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Farmers' Market EBT News for California Market Managers, Farmers, and Friends **Summer 2013 Edition**

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August, 2013

Greetings!

Lately while visiting my neighborhood farmers' market, I've enjoyed the cornucopia of colors, scents and tastes. Magenta Dahlias, strawberries wafting past my nose, and explosively sweet cherry tomatoes--there is so much abundance this time of year. Peaches, tomatoes and blueberries abound and Farmers' Markets are in full swing with cooking demos, kids days and tastings galore.

We've been busy too and have already finished some projects this year, with more to come in the next six months. The Los Angeles Farmers' Market Finder, an online interactive map that allows a user to find the farmers' markets nearest them, is finished and soon a flyer will go out some 500,000 CalFresh recipients to promote the FM Finder. [Scroll down](#) to learn more.

As always, I'm looking forward to helping you establish or improve your farmers' market's EBT Program and make farmers' markets more accessible for all people. Let's connect soon!

[the Simple Guide
for Market
Managers](#)

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Sincerely,
Carle Brinkman, Program Manager
Ecology Center, Statewide Farmers' Market EBT Program
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Los Angeles Farmers' Market Finder

Establishing EBT access at a farmers' market is a crucial first step in creating greater healthy food access for all customers and adding take-home revenue for small farmers. But EBT access alone only affects customers already shopping at the market and doesn't tap new shoppers who may not know the farmers' market is a place that they can spend their benefits, let alone which markets accept those benefits. Those prospective customers need education and information that will motivate them to become new farmers' market shoppers--How to spend their benefits at a market, which markets accept their benefits, and that farmers' markets are affordable, healthy, and fun places to shop. Over the last year, the Ecology Center has been working with Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services (LA DPSS) in order to create the *Los Angeles Farmers' Market Finder*, an interactive phone and online directory, that does just that.

The Farmers' Market Finder is a new tool that connects 550,000 CalFresh clients to the 150 farmers' markets in Los Angeles County. The project is piloting in Los Angeles, but has been designed to be expanded statewide. Developed by the Ecology Center's Farmers' Market EBT Program, it creates an easy, accessible new web and phone resource for food assistance recipients to locate farmers' markets near them that accept their benefits.



Shown Above: A screen shot of the FM Finder showing the more than 150 farmers' markets in the Los Angeles Area

When visiting the website, the user enters their address on the interactive map and can view the nearest farmers' markets, with filters for different days of the week, and different types of food assistance benefit programs accepted at each market, including [WIC](#), CalFresh EBT and those that also offer [Market Match](#).

A flyer promoting the FM Finder is scheduled to be sent out to some 500,000 CalFresh recipients and their families later this month.

This project wouldn't have been possible without assistance and support from champion partners like Los Angeles DPSS, Los Angeles Public Health (who is helping to keep the data current for LA County), Hunger Action Los Angeles, and numerous farmers' market partners. Development of resources like the Farmers' Market Finder fill an important role in helping grow the number of EBT recipients coming to farmers' markets, a goal of both the Ecology Center and the other key local partners.



Use your **CalFresh EBT** card at **farmers' markets** across **L.A. County.** For CalFresh EBT cardholders, shopping and eating healthy is now just a market away.

Here's how:

- Step 1**  Find the farmers' market near you that accepts CalFresh EBT cards. Just go to ecologycenter.org/fmfinder 1-800-962-8217.
- Step 2** Ask at the market's information booth or the market manager how to use your CalFresh EBT card—and whether the market offers incentives like Market Match that provide additional money to spend on healthy food.
- Step 3** Buy and eat! Enjoy all the fresh, nutritious food you've purchased for you and your family—with more flavor and less cost.

Conveniently located all across L.A. County, farmers' markets are family-friendly, open-air marketplaces where California farmers sell fruits and vegetables, fresh baked goods, jams, juices, olive oils, yogurt and cheeses, fresh fish, pickles, and more—right in your community.

Just enter your address on our interactive map to find the market that accepts CalFresh EBT cards near you.



Find the market near you: Visit ecologycenter.org/FMFINDER or call **1-800-962-8217**

Shown Above: The inside of the tri-fold flyer going out to every CalFresh recipient in the county

Visit the website and phone line today and stay tuned for other counties coming soon!

Farmers' Market Finder

Website: www.ecologycenter.org/fmfinder

Phone Directory: 1-800-962-8217

If you have questions about this project, contact Carle Brinkman, Program Manager, at ebt@ecologycenter.org.

Important Market Info, IRS 1099 Withholdings

Congress passed a law that requires FIS, the company contracted to provide the wireless POS devices, to report Merchants' EBT transactions to the IRS.

As Farmers' Markets are not actually the recipient of the SNAP EBT dollars, they are exempt, but must file paperwork with FIS in order to avoid the withholdings.

If you have had any problems with funds being withheld or have any questions on this, immediately contact [Dianne Padilla Bates](#) with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) at 916-654-1396.

Food Stamped, a Documentary

This short film follows filmmakers while they embark on the challenge of eating healthy on the "Food Stamp Diet"

Food Stamped is an award-winning documentary made by Bay-area couple Shira and Yoav Potash, following them as they attempt to eat healthy on \$1 per meal per day, the average amount received by a food stamp recipient.

Through asking good questions, and a whole lot of humor, the couple takes a hard look at what shapes the current food system. The film also features EBT-use at farmers' markets, and highlights low income shoppers ability to make healthy food choices being linked to issues of access and affordability.



Shown Above: Food Stamped is an informative and humorous documentary film following a couple as they attempt to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet on a food stamp budget. Through their adventures they consult with members of U.S. Congress, food justice organizations, nutrition experts, and people living on food stamps to take a deep look at America's broken food system. (62 minutes)

I found the film smart and funny. It's a great primer if you don't know much about the Farm Bill and how it affects our food system, but want to learn. I give it two thumbs up. Check out [clips](#) from the film and buy it [here](#).

If you are interested in learning more about *Food Stamped*, visit [their website](#).

FREE Signage Available from CDSS

Despite the fact that EBT access at farmers' markets continues to grow, not everyone knows that their CalFresh benefits can be spent at the farmers' market. It's important to let customers know that their EBT card is welcome by using clear signage. Sandwich boards and signage at entrances can be great help in ensuring your customers are informed about your market's EBT program.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) recently created some new signage and will provide them to markets that have been authorized by FNS.

Aceptamos



EBT

CalFresh ayuda a que rinda más su presupuesto de comida. Puede comprar más frutas, verduras y otros alimentos saludables para toda la familia.

Para más información sobre cómo usar los beneficios de su tarjeta EBT, visite www.calfresh.ca.gov o llame al 1-888-9-COMIDA.

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Financiado por SNAP del USDA, concedido en California como CalFresh, un proveedor y empleador que ofrece oportunidades equitativas.
Departamento de Servicios Sociales de California y Departamento de Salud Pública de California.

Requests for these posters should go directly to Dianne Padilla-Bates at 916-654-1396 or via email at Dianne.Padilla-Bates@dss.ca.gov. They can also be [downloaded here](#).

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