

**Seniors
Farmers' Market
Nutrition Program
2022**

Guidelines



Division of Aging and Adult Services-DHHS
Raleigh, North Carolina

2022 - SENIORS FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Guidelines

Goals:

The Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) has dual goals. One goal is to improve the nutritional status of the low-income older adults by enabling them to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. A second goal is to stimulate business for the local farmers and create a greater awareness of the farmers' market.

Participant Eligibility:

To be eligible for the program, a person must in one of the SFMNP program counties and self declared low income (185% poverty level).

Program Design:

Checks (coupons) will be distributed to the participants once during the growing season. The aging service agencies will try to schedule "field trips" to visit the local farmers' markets and allow the participants to purchase fresh produce. Participants also will be encouraged to visit the local farmers' markets independently and may redeem their coupons at this time as well. Once the participating farmers receive the checks, they are given to the bank and handled like money.

Issuance of Checks:

1. The Division of Aging and Adult Services will distribute checks (coupons) to the county nutrition program directors no later than July 2022.
2. The checks will be distributed to the participating aging service agencies as soon as possible.
3. Checks shall be stored in a secure storage location until distribution to the congregate nutrition site participants.
4. Issue checks to the participants in sequential order in sets of 14. Each participant will receive a total of \$42 worth of checks (coupons).

5. On the **Issuance Log**, fill out the recipient's name, check numbers issued, and the date issued. The recipient then signs the log.
6. If the recipients should receive checks but not sign the check issuance log, write "RCVD BY (name of Recipient)" where the signature should be and initial and date it. (Note: To minimize such occurrences, don't issue checks until log is filled in.)

Check Issuance Log:

1. Retain a copy of the completed issuance log in the aging service agency and submit a copy of the issuance log to the and the original copy to the Division of Aging and Adult Services by the last day of the month.

Division of Aging and Adult Services
ATTN: Audrey Edmisten
2101 Mail Service Center
693 Palmer Drive
Raleigh, NC 27699-2101
Audrey.edmisten@dhhs.nc.gov

2. Do not submit issuance logs in months when checks (coupons) are not issued.
3. If a coupon(s) is damaged and voided, "VOID" should be written in the signature space, dated, and initialed.
4. To correct an error on the issuance log, draw a line through the incorrect entry, make the correct entry, and initial and date the correction. Staff shall sign the issuance log verifying accuracy.

Dual Participation

1. Local agencies must have a procedure to prevent dual participation.
2. A master participant list should be reviewed regularly to ensure participants do not receive multiple sets of coupons. The DAAS Aging Resources Management System's Units of Service Verification Report (ZGA 542) and SFMNP Issuance Logs may be reviewed to assess if any SFMNP participants are issued more than the appropriate allotment.

Proxy

1. A proxy is a person only authorized to receive and/or redeem SFMNP checks. A proxy should be at least eighteen (18) years of age and dependable for the duration of the program months of operation. In order for the checks to be issued to a proxy, the proxy must present identification as well as written approval from the participant. Proxies must sign the check issuance log to receive checks. Proxies have the same obligations to follow program guidelines when purchasing fruits and vegetables from an authorized farmer.
2. A proxy should not be the program staff person counting/distributing the checks.
3. A proxy should be limited to no more than 10 participants.

Check Security:

1. Seniors Farmers' Market checks have monetary value and therefore should be handled like money.
2. When checks are received from the county nutrition program director, verify that all checks indicated were received. Call the Division of Aging and Adult Services if there are any discrepancies.
3. Keep checks in a secure place at all times and store them in a locked cabinet when not in use.
4. Report any checks lost or stolen at the congregate nutrition site immediately to the Division of Aging and Adult Services.
5. If any checks are lost or stolen at the congregate nutrition site, record them on the issuance log. Document:
 - a. the check serial number(s)
 - b. write "Lost" or "Stolen" by the serial number(s)
 - c. initial and date each entry
6. Do not replace issued checks reported lost or stolen by recipients.

Edit, Update, and Unmatched Redemption Reports:

These reports will be provided monthly. There should be very few errors given the nature of the coupons, so these reports are expected to require minimal time.

Program Monitoring and Enforcement:

1. At any time during the program, officials from NC Department of Agriculture and DHHS may visit local congregate nutrition sites to review procedures and interview personnel working on the program.
2. Minor compliance problems, such as failing to follow procedures for issuing checks or checks for cash; theft; or other actions intended to produce illegal financial gain, may be violations of federal or state laws of the coupon program.
3. Certain abuses, such as the deliberately issuing to ineligible persons; exchange of checks for cash; theft; or other actions intended to produce illegal financial gain, may be violations of federal or state laws, and violators may be prosecuted.

Program Evaluation:

During or following the check issuance period, your site may be interviewed about program operations and impact. At the end of the growing season, recipients must be surveyed.

Information to give to Check Recipients:

1. When issuing checks, give each participant a “flyer” that describes how to use the checks and the locations of nearby farmers’ markets.
2. Also use the attached “flyer” to briefly explain the program to participants, including the following information:
 - Purpose of the Program
 - Descriptions of farmers’ markets and operating hours
 - Location of nearest market(s) and transportation information
 - Description of eligible foods
 - How to redeem checks at markets
 - Restriction on checks
 - Expiration dates for checks
3. Nutrition education materials should be distributed to check recipients. Nutrition education should be integrated into SFMNP operations and may satisfy nutrition education requirements through coordination with other agencies.

Description of Eligible Foods:

1. Check may be redeemed at authorized markets for any fresh locally grown, fruits and vegetables.
2. SFMNP checks cannot be redeemed for honey, jelly, jam, eggs, baked goods, plants, flowers, or other non-food items, or items not produced on local farms.

Procedures for Redeeming Checks at Farmers' Markets:

1. Participants may redeem checks at any participating farmers' market with certified farmers. They cannot be redeemed at grocery stores or roadside farm stands. Look for the farmer's redemption sign.
2. Each check is worth \$3.00. No change is given for check purchases.
3. Checks must be used by **September 30, 2022**. Be sure to check to see when your local market closes for the season.

NONDISCRIMINATION and CIVIL RIGHTS:

Anyone involved in federally funded programs may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. North Carolina law also provides protection from discrimination on the basis of religion.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.