



History

In 2010 Springfield Farmers' Market launched a new program through public and private sponsorships to increase SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) redemption in its seasonal open-air marketplace. The market runs from May-October between 5th and 6th on Main Street in downtown Springfield, Oregon. In 2009 the market introduced the ability to accept food stamp benefits through a grant from the Northwest Health Foundation. In 2010, the market's third season, a major goal was to increase healthy food access for all Springfield residents and chip away at the negative connotation that farmers' markets are too expensive for many low income families.

Project

SNAP Match Month ran for five weeks during the month of July, 2010. Customers who visited the market with SNAP benefits were provided up to \$5 additional spending money if they purchased \$5 in tokens. The month long event presented the opportunity to access \$25 in healthy, locally grown products for free simply by visiting weekly and spending \$5 in SNAP benefits. The project was funded by donations from PacificSource Insurance and Siuslaw Bank with additional funding coming from nine gracious downtown businesses. Outreach efforts were started as early as April 2010 and promotional materials were distributed not only by NEDCO but by organizations that worked with low-income populations. Promotional materials were available in both English and Spanish.

Result

SNAP Match Month provided solid data to compel NEDCO to continue and expand SNAP incentive programming in 2011. Daily transactions for SNAP benefits doubled between May and July in 2011 and July's total transactions increased by thirty eight individual transactions over the June 2010 total. One of the most promising trends following the month of July was a sustained increase in transactions through the end of the season compared to the two months prior to *SNAP Match Month*. These numbers indicate that many new customers were introduced to the market through Snap Match Month yet continued to visit the market and spend SNAP dollars following the conclusion of *SNAP Match Month*. Over \$5,500 in SNAP benefits were redeemed at the market in 2010, a 300% increase to the transaction sales of just over \$1,500 in 2009.

Conclusions

2010's SNAP Match Month had an easily identifiable triple bounce effect for the farmers' market community. First, the market attracted new low income customers who historically have harder times accessing fresh healthy foods.

This access addresses an increasing concern regarding obesity and its health effects on a growing number of Americans and specifically among low income. Second, new customers spending SNAP dollars and now incentive dollars provided an immediate increase to the amount of money available in the market thus noticeably increasing vendor sales during the month of July. Finally, new customers at the market often meant new customers in downtown Springfield. A 2010 study by students at the University of Oregon found that the average market customer spent \$14 at the market and \$7 at surrounding businesses.

Springfield Farmers' Market hopes to continue and expand *SNAP Match* during its 2011 season starting May 6th, 2011. If you, your organization, or someone you know is interested in donating for SNAP Match please contact Market Manager Lee Warnecke at 541-345-7106.