

# CITY OF BOSTON FARMERS MARKET GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

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City of Boston  
Food Justice

**CITY of BOSTON**



## A Message From the Director

The Mayor's Office of Food Justice (OFJ) is delighted to oversee farmers markets in the City of Boston. In putting together this guide, it is our goal to make starting, running, and growing a farmers market as simple and joyful as possible.

OFJ's goal is to create a more food secure community with a vibrant, inclusive food culture. We want to reflect the diversity of the residents of Boston while championing affordability, physical accessibility, and cultural appropriateness.

We are excited to share this farmers market guide with you. Thanks to the feedback of market managers from across the city, this guide will include the following topics:

- Resources from Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR), the Farmers Market Coalition, and Mass Farmers Markets to support farmers markets
- A step by step guide to completing forms for the City of Boston
- A step by step guide to accepting SNAP, HIP, WIC, WIC FMNP and SFMNP at your market

Thank you for taking on the responsibility of managing a farmers market. It is through your work that Boston's farmers market network continues to bloom. As always, please contact our office with any questions throughout this process.

Sincerely,

*Aliza Wasserman*

Aliza Wasserman  
Director, Mayor's Office of Food Justice

Charissa Zapata-Walker,  
Farmers Market Program Manager, Mayor's Office of Food Justice



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## Farmers Market Checklist

Use this list as a guide as you prepare to open your farmers market

### *3 months before start of market*

- Review [these slides](#) first to understand the new Special Events Application process.
- [Complete Special Events Application](#) - also called PUB application. They will determine all the permits that you will need including ISD. This must be your 1st step.
- Begin seeking vendors

### *2 months before start of market*

- Hire or select Market Manager
- Submit "[Manager Renewal Form](#)" to OFJ
- Get relevant building occupancy permit (for private property) ([see page 11](#) for details) and submit to ISD-Buildings Division or confirm written approval for use of public (state or city) property
- Submit other city permits requested by the Special Events team.
- Attend OFJ Farmers Market Kick-Off meeting

### *1 - 2 months before start of market*

- Confirm vendors for your market - visit [MDAR's "Farmers Markets Seeking Vendors"](#) if you are interested in hosting more vendors at your market
- Update OFJ with any changes to your market location, date, or manager
- If new market: [apply for FNS number](#) in order to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). DTA is not currently onboarding new HIP vendors
- Contact [Boston Transportation Department](#) about street parking for vendors
- [Apply to host Summer Meal Site](#)
- Submit all vendor forms to ISD-Health either in person or via mail. Make sure that all vendor forms include a completed vendor form, required business and health permits, and checks if the vendor is not exempt. [See page 11](#) of this guide for more information on what forms are required, and which vendors are exempt from paying fees.
- Collect your permits and then send them with your initial Special Events Application (signed and dated) to Awilda Reyes in the Licensing Division at [MOCAL@boston.gov](mailto:MOCAL@boston.gov) who will issue final approval of the event. (If your event does not have entertainment, you will still need to send your Special Events (PUB) application and other permits acquired to [MOCAL@boston.gov](mailto:MOCAL@boston.gov) for final review and approval).
- Advertise to your community that your market will be opening



### *2 weeks before start of market*

- Check to make sure your EBT processing equipment is working and you have manual vouchers in case of technical difficulties on market days
- Begin advertising the opening day of your market
- Begin planning market kick-off event (does not need to be the first day of your market)
- Share outreach materials with OFJ so the office can promote your market
- Advertise to your community that your market will be opening
- Confirm with Awilda Reyes from Licensing ([mocal@boston.gov](mailto:mocal@boston.gov)) that she has received all of your permits and the Special Events (PUB) application and ISD to confirm that they have received all of your vendor permits

### *Day of market*

- Bring EBT processing equipment, manual vouchers, multilingual resources about SNAP, HIP, WIC, and SFMNP
- Bring tents, table, chairs, and signage for market manager table

## **Boston Farmers Market General Information**

In the City of Boston, farmers markets are independently managed by non-profits, neighborhood groups, developers, and so forth. The City of Boston oversees the permitting process for these independent markets and serves as a clearinghouse of information about SNAP benefits, grant opportunities, and compliance across city offices.

*Definitions: The MA Department of Agricultural Resources defines farmers markets as “public markets for the primary purpose of connecting and mutually benefiting Massachusetts farmers, communities, and shoppers while promoting and selling products grown and raised by participating farmers.”*

[Mass Farmers Markets](#) is a statewide organization that supports food security and community vitality through the promotion of farmers markets. Becoming a member of this organization you will gain access to resources, vendor lists, and become part of a larger network of farmers markets across the state.

The national [Farmers Market Coalition](#) is dedicated to working with farmers market operators to strengthen farmers markets across the United States so that they can serve as community assets while providing real income opportunities for farmers. The Farmers Market Coalition serves as an information center for farmers market vendors and operators, providing resources such as the [Anti-Racist Farmers Market Toolkit](#) that helps cultivate a culture of inclusivity at farmers markets nationwide.



Below are offices and organizations that have a role in starting your farmers market. More information on deadlines, forms, and other communications with these offices will be discussed later in this guide.

| Office Name   | Responsibilities  | Contact Information  | Reason to Contact  |
|---|---|--|--|
| City of Boston Office of Food Justice                       | Oversees and promotes farmers markets in Boston; collects Farmers Market Renewal Forms and works with other city departments to ensure that farmers markets are in compliance | <a href="mailto:food@boston.gov">food@boston.gov</a><br><br>(617) 635-3717<br><br>1 City Hall Square<br>Room 806<br>Boston MA 02201<br><br><a href="http://boston.gov/departments/food-justice">boston.gov/departments/food-justice</a>  | Day to day operations of farmers market; questions about navigating permitting process; assistance applying to accept SNAP, HIP, WIC, or SFMNP; letter of support from Neighborhood Services |
| Special Events, City of Boston Consumer Affairs & Licensing | Oversees all outdoor events in the City of Boston to streamline permitting and other processes  | <p>a. To start special events process</p> <p>b. To complete special events process</p> <p>a. Today Baker, Consumer Affairs &amp; Licensing<br/><a href="mailto:today.baker@boston.gov">today.baker@boston.gov</a></p> <p>a. Rebecca Phu, Consumer Affairs &amp; Licensing<br/><a href="mailto:rebecca.phu@boston.gov">rebecca.phu@boston.gov</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">How to Guide on Outdoor Events</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Application portal</a></li> </ul> <p>b. Awilda Reyes, Consumer Affairs &amp; Licensing (Entertainment Dept)<br/><a href="mailto:mocal@boston.gov">mocal@boston.gov</a></p> | Coordination with all other city departments requiring permits   |
| City of Boston Inspectional Services Department (ISD)       | Oversees farmers market and vendor permitting process; performs site visits at farmers markets to issue permits to  | <p>1. ISD - Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theresa "Tracy" Seneschal<br/><a href="mailto:tracy.seneschal@boston.gov">tracy.seneschal@boston.gov</a></li> <li>• (877) 382-2363</li> </ul>  | Questions regarding required forms needed to vend; clarification about fees needed to vend in the City of Boston   |



|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|   | farmers markets vendors; issues permits for the location of farmers markets  | <a href="http://boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/health-division">boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/health-division</a><br><br>2. ISD- Buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor/ outdoor space permits via Building Division:</li> <li>• (617) 635-5300</li> </ul><br><a href="http://boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/what-building-permit-do-i-need">boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/what-building-permit-do-i-need</a> |   |
| City of Boston Fire Department                                    | Responsible for permitting to prevent public from fire hazards   | For annual fire permits: (617) 343-3772<br><br>For temporary permits: (617) 343-3628  | Permitting for on-site cooking demonstrations or vendors that prepare food at farmers markets   |
| Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) (State)               | Oversees the distribution of SNAP/EBT throughout the state; responsible for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)   | <a href="http://mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-transitional-assistance">mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-transitional-assistance</a><br><br>DTA.HIP@state.ma.us   | SNAP shoppers looking to find out their SNAP balance; questions regarding a particular shopper's case; questions regarding SNAP or HIP redemption at farmers market   |
| Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) (State) | Oversees all Farmers Markets in MA; establishes regulations about what items can and cannot be sold at state Farmers Markets<br><br>Farmer Certification for WIC/SFMP; provides training and certification for farmers to accept state coupons | David Webber, Farmers Market Program Coordinator<br><a href="mailto:David.Webber@state.ma.us">David.Webber@state.ma.us</a><br>617-626-1754<br><a href="http://www.mass.gov/farmers-market-program">www.mass.gov/farmers-market-program</a><br><br>Jennifer Donnelly<br><a href="mailto:jennifer.donnelly@mass.gov">jennifer.donnelly@mass.gov</a>   | Questions regarding business or health code regulations for vendors<br><br>Supports markets to find MA producers to be vendors at markets<br><br>Questions about certification and training for WIC/SFMNP vendors |
| Project Bread FoodSource Hotline (Statewide)                      | Comprehensive statewide information and referral service in Massachusetts for  | 1-800-645-8333<br><br>Hotline Hours: Monday - Friday  | On-call troubleshooting for SNAP and HIP shoppers when  |



|            |  |   |  |
|------------|--|---|--|
| nonprofit) | people facing hunger; Hotline counselors refer callers to food resources in their community as well as provides them with information about school meals, summer meal sites for kids, elder meals programs, and SNAP; available in 160 languages | 8 A.M. - 7 P.M.<br><br>Saturday<br>10 A.M. - 2 P.M.<br><br><a href="http://projectbread.org/foodsource-hotline">projectbread.org/foodsource-hotline</a> | on-site at a farmers market; multilingual support for shoppers that need additional explanation of SNAP or HIP |
|------------|--|---|--|

## Farmers Markets: The Basics

If this is your first season organizing a farmers market, or if you're starting a brand new market, we recommend thoroughly reviewing MDAR's [How to Run a Farmers Market Guide](#). This guide will provide you an overview of starting a farmers market, steps to complete, and what factors you will need to consider. MDAR also connects markets with potential vendors and provides other resources to new and existing markets.

### 1. Select a strong location

Selecting a location can be tricky. Consider:

- How close is your market to existing community gathering spaces?
- Is there parking near your market? Is your market accessible by MBTA Public Transit?
- Is there shade and seating near your market?
- Is your market location conducive to hosting recreational or educational activities?
- Is your market location handicap accessible?

Some examples of locations for farmers markets:

- Outside MBTA stations
- Parking lot of a shopping center
- Parking lot of a health center
- Public square
- Privately owned development
- City park





All locations for farmers markets require different permissions and permitting, which will be discussed on page 11.

## 2. Solicit Vendors

Finding vendors for your market is a challenging but necessary step to a successful market. A good mix of products attracts community members to your market week after week.

Consider inviting the following vendors to your market:

- Farm fresh fruits and vegetables
- Culturally-appropriate produce growers
- Bread and baked goods
- Meat, fish, and eggs
- Prepared food to eat at the market (sandwiches, popsicles, fresh juices)
- Prepared food to cook at home
- Seedlings and plants to grow at home
- Specialty products (soap, coffee, sauces, etc)

Produce vendors are a particularly important anchor to a farmers market. As we hit peak farmers market season (July - August), the shopper demands on a single produce vendor may be more than they can handle. Having multiple vendors means that there is plenty of product selection for shoppers and less stress on the vendors themselves.

## 3. Hire a market manager

It is not required that you have a Market Manager. However, it is highly recommended that you do, as having a person in charge of soliciting vendors, submitting forms, and overseeing the day to day operations of your market makes shopping at the market smoother for everyone. Some markets hire managers as volunteers, while others secure funding to pay managers for their services.

Considerations when hiring a Market Manager:

- How many hours per week do you expect them to work? Only during the hours of the market or beyond that for office work?
- Does the market manager need a car to transport market materials?
- What kind of training are you able to provide your manager?
- Does your market have any particular language needs?

On the following page is an example job description for a farmers market manager:



### **EXAMPLE Market Manager Job Description**

The [insert organization name] is looking for an outgoing individual who is interested in agriculture, food, and community to manage the [insert market name] this season. The Market Manager is the go-to person for community partners, farmers, producers, and shoppers during the market season. The Market Manager's general responsibilities include: setting up and breaking down the market, helping promote the SBFM, running the EBT/SNAP program, and keeping accurate weekly records of market activities.

#### **Specific Responsibilities:**

- Provide assistance in market application and permit process.
- Recruit and manage vendors.
- Help promote the market and [insert organization here] mission.
- Assist with social media and general outreach to promote the market.
- Operate and promote the EBT/SNAP program and HIP
- Arrive at market before opening to coordinate market set-up and stay at market until all vendors have left (usually no more than 1 hour after market closing).
- Coordinate vendor parking and set-up, ensuring vendors are in the correct space.
- Staff the manager tent providing information to customers.
- Enforce market rules.
- Occasionally assist vendors by providing limited set up help.

#### **Desired Qualifications:**

- Individuals must be able to communicate effectively with a variety of people including but not limited to customers, farmers, volunteers, potential sponsoring agencies, health inspectors, police and city transportation officials as well as market staff.
- Willing and able to work outside in all weather conditions.
- Able to safely lift and carry at least 30 pounds.
- Ability to work independently, as well as with the team of volunteers, interns and staff members.
- Possess excellent customer service skills.
- Prior experience with Farmers Market or EBT/SNAP transactions preferred.
- Must be proficient in Microsoft Office.

[insert market name] is held every [insert market day and hours], including holidays. Market Managers must be able to commit to a full market season which runs from [insert market start and end days]. Hours are approximately 8 hours per market day and 2 hours of administrative/budget work per week. The rate of pay is \$XX-\$XX per hour based on experience. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to [insert contact information]. **Deadline for applications is [insert deadline].**



## City of Boston Farmers Market Forms

The permitting process for farmers markets extends beyond the Office of Food Justice (OFJ). We are delighted to partner with the Special Events Permitting Process and the Health and Building Divisions at Inspectional Services (ISD) to ensure the health and safety of all Bostonians that shop and vend at our farmers markets. Certain steps in the permitting process need to be completed yearly; others are only for new markets or vendors. OFJ, Special Events, and ISD are here to assist you through each step of this process.

In order to ensure a smooth opening of your market, the following are the deadlines for the submission of forms necessary for your market to be in compliance with City of Boston regulations.

**For Summer/ Fall markets:** OFJ will begin soliciting information about farmers markets beginning in February/March

**For Winter markets:** OFJ will begin soliciting information about farmers markets beginning in late September.

Up-to-date forms and regulations can now be found on the [Office of Food Justice website](#)

### Step 1: Special Events Application

Review [these slides](#) first to understand the new Special Events Application process. [Complete Special Events Application](#) - also called PUB application. They will determine all the permits that you will need including ISD. This must be your 1st step.

### Step 2: Acquiring all Required Permits

The Special Events team will guide you and advise you on the required permits that you will need that include but are not limited to ISD permits mentioned below. You must contact each department individually and apply for the required documents listed by the Special Events team.

*Building Permit Forms:* In partnership with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD), the City of Boston requires permitting for use of the space where you plan on locating your market. This process may take up to 12 weeks according to ISD, so we recommend you begin filing these forms at least 3 months before the start of your market, especially if this is a new location for your market or a new market.



While your forms are being processed, OFJ will assist you in obtaining a letter from the [Office of Neighborhood Services](#). This letter serves as an agreement between ISD, OFJ, and ONS that your market has filed the necessary forms with ISD. Please contact OFJ for assistance with this process.

The properties where markets are located fall into two categories: Public and Private. The forms that are needed for each respective market type are listed below.

#### Public Property

- ❑ Includes: Indoor and outdoor City of Boston or state property (examples: municipal parking lot, MBTA stations, state DCR property, city Parks and Recreation property)
- ❑ For permission to use this space, please acquire written permission from the agency that is the owner of property for use of property and submit to ISD

#### Private Property

- ❑ Includes: property not owned by the City of Boston or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

For permission to operate your market on privately owned space, please follow the following process:

- 1) File a temporary use of premise permit with ISD. The form and instructions can be found [here](#).
- 2) Submit a schematic plan/ mock-up of your farmers market to ISD. This schematic needs to be inspected and approved by an architect.
- 3) Submit a certified copy of the site and parcel plan to ISD.

For questions or more detailed information on this process, please contact:

Rosemarie Pessia  
[isdpzreview@boston.gov](mailto:isdpzreview@boston.gov)

ISD  
1010 Massachusetts Ave  
5th floor, Counters 1 or 2

### **Step 3: Manager Renewal Form**

If you are looking to start a **new farmers market** — or renew an **existing market** — please complete [this form](#).



The manager renewal form is due to OFJ **two months** before the start of your market. You can email this form to [food@boston.gov](mailto:food@boston.gov) or mail it to our office:

Office of Food Justice  
1 CITY HALL SQUARE  
ROOM 804  
BOSTON, MA 02201

This form is used by OFJ to keep a running list of markets in the City of Boston. We also share this list with ISD to make sure that they are aware of the markets that are operating in Boston and are prepared to accept your vendor and buildings forms once you submit them. OFJ will let you know that we have received your manager application via email.

**Notes on completing this form:**

- You will need to fill out this form every year so OFJ can update our records.
- If you have not hired a market manager when you submit this form, list a contact person for your organization instead. You can update us on the name and contact information for your market manager closer to the start of your market.
- We use the market days, hours of operation, and open/ close days listed on this form for our website and official publications. Please make sure they are accurate when you fill out this form!
  - If your market makes changes to days/hours of operation or to the vendors participating in your market before or during the season, please notify OFJ as soon as possible. We also ask that you update your market's information on the [DTA HIP Finder](#) as soon as the change is confirmed, which will ensure that potential customers paying with SNAP & HIP are able to find your market and vendors.
- If you are not sure of your final vendor list when filling out this application, list as many vendors as you know. You can update this listing closer to the start of your market when submitting vendor forms to ISD. Please notify OFJ of your final vendor list prior to the first date of your market.

#### **Step 4: Vendor Profile and Renewal Form**

As a market manager, it is your responsibility to secure vendors for your market. Once you have decided who will sell at your market, it is also your responsibility to collect and submit vendor profile and renewal forms to Inspectional Services (ISD).

If a vendor plans to **sell** food, crafts, or any other goods, **they need to submit** a vendor profile to ISD.

If vendors are selling or giving away anything, including non-food items, ISD requires that they submit a vendor profile. If the vendor is not selling any food items or exempt



products, no fee is required— and ISD requests that a vendor profile is submitted or the information is emailed to [ISDhealth@boston.gov](mailto:ISDhealth@boston.gov) by the market manager.

Please have each of your vendors complete the vendor profile and market renewal form. You can find copies of these forms on our website at [www.boston.gov/farmersmarkets](http://www.boston.gov/farmersmarkets)

The vendor renewal forms are due **2 weeks** before the start of your market. Please collect all of your vendor forms and checks and submit them **in person or via mail** to ISD

Boston ISD  
Attn: Theresa “Tracy” Seneschal  
c/o Health Division - 4th Floor  
1010 Massachusetts Avenue  
Boston, MA 02118

**\*\*Please note, ISD is not located at City Hall. Also, please do not send paper copies of vendor forms to OFJ at City Hall.** It will take several days for us to mail your application to ISD which will delay the approval of your vendors.

It is strongly encouraged that you submit these forms in person. Vendor forms include personal ID, tax information, and checks that are best secured if submitted in person directly to ISD.

The following page is a guide for what documentation is needed for vendors in addition to the OFJ Vendor Profile and Renewal Form:

| Type of Product   | Forms Needed   | Pay Fee?   |
|---|--|--|
| Local, farm fresh produce, honey, eggs and/ or maple syrup ONLY are Exempt product(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendor Profile Form</li> <li>- Copy of Business Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of ServSafe Certificate (if they plan on having samples)</li> <li>- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight</li> </ul> | No - produce vendors are exempt. Selling any non-exempt (processed) items means you will be required to pay the fee. |
| Local, farm fresh chicken and meat products that require refrigeration                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendor Profile Form</li> <li>- Copy of Business Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of ServSafe</li> </ul>  | Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to “City of Boston”  |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>Certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight</li> <li>- Copy of USDA permits</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p>ONLY locally caught, day-boat fish and/ or crustaceans</p>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendor Profile Form</li> <li>- Copy of Business Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of ServSafe Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of Allergen Certificate</li> <li>- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight</li> <li>- Copy of USDA permits</li> </ul>  | <p>Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"</p> |
| <p>Farm fresh processed foods (cheese, jams, pies, baked goods, etc)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendor Profile Form</li> <li>- Copy of Business Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of ServSafe Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of Allergen Certificate</li> <li>- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight</li> <li>- Copy of USDA permits</li> </ul>  | <p>Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"</p> |
| <p>Locally sourced and produced processed and/ or packaged foods</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendor Profile Form</li> <li>- List of any local farms whose product you will be vending</li> <li>- Copy of Business Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of ServSafe Certificate</li> <li>- Copy of Allergen Certificate</li> <li>- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight</li> <li>- Copy of USDA permits</li> </ul> | <p>Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"</p> |
| <p>Non-food related items or</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vendor Profile Form</li> </ul>  | <p>No - non-food vendors are</p>   |



| services   | - Copy of Business Certificate  | exempt |
|--|---|--------|
| Wine produced by a holder of a Massachusetts Farmer Winery License | - <a href="#">MDAR application</a> for certification of an agricultural event for the sale of wine<br>-MDAR certification letter<br>- <a href="#">Licensing Board application</a> | \$50   |

For more information on MDAR regulations for farmers market vendors, please [refer to this document](#).

A copy of the MDAR regulations can also be found in the appendix of this guide.

Notes on completing these forms:

- Vendors can submit one application for all of their markets. Please check the application to make sure that the vendor has submitted the proper fee given the number of markets where they plan to sell. Insufficient fees paid to ISD is one of the main reasons why vendors do not end up receiving a permit from ISD.
- If a vendor begins the season as an exempt vendor but decides to bring non-exempt goods throughout the season, they need to re-submit their vendor form and pay a fee to ISD.
- A representative from ISD will visit your market at some point during your season to issue permits. If you do not receive a visit from ISD, please let our office know.
- For your records, we recommend you keep a copy of your vendor applications along with a copy of the check for non-exempt vendors.

## **Step 5:** Weights and measures regulations

### Working with the Scales

You must have scales inspected and sealed before you use them to sell products. You also need to have a current inspection from your home location. We accept current inspections from other cities and towns.

Your scales must be “legal for trade” and fit for the product you're weighing. Please position your scales so customers can clearly see the product weight. The scale must read zero when there's nothing on it.

### Product Rules





Sell fruits and vegetables by standard weight – 16 ounces equals 1 pound – or by a standard container or count. The container must fit the product if you're selling items by container or count.

Sell meat, fish, and poultry by weight. Label prepackaged products with net weight. Have a scale in case a customer asks you to weigh a product with a random weight.

### Pricing Rules

Any product for sale needs an easy to read price tag. Label randomly weighted prepackaged products with the net weight, price per pound, and total price.

## **Step 6: Complete and Submit all Permits to the Licensing Division**

Collect your permits and then send them with your initial Special Events Application (signed and dated) to Awilda Reyes in the Licensing Division at [MOCAL@boston.gov](mailto:MOCAL@boston.gov) who will issue final approval of the event. (If your event does not have entertainment, you will still need to send your Special Events (PUB) application and other permits acquired to [MOCAL@boston.gov](mailto:MOCAL@boston.gov) for final review and approval).

If your organization is a non-profit organization, some city permit fees will be waived if you provide proof of 501c3 status.

## **[Applying for SNAP and Other Food Aid Benefits](#)**

### **Step 1: [Applying for an FNS number](#)**

In order to be a farmers market in the City of Boston, your market must accept SNAP (Food Stamps). We recommend that all farmers markets apply to have their own FNS number in order to be able to accept SNAP benefits.

This is beneficial to your vendors for several reasons:

- In case of connectivity issues, broken devices, or forgotten equipment, you are able to run SNAP transactions for vendors at your market
- If a vendor is waiting for grant funding for free EBT equipment, you can run SNAP transactions for these vendors.
- If there is a new vendor at your market that is unable to process HIP, you can run HIP transactions for them

In order to accept SNAP benefits at your market, you must first get an FNS number from the USDA. More details on this process can be found [here](#).

Notes on the FNS application process:

- Once you begin your application, you have 30 days to complete it.
- Be sure to check the status of your FNS application. You can contact Debbie Crosby at USDA FNS with specific questions about the status of your application



## Step 2: Applying to accept HIP

**About the program:** In the state of Massachusetts, we are fortunate to be able to offer SNAP shoppers the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP). SNAP recipients will receive an instant, dollar-for-dollar match credited to their EBT card on eligible purchases. HIP can only be used at [participating HIP locations](#) and using SNAP/EBT terminals that have been programmed to process the new benefit.

**NOTE:** The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) is not signing up new farmers, vendors, or farmers markets at this time. For additional information or to be notified of future opportunities to apply, contact [DTA.HIP@mass.gov](mailto:DTA.HIP@mass.gov).

It is easy to earn the incentive and funds are immediately added to SNAP recipients' EBT cards. The earned incentives can be used right away, or saved for a future purchase at any SNAP retailer on any SNAP eligible foods.

The HIP incentive benefit has a monthly cap based on household size.

| Household Size | HIP Monthly Cap |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1-2 persons    | \$40            |
| 3-5 persons    | \$60            |
| 6+ persons     | \$80            |

SNAP households will need to spend SNAP dollars on fruits and vegetables at one of the four main points of sale to earn the HIP incentive. HIP benefits are earned when SNAP recipients swipe their SNAP/EBT card for fruit and vegetable purchases, or when they enroll with a CSA farm to participate in the SNAP CSA farm share Pilot and have their monthly payment automatically withdrawn.

Below is a list of HIP Eligible Foods:

| YES HIP                                    | NO HIP                                  |
|--|---|
| Fresh fruits and vegetables – cut or whole | Fruit and vegetable juices or smoothies |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Frozen fruits and vegetables  |   |
| Seeds and plants that you plan on growing and eating at home              | Ornamental fruits and vegetables not intended to be eaten at home |
| White potatoes  | Honey   |
| Dried beans   | Maple syrup   |
| Fresh herbs   | Dried herbs and spices  |
| Nuts with no added salt, sugar, or oil                                    | Baked goods   |
| Mushrooms   |   |
| Garlic  |   |
| Tomatoes – diced, pureed, paste, sauced with no added salt, sugar, or oil | Creamed or sauced vegetables                                      |
| Pickled vegetables or fruit   | Olives  |
| Apple sauce with no added sugar or other additive                         |   |

For a complete list of HIP eligible foods, please refer to [this list](#). Infographics on HIP are included in this appendix of this guide.

### Language Access and HIP

What are the most prominent languages spoken in your community, besides English? It is essential to create signage, informational flyers, and other resources in multiple languages to enhance the HIP earning experience of our multilingual neighbors. These may include signs that say “Earn HIP here!” or “You must have a SNAP balance to earn HIP”.

According to DTA, the following are the top 10 most spoken languages by HIP users:

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <a href="#">English</a>             | 7. <a href="#">Arabic</a>             |
| 2. <a href="#">Spanish</a>             | 8. <a href="#">Chinese - Mandarin</a> |
| 3. <a href="#">Chinese - Cantonese</a> | 9. <a href="#">Portuguese</a>         |
| 4. <a href="#">Russian</a>             | 10. <a href="#">Haitian Creole</a>    |
| 5. <a href="#">Vietnamese</a>          |                                       |



Consider hiring interpreters at your market. These individuals are key in enhancing the understanding of HIP and overall market experience amongst multilingual shoppers. There may be community resources available in your area that offer in-person interpretation and translation services.

The DTA and OFJ offer a variety of resources in multiple languages that describe HIP to shoppers. These paper resources can be distributed to community partners, used in the cases where a shopper speaks a language that is not spoken by any market staff members, or as a tool for the shopper to further their understanding of HIP.

### **Step 3: Applying to accept WIC and SFMNP**

There are two additional USDA food aid programs that your market or specific vendors at your market may choose to accept: **WIC** and **SFMNP**

\*For comprehensive information and detailed instructions on **2024 MASSACHUSETTS FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR FARMERS AND FARMERS' MARKETS** please click [here](#)

The **WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)** is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC. The WIC Program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk. For more information on this program, please visit [this website](#).

The **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)** provides low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs. More information on this program can be found [here](#).

**In MA, all farmers markets, farm stands, and farmers must be certified by MDAR to participate in the WIC and SFMNP Programs.** General information on the program can be found in the following [MDAR publication](#).

- To apply to accept WIC and SFMNP vouchers as a **farmers market**, please complete the application [here](#).
- Please direct **farmers and vendors** that would like to accept WIC and SFMNP vouchers to [this application](#).

### **General information about WIC and SFMNP**



There are two types of coupons under this certification process:

**Green - WIC program** - \$2.50 face value

Good ONLY for fresh, locally grown, and unprocessed fruits, vegetables, and fresh, cut herbs. Produce may be cleaned, trimmed and packaged, but not otherwise processed, heated, or cooked.

**Orange - Senior program** - \$2.50 face value

Good for the same items as RED (WIC) coupons, as well as honey.

Coupons cannot be redeemed for plants, flowers, or other non-food items or items not produced on local farms. In addition, coupons cannot be redeemed for any other edible farm product, such as eggs, maple products, meat products, cheese, and farm produced baked goods.

### **Farmers Markets Vendors**

Look at [MDAR's Vendor Directory for 2024](#) for more information.