Increasing Food Access through EBT at Farmers Markets

Amber Canto
Karen Early
Francie Dekker

FOOD WISE
University of Wisconsin-Extension

Healthy choices, healthy lives.
Project Overview

• Farmers’ Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
  - Project title: Extending Reach of EBT at Wisconsin Farmers’ Markets

• Purpose:
  - Better understand barriers SNAP participants face in accessing and using federal program dollars at Wisconsin farmers’ markets

• Goal:
  - Develop outreach strategies for farmers’ markets to engage SNAP audience and increase participation
Five Counties & Four Community Partners

- Brown County; Downtown Green Bay Market
- Portage/Wood Counties; Downtown Stevens Point Market and Wisconsin Rapids Market, in partnership with Farmshed
- Milwaukee County; Fondy Food Center
- Rock County; Janesville Farmers’ Market
### Phase 1: Survey Findings

#### How important are the following reasons in your decision to shop at the farmers’ market?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total n (respondents)</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To buy fresh produce</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To buy local produce</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To buy local meat/eggs/dairy</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support local farmers/businesses</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take part in the community</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To shop where it is convenient for me</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in other activities/events at the market</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts FoodShare</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of WIC Farmers’ Market Voucher Program</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of Senior Farmers’ Market Voucher Program</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of Incentive Program*</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two communities did not have incentive programs at the time of survey: Fondy Food Center (Milwaukee, Milwaukee County), and Wisconsin Rapids Farmers’ Market (Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County).

#### QUESTION 4:
What forms of payment did you last use at the farmers’ market? Check all that apply.

Participants were allowed to select more than one response.

![Graph showing forms of payment]
**Survey Findings**

**QUESTION 5:**
Why didn’t you use your FoodShare benefits at the farmers’ market?  
Check all that apply.

Only participants who did not select Quest Card/FoodShare in Question 4 were asked to respond to this question. Participants were allowed to select more than one response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know it was an option</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasn’t sure how</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seemed like too much work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t want people to know I use FoodShare</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t have sufficient funds</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University of Wisconsin-Extension
Survey Findings

To what extent do you agree with the following statements (n=76):
This question specifically inquires about barriers FoodShare participants face in accessing farmers’ markets. Items that were included as potential barriers were: cost; food preference; food preparation knowledge; market day/time convenience; market location convenience; transportation difficulties; consumer behavior/habits; and level of comfort at the market.
Item scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree.

QUESTION 9:
Which of the following conditions would make you most likely to shop at the farmers’ market in the future? Please select your top 3 choices, or “none of the above”
Participants were allowed to select more than one answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive extra money as result of using FoodShare</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free activities for kids</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free cooking demonstrations</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free community activities</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market proximity to other businesses or services used regularly</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free nutrition education classes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market proximity to public transportation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping tours of the market</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outreach

• Definition – Community Toolbox
People use the word "outreach" to describe a wide range of activities, from actual delivery of services to dissemination of information. As a tool to help expand access to healthy services, practices or products, outreach is most often designed to accomplish one of the following (or some combination):
  o Directly deliver healthy services or products
  o Educate or inform the target population, increasing their knowledge and/or skills
  o Educate or inform people who interact with the target population (often called community health advisors)
  o Establish beneficial connections between people and/or organizations”

• Marketing vs. Outreach
Purpose: The University of Wisconsin—Extension, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin—Extension, is seeking an energetic, passionate, and dynamic individual to serve as a Community Connector. This focus of this position is to promote the farmers’ market, connect FoodShare users and organizations to each other and to the farmers’ market, and engage with the community on behalf of FoodShare users and the farmers’ market.

Promote the Farmers’ Market to...
- Other organizations serving FoodShare (Wisconsin Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program) users.
  - Tell them about the farmers’ market’s Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program
  - Learn about their services: How might they connect with what the farmers’ market?
  - How can you coordinate similar efforts?
  - Provide them with information/marketing materials about the market and its programs
- FoodShare users
  - Tell them about the farmers’ market: what do you like about the market? Why do you shop there?
  - Highlight their ability to use FoodShare at the market: talk about your experiences with the program!
  - Tell them about any incentive programs, activities, or other services that may be of interest or use.
- City Officials, Chamber of Commerce, Other Organizations
  - Tell them why the farmers’ market EBT program is important!
  - Ask them to promote the program in their marketing efforts, planning efforts, and strategic plans
  - Provide them with information/marketing materials

Connect the following people/organizations...
- FoodShare users
  - With the farmers’ market
  - With other available assistance programs (UW-Extension, WIC, other services in the community) or organizations
  - With other FoodShare users
- Farmers’ Market
  - With the University of Wisconsin—Extension
  - With other organizations serving FoodShare users

Engage...
- FoodShare users at the farmers’ market. Examples include:
  - Meeting new users at the market and showing them around
Quest Card Sleeves

Using Quest at the farmers’ market?
Tell your friends!

Make a date with a friend to use Quest at the farmers’ market!
How to use your Quest card at the farmers’ market

1. Farmers’ Market Info
2. Insert Quest Card
3. Swipe at Market
4. Get Tokens

EXTENSION
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Stakeholder Sheets

Extending Reach of EBT in Wisconsin Farmers’ Markets Project

Outreach

QUICK TIP 1: Word-of-mouth works!
Our research confirms that word-of-mouth is a highly effective marketing strategy. The best part? It’s relatively free. We say relatively, because there is a cost associated with this strategy: your time. Remind users of the value of using EBT at their market every time they come. Be sure to tell those users to spread the word to family, friends, and coworkers that your market accepts EBT. They know your location, date, time, and how to use their benefits, so they will be the best advocates on your behalf.

QUICK TIP 2: Incentive program and free activities for kids increase participation
If you are able to fund an incentive program, our research showed that it is highly influential in increasing participation at the farmers’ market. For more information on how to create a sustainability-funded incentive program, how to run an incentive program, or for other resources, check out FarmersMarketsCalion.org. Our research also found that providing free activities for kids was a big incentive for SNAP/FoodShare users to shop at the farmers’ market. Simple activities like market bingo are easy to put together and a fun way to engage families. They are also easily concrete ways of deepening partnerships with other organizations in your community, like the local Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, or local libraries.

QUICK TIP 3: Strong partnerships and consistent messaging are instrumental
If you can dedicate a staff person, one of your volunteers who runs the EBT machine, or one of your (BT machines) but be sure to communicate them appropriately to go to other government organizations, nonprofits, community events, faith-based organizations, or food pantries that serve low-income families to talk directly with FoodShare/SNAP users about the program. While they’re there, they can educate staff/volunteers of those organizations about the program as well, and ask that staff continuously promote the program. People need to hear the message more than once—so keep at it! For more information on sending people out into your community, go to Fyews.wcu.edu/beitreach and watch for Community Connection. There, you’ll find information on building partnerships, as well as handy sheets for spreading the word to partners.
Website

http://fyi.uwex.edu/ebtoutreach/
Brown County – Community Connector
Outreach Sites

• Special Events
  o Green Bay Juneteenth Celebration
  o Children’s Museum FIT Kids Event
• Summer Picnics
  o Early HeadStart
  o Healthy Family 20 year celebration Saturday
• Back to School Stores: St Vincent De Paul, YMCA, Green BayEast High, Howard Suamico
• Block Parties: Whitney Park
• Farmers Markets
• Food and Hunger Network
• Riding the city bus and engaging in conversation
Lessons Learned

• Personal Values & Experiences Important Perspective
  • Personal stories shared with agencies on the challenges of food access
  • Comfort and experience approaching peers in causal settings
  • Challenges of everyday life affect follow through, planning and reporting results
• Challenge to find someone who is job ready, not working and from the population we are working to serve.
• Summer bus transportation pass
• People skills top priority
Next Steps

- Model supported by community and coalition partners
- Insights from 2016 market season will guide future efforts
- Continue model in 2017; Focus on market accessibility for older adults and individuals with limited mobility
Milwaukee County – Community Connector efforts at Walker Square Farmers Market
Walker Square Farmers Market

- Open June – October
- Thursdays and Sundays from 7 am to 3 pm
- Volunteer market coordinators and paid interns to run EBT operations. Support from Southside EAT Coalition, Milwaukee Farmers Market Connection and UW-Extension
Walker Square Farmers Market Culture

• Most Walker Square residents are Latino and/or Hispanic households
• Hmong family farmers/producers
• Shoppers represent a diverse Southside population including many refugee families
• Walker Square Cultural Festival held at Market
WSFM Community Connector

• Recruitment – Bilingual Spanish speaking student with familiarity of Walker Square and surrounding neighborhoods

CC Outreach
• At Milwaukee County FoodWIse lessons
• Southside WIC clinics
• Partner agencies
• Tailored outreach plan to include CC’s personal connections:
  • Neighborhood churches
  • Schools
  • Soccer camps
End of Season Results

Market shoppers surveyed 1-2 times a month to capture why and how often people were visiting the farmers market, and if they knew EBT was an option.

During the first two market surveys:

66% of people interviewed at the market did not know they could use EBT

Of those who knew, the majority learned about the option via word of mouth or from a WIC clinic

“I’ve been coming every time the market is up and had no clue I could use my card here.”

During the last month of market surveys:

90% of shoppers interviewed at the market knew they could EBT

All learned via word-of-mouth, from Community Connector at a previous market, or from WIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2015 EBT amounts by Month</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2016 EBT amounts by Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>June 27, 2016</td>
<td>$187.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>$157.00</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>$2,889.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>$1,932.00</td>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td>No data yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>$4,473.00</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>$7,740.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>$4,262.00</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>No data yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL 2015</td>
<td>$10,824</td>
<td>GRAND TOTAL 2016</td>
<td>$10,816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moving Forward: Opportunities and Lessons Learned

• Including community connector principles at nutrition education lessons
• Promotion for all markets in Milwaukee that accept Federal Nutrition Benefits
• Everyone calls FoodShare something different! Streamlining promotion efforts and language
• Creating additional cross-cultural educational materials
• Staff/volunteer support to run EBT efforts
QUESTIONS?

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX and ADA requirements.
FONDY FARMERS MARKET OPENS MAY 13TH

100 YEARS

LETS CELEBRATE
Mission: to connect neighborhoods to fresh local food – from farm to market to table – so that children learn better, people live healthier, and communities embrace cultural food traditions.
2016 Top Retail Sites for SNAP

1st Superstores: $34,337,302,850 51.73%
2nd Supermarkets: $19,687,954,131 29.66%
3rd Convenience Stores: $3,737,586,325 5.63%

And near the bottom of firm types:
Farmers' Market $14,590,395 0.02%
Farmers Market Can be Part of the Solution
The promise of farmers markets (FM’s)

Promising venues for improving access to healthy food

Federal policy supports FM’s for helping increase produce intake for low-income Americans

Milwaukee Farmers Market Connection - project overview

Established 2014

2-year $200k “Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program” grant to improve access to farmers markets in Milwaukee by low-income and diverse populations

- Increasing federal benefit redemption rates at farmers markets
- Creating a culture shift resulting in wider diversity of farmers market shoppers

Primary Partners:

- Fondy Food Center
  - Model farmers market
  - Culturally diverse, vibrant farmers market
  - High rates of benefit redemption

- Medical College of WI – Center for Healthy Communities & Research
  - Research expertise
  - Evaluation
The MFMC Coalition

~20 active multi-sector members
- Farmers markets (Washington Park, Hartung Park, Shorewood, 53212,
- Healthcare (Columbia St Mary’s, Aurora)
- Non-profit (Feeding America SE WI, Hunger Task Force)
- Governmental (UWEx, MKE Health Dept, WIC)

Activities:
- EBT Training & Technical Assistance
- Creating a culture of inclusivity at FMs - cultural competence training
- Grants submissions for city-wide incentive program
- Pilot fruit & veggie prescription program
- Marketing
- Others: e.g., Advocacy, gleaning, composting, lead...

**GOAL: improve access to FMs for diverse populations**
Early success

17% SNAP increase in MKE County FM from 2015-2016
SNAP ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS

75,000 households
(MKE County)

23,700 households
(+53204)

17,800 households
(53206, 53212, 53208, 53218)
Lack of Awareness of SNAP @ FMs

Findings from a UW Ex survey of low-income consumers:
60% didn’t know that SNAP was an option at some MKE area FMs.
Welcome
Bienvenue
Nyob zoo
Bienvenidos
Witamy
Faite
ินี่ต้อนรับ
स्वागत
Hoan nghênh
Soo dhaweyn
Benvenuto
ស្រុក
MILWAUKEE
WINTER
farmers
market
Healthy Local Food
All Winter Long

Marketing Pilot

The Milwaukee Winter Farmers Market gladly accepts Quest cards (SNAP/EBT/FoodShare)!
Please visit the information table to find out how to purchase fresh and local fruits, vegetables, cheeses, baked goods, and more!
See you at the market!

El Mercado de Agricultores de Invierno de Milwaukee acepta la tarjeta Quest (SNAP/EBT/FoodShare) con mucho gusto! Por favor visite la mesa de información para ver cómo comprar frutas, verduras, queso, comida de panadería y más que es fresco y cultivado en Wisconsin ¡Nos vemos en el mercado!

Lub Milwaukee Winter Farmers Market zoo siab txais daim Quest cards (SNAP/EBT/FoodShare)!
Thoy los nrög peb tham nyob ntawm peb lub rooj kom paub siv daim Quest cards mus yuav zaub, txiv hmab txiv ntoob, cheeses, cov khoom noj ci thiab lawm yam khoom!
Cia siab tias yuav ntsib koj nyob rau ntawm qhow chaw muag khoom!

November 5 to April 8
Saturdays 9 AM - 1 PM
Greenhouse Annex @ The Domes
524 S. Layton Blvd.

5077 0800 1234 5678
Next: Joint Marketing

Current Challenges:
- Translating informative materials into successful marketing campaigns targeting diverse populations
- Distribution
- Coalition members finding solutions (UWEx)
- Funding
The Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program
The Rx Process

Highlights:

• Anonymous

• Minimal provider effort

• Two $20 prescriptions
  • 4 weeks
  • 8 weeks

• Market hours and location included

• Reminder card for providers
  • Name of market
  • Rx amount
Results – Satisfaction

• 95% rated program as “good” or better
  • Choices were: poor, fair, good, very good, excellent

• 71% felt $40 amount was, “Just right”

• 95% plan to visit the market in the future
  • May be skewed, as some likely plan to return in order to use 2nd prescription

• Other comments from participants:
  • Wanted a wider selection of fruits at market
  • Wanted other farmers markets to be included
Thank you!