

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Fresh Connect Program

Traditional Farmers' Markets
Youth Markets
Food Box Pilot Project

Questions & Answers

Addendum 1 – Request for Proposals for the Fresh Connect Program – Food Box Pilot

Explanation

As of May of 2012, USDA has required that organizations administering EBT/SNAP projects apply for and receive certification for each site at which they operate an EBT terminal. In addition, a separate terminal is required for each venue at which an EBT/SNAP project will be taking place. There are exceptions to this rule for organizations that were already administering EBT/SNAP at multiple locations prior to May of 2012. Those organizations required to be certified at a new site should state in their proposal that they are prepared to file the paperwork expeditiously with the Farmers Market Federation of New York for a terminal and USDA/FNS for a certification number should their project be selected for funding.

Addendum – Replace Section 3.2.1 with the following

3.2.1 Application Requirements

At the time of the application, authorization as a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) vendor and procurement of a separate Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) terminal must either be in place or in process for **each individual affiliated food box location**. Therefore, at the time of application, the applicant or a partner entity that will be operating the SNAP/EBT program, must be an authorized SNAP vendor, agree to accept SNAP benefits as part of the proposed project, and provide proof of authorization applicable to each individual affiliated food box location of a separate terminal (unless exempted under USDA rules). If authorization and terminals are not in hand at the time of application, proof of intent to participate and obtain terminals, such as completed application forms with the Farmers Market Federation of New York and USDA/FNS, must be provided instead.

Q1: Our organization sells produce of more than ten farmers at farm stands. Although farmers are not directly present, their products are opened to new markets and the farms are promoted at the stands. Is this model eligible for Traditional Farmers' Markets?

A: Based upon the information provided, it appears that your organization is operating farm stands and does not meet the definition of a farmers' market as stated in the RFP – Traditional Farmers' Markets, and, therefore, does not appear to be eligible for funding under the referenced program.

Q2: Can a single organization apply for more than one grant, as before? If so, can it be for more than one in one of the three categories (i.e. two applications for different aspect of traditional farmers' market) or one in each category (i.e. an app for youth markets, an app for traditional farmers' markets, and an app for food box)?

A: A single organization is eligible to submit an application for any or all three Fresh Connect opportunities, Traditional Farmers' Markets, Youth Markets, Food Box Pilot Projects. Refer to the individual program RFP regarding the requirements concerning the number of applications a single organization may submit.

Q3: If the farmers' market is all volunteer with no paid employees at all, do they need proof of worker's compensation and disability insurance coverage?

New York State Workers' Compensation Law sections 57 and 220 require that the Department not enter into a contract unless proof of Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance in a form satisfactory to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board has been secured.

Please refer to the Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance Requirements at the New York State Workers' Compensation Board website, www.wcb.ny.gov, for more information. You may contact the Board's Bureau of Compliance with any questions related to workers' compensation or disability insurance at (866) 298-7830.

Q4: If a non-profit group is sponsoring the market, do they need to show insurance for the dates of the market if it is already being covered by insurance from the church who is providing their parking lot, etc. Also the church would provide written proof from their insurance company for such on dates and times listed for the market.

A: With exception of New York State Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance delineated above, the RFPs under the Fresh Connect Program do not specify insurance requirements. Insurance requirements are project specific and are addressed at the time a contract is awarded.

Q5: My project involves providing low income pantry clients, vo-tec culinary students and High School students training to create healthy frozen and vacuum packaged fruits and vegetables for use in meal kits and finished product form that they can take home. Would this idea fit the grant guidelines?

A: Based upon the information provided, it does not appear the project is eligible for funding under the Fresh Connect Program RFPs.

Q6: I have a question about Youth Markets. Will the grant pay for salaries of youth growing produce to sell at the market in a community garden or farm?

A: No.

Q7: When do you anticipate awards will be announced?

A: Beginning of May 2013

Q8: Is there any possibility that the projects can be developed for the 2014 growing season?

A: No.

Q9: Do you consider employer paid FICA costs to be fringe or part of salary costs?

A: Employer paid FICA costs are not considered part of an employee's salary or fringe benefit and are, therefore, not an eligible cost to be reimbursed with grant funds.

Q10: Our organization as the applicant is not a certified SNAP vendor nor are our proposed locations, but we plan to contract with an organization that has already been certified to accept SNAP benefits at another location, but not our proposed food box locations. Will it be acceptable that our partner rather than our organization as the applicant is certified to accept SNAP benefits? If a. is acceptable, should we have the partner apply for the other locations and include a copy in our application for the Fresh Connect grant?

A: Please refer to answer 13 below.

Q11: I have a question as I review the Pilot Food Box RFP: as we administered the SNAP card machine last season, can I assume that we are in fact then a certified vendor? That this can be documented by the NYS Farmers Market Federation?

A: At the time of the application, applicant or affiliated food box location must be a certified Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) vendor, agree to accept SNAP benefits as part of the proposed project, and provide proof of certification. If the applicant or affiliated food box location is not a certified vendor at the time of application, proof of intent to participate, such as a completed application form, must be provided instead.

Q12: Is the goal of the Fresh Connect Food Box Pilot to fund projects that will serve a region? Or, will projects that focus on a more localized area as a pilot be considered?

A: The goal of the Fresh Connect Program Food Box Pilot Project is to promote an increase in access to local, fresh, healthy, fruit and vegetables in pre-packed boxes for low-income, underserved communities.

Q13: If the United Way of Broome County (as the applicant) has partnered with another entity which will carry out the box program and has applied to use their EBT machine to accept SNAP benefits at affiliated box locations, will this meet the requirements of the RFP and be an eligible project?

A: Based upon the information provided, the requirements of the RFP appear to be met as long as the partner entity has or submits proof that they will obtain separate authorization and a separate terminal for each box program location, unless exempted under USDA/FNS rules. Documents required by the RFP must be included with the application.

Q14: If an organization uses an ALL VOLUNTEER effort to run the proposed farmers' market (no salaries or perks will be distributed), will the attachment of a copy of the New York State Regulations of the Worker's Compensation Board explaining that Workmen's Compensation is not required for a non-profit organization using volunteers satisfy the RFP?

A: Please refer to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board website, www.wcb.ny.gov, for more information. You may contact the Board's Bureau of Compliance with any questions related to workers' compensation or disability insurance at (866) 298-7830.

Q15: Is it an absolute requirement for the proposed farmers' market to be an authorized SNAP vendor?

A: Yes.

Q16: Can the Food Box Pilot Program funds be used to build on and improve an existing effort that is consistent with the goals of the Food Box Program?

A: In accordance with the RFP, eligible projects include:

- Creating new Food Box customer pick-up location(s) serving low-income and/or underserved communities; and/or
- At a new Food Box customer pick-up location, creating a new or strengthening an existing nutrition incentive program to attract new customers from low-income and/or underserved communities; and/or
- At a new Food Box customer pick-up location, creating new or strengthening existing partnerships or programs to better connect low-income and/or underserved communities with local farm and food products.