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Farmers Market Coalition Reports Successes of Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program

Program increases fruit and vegetable consumption for low-income families, boosts revenue for farmers

May 2, 2017 - The [Farmers Market Coalition](#) (FMC), a national nonprofit committed to strengthening farmers markets, has released a [report](#) highlighting successes demonstrated in year-one of the [Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive \(FINI\)](#) program. A federally funded grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, FINI is designed to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income customers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). While FINI funding is available to multiple types of produce retailers, incentive programs tested have proven to be especially successful at America's farmers markets.

According to the report, which compiled results from the 13 largest FINI grantees, in year-one of the program, FINI funds supported incentive programs at almost 1,000 farmers markets nationwide, representing 4,000 direct-marketing farmers in 27 states. SNAP-participating customers purchased nearly \$8 million at farmers markets and with local farmers.

“Through the FINI program, farmers markets provided 16-32 million additional servings of fruits and vegetables to SNAP-participating families,” said Ben Feldman, FMC’s Policy Specialist, who prepared the report. “This is not only encouraging news for improving the nutrition and health of these families, but puts more money in the pockets of innovative American farmers while boosting agricultural communities.”

FINI funding works to boost economic activity in rural, agricultural communities by increasing revenue for independent, small, and mid-sized farms who are critical economic drivers in those communities.. According to the SNAP Economic Multiplier determined by USDA’s Economic Research Service, the \$8 million in SNAP benefits redeemed at FINI-supported farmers markets translates into at least \$14.3 million in economic activity across those rural communities.

“We’ve been heartened by the feedback received from FINI-supported farmers and farmers markets,” said Feldman. “A high majority report earning more money through the program, and an uptick in sales and customers. This increase has allowed many farms to expand their business by buying more equipment, investing in improvements, and hiring more workers.”

The FINI program allows most grantees to offer a \$1 incentive for every \$1 spent in SNAP benefits by the customer at the market, doubling their purchasing power up to \$10 per day. At most FINI-supported farmers markets, SNAP customers redeem their SNAP benefits, and collect

their incentive at the market's information booth, where market staff are available to answer questions and provide more information on the program.

“FINI has been tremendously successful at farmers markets in its first year. It's rare to see a program work as comprehensively as FINI does for Americans,” said Feldman.

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The Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to strengthening farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers, and communities. For more information about the Farmers Market Coalition, visit www.farmersmarketcoalition.org