

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program in Washington State



Description

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition provides fresh fruit and vegetables to lower income seniors and supports local farming by increasing the use of farmers markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture. Produce is also purchased directly from farmers for delivery to seniors. The program is managed by the Aging and Disability Services Administration/DSHS and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), State of Washington funds, and some local area funds.

Benefits

- Improves the health and nutritional status of low-income seniors by increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Diets high in fruits and vegetables reduce the risk of many diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. Increasing access to healthy foods is one of the priority goals of the Department of Health's Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan. In 2008, 18,278 people were served by the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.
- Provides seniors with social opportunities to be actively engaged in their local communities.
- Reduces hunger in low income seniors by providing up to \$40 in food assistance.
- Reducing hunger is also a priority goal of the Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan.
- Supports small farmers and rural economies through the promotion of Washington State Agriculture.
- Increase sales of Washington-grown fruits and vegetables - \$3,017,195 since 2001.
- Increases marketing opportunities for local farms. Last year 770 farmers participated at 82 markets in Washington State.
- Strengthens local economies and communities, 36 of 39 counties participate in the program, total farm sales in 2008 were \$649,436.
- Preserves farmland and reduces energy usage and pollutants.



How the Program Works

- **The program operates June through October.**
- **Eligible seniors (income below 185% of Federal Poverty Level, a gross income of \$1,669.63 a month for one in 2009 AND 60 and older) in one of two ways:**
- **redeem farmers market checks worth a total of \$40 for produce at authorized farmers markets or roadside stands. -OR-**
- **local produce is purchased directly from farmers and delivered to eligible homebound seniors or to meal sites and senior housing for pick up by seniors.**

• **In Clallam and Jefferson Counties, OlyCAP Senior Nutrition Program is distributing vouchers that can be redeemed at certified Farmers Markets. For any inquiries, please contact Kathy Crowley at 360-452-4726**

• **In Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties, Coastal Community Action Senior Nutrition Program is distributing bulk produce through the senior nutrition program. For any inquiries, contact Barb Huffman at the Aberdeen Senior Center, 360-533-3311.**

*****NEW For 2009 Senior Farmer Market Nutrition Program*****

Washington State produced honey is now an eligible SFMNP purchase

Administration

The program is operated by DSHS Aging and Disability Services Administration in partnership with the Department of Health, Area Agencies on Aging, Washington State Farmers Market Association, Washington Association of Senior Nutrition Programs, Department of Agriculture, Washington State University Cooperative Extension, food banks, individual farmers, and civic groups. **State Contact:** Rosemary Biggins, SFMNP Program Manager biggire@dshs.wa.gov