



Market Match for Seniors

Incentives bring seniors to the market, increase SFMNP redemptions.

The Crescent City Farmers Market, run by nonprofit organization Market Umbrella, in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) and with the Archdiocese of New Orleans, implemented a successful educational program and incentive campaign (Market Match) to improve vulnerable seniors' knowledge about fresh market produce, encourage them to broaden their food environment, and get them excited about healthful eating.



"It is really nice to be able to get fresh vegetables. I enjoy when they have okra."

Mary Summers
Kingsley House Senior Center

Challenge

Reaching Out. We asked, "How can we bring more vulnerable seniors to our market, improve their nutritional options, and increase SFMNP redemptions?"

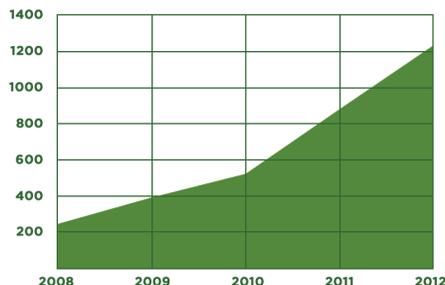
Solutions

Partnerships and Incentives. USDA's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program works to improve the nutrition of vulnerable seniors (those aged 60+, living at or below 185% of the poverty line) and to expand the reach of domestic farmers markets. We partnered with the LDAF, which administers SFMNP in our state, and the Archdiocese of New Orleans and implemented a fun, educational farmers market BINGO program and a \$20-\$24 matching-funds incentive to improve the nutrition of vulnerable seniors, to help them stretch their food dollars, and to grow our farmers market community.

Results

Increased SFMNP Redemptions and Senior Attendance at the Market. The program has shown double-digit increases from year to year and a 501% increase in total numbers of seniors receiving matching funds from 2008 to 2012. In total, nearly a thousand more seniors have come to market since the program began in 2008, resulting in a program cost increase of \$24,000 to cover the match. We conclude that incentive programs can improve nutrition for vulnerable seniors and increase redemption of SFMNP vouchers at markets.

Seniors Redeeming SFMNP Vouchers at CCFM



INTRODUCING THE MATCH

From 2008 to 2010, our SFMNP Market Match program included a visit to senior centers by Market Umbrella staff to play Farmers Market Bingo, as well as guided tours of the Crescent City Farmers Market.

The Farmers Market Bingo game, developed by Market Umbrella staff, highlighted seasonal, local produce, dairy, seafood, and meat. Players learned about preparation and health benefits of the foods available at the market. Prizes included market produce and reusable shopping bags. Farmers Market Bingo was a grant-funded program and was vital in connecting with senior and community centers.

A market visit included a short introduction to the market and the match, as well as assistance understanding and using SFMNP vouchers and market tokens. This was especially helpful in making seniors feel welcome and part of the market community.



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Program Details

Participating SFMNP seniors receive a booklet containing vouchers that are good for \$24 worth of Louisiana-grown fruits and vegetables (the amount was \$20 in 2008 and 2009). These vouchers can be redeemed with farmers who are approved and certified by LDAF; the farmers deposit the vouchers as they do checks.

To incentivize good nutritional habits and create sustainable change in individuals and their communities, the Crescent City Farmers Market and its parent nonprofit, Market Umbrella, partnered with the LDAF to implement incentives to encourage vulnerable seniors to use SFMNP vouchers at the Crescent City Farmers Market (CCFM).

In 2008, we created an incentive consisting of matching funds issued in market currency (wooden tokens) given to seniors after they spent all their SFMNP vouchers. The tokens are good for all market products, including fruit, vegetables, dairy, seafood, meat, and other locally-produced goods. The incentive encourages seniors to use all of the vouchers, increasing SFMNP redemption rates. It also encourages seniors to return to the market to spend the tokens.

The program has shown double-digit increases from year to year and a 501% increase in total numbers from 2008 to 2012. Before CCFM's Senior FMNP Market Match program began, the redemption rate for vouchers was 66.68% in Orleans Parish; it increased to 80% in 2011, a 13.32% increase in overall voucher redemption, due in part to the Senior FMNP Market Match program. In total, nearly a thousand more seniors have come to market since the program began in 2008.

Resources

The SFMNP Market Match was mostly funded through grants from private foundations, with supplemental funding from the Crescent City Farmers Market.

Market Umbrella offers consulting and training services as well as assistance in implementing incentive programs. Contact us at help@marketumbrella.org to learn more.