



farmersmarketcoalition.org

Are you eligible to receive a FREE EBT machine from your state?

In May of 2012, the USDA announced new grant funding through the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2012 to increase SNAP access at farmers markets. **\$4 million was appropriated for the purchase or rental of a wireless device and related SNAP fees for markets.** The purpose of the funds is to increase the availability of point-of-sale (POS) equipment in farmers markets not currently participating in SNAP. These are two-year funds, and will be available **until September 30, 2013.**

The USDA funds can be used to cover the purchase price or rental fees of a wireless POS device, a one-time account setup/application fee, and monthly wireless fees (necessary to operate SNAP on the device). Electronic benefit transfer (EBT) transaction fees, cost of tokens, signage, and promotional materials are not eligible to be covered by the funds. Devices purchased or rented with federal funds may also accept commercial debit/credit cards.

The money has been allocated to states based on the number of farmers markets in the state not participating in SNAP. States are not required to use the funds, and some states have denied the assistance. As of May 10, 2013, Alaska is the only state that has used all of its funds.

Previously, the funds were only available to farmers markets. In May of 2013, USDA announced that the funds would also be made **available to individual farmers if the farmer participates in a market that does not currently offer SNAP access.**

An individual farmer is eligible if:

- You are authorized to accept SNAP on or after November 18, 2011.
- You participate in a farmers market* that does not currently offer SNAP access (either through the market itself, or through individual vendors).

A farmers market is eligible if:

- It was authorized to accept SNAP on or after November 18, 2011.
- It is not currently offering SNAP access.
- It is listed on the AMS Farmers Market Directory.

**A farmers market is defined as a multi-stall, multi-vendor, direct marketing operation. So, two or more vendors selling their own produce.*

Individual Farmer

Eligibility Clarifications

- I participate in multiple markets, but only one of the markets doesn't have SNAP access. Am I eligible? **Yes!**
- I'm a first-year farmer. Am I eligible? **Yes!**
- Once I receive my free POS device from my state, can I use it anywhere I like? Even at markets that already have SNAP access, and individual farm stands? **Yes!**
- My market doesn't offer SNAP access, but one of the participating vendors has his own EBT machine for his individual sales. Am I eligible? **No.** *Even though the whole market isn't SNAP accessible, there is opportunity to use SNAP benefits at that market.*
- My market isn't currently offering SNAP, so many individual vendors from the same market will be applying for these funds. Will only the first application received get the funds? **No.** *If individual farmers at the same market apply within a 'reasonably close time-frame' (within 1 month or so of each other), then all of the farmers who applied can receive a free device.*
- I own and operate a CSA. Am I eligible? **No.** *You must sell at at least one farmers market where SNAP is not currently available in order to be eligible. However, if you receive a free POS device because you sell at a market with no SNAP access, you can then also use the POS device for your CSA customers.*
- I resell local produce at my farmers market. Am I eligible? **No.** *To be eligible, farmers must sell their own produce.*

- My farm sells at two different markets that happen simultaneously on Saturdays. Neither market has SNAP access. Am I eligible to receive two POS devices—one for each market? **No.** *Each farmer is limited to one POS device.*

Farmers Market

Eligibility Clarifications

- My market is not a nonprofit. Is it eligible? **Yes.**
- I work for an umbrella organization that runs multiple markets. Can I apply for multiple POS devices, so each market can have one? **Yes.** *However, you will need update the information you have on file with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Specifically, you will have to complete the [online FNS 252-C form](#), which includes basic information regarding each market.*
- What happens if an individual farmer is approved for the new wireless equipment, then the manager of the farmers market decides they want to apply for the entire market. Can both the farmer and market eligible receive a free POS device? **Yes.**
- Can the USDA funds be used to pay for leasing a POS device, rather than purchasing it? **Yes.**
- Can multiple markets share a POS machine? **No.**
- Does my market need its own bank account in order to apply for SNAP authorization? **No, however,** the market must have access to a checking account in order to process payments. The bank account may belong to the sponsoring organization or individual.

Think you may be eligible? Here's what to do:

- 1** Check to make sure your state is offering the funds by [referring to this PDF](#), and/or [calling your State SNAP agency](#).
- 2** If you aren't already SNAP authorized, [visit the FNS website](#) to apply for authorization. FNS tries to get all applications processed within 45 days. If your market isn't on the [AMS Farmers Market Directory](#), send your market's info to directoryupdates@ams.usda.gov.
- 3** [Contact your State SNAP agency](#) to let them know that you have applied for SNAP authorization, and that you're hoping to receive a free POS device when the authorization comes through. This will allow the state to begin work on the issue, so by the time you're SNAP authorization comes through, your machine can be ready for you.
- 4** Contact your state's SNAP vendor. Depending on your state's choice, this may be JP Morgan Chase, FIS, MerchantSource, Veriphone, Novo Dia/World Pay, Xerox, or TSYS.

Process Questions and Troubleshooting

Q: Do all market or farm employees and partners need to supply their social security numbers to FNS in order to become SNAP authorized?

A: *Market owners, partners, and board members must share copies of their photo identification and social security cards. Market and farm employees do not need to supply this information.*

Q: My state says that there's a minimum amount of monthly or yearly SNAP sales that I must complete in order to receive a machine. Is this an FNS requirement?

A: *This is not a requirement that has been implemented by FNS. As far as FNS is concerned, there's no minimum sales requirement to become SNAP authorized or to receive a machine. If your POS device vendor is requiring minimum sales you should contact your state agency to discuss options.*

Q: If state agencies are causing barriers to utilizing these funds, can another organization in the state step into the role of disseminating funds in that state?

A: *No. If your state has declined the funds, or is not distributing them in a timely fashion, contact Rogelio. FNS will try to work with the state to troubleshoot any issues impeding the use of the funds.*

Q: Do I need a business license to use the funds?

A: *FNS does not require a business license for farmers markets, however, some states do require it. If your state requires it, you should include a copy of the license with your application to FNS.*

Q: Does FNS approve iphone and ipads for SNAP yet?

A: *There is one company (Novo Dia) that produces software and hardware that satisfies the security requirements of the USDA. If your state is participating in Novo Dia's pilot program, your state may use the \$4 million to purchase the equipment.*

Q: Does the State SNAP Agency have the final say on what type of equipment will be purchased?

A: *Yes. Some states have existing contracts with equipment manufacturers and processors. Other states are having the individual markets choose what type of machine they'd like. Keep in mind that these are federal funds, so state procurement rules are in play.*

Q: As a part of the state agency, how do we monitor or ascertain that this farmer is the only SNAP farmer in a market?

A: *It is the State's responsibility to make a reasonable effort to confirm that the market doesn't have another vendor offering SNAP access. This must include checking the AMS farmers' market database website and the FNS list of farmers markets currently accepting SNAP, and may include contacting the market manager to confirm.*

Q: I work for a state agency and receive application inquiries but I can only refer them to the FNS website or phone number. Since I am not included in the application process, I am limited in what I can do. Is there a way we can at least see the application?

A: *FNS is working to develop guidance that will give members of the public more insight on the application process. We'll let you know when FNS posts that information.*

Vendor info:

MerchantSource offers rental month to month wireless terminals, and also helps farmers walk through the FNS online application process. Contact Kim Lyons, (800) 313-5198.

Novo Dia / World Pay offers mobile solutions for farmers markets. Contact Steve Eyring, (801) 302-9924.

Useful Links:

- FNS SNAP at Farmers Markets website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm>
- USDA info sheet regarding the \$4 million, and the recent eligibility changes: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/pdfs/fm/FM-update.pdf>
- Funds remaining in each state as of 02/28/13: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/pdfs/fm/FM-funds.pdf>
- FNS SNAP authorization website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/application-process.htm>
- Contact information for State SNAP agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/docs/State-List.docx>
- List of farmers markets currently participating in SNAP: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/pdfs/fm/SNAP-FM.xlsx>
- AMS farmers market directory: <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>
- Link to the online 252-C form: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/application-process.htm>

More questions?

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