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National Farmers Market Coalition Awards Grants to Support SNAP at Farmers Markets

Farmers markets and farm stands impacted by Novo Dia Group shutdown can apply for funding by October 19

October 16, 2018 - The [Farmers Market Coalition](#) (FMC), a national organization committed to strengthening farmers markets, recently announced the [first round of recipients](#) of the [SNAP Mini-Grant Program](#), a \$500 grant program created to support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) at farmers markets by offsetting operating costs, including payment processing equipment, marketing materials, and staff time. While the first round of applications was by invitation-only, FMC is now opening up the SNAP Mini-Grant Program to applicants nationwide. The due date to [apply](#) is October 19, 2018.

The SNAP Mini-Grant Program was initially created to provide financial aid to farmers markets and farm stands impacted by the [shutdown of Novo Dia Group \(NDG\)](#), the country's largest processor of SNAP at farmers markets. Earlier this summer, the company announced its plans to go out of business July 31st, effectively terminating service to nearly 2,000 markets nationwide.

"The news came as a shock. Without an immediate solution, many farmers markets and farm stands across the county would unexpectedly lose the equipment and services necessary to accept SNAP, harming the bottomline of farmers who depend on those sales and the low-income families who rely on farmers markets for fresh, affordable food," said Ben Feldman, FMC's Policy Director. "FMC quickly responded by launching a fundraising campaign to support SNAP programs, farmers markets, and farm stands impacted by the shutdown."

While financial aid from the [State of New York](#) stalled the impending closure, and made it possible for NDG to provide service to its customers through February 2019, markets and farmers are feeling unsure about the future, and need additional support to improve their SNAP programs. As a result, FMC expanded Mini-Grant eligibility to include "any reasonable SNAP-related expense" for markets or farmers who sell directly to the public. Over 200 markets and farm stands seeking support have already applied to the SNAP Mini-Grant Program.

Each of FMC's first-round awarded grant recipients clearly outlined how the NDG shutdown would impact their market or farm, demonstrated a deep commitment toward making healthy, local food available to SNAP shoppers in their community, and illustrated how the Mini-Grant funds would support the long term sustainability of their SNAP programs.

“Clearly, the ability for markets to accept SNAP is vital to both farmers and shoppers, and a long term, permanent solution is needed to ensure the future success of SNAP at farmers markets,” said Feldman. “FMC’s SNAP Mini-Grant Program certainly isn’t a solution to the larger problem, but it is helping markets desperately in need of financial support, while demonstrating the funding challenges farmers markets face when operating a SNAP program.”

According to the USDA, over \$22.4 million in SNAP was spent at farmers markets and farm stands last year, putting more money in the pockets of local farmers, and more fresh, nutritious food on the tables of low-income families.

Farmers market and farm stands interested in the SNAP Mini-Grant Program can visit <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/farmers-market-mini-grant-application/> to apply.

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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