Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Overview

• The FMNP program is a USDA Supplemental Nutrition Grant Program.
• The USDA provides grants to state agencies to provide checks to low-income participants.
• Two programs funded: Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (FMNP) and Seniors (SFMNP).
• Checks can be used to buy fresh fruits, vegetables, cut herbs and honey (Seniors only) at farmers’ markets.
• In 2016, farmers received $470,665 through the two programs, $37,000 more than 2015.
HOW THE FMNP PROGRAMS WORK

MDA provides checks to DHMH & DOA

DOA distributes checks to eligible Seniors

DHMH distributes checks to eligible WIC participants

Participants use checks to buy produce from FMNP authorized farmers at markets
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Must qualify based on income (185% of federal poverty level)
   Must have proof of residency in Maryland

WIC - $20
- Applicants must be pregnant or have recently given birth, infants, or children up to 5 years and have a nutritional need
- WIC participants receive nutrition education, breastfeeding support, health screenings & referrals to other community support programs
- Can sign up at WIC clinics

SENIORS - $30
- Applicants must be 60 or over
- Must certify income eligibility on application form
- Can sign up at participating Senior Centers
Authorized FMNP Farmers must meet the following standards:

- The farmer must complete the Maryland FMNP Farmer Application & Agreement.
- The farmer must agree to abide by all FMNP rules.
- The farmer must sell fruits, vegetables and/or cut herbs and honey (seniors only) grown only in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware or Pennsylvania at a Maryland Farmers Market.
- The farmer must not accept FMNP checks for agricultural produce obtained from wholesale distributors. FMNP checks can only be accepted as payment for produce grown by the authorized farmer.
- The farmer must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local governmental laws and regulations and obtain all necessary licenses and permits.

Farmer Application & Agreement due to MDA no later than April 30.
In person training required 1st year in program

- Annual updates required thereafter
- MDA offers many training dates each year from March – July throughout the state and online

- Dates are posted on Maryland’s Best, Maryland WIC, and sent to renewing farmers
FMNP checks can only be redeemed for fresh fruits, vegetables, fresh cut herbs and honey (seniors only) grown by the farmer applicant. Checks cannot be redeemed for tropical fruits, citrus fruits, baked goods, jams, jellies, cider, flowers, plants, eggs, nuts, cheese, meats, seafood, crafts, etc.

FMNP checks can only be redeemed at farmers’ markets, and private farm stands. Farmers may only redeem FMNP checks at private farm stands if they also sell at a farmers market. Only authorized FMNP farmers can redeem checks. Authorized FMNP farmers cannot accept FMNP checks from unauthorized farmers or vendors.

All authorized FMNP farmers are required to display the “WIC & Seniors Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program” sign and their associated farm name.
Authorized FMNP farmers cannot charge FMNP customers more for their fruits, vegetables, fresh cut herbs and honey than they charge other customers. FMNP customers must be shown the same courtesies as all other customers and FMNP authorized farmers agree not to discriminate against any FMNP customer on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap or disability.

FMNP checks cannot be exchanged for cash or change. Whenever possible, authorized FMNP farmers should help FMNP customers use the full value of their checks by making up the difference with additional produce items. The FMNP customer must pay the difference when the purchase exceeds the value of the check(s).

FMNP checks must be signed in the presence of the FMNP authorized farmer.

FMNP checks are valid from June 1st through November 30th. Authorized FMNP farmers will not be reimbursed for checks accepted after November 30th. All FMNP Checks must be deposited at the bank no later than December 5th.
FARMERS ARE REQUIRED TO DISPLAY THEIR FARM NAME & THE FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM SIGN

Old MacDonald’s Farm

This sign lets WIC customers know they can spend their FVCs at your stand.
Recent Changes to Remember

- FMNP & FVC joint application & enrollment
- No longer authorizing Farmers’ Markets
- Farmers must submit a list of markets that they participate in every year
- Farmer authorization is now 3 years
- Checks may be accepted at farm stands only if the farmer sells at a Farmers’ Market
- Color of the FMNP checks change every year.
- Potatoes (of any variety) are now allowed to be purchased with both FVC & FMNP checks.
- No longer need to see WIC FMNP folders.
WIC, FMMP & SFMNP Key Dates

- April 30: Farmer FMNP applications due
- June - July: Checks issued to eligible participants (WIC & Seniors)
- June 1: First date that farmers may accept checks at markets or on-farm stands
- November 30: Last date that farmers may accept checks at markets or on-farm stands
- December 5: Last date that farmers may deposit checks for the season
WIC: Eligible foods include all locally grown fruits, vegetables and cut herbs except honey grown by the authorized farmer. Eligible foods may not be processed or prepared beyond their natural state except for usual harvesting and cleaning processes.

Seniors: all of the above + honey
INELIGIBLE FOODS
The customer should:
• Select the produce they wish to purchase.
• Inform the farmer they are paying with an FMNP or SFMNP check.
• Give the farmer the FMNP or SFMNP check.
• Sign the check on the signature line.

The farmer should:
• Allow purchases to be combined with cash purchases (*if the total of the items being purchased exceeds the value of the check, the customer makes up the difference*).
• **Not** provide change if the purchase amount is less than the face value ($5) of the FMNP check.
• Allow FMNP checks to be combined (*for example, two $5 FMNP checks may be used for a $10 total purchase*).
Our bank **will not** pay FMNP checks which are missing farmer stamps, have an unreadable or invalid stamps, missing signatures, checks which have been torn, marked “VOID” or altered in any way, or checks issued in a prior year or checks that have expired.
WIC FVCs are issued in $8, $11 and $17 denominations. WIC participants may purchase any produce with their FVC except: fruit baskets, herbs, dried fruit, salad kits, fruit or vegetables with dip. (See Handbook for more details.)
Information for Maryland Farmers Markets

Note: Information on this page is for farmers market managers, farmers and vendors. If you are a consumer looking for a farmers market near you, visit Maryland’s Best. Once on the page, see instructions below.

- At the top of the page, select your City or County in the "Locations" section.
- Select "Farmers Market" from the "Category" section.
- For a more detailed search, use the "Advanced Search" on the right side of the home page to find markets where federal nutrition programs benefits like the Farmers Market Nutrition Program are accepted by authorized farmers.

- Winter Farmers Market Guide: A listing of all farmers markets that are open during winter months.
- Farmers Market Directory: Note: This is the current listing of the Farmers Market Directory. As new information becomes available we will continue to update the directory throughout the season.
- Maryland WIC 2016 Farmers’ Market Cookbook and 2015 Farmers’ Market Cookbook
**POINTS OF CONTACT**

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