

Clark County Public Health

Community Transformation Grant —Success Stories

SNAP at Farmers Markets

The Double Win: Supporting Healthy Eating and Clark County Farms

Studies link the intake of fruits and vegetables with decreased risk of obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, stroke, and hypertension. However, according to BRFSS data for 2012, the consumption of fruits and vegetables among Clark County adults and children lagged far behind the five to nine servings per day recommended by the USDA.

To support the intake of fresh produce, Clark County Public Health worked with seven local farmers market managers to add Electronic Benefit Technology (EBT) to their markets so recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits could buy more fresh fruits and vegetables. The result is greater consumption of fresh produce, especially by Clark County's most vulnerable socioeconomic population, and increased support for local farms.



- Five markets, Camas, Vancouver, Salmon Creek Downtown, Legacy Salmon Creek, and Battle Ground Markets now accept SNAP and WIC benefits. As an added incentive for benefit recipients to visit the market and learn more about various types of produce, four markets also administer the *Fresh Match* program, which provides a dollar-to-dollar match for the first \$5 in SNAP benefits spent on produce at each market visit.
- In partnership with Washington State University/Clark County Extension, Clark County supports nutrition education programs at markets that offer Fresh Match. Cooking demonstrations and nutrition education activities for adults and children promote healthy eating on a budget, emphasizing seasonable produce available at the markets.
- At Salmon Creek Farmers Market, Public Health staff supports a market-developed program called Produce Pals, which gives a \$2 token to each child who visits the market. The caveat: Parents must allow their children to select their own fresh fruit or vegetable in hopes that children will explore a variety of tastes and types of produce.
- In 2013, SNAP recipients spent a total of \$60,337 at Clark County farmers markets. Spending federal benefits (SNAP = \$51,680) plus private business donations (Fresh Match supporter funds = \$8,657) at farmers markets is a win-win for both SNAP recipients and local food producers. From 2012 to 2013, the number of SNAP transactions at five local farmers markets showed an increase of 22 to 82 percent, varying by market. The 2014 market season is not yet over, but SNAP use and Fresh Match participation has already exceeded last year's numbers.

