



# WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

## 1. What is the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)?

The FMNP is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, generally known as WIC. The WIC Program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk.

## 2. What is the purpose of the FMNP?

The FMNP was established by Congress in July 1992, to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables through farmers' markets and roadside stands to WIC participants, and to expand awareness and use of, and sales at, farmers' markets and roadside stands.

## 3. Who is eligible for FMNP benefits?

Women, infants over 4 months old, and children who are certified to receive WIC Program benefits or who are on a waiting list for WIC certification are eligible to participate in the FMNP. State agencies may serve some or all of these categories.

## 4. How many recipients are served?

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, 1.7 million WIC participants received FMNP benefits.

## 5. Where does the FMNP operate?

For fiscal year (FY) 2015, 48 State agencies, U.S. Territories and Federally recognized Indian Tribal Organizations (ITO) received grants to operate the FMNP: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, the Chickasaw Nation (Oklahoma), the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos (New



Mexico), Florida, Georgia, Guam, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Osage Nation (Oklahoma), Pennsylvania, Pueblo of San Felipe (New Mexico), Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Not all State agencies operate the FMNP on a statewide basis.

## 6. How does the FMNP operate?

The FMNP is administered through a Federal/State partnership in which the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides cash grants to State agencies. The FMNP is administered by State agencies such as State Agriculture Departments, State Health Departments, or ITOs. As a prerequisite to receiving Federal funds for the FMNP, each applying or participating State agency must submit an annual State Plan describing how the State agency intends to implement, operate and administer all aspects of the FMNP within its jurisdiction. Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP checks or coupons in addition to their regular WIC benefits. These checks or coupons are

used to buy eligible foods from farmers at farmers' markets and/or roadside stands that have been approved by the State agency to accept FMNP coupons. The farmers or farmers' market managers then submit the redeemed FMNP checks or coupons to the bank or State agency for reimbursement.

The Federal FMNP benefit level must be at least \$10 and cannot be more than \$30 per year, per recipient. However, State agencies may supplement the Federal benefit level with State, local or private funds.

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

## **7. What foods are available through the FMNP?**

A variety of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs can be purchased with FMNP checks or coupons. State agencies may limit sales to specific foods grown within the State borders to encourage FMNP recipients to support farmers in their own State.

## **8. How does a farmer or farmers' market become authorized to accept FMNP benefits?**

Each State agency is responsible for authorizing individual farmers, farmers'

markets, roadside stands or all of the above to participate in the FMNP. Only farmers, farmers' markets and/or roadside stands authorized by the State agency may accept and redeem FMNP coupons. Individuals who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else, such as wholesale distributors cannot be authorized to participate in the FMNP.

## **9. How many farmers and farmers' markets participate in the FMNP?**

In FY 2015, 17,926 farmers, 3,390 farmers' markets and 2,894 roadside stands were authorized to accept FMNP checks or coupons. Checks and coupons redeemed through the FMNP resulted in about \$14 million in revenue to farmers during FY 2015.

## **10. What is the current funding level?**

For FY 2015, \$16.548 million was appropriated for the FMNP.

## **11. How can I obtain further information?**

The FMNP contact person for each State agency can be found at:

[www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/farm.HTM](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/farm.HTM)

For further information, please visit our website at: [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic)