

CITY OF BOSTON FARMERS MARKET GUIDE FOR MANAGERS



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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Farmers Market Checklist	4
Boston Farmers Market General Information	5
Farmers Markets: The Basics	8
City of Boston Farmers Market Forms	11
Language Access and HIP	18
Farmers Markets Vendors	21



Farmers Market Checklist

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

3 months before start of market

- ☐ Determine if your farmers market needs to follow the Special Events process which depends on size and type of features at your market.
 - ☐ Review Overview Guidance [here](#)
 - ☐ If you need to follow the Special Events Process, review [these overview slides](#) and complete a [Special Events Application](#) - also called PUB application. The City's Licensing Department will then determine all the permits that you will need including ISD. This must be your 1st step.
- ☐ Begin seeking vendors
 - ☐ If you are seeking additional vendors, visit [MDAR's "Farmers Markets Seeking Vendors"](#) or Mass Farmers Markets' [list of vendors and markets looking to be matched](#), if you are interested in hosting more vendors at your market

2 months before start of market

- ☐ Hire or select Market Manager
- ☐ Submit "[Manager Renewal Form](#)" to OFJ
- ☐ Confirm site of market:
 - ☐ If on private property: Get relevant building occupancy permit (for private property) ([see page 11](#) for details) and submit to ISD-Buildings Division
 - ☐ If on public property: confirm written approval for use of public (state or city) property
- ☐ (If relevant) 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
- ☐ 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](#) to offer prepared meals free of charge to youth 18 and under at your market.
- ☐ Submit all vendor forms to ISD-Health either in person or via mail (Note: ISD-Health is located at 1010 Massachusetts Ave, not Boston City Hall). 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. **Note: These vendor forms and any required payments should be submitted to ISD, NOT OFJ.**

- ❑ If you need to submit additional permits to the Licensing Department for the Special Events (PUB) process (see guidance [here](#) for more info), 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 who will issue final approval of the event. 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 sandra.aronson@boston.gov and emiliana.germanroman@boston.gov so OFJ so the office can promote your market
- ❑ Advertise to your community that your market will be opening
- ❑ If you need to submit additional permits to the Licensing Department for the Special Events (PUB) process (see guidance [here](#) for more info), confirm with Awilda Reyes from Licensing (mocal@boston.gov) that she has received all of your permits and the Special Events (PUB) application
- ❑ Confirm with ISD Health that they have received all of your vendor permits (you can do this by emailing isdhealth@boston.gov)

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. If you become 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	food@boston.gov (617) 635-3717 1 City Hall Square Room 806 Boston MA 02201 boston.gov/departments/food-justice	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 Office of 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. To start special events processb. To complete special events process <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Today Baker, Consumer Affairs & Licensing today.baker@boston.gova. Rebecca Phu, Consumer Affairs & Licensing rebecca.phu@boston.gov	Coordination with all other city departments requiring permits



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to Guide on Outdoor Events• Application portal <p>b. Awilda Reyes, Consumer Affairs & Licensing (Entertainment Dept) mocal@boston.gov</p>	
City of Boston Inspectional Services Department (ISD)	Health Division- Oversees farmers market vendor permitting process; performs site visits at farmers markets to issue permits to farmers markets vendors; issues permits for the location of farmers markets	<p>1. ISD - Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theresa “Tracy” Seneschal tracy.seneschal@boston.gov• (877) 382-2363 <p>boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/health-division</p> <p>2. ISD- Buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indoor/ outdoor space permits via Building Division:• (617) 635-5300 <p>boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/what-building-permit-do-i-need</p>	Questions regarding required forms needed to vend; clarification about fees needed to vend in the City of Boston
City of Boston Fire Department	Responsible for permitting to prevent public from fire hazards	<p>For annual fire permits: (617) 343-3772</p> <p>For temporary permits: (617) 343-3628</p>	Permitting for on-site cooking demonstrations or vendors that prepare food at farmers markets, as well as markets with more than 4 tents
Commonwealth of MA: Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)	Oversees the distribution of SNAP/EBT throughout the state; responsible for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) except farmer certification	<p>mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-transitional-assistance</p> <p>DTA Assistance Line: (877) 382-2363</p> <p>DTA.HIP@state.ma.us</p>	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	Oversees all Farmers	1.David Webber, Farmers	Questions regarding



Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) (State)	<p>Markets in MA; establishes regulations about what items can and cannot be sold at state Farmers Markets</p> <p>Farmer Certification for WIC/SFMP; provides training and certification for farmers to accept FMNP coupons</p>	<p>Market Program Coordinator David.Webber@state.ma.us 617-626-1754 www.mass.gov/farmers-market-program</p> <p>2. Jennifer Donnelly jennifer.donnelly@mass.gov</p>	<p>business or health code regulations for vendors</p> <p>1. Supports markets to find MA producers to be vendors at markets</p> <p>2. Questions about certification and training for WIC/SFMNP vendors</p>
Project Bread FoodSource Hotline (Statewide nonprofit)	<p>Comprehensive statewide information and referral service in Massachusetts for 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</p>	<p>1-800-645-8333</p> <p>Hotline Hours: Monday - Friday 8 A.M. - 7 P.M.</p> <p>Saturday 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.</p> <p>projectbread.org/foodsource-hotline</p>	<p>On-call troubleshooting for SNAP and HIP shoppers when on-site at a farmers market; multilingual support for shoppers that need additional explanation of SNAP or HIP</p>

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 starting 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?

See below for 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 is situated outside of the Office of Food Justice (OFJ). We 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 **Updated for 2025**

Review the one page overview guidance [here](#) to determine if your farmers market will need to follow the Special Events (PUB) process with the City of Boston Office of Consumer Affairs & Licensing, which depends on size and type of features at your market. If your market will need to complete the Special Events Application, review [these slides](#) first to understand the Special Events Application process.



[Complete Special Events Application](#) - also called PUB application.

They will determine all the permits that you will need including ISD. If your market falls into the category listed in [this overview document](#) that requires the Special Events (PUB) application, this application must be your 1st step.

Step 2: Acquiring all Required Permits

If your market needs an application for a Special Event (see Step 1), 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 Buildings (and to the Special Events contact if you are required to submit a Special Events Application- see Step 1 on page 11)

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

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

Rosemarie Pessia
isdprreview@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 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 requests 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 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

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">- Vendor Profile Form- Copy of Business Certificate- Copy of ServSafe Certificate (if they plan on having samples)- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight	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">- Vendor Profile Form- Copy of Business Certificate- Copy of ServSafe Certificate- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight- Copy of USDA permits	Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"
ONLY locally caught, day-boat fish and/ or crustaceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vendor Profile Form- Copy of Business Certificate- Copy of ServSafe Certificate- Copy of Allergen Certificate- Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight- Copy of USDA permits	Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"
Farm fresh processed foods (cheese, jams, pies, baked goods, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vendor Profile Form- Copy of Business Certificate- Copy of ServSafe Certificate- Copy of Allergen	Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"



	Certificate - Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight - Copy of USDA permits	
Locally sourced and produced processed and/or packaged foods	- Vendor Profile Form - List of any local farms whose product you will be vending - Copy of Business Certificate - Copy of ServSafe Certificate - Copy of Allergen Certificate - Date of most recent scale inspection if items are sold by weight - Copy of USDA permits	Yes - \$100 x # of markets. Checks made payable to "City of Boston"
Non-food related items or services	- Vendor Profile Form - Copy of Business Certificate	No - non-food vendors are exempt
Updated 2025 Wine or other Alcohol produced by Licensed Farm-Winery, Farm-Brewery, Pub-Brewery or Farm-Distillery in Massachusetts	- MDAR application for certification of an agricultural event for the sale of craft beverages - MDAR certification letter - Boston Licensing Board application for breweries, wineries and distilleries to sell at sanctioned agricultural events in the City of Boston	\$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

If your market needs to follow the Special Events (PUB) process (see Step 1 on p. 11), you must collect copies of all 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 who will issue final approval of the event.



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. The benefit is currently \$20/month for all eligible households.

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.

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.



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. English	7. Arabic
2. Spanish	8. Chinese - Mandarin
3. Chinese - Cantonese	9. Portuguese
4. Russian	10. Haitian Creole
5. Vietnamese	

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 **2025 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](#). If your market accepted FMNP

- 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](#).

Certified farmers who participated in WIC or SFMNP last year do not need live training again to receive certification. Farmer re-certification occurs on a three-year cycle. 2026 will be the next re-certification year, meaning that all returning farmer swill receive a notice with a link to re-certify. The deadline to recertify will be May 15, 2026. New farmers must submit a certification form online and complete an online, live training. Interested farmers can email Jennifer.Donnelly@Mass.gov to schedule a training.

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 2025](#) for more information.