Financial support is provided to purchase the equipment, tokens, and development of a tracking system. Nonfinancial support is provided to manage the distribution and tracking of incentives, as well as the expertise necessary to develop the tracking system.

- **Organizations perform multiple roles in SBIP implementation and no single organization implements the SBIP alone.** For most organizations, the SBIP activities are absorbed within the existing program structure and allocated to existing staff. Besides providing financial support, Funder organizations assist in marketing and outreach activities as well as impact evaluation. Coordinator and Supporter organizations assist with grant applications, setting up and implementing the program, marketing and outreach, data collection and evaluation. Finally, Operator organizations are engaged in all aspects of program implementation and evaluation.
- **Funding and staffing challenges affect program delivery.** While some funding may be earmarked for the incentive itself, funder fatigue adversely impacts program sustainability. The high rate of staff turnover and the volunteer-based operation of the FM are considered as impediments to implementing an effective SNAP and incentive tracking system. The Funder representatives indicated that the difficulties in tracking arise due to the use of multiple currencies and token systems used to deliver the program.
- **Consequences of funding challenges lead to program alterations including the amount of incentive offered per SNAP recipient and the duration of the incentive season.** Some representatives perceived that SNAP customers would discontinue shopping at the market while some others expressed the opinion that incentives help to draw the SNAP customers to the market and, once they start shopping at the market, they would do so even if the incentives were discontinued.
- **About 80 percent of the organizations are involved in data collection and evaluation activities.** For the most part, data collection and evaluation revolve around tracking the volume of EBT and incentive redemptions with some organizations also tracking the number of redemptions. However, the approach to tracking redemptions varies across organizations. While some organizations track the value of SNAP benefits debited from EBT cards, others track the value of reimbursements provided to vendors. A few organizations did track the value of incentives distributed and redeemed. All these quantitative measures provide different dimensions of program effectiveness. The USDA's Anti-Fraud Locator for EBT Redemption Transactions (ALERT) system tracks the value of SNAP benefits debited from the EBT cards. To measure the agreement in sales at the market with the ALERT system, tracking the amount debited from EBT cards will be the best indicator. However, to understand the difference between the amounts debited and the amount redeemed (i.e., vendor reimbursements), both of these measures are needed. In this study, the difference in the ALERT and self-reported measures of EBT redemptions may be due to unspent benefits. Since unspent benefits are not added back to the EBT account, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which the difference is attributable to these two scenarios.

- **A few organizations do engage in vendor and customer surveys** to capture different dimensions such as purchase and consumption behavior, satisfaction with the products at the market, and so forth. While these data are not collected routinely, when collected they are used to inform program implementation decisions.
- **SNAP fraud is not considered a major issue.** The model of implementing SNAP at FMs is unlike that at other stores; at non-FM venues, SNAP benefits are deducted from the EBT card after purchases are made and the recipient is not left with unspent currency. The implementation model at FMs includes use of tokens, and unused tokens may be redeemed at a later time or left unutilized. While this model may increase the likelihood of fraud, approximately 80 percent of representatives indicated that SNAP misuse was not a major issue at FMs. Among those that reported SNAP misuse, a clear distinction was made between intentional and unintentional fraud, with more instances of unintentional fraud. Unintentional fraud was defined as vendor ignorance wherein the vendors accepted SNAP for purchase of non-SNAP products. Vendor education and use of technology instead of the token system were perceived to be potential strategies to reduce fraud.

Appendix A

Email Flyer for FMIPS Sample



Westat, a survey research company headquartered in Rockville Maryland, will soon be implementing a study of organizational networks providing support for SNAP-based incentive programs at farmers markets on behalf of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. As you know, there has been a significant increase in the number of SNAP incentive programs offered at farmers markets, which extend the value of SNAP clients' benefits through tokens or vouchers. For this study, Westat will be conducting interviews with the goal of assisting FNS in better understanding:

- ❖ How SNAP incentive programs at farmers markets are currently **funded, designed, implemented, and evaluated;**
- ❖ The structure of **support networks** necessary to ensure programmatic success; and
- ❖ The **opinions** of key, experienced stakeholders in the farmers market community about SNAP incentive programs.

The two main components of this study will involve:

- ❖ **In-depth telephone interviews** with key organizations that participate in providing and/or supporting incentive programs at farmers markets.
- ❖ An analysis of **self-evaluation program data** voluntarily provided by organizations participating in the study to explore the potential effectiveness of the programs on increasing purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP clients.

Each interview will include requests for organizations' self-evaluation data on completed SNAP incentive programs, if available. The aggregation of this information will provide a great opportunity to evaluate program components that consistently yield successful outcomes, and metrics most salient for markets involved or interested in developing SNAP incentive programs.

Westat will be contacting multiple representatives of organizations that are funding or implementing SNAP incentive programs. Interviews with interested individuals will take place between February and June 2013. Both Westat and the FNS are excited to have this opportunity to study the processes and networks linking farmers, consumers, and communities, and increasing access to farmers markets.

We look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your willingness to share your experiences!

Appendix B

Email Invitation to Participate

Organizational Invitation to Participate



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am contacting you to ask your organization to participate in the Farmers Market Incentive Provider Study sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. This study will be investigating how organizations are supporting programs that extend the value of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits at farmers markets. My colleagues and I at Westat, a survey research company headquartered in Rockville Maryland, would like you and others at your organization to participate in brief telephone interviews that will ask questions about your organization's history with SNAP, the kinds of support your organization provides to farmers market incentive programs, and suggestions for maximizing the success of SNAP incentive programs. Individual comments and interview responses will be kept confidential and results will be reported in aggregate so that no one individual can be identified.

In addition to each 20 to 30 minute interview, we will also be asking whether your organization would share self-evaluation data on completed SNAP incentive programs. The aggregation of this information will provide an opportunity to explore program components that may consistently yield successful outcomes.

Please respond to this email at your earliest convenience to inform us whether or not you are interested in participating. Someone from the Westat FMIPS research team will then contact you via phone or email to schedule a time for this interview. Participation in the study is voluntary, but we hope you will decide to participate and help us with this important work. All Westat research involving volunteers is reviewed by our Institutional Review Board to ensure volunteer rights and welfare are protected.

We welcome your questions and feedback. We can be reached by email at FMIPS@Westat.com. Please feel free to call the FMIPS Study Manager, Ms. Vibha Vij, using the toll free number 1-800-937-8281, extension 2509, or Research Assistant, Stephen Leard, at extension 5830. I can also always be reached directly at extension 2721. We look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Melissa King, MSPH
Sr. Project Director
Westat
1450 Research Blvd, TC 3042
Rockville, MD 20850

Appendix C

Final Interview Protocols



**Task Order #3
Study of Organizations Providing or
Administering SNAP Incentives at
Farmers Markets
Contract No: AG-3198-B-10-0029**

**Subtask 3: Final Interview Protocols
May 2012**

Author

Melissa King, Westat Project Director
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May 11, 2012

Prepared for:

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May 12, 2012

Dr. Eric Sean Williams
USDA FNS
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1594

**RE: Farmers Market Incentive Program Study (FMIPS) Subtask 3: Final Interview
Protocols**

Dear Dr. Williams,

Development work for the Farmers Market Incentive Program Study (FMIPS) interview protocols has been completed. Following the initial development work, the interviews were reviewed by the Technical Working Group (TWG) on March 14, 2012. The TWG, FNS, and our consultant, Ms. Stacy Miller at the Farmers Market Coalition provided suggestions for improving question wording and specific probes. The interview protocols were then pretested with a total of six individuals who formerly worked at the type of organizations that will be included for participation in the study. The cognitive and pretesting methodologies and findings were summarized in our previous memo to you earlier this month.

Three interview protocol guides are attached. These are the final versions of the guides that were submitted with the Office of Management and Budgets application and intended for use in the study. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melissa King
Westat, Sr. Project Director

FNS Farmers Market SNAP Incentive Program Telephone Interview

Type 1 Organization: Executive and Program Directors

This is a semi-structured interview instrument. It is designed to ensure coverage of important topics while leaving space for interviewees to contribute their perspectives and for unanticipated information to emerge.

There are two kinds of items:

Questions: To be asked directly of the interviewee. Use exact wording.

Probes: Information about the questions that we need. If the individual incorporates this information into his/her response, don't ask them. If he/she does not, ask them. The wording you use to ask will depend on what the person has already told you. Use whatever wording works.

You do not have to ask these questions in the order presented if it doesn't seem appropriate (for example, if the person launches immediately into a litany of problems) but try to cover all of the questions.

Record everything the interviewee says after the completion of verbal consent. Don't make judgments about what is relevant. That's a job for analysis.

DO NOT HESITATE TO FOLLOW UP ON LEADS THAT MAY LEAD TO NEW INFORMATION. If you don't understand completely something the interviewee says, ask until you do understand. If it is something new or different, follow up ("Can you tell me more about that?").

Directions Specific to this Instrument: The goal of this interview is to identify other people to talk to. We don't expect this person to know much about the program. We don't know how much these interviewees will know about the incentive program(s) beyond the understanding that they have one. This will require careful probing. Discontinue lines of questioning related to the program if the interviewee knows nothing about them. Explain the study briefly. This interview should be about 15 minutes.

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 1 Organization Executive Director

Introduction:

INTRO A: Hi, my name is _____, and I'm calling from Westat . I would like to speak to [respondent].

- 1 - RESPONDENT ON PHONE → GO TO **INTRO B**.
- 2 - IS NOT RESPONDENT, BUT RESPONDENT IS AVAILABLE → GO TO INTRO A
- 3 - RESPONDENT NO LONGER AS SOCIATED WITH THIS NUMBER → CHECK TO SEE IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, CALL ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER IF AVAILABLE. THANK AND TERMINATE
- 4- RESPONDENT NOT AVAILABLE → THANK AND TERMINATE; CALL BACK OTHER TIMES.

INTRO B:

Q1. My appointment log shows that we have a telephone interview scheduled with you at this time. Are you ready to begin this interview?

- 1 -Yes → GO TO **VERBAL CONSENT SECTION**
- 2 - No
- 3 - REFUSED → THANK AND TERMINATE

Q2: When is a good time for us to talk? [ESTABLISH CONVENIENT TIME TO TALK AND CONFIRM THE PHONE NUMBER]

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

NOTE: IF RESPONDENT WANTS TO END THE INTERVIEW BEFORE IT IS COMPLETED AND WISHES TO CONTINUE THE INTERVIEW AT ANOTHER TIME, SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK.
 DATE _____ TIME _____
 THANK AND TERMINATE

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 1 Organization Executive Director

Verbal Consent:

All the information I receive from you today will be kept confidential and secure. I will not identify you or use any information that would make it possible for anyone to identify you in any presentation or written reports about this study. All of the information in any report or presentation will be based on analysis summaries and will not identify individual participants. For some analyses, the organization’s name for which you represent may be used in reports, presentations, or publications that result from this research.

There are no expected risks to you for helping me with this study. The only risk to you might be if your identity was ever revealed.

Do you have any questions about this research study specifically?

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact the Institutional Review Board at <Phone Number>.

Do you consent to participate in this study?

- Yes, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research survey. (COMPLETE THE SECTION BELOW AND GO TO *ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS*)
- No → THANK AND TERMINATE

Subject Name: _____

Date Verbal Consent Obtained: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Verbal Consent: _____

Date: _____

Permission to Record the Interview:

Before we begin, I would like your permission to record this conversation. I am recording this conversation for quality assurance purposes only. This recording will be destroyed at the end of the study. Do I have your permission to record this conversation?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO → Thank you, we will continue without recording this call. [GO TO *ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS*]

I am now turning the tape recorder on. [TURN ON RECORDER.] Now that the tape recorder is on, can you please state again that you have given me permission to record this call? [SECURE PERMISSION FROM RESPONDENT.] Thank you.

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 1 Organization Executive Director

Introduction and organizational demographics:

To start, please tell me about your organization, its mission, and the role you play in your organization's operation, with particular focus on SNAP-based incentive programs. (COMPLETE/CONFIRM ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS BASED ON PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE.)

<p>ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS: Fill in as much of this information as possible prior to the interview. Complete and confirm based on participant's response.</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Primary Mission: _____</p> <p>Year Established: _____</p> <p>Number of Employees: _____</p> <p>Service Area: _____</p> <p>Method of incentive redemption (Provide examples): _____</p>

<p>Screening Question: Are you the person responsible for the day-to-day operation of the SNAP incentive program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> [If YES, ask all questions 1-13 You may need to reschedule the interview since this will require more time than this person bargained for]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> [If NO, ask only question 2 and 3.]</p>
<p>Question 1. The purpose of this study is to understand the FM SNAP-based incentive from as many perspectives as follows. We need your help in identifying the best people to speak to. Can you give me some examples of organizations you work with to implement the FM SNAP-based incentive program?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Names and organizations of partners that we can contact? <i>Probe:</i> Who are the best organizations for us to include. <i>Probe:</i> Who is the person in this organization responsible for day-to-day operations of the SNAP incentive program(s).</p>
<p>Question 2: What is the role of your organization in the implementation of SNAP-based incentive programs?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> What SNAP-based incentive program operations does your organization have in place? <i>Probe:</i> What other organizations do you work with on SNAP-based incentive programs? Please describe working, funding, or reporting relationships with other organizations in the community who are also working with FM SNAP-based incentive programs.</p>

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 1 Organization Executive Director

<p><u>Probe:</u> What (if any) informal working connections does your organization have with other organizations relative to the implementation of SNAP-based incentive programs? <u>Probe:</u> Does your organization work with other FNS programs? Which ones and how?</p>
<p>IF INTERVIEWING TYPE 1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, END INTERVIEW AND THANK PARTICIPANT FOR HIS/HER TIME.</p>
<p>Question 3: How long has your organization worked with SNAP? Can you tell me more about this?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> Why did you choose to become involved in the SNAP incentive program? <u>Probe:</u> Was this organization formed specifically to provide FM SNAP-based incentives?</p>
<p>Question 4: What kinds of support does this organization provide to FM SNAP-based incentive programs?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> SNAP incentives? Other? <u>Probe:</u> About how many Farmers Markets received benefit from this organization in 2012? <u>Probe:</u> What operational assistance did the SNAP-based incentive programs receive from other organizations that your organization helped in some way?</p>
<p>Question 5: How is your organization funded?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> Throughout response for additional sources of support.</p>
<p>Question 6: How do you decide what organizations or programs to support (either through funding, advisory, or operational support)?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> How does your organization decide to provide financial versus other support. <u>Probe:</u> Is there a single set of criteria for funding or does it go to whoever asks? <u>Probe:</u> Probe about geographical proximity of organizations that are supported</p>
<p>Question 7: What measures do you have in place to prevent misuse of farmers' market SNAP-based incentives?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> Examples of misuse might be selling or buying of benefits, counterfeiting, or misrepresentation of beneficiary identity. <u>Probe:</u> In the context of the farmers markets or markets you work with what are your thoughts about this issue? <u>Probe:</u> If needed, reiterate confidentiality. Probe for as much information as you can. <u>Probe:</u> Which parts of the purchasing chain do you think is most vulnerable to misuse? <u>Probe:</u> Are there any specific steps that can be taken to reduce this risk?</p>

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 1 Organization Executive Director

<p>Question 8: Looking overall at the SNAP-based incentive program, what challenges have you encountered?</p>
<p>Question 9: What factors do you think are most important to a successful SNAP-based incentive program?</p>
<p>Question 10: FNS is very interested in whether organizations participating in SNAP-based incentive programs self-evaluate the incentive programs in any way. How do you measure the impact of your SNAP-based incentive programs?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> Do you collect information on program performance? Vouchers redeemed? Vendor satisfaction? Customer satisfaction? <u>Probe:</u> What do you use this information for? <u>Probe:</u> Is it feasible for us to access that data?</p>
<p>Question 11: Is information collected about the impact of FM SNAP-based incentives on market sales and SNAP market redemptions?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> What is it? <u>Probe:</u> Is it feasible for us to access that data?</p>
<p>Question 12: Do you work closely or have any formal or informal partnerships with other organizations? We are particularly interested in organizations you work with regarding to farmers markets and SNAP-based incentive programs.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes → IF YES, Question 11a: Who are these organizations and/or partners? (Collect Names, City, and State for each organization/partnership)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Question 11b: What role or functions do these organizations play in this partnership?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 1 Organization Executive Director

Question 13: *The purpose of this study is to understand FM SNAP-based incentive programs from many perspectives. Do you have suggestions for other people or representatives of other organizations that we should contact?*

Probe: Names and organizations of partners that we can contact?

Probe: Who are the best organizations for us to include?

Probe: Who is the person in this organization responsible for day-to-day operations of SNAP-based incentive programs?

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 2 Organization Program Director

FNS Farmers' Market SNAP Incentive Program Telephone Interview

Type 2 Organizations: Person with Day-To-Day Responsibility for Incentive-Related Programs/Activities

This is a semi-structured interview instrument. It is designed to ensure coverage of important topics while leaving space for interviewees to contribute their perspectives and for unanticipated information to emerge.

There are two kinds of items:

Questions: To be asked directly of the interviewee. Use exact wording.

Probes: Information about the questions that we need. If the individual incorporates this information into his/her response, don't ask them. If he/she does not, ask them. The wording you use to ask will depend on what the person has already told you. Use whatever wording works.

You do not have to ask these questions in the order presented if it doesn't seem appropriate (for example, if the person launches immediately into a litany of problems) but try to cover all of the questions.

Record everything the interviewee says after the completion of verbal consent. Don't make judgments about what is relevant. That's a job for analysis.

DO NOT HESITATE TO FOLLOW UP ON LEADS THAT MAY LEAD TO NEW INFORMATION. If you don't understand completely something the interviewee says, ask until you do understand. If it is something new or different, follow up ("Can you tell me more about that?").

Directions specific to this interview: Responses to this instrument will be highly varied as will the organizations to which it is directed. Normally these organizations for work with incentives as part of a larger mission. This should be about a 30 minute interview.

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 2 Organization Program Director

Introduction:

INTRO A: Hi, my name is _____, and I'm calling from Westat. I would like to speak to [respondent].

- 1 - RESPONDENT ON PHONE → GO TO **INTRO B**.
- 2 - IS NOT RESPONDENT, BUT RESPONDENT IS AVAILABLE → GO TO INTRO A
- 3 - RESPONDENT NO LONGER ASSOCIATED WITH THIS NUMBER → CHECK TO SEE IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, CALL ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER IF AVAILABLE. THANK AND TERMINATE
- 4 - RESPONDENT NOT AVAILABLE → THANK AND TERMINATE; CALL BACK OTHER TIMES.

INTRO B:

Q1. My appointment log shows that we have a telephone interview scheduled with you at this time. Are you ready to begin this interview?

- 1 - Yes → GO TO **VERBAL CONSENT SECTION**
- 2 - No
- 3 - REFUSED → THANK AND TERMINATE

Q2: When is a good time for us to talk? [ESTABLISH CONVENIENT TIME TO TALK AND CONFIRM THE PHONE NUMBER]

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

NOTE: IF RESPONDENT WANTS TO END THE INTERVIEW BEFORE IT IS COMPLETED AND WISHES TO CONTINUE THE INTERVIEW AT ANOTHER TIME, SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK. DATE _____ TIME _____ THANK AND TERMINATE

Verbal Consent:

All the information I receive from you today will be kept confidential and secure. I will not identify you or use any information that would make it possible for anyone to identify you in any presentation or written reports about this study. All of the information in any report or presentation will be based on analysis summaries and will not identify individual participants. For some analyses, the organization's name for which you represent may be used in reports, presentations, or publications that result from this research.

There are no expected risks to you for helping me with this study. The only risk to you might be if your identity was ever revealed.

Do you have any questions about this research study specifically?

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact the Institutional Review Board at <Phone Number>.

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 2 Organization Program Director

Do you consent to participate in this study?

Yes, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research survey. (COMPLETE THE SECTION BELOW AND GO TO *ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS*)

No → THANK AND TERMINATE

Subject Name: _____

Date Verbal Consent Obtained: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Verbal Consent: _____

Date: _____

Permission to Record the Interview:

Before we begin, I would like your permission to record this conversation. I am recording this conversation for quality assurance purposes only. This recording will be destroyed at the end of the study. Do I have your permission to record this conversation?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO → Thank you, we will continue without recording this call. [GO TO *ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS*]

I am now turning the tape recorder on. [TURN ON RECORDER.] Now that the tape recorder is on, can you please state again that you have given me permission to record this call? [SECURE PERMISSION FROM RESPONDENT.] Thank you.

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 2 Organization Program Director

Introduction and organizational demographics:

To start, please tell me about your organization, its mission, and the role you play in your organization's operation, with particular focus on SNAP-based incentive programs. (COMPLETE/CONFIRM ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS BASED ON PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE.)

<p>ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS: Fill in as much of this information as possible prior to the interview. Complete and confirm based on participant's response.</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Primary Mission: _____</p> <p>Year Established: _____</p> <p>Number of Employees: _____</p> <p>Service Area: _____</p> <p>Method of incentive redemption (e.g. coupons, matched value vouchers, market credit): _____</p>
<p>Question 1: What is the role of your organization in the implementation of SNAP-based incentive programs?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> What SNAP-based incentive program operations does your organization have in place? <u>Probe:</u> What other organizations do you work with on SNAP-based incentive programs? Please describe working, funding, or reporting relationships with other organizations in the community who are also working with FM SNAP-based incentive programs. <u>Probe:</u> What (if any) informal working connections does your organization have with other organizations relative to the implementation of SNAP-based incentive programs? <u>Probe:</u> Does your organization work with other FNS programs? Which ones and how?</p>
<p>Question 2: How long has your organization worked with SNAP? Can you tell me more about this?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> Why did you choose to become involved in the SNAP incentive program? <u>Probe:</u> Was this organization formed specifically to provide FM SNAP-based incentives?</p>
<p>Question 3: What kinds of support does this organization provide to FM SNAP-based incentive programs?</p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> About how many Farmers Markets received benefit from this organization in 2012? <u>Probe:</u> What operational assistance did the SNAP-based incentive programs receive from other organizations that your organization helped in some way?</p>

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 2 Organization Program Director

<p>Question 4: <i>What measures do you have in place to prevent misuse of farmers' market SNAP-based incentives?</i></p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> Examples of misuse might be selling or buying of benefits, counterfeiting, or misrepresentation of beneficiary identity.</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> In the context of the farmers markets or markets you work with what are your thoughts about this issue?</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> If needed, reiterate confidentiality. Probe for as much information as you can.</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> Which parts of the purchasing chain do you think is most vulnerable to misuse?</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> Are there any specific steps that can be taken to reduce this risk?</p>
<p>Question 5: <i>Looking overall at the SNAP-based incentive program, what challenges have you encountered?</i></p>
<p>Question 6: <i>What factors do you think are most important in a successful SNAP-based incentive programs?</i></p>
<p>Question 7: <i>FNS is very interested in whether organizations participating in SNAP-based incentive programs self-evaluate the incentive programs in any way. How do you measure the impact of your SNAP-based incentive programs?</i></p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> do you collect information on program performance? Vouchers redeemed? Vendor satisfaction? Customer satisfaction?</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> What do you use this information for?</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> Is it feasible for us to access that data?</p>
<p>Question 8: <i>Is information collected about the impact of FM SNAP-based incentives on market sales and SNAP market redemptions?</i></p>
<p><u>Probe:</u> What is it?</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> Is it feasible for us to access that data?</p>

Telephone Interview Instrument for Type 2 Organization Program Director

Question 9: Do you work closely or have any formal or informal partnerships with other organizations? We are particularly interested in organizations you work with regarding to farmers markets and SNAP-based incentive programs.

Yes → IF YES, **Question 9a:** Who are these organizations and/or partners?
(Collect Names, City, and State for each organization/partnership)

Question 9b: What role or functions do these organizations play in this partnership?

No

Question 10: The purpose of this study is to understand ~~the~~ FM SNAP-based incentive programs from many perspectives. Do you have suggestions for other people or representatives of other organizations that we should contact?

Probe: Names and organizations of partners that we can contact?

Probe: Who are the best organizations for us to include?

Probe: Who is the person in this organization responsible for day-to-day operations of SNAP-based incentive programs?

FNS Farmers' Market SNAP Incentive Program Telephone Interview

Type 3 Organizations: Directors or Other Staff

This is a semi-structured interview instrument. It is designed to ensure coverage of important topics while leaving space for interviewees to contribute their perspectives and for unanticipated information to emerge.

There are two kinds of items:

Questions: To be asked directly of the interviewee. Use exact wording.

Probes: Information about the questions that we need. If the individual incorporates this information into his/her response, don't ask them. If he/she does not, ask them. The wording you use to ask will depend on what the person has already told you. Use whatever wording works.

You do not have to ask these questions in the order presented if it doesn't seem appropriate (for example, if the person launches immediately into a litany of problems) but try to cover all of the questions.

Record everything the interviewee says after the completion of verbal consent. Don't make judgments about what is relevant. That's a job for analysis.

DO NOT HESITATE TO FOLLOW UP ON LEADS THAT MAY LEAD TO NEW INFORMATION. If you don't understand completely something the interviewee says, ask until you do understand. If it is something new or different, follow up ("Can you tell me more about that?").

Directions specific to this interview: Responses to this instrument will be highly varied as will the organizations to which it is directed. Normally these organizations work with incentives as part of a larger mission. This should be about a 30 minute interview.

Introduction:

INTRO A: Hi, my name is _____, and I'm calling from Westat . I would like to speak to [respondent].

- 1 - RESPONDENT ON PHONE → GO TO **INTRO B**.
- 2 - IS NOT RESPONDENT, BUT RESPONDENT IS AVAILABLE → GO TO INTRO A
- 3 - RESPONDENT NO LONGER AS SOCIATED WITH THIS NUMBER → CHECK TO SEE IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, CALL ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER IF AVAILABLE. THANK AND TERMINATE
- 4- RESPONDENT NOT AVAILABLE → THANK AND TERMINATE; CALL BACK OTHER TIMES.

INTRO B:

Q1. My appointment log shows that we have a telephone interview scheduled with you at this time. Are you ready to begin this interview?

- 1 –Yes → GO TO **VERBAL CONSENT SECTION**
- 2 – No
- 3 - REFUSED → THANK AND TERMINATE

Q2: When is a good time for us to talk? [ESTABLISH CONVENIENT TIME TO TALK AND CONFIRM THE PHONE NUMBER]

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

NOTE: IF RESPONDENT WANTS TO END THE INTERVIEW BEFORE IT IS COMPLETED AND WISHES TO CONTINUE THE INTERVIEW AT ANOTHER TIME, SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK.

DATE _____ TIME _____
THANK AND TERMINATE

Verbal Consent:

All the information I receive from you today will be kept confidential and secure. I will not identify you or use any information that would make it possible for anyone to identify you in any presentation or written reports about this study. All of the information in any report or presentation will be based on analysis summaries and will not identify individual participants. For some analyses, the organization's name for which you represent may be used in reports, presentations, or publications that result from this research.

There are no expected risks to you for helping me with this study. The only risk to you might be if your identity was ever revealed.

Do you have any questions about this research study specifically?

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact the Institutional Review Board at <Phone Number>.

Do you consent to participate in this study?

Yes, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research survey. (COMPLETE THE SECTION BELOW AND GO TO *ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS*)

No → THANK AND TERMINATE

Subject Name: _____

Date Verbal Consent Obtained: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Verbal Consent: _____

Date: _____

Permission to Record the Interview:

Before we begin, I would like your permission to record this conversation. I am recording this conversation for quality assurance purposes only. This recording will be destroyed at the end of the study. Do I have your permission to record this conversation?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO → Thank you, we will continue without recording this call. [GO TO *ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS*]

I am now turning the tape recorder on. [TURN ON RECORDER.] Now that the tape recorder is on, can you please state again that you have given me permission to record this call? [SECURE PERMISSION FROM RESPONDENT.] Thank you.

Introduction and organizational demographics:

To start, please tell me about your organization, its mission, and the role you play in your organization's operation, with particular focus on SNAP-based incentive programs. (COMPLETE/CONFIRM ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS BASED ON PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE.)

<p>ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS: Fill in as much of this information as possible prior to the interview. Complete and confirm based on participant's response.</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Primary Mission: _____</p> <p>Year Established: _____</p> <p>Number of Employees: _____</p> <p>Service Area: _____</p> <p>Method of incentive redemption (e.g. coupons, matched value vouchers, market credit): _____</p>
<p>Question 1: How is your organization participating in or supporting SNAP-based incentive programs in farmers markets?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> What SNAP-based incentive program operations does your organization have in place? What is your relationship with {Name of partnering Type 1 organization}?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> What other organizations do you work with on SNAP-based incentive programs? Please describe working, funding, or reporting relationships with other organizations in the community who are also working with FM SNAP-based incentive programs.</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> What (if any) informal working connections does your organization have with other organizations relative to the implementation of SNAP-based incentive programs?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Does your organization work with other FNS programs? Which ones and how?</p>
<p>Question 2: How is your organization funded?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Throughout response assess for additional sources of support.</p>
<p>Question 3: What measures do you have in place to prevent misuse of farmers' market SNAP-based incentives?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Examples of misuse might be selling or buying of benefits, counterfeiting, or misrepresentation of beneficiary identity.</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> In the context of the farmers markets or markets you work with what are your thoughts about this issue?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> If needed, reiterate confidentiality. Probe for as much information as you can.</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Which parts of the purchasing chain do you think is most vulnerable to misuse?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Are there any specific steps that can be taken to reduce this risk?</p>

<p>Question 4: Looking overall at the SNAP-based incentive program, what challenges have you encountered?</p>
<p>Question 5: What factors do you think are most important to a successful SNAP-based incentive program?</p>
<p>Question 6: FNS is very interested in whether organizations participating in SNAP-based incentive programs self-evaluate the incentive programs in any way. How do you measure the impact of your SNAP-based incentive programs?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> Do you collect information on program performance? Vouchers redeemed? Vendor satisfaction? Customer satisfaction? <i>Probe:</i> What do you use this information for? <i>Probe:</i> Is it feasible for us to access that data?</p>
<p>Question 7: Do you work closely or have any formal or informal partnerships with other organizations? We are particularly interested in organizations you work with regarding to farmers markets and SNAP-based incentive programs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes → IF YES, Question 7a: Who are these organizations and/or partners? (Collect Names, City, and State for each organization/partnership)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Question 7b: What role or functions do these organizations play in this partnership?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Question 8: Is information collected about the impact of FM SNAP-based incentives on market sales and SNAP market redemptions?</p> <p><i>Probe:</i> What is it? <i>Probe:</i> Is it feasible for us to access that data?</p>

Appendix D

Collaborative Partnership Diagrams

Appendix D

Additional SBIP Network Diagrams

Appendix D provides the results of the more detailed social network analysis presented in Chapter 4. Representatives from the FMIPS sample of 103 organizations described 356 collaborative partnerships among 342 organizations related to work with FMs and SBIPs, including descriptions of partnering organizations’ missions, objectives, and roles. These numerous collaborations among the 342 organizations were analyzed to examine the characteristics of the organizations (e.g., function, partner type, FNS geographic region) and their collaborations (e.g., formality, support type). For the purposes of the social network analysis additional organizations named by the 103 SBIP organizations that participated in the FMIPS interviews that could not be categorized into this SBIP functional typology, an “unspecified partner” category was created. In addition, as shown in Table D-1 below, partnering and collaborating organizations were further classified into 18 “Partner Types” using a classification schema developed from the *Nutrition Assistance at Farmers Markets: Understanding Current Operations* survey,⁴⁹ to facilitate identification of common patterns or models for SBIP support. While most representatives specified their nonprofit partners were foundations, food banks, coalitions, etc., some representatives simply referred to these partners as “nonprofits.” Each organization involved in a collaborative partnership was classified into one functional type and one partner type. Other aspects of organizational partnerships were also assessed and analyzed; such as the formality of the partnerships; partner types; and a more granular look at the support provided through these partnerships.

⁴⁹U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Research and Analysis. (2013). *Nutrition assistance in farmers markets: Understanding current operations* by Sujata Dixit-Joshi et al. Project Officer: Eric Sean Williams, Alexandria, VA: April 2013. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis>.

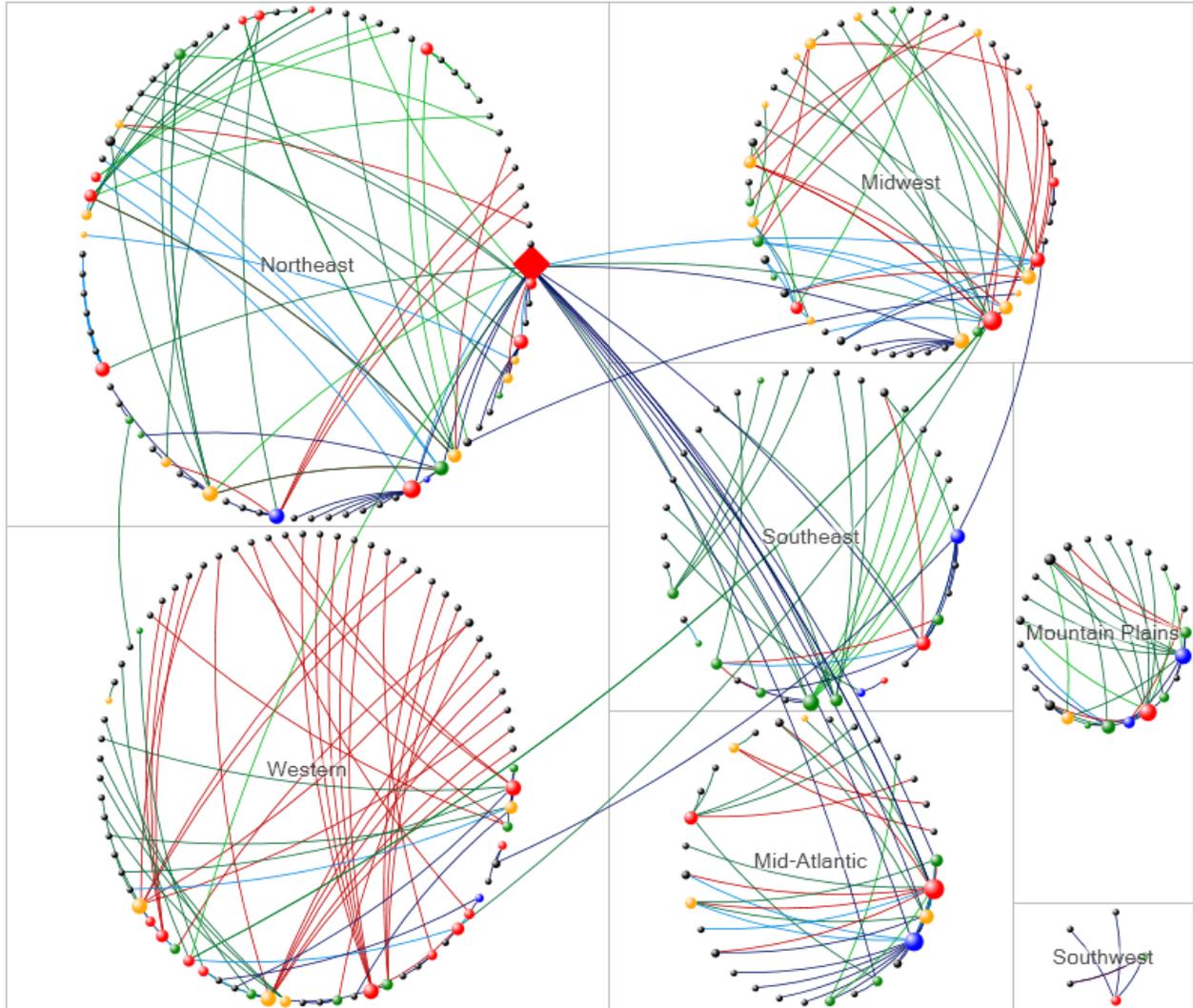
Table D-1. Analytic categories used in FMIPS social network analysis

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS (n=342)		
SBIP organizational function	Partner types*	FNS geographic regions (based on organization location)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Funders ■ Coordinators ■ Supporters ■ Operators ■ Unspecified Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bank ■ Business ■ Coalition ■ Education ■ Extension Service ■ Faith-Based ■ Farmers Market Association ■ City Government ■ County Government ■ Local Government ■ State Government ■ Federal Government ■ Food Bank ■ Food Producer ■ Foundation ■ Health ■ Market Organization ■ Nonprofit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mid-Atlantic ■ Midwest ■ Mountain Plains ■ Northeast ■ Southeast ■ Southwest ■ Western
PARTNERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS (n=356)		
Formality	Support type	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Formal ■ Informal ■ Both ■ Unspecified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Financial support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Funding — Grant-writing support ■ Nonfinancial support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Design/general business support – administrative support, management, program design, and strategic improvement — Logistical support – communication, consumer education, data collection and evaluation, incentive distribution, advertising, program implementation, and technical assistance and training — Network support – outreach, policy/advocacy, networking to establish partnerships, and advisory/mentoring support ■ Unspecified support – organizations were described as key partners without any additional information 	

*Partner types were developed using classifications from the FM Ops social network analysis. Partner types were assigned based on representative descriptions. Nonprofit partner type subsets (e.g., foundations, food banks, coalitions) were maintained to provide additional information about SBIP network patterns.

Representation of SBIP Networks

Partnerships between geographic regions



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Function.

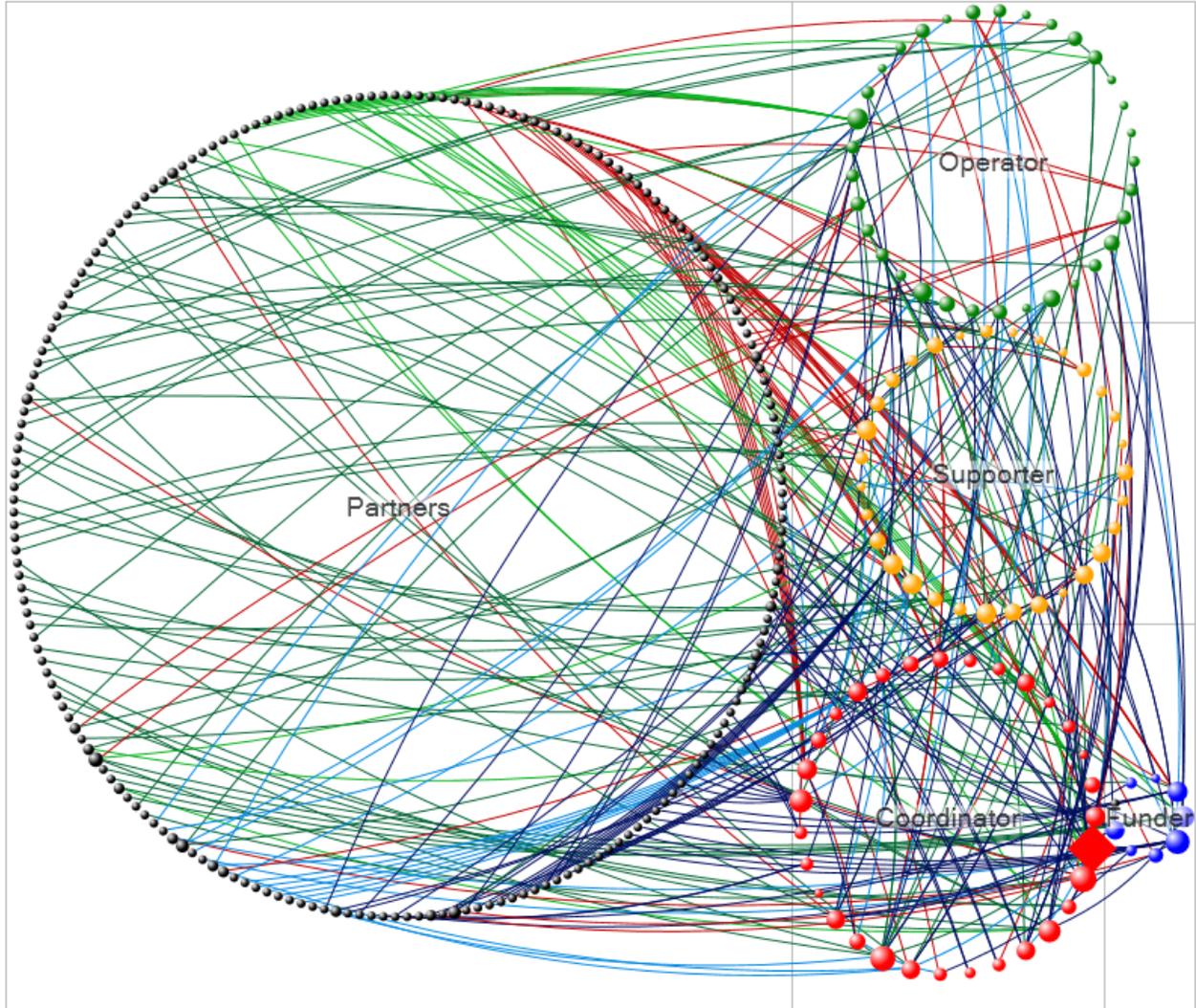
Sphere color denotes **Organizational Function:**

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified partners

Line color denotes **Support Type:**

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

Partnerships between organizational functions, including nonspecific partners



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Function.

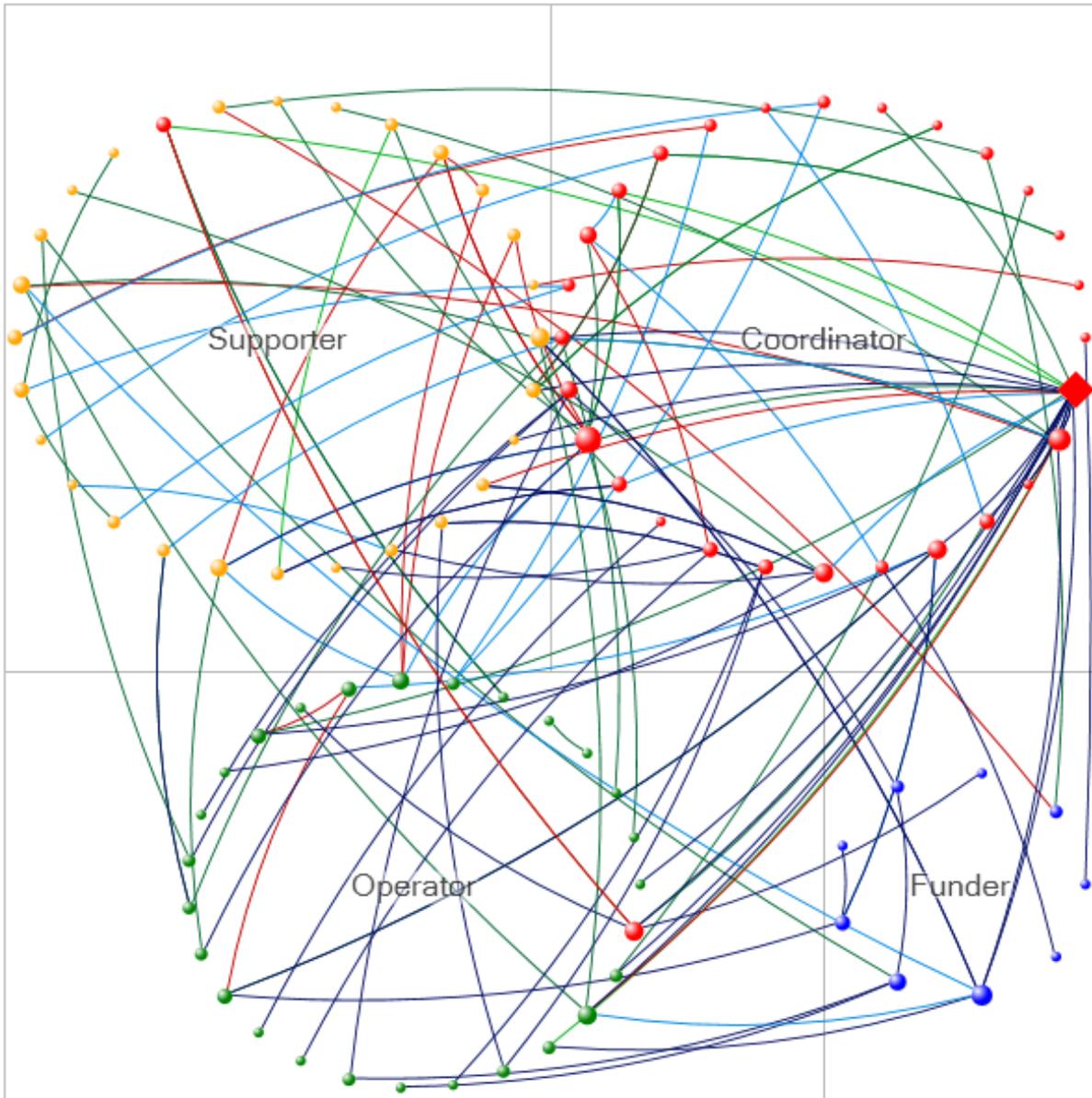
Sphere color denotes **Organizational Function:**

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black sphere – unspecified partners

Line color denotes **Support Type:**

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

Partnerships between organizational function, excluding nonspecific partners



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Function.

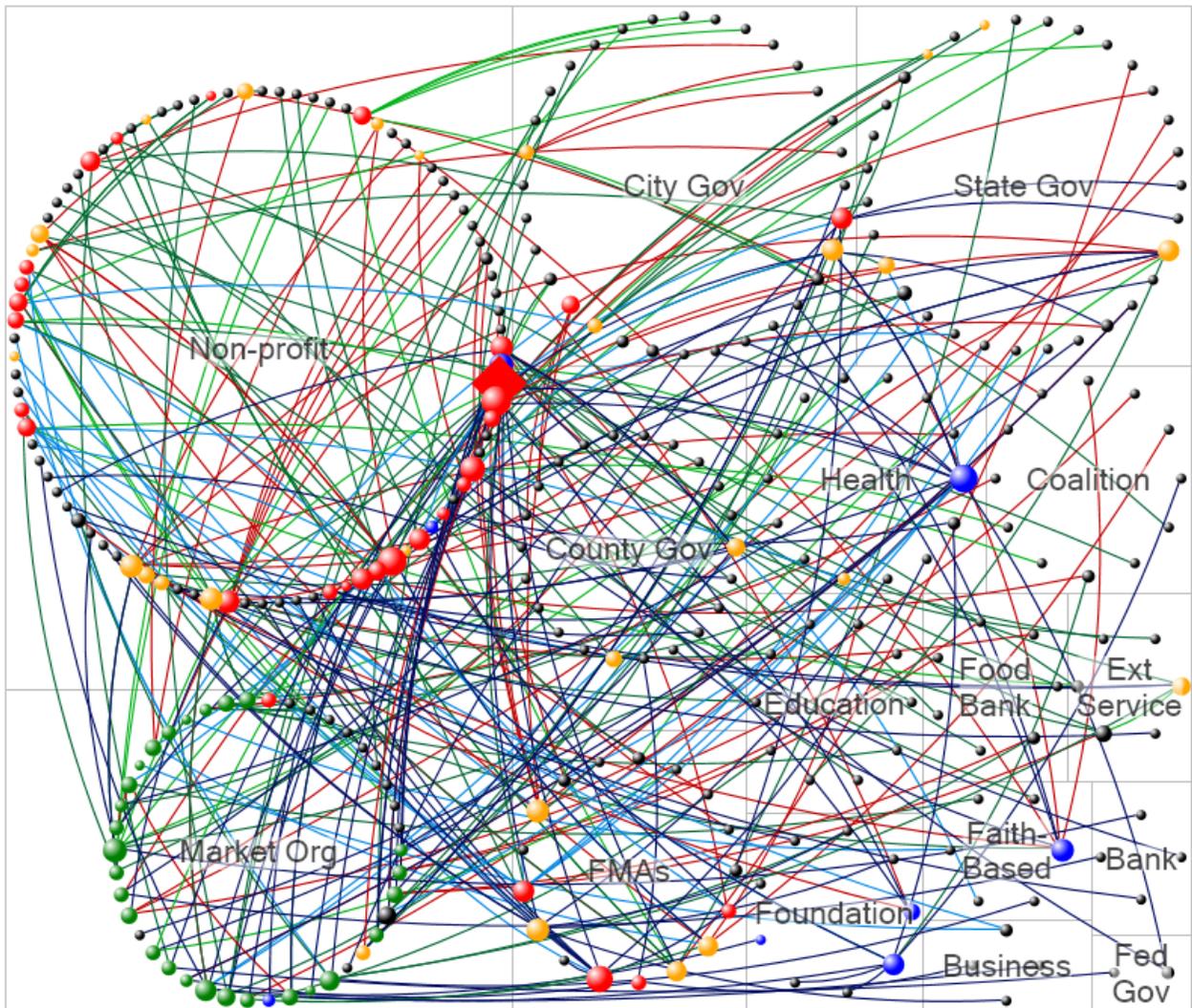
Sphere color denotes **Organizational Function:**

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified partners

Line color denotes **Support Type:**

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support

Partnerships between partner types



Key: Each sphere represents an organization involved in a collaborative partnership and each line represents a description of that collaborative partnership. Sphere size represents the number of connections involving that organization, with the most connected organization represented by a solid diamond. Each labeled circle of spheres denotes a Partner type. Connections between partner types (intergroup) are combined and sized based on number of connections.

Sphere color denotes **Organizational Function:**

- Blue spheres – Funders
- Red spheres – Coordinators
- Orange spheres – Supporters
- Green spheres – Operators
- Black spheres – unspecified partners

Line color denotes **Support Type:**

- Dark blue lines – financial support
- Light blue lines – design/general business support
- Dark green lines – logistical support
- Red lines – networking support
- Light green lines – unspecified support