

A Vendor's Guide to Nutrition Assistance

Accepting alternative forms of payment and enrolling in nutrition assistance programs offers a wide variety of benefits. Firstly, nutrition assistance programs improve access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for people from a wide variety of backgrounds of socioeconomic statuses. Secondly, these programs benefit farmers and producers! These programs expand your consumer base, resulting in more sales across the growing season.

SNAP/ EBT

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, provides food benefits to low-income families to supplement their grocery budget so they can afford the nutritious food essential to health and wellbeing.

To [register as a SNAP-authorized vendor](#), email farmers@hhs.iowa.gov or contact Belinda at (515) 491-6325. Paperwork can be mailed to you. They will send you further information and instructions on how to receive a **free** wireless point-of-sale machine that accepts SNAP cards.

Iowa Health and Human Services (HHS) pays for and provides one WI-FI enabled point-of-sale machine to each qualified direct marketing farmer across the state. This enables you to accept SNAP EBT, MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express cards. HHS pays for all monthly costs associated with EBT and provides signage (tabletop, table skirt, banner & stickers).

Senior FMNP/ WIC

[The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) distributes vouchers to active participants in the Iowa Department's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and to eligible seniors. These vouchers can be used to purchase fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs. FMNP vouchers may only be used from June 1 to October 31 at FMNP-authorized farmers markets and farmstands.

To be eligible, farmers must be at least 18 years old, live and grow in Iowa or an out-of-state county touching Iowa's border, and must personally grow at least 51% of the fresh produce or raw honey sold. Vendors also must complete vendor training webinar and submit an annual application.

Farmers can become certified FMNP vendors by [applying for certification](#) (resubmit each year), completing a 1-hour training webinar (need to be retrained every 3 years), downloading the payment app, and registering/ verifying a bank account.

Veggie Vouchers

The Veggie Vouchers program is a locally financed program designed to meet local food needs in our community. The program increases access to fruits & vegetables among vulnerable and underserved populations by partnering with a number of local clinics and non-profits. These partners distribute \$5 Veggie Vouchers to their clients that are most in need of fresh fruits and vegetables. These vouchers can be redeemed by clients at local farmers markets and farm stands during the growing season. Food producers at the markets and farm stands are reimbursed through the University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education (UNI-CEEE).

To accept Veggie Vouchers as a vendor, contact Kathryn Gilbery at kathryn.gilbery@uni.edu. You will need to fill out a W-4 tax form and a direct deposit form. Then, simply collect the vouchers at the market and initial each one you receive prior to pickup.

Double Up Food Bucks

The Double Up Food Bucks (DUFBS) program is a health incentive program that allows SNAP users to double their SNAP dollars, up to \$15 a day, on purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables at participating locations. For every dollar customers spend on fruits and vegetables, \$1 is loaded onto their DUFBS card.

Double Up Food Bucks are most effective when conducted on a market-wide basis. To qualify, you must be a centralized farmers market, independent farm stand, CSA, grocer, or full-service vendor operating in Iowa. You also **must be able to accept SNAP EBT** benefits. After applying, you must complete the required Double Up Food Bucks training provided by Iowa Healthiest State and sign and submit the Double Up Food Bucks contract and W9.

You can apply for the program [here](#).