



Support Equitable Food Access and Local Farmers

Action Updates

This action has been newly drafted for the **current certification cycle**. (Last update 2023)

Objective

To support local agriculture and farmers, and to ensure that all people have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences.

Complementary Actions:

- [Provide Effective Community Communications](#)
- [Encourage an Equitable and Just Food System](#)

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Host a farmers' market in your municipality, or in partnership with neighboring municipalities. **(15 points)**

To earn points, the market must:

- Meet the CT Department of Agriculture's definition of a [Certified Farmers' Market](#); and
- Be regularly occurring, with at least six market dates per year; and
- Be supported by the hosting municipality or municipalities (support could include providing public space for the market, providing waste pick-up at the market, etc.); and
- Be advertised by the hosting municipality or municipalities on a municipal website, newsletter, social media, or other regularly used form of communications.

Submit: The market calendar or schedule for the year in which your municipality is applying for certification, the location of the farmers' market, and a hyperlink or screenshot of promotion/outreach for the farmers' market on your municipality's website or other sample outreach material (such as a flyer or social media post).

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Implementation Projects" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. Directly or through community partnerships, encourage and support farmstands and farmers' markets to accept [Farmer Market Nutrition Program](#) (FMNP) vouchers and the Connecticut Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which is the payment method for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Such support could include applying to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for an entire farmers' market to be approved to accept EBT, if it is not practical for individual farmers to do so; helping vendors obtain electronic EBT card readers; or providing educational materials for vendors on processing for accepting EBT cards and FMNP vouchers. Promote these new payment methods through municipal communications (such as newsletters, social media, or email lists), the municipal website, social services offices or providers, senior centers, or other relevant channels and partners. **(15 points awarded for implementing acceptance of each FMNP and EBT, up to 30 points total for both)**

Submit: A description of your municipality's actions to facilitate and support farmstands and farmers' markets to accept FMNP vouchers and EBT cards; the dates your municipality took those actions; names and locations of farmers markets included; a description of the communication and promotion efforts undertaken by the municipality to promote the new payment methods.

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Implementation Projects" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

3. Improve the accessibility of farmers markets, making it easier for all populations, especially low-income residents, to reach the market and shop there. **(15 points per improvement, up to 30 points)**

Examples of accessibility improvements include:

- Providing shuttle bus service to the farmers' market
- Ensuring the market space meets all ADA requirements
- Introducing new wayfinding signage directing pedestrians to the farmers' market
- Hosting pop-up markets at locations underserved by farmers markets

Submit: A description of how your municipality improved accessibility of local farmers markets and relevant documentation, such as invoices for shuttle bus service to markets or photos of a pop-up market.

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Implementation Projects" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim *New Action Credit* for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for *Rolling Credit* for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. For additional information, please see the Partners Guidance Document.

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

The local government public health department or district staff and social services department or staff should be involved in the implementation of this action, in partnership with community agencies. Partners might include community food nonprofits, local businesses (including farms), municipal economic development representatives, an agricultural commission or food systems team, farmers markets, emergency food providers, and senior centers.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the [Sustainable CT Grants Portal](#), which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the [Support for Your Town](#) page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- [Urban Act Grant Program](#)
- [Municipal Grant Program \(MGP\)](#)
- [Sustainable CT Community Match Fund](#)

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- CT Department of Agriculture - [Establishing a Farmers' Market in Connecticut](#)
- CT Department of Agriculture - [Farmers' Market Reference Guide](#)
- [Connecticut Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Factsheet](#)
- CT Department of Health and Human Services - [Food Assistance - Farmers' Markets, Farms and Farm](#)

[Stands](#)

- Farmers Market Coalition - [The Anti-Racist Farmers Market Toolkit](#)
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service - [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) - Farmer/Producer](#)
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service - [Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#)

Organizations

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service - [Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#)
- CT Department of Health and Human Services - [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- University of Connecticut - [The Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy](#)
- CT Department of Agriculture - [Farmers Markets](#)
- [CT Food System Alliance](#)

Why This Matters

Increasing access to farmers' markets, for all populations, benefits both shoppers and farmers. Residents are able to purchase fresh, local food, while supporting local agriculture. Farmers' markets also serve as vibrant community spaces.

In fiscal year 2021, 371,600 Connecticut residents (10% of the state population) received SNAP benefits. Approximately half of the state's SNAP participants include families with children. Increasing options for where residents can spend their SNAP or FMNP benefits can improve access to food for low-income populations, while also supporting local farms and farmers.

Benefits

Expanding access to food purchasing options benefits residents in terms of financial flexibility and increased options for shopping locations. Encouraging more residents to shop at the farmers' market supports local agriculture and vendors. Both of these help to build a more equitable food system.