

Fruit and Vegetable Incentives Accessibility Pilot Project: Supporting Farm Vendors

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Introduction

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Washington State Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) have partnered to pilot a program called Produce Rewards.

Produce Rewards will make purchasing fruits and vegetables easier by integrating fruit and vegetable incentives onto the SNAP EBT card. This will allow a SNAP user to swipe their card to use both their SNAP benefits and fruit and vegetable incentives at pilot locations.

Key Background Info:

Currently, SNAP users must use market-issued tokens and paper voucher currencies for purchases at farmers markets. This system:

- Increases stigma, as SNAP transactions require separate currency and additional efforts to ensure that purchases fall within the set denominations offered by the market.
- Is burdensome for farm vendors, who must spend additional time during transactions, count market currency and request reimbursements from the farmers market, rather than receive direct payments.
- Discourages SNAP users from using SNAP benefits and incentives at farmers markets.

Project Objectives

1. Support farm vendors in learning about Produce Rewards, submitting applications, obtaining SNAP EBT processing equipment, and processing transactions.
2. Develop and provide trainings, resources, and technical support.
3. Develop a user-friendly tools to support farm vendors in the Produce Rewards application process.
4. Identify and document barriers and facilitators for farm vendors during pilot implementation.



Infographic illustrating how Produce Rewards works for SNAP users.

Methods

- Reviewed project meeting notes, project plans, and grant application.
- Met with project stakeholders and community partners to collect concerns, feedback and clear descriptions of Produce Rewards program components.
- Researched communication strategies and developed a Produce Rewards technical training in English and Spanish for farm vendors and project stakeholders.
- Worked with DOH and DSHS to develop application process flow and created an interactive infographic to guide Farm Vendors through the application process.
- Researched and developed evaluation questions and a post-application questionnaire for farm vendors.

Materials

- 2-hour Technical Training for Farm Vendors
 - Project overview, 2023 market changes, example transactions, eligibility, SNAP application (USDA), Produce Rewards application (DOH), equipment options, how to access support and contacts.

Post-application Farm Vendor Questionnaire

- Guiding research questions:
 - Do vendors feel prepared to offer Produce Rewards to their SNAP customers?
 - What communication, resources, and/or activities are most useful to vendors in preparation to offering Produce Rewards to their SNAP customers?
 - What parts of the application and training processes need adjustment?
 - What influences a vendor to offer Produce Rewards to their SNAP customers?

Interactive infographic application guide

- Steps to apply for Produce Rewards, with click-able links to resources that will be needed to complete each step.

Who is eligible to offer Produce Rewards?

Your business is:

(1) Authorized to accept SNAP?

(2) Selling fruits and vegetables?

(3) At least 5 location?

- Staple food
 - Fruit
 - Meat
 - Dairy
 - Bread

If you answer offer SNAP P

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below:

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree Don't know

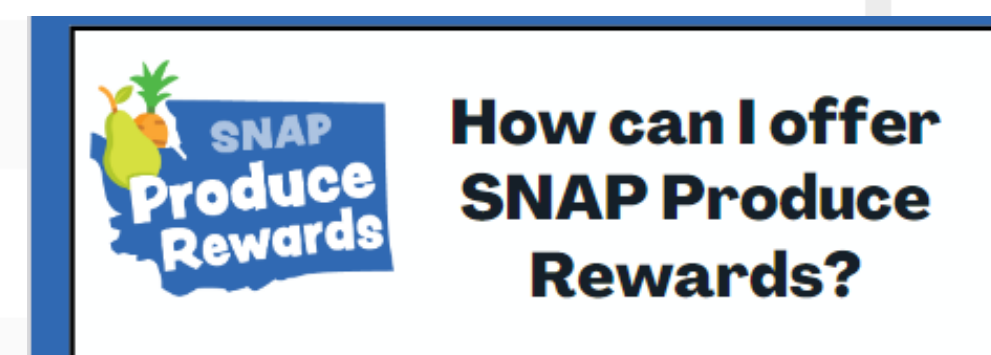
I feel prepared to offer Produce Rewards.

I feel prepared to process transactions.

I know where I can get help when I need it.

All of my questions were answered.

I know where to report any issues.



Apply for SNAP

Gather your business information, have a Responsible Official and digital copies of their ID information. Set up your USDA account as a customer, watch for your confirmation email - and apply! You'll get your FNS number via email in 4-8 weeks.

Conclusions

This project highlights the importance of and need for inter-agency collaboration, strong community relationships and partnerships, and supportive program elements for community stakeholders in public health work. All of these become even more essential in the implementation of structural-level change.



Acknowledgments

This practicum project was completed under the supervision of Alyssa Auvinen, MPH, Program Manager for the Fruit and Vegetable Incentives Program at the Washington State Department of Health. Special thanks to Sharon Hill-Laguerre and Amber Foister from the Washington State Department of Social and Human Services and to Damien Davis from the Pasco Farmers Market.

