



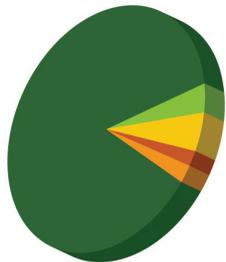
MarketMatch SNAP Incentive Program

Incentive campaign to increase farmers market SNAP transactions

The Crescent City Farmers Market, run by marketumbrella.org, implemented a successful incentive campaign to encourage SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) consumers to shop at the market. As a result, over the course of four years, SNAP transactions at the market increased dramatically.

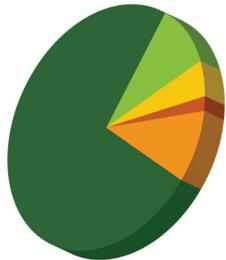
2007 Market

87% White
 4% Black
 5% Hispanic
 2% Asian
 2% Other



2011 Market

74% White
 10% Black
 5% Hispanic
 2% Asian
 9% Other



*data is per marketumbrella.org's
 2007 and 2011 NEED (Neighborhood
 Exchange Evaluation Device) studies*

“Farmers markets have great potential to help improve nutrition and combat obesity in families with limited incomes. Meeting SNAP customers halfway made a huge difference at our market.”

*Emery Van Hook
 Director of Markets,
 Crescent City Farmers Market*

Challenge:

Incentivizing SNAP Consumers. Beginning in 2005, our market took strides to accommodate SNAP consumers by purchasing a point-of-sale wireless device and instituting a wooden-token scrip system, but we discovered that improved access does not by itself engage and attract individuals and families on public assistance. Farmers markets, with limited hours and locations, can seem foreign and inconvenient, and adopting healthy eating practices can be intimidating, especially for those on limited incomes.

Solutions:

Matching Dollars and Effective Marketing. Beginning in 2008, we raised philanthropic dollars to stage annual 8-12 week incentive campaigns. We matched each SNAP dollar shoppers spent, up to the first \$25 per visit. We conducted grassroots and multimedia marketing to advertise these matching dollars, and we set up an in-market welcome station to orient new shoppers to the market.

Impact:

Increased SNAP Transactions and Dollars. SNAP spending has increased steadily, for a cumulative 424% dollar increase (2008-2011). Also, SNAP consumers are using their EBT (electronic benefit transfer) SNAP funds at the market not only during incentive season but throughout the rest of the year. SNAP consumers are learning how enjoyable and affordable it is to purchase fresh, healthy, local products directly from local farmers and fishers.

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Case Study Details:

In 2008, the Crescent City Farmers Market (CCFM) had had SNAP electronic benefit transfer (EBT) capabilities for several years—since 2005—but SNAP receipts had remained flat; SNAP consumers simply did not see the Market as a place to buy groceries. There are several reasons: From 1995 to 2005, most farmers markets, which were largely cash-based, were unable to accept the recently introduced EBT food assistance. The idea that farmers markets are not places to shop for groceries had a full decade to take hold. Also, farmers markets' sometimes inconvenient and often limited hours daunted many shoppers. Finally, many people in poverty also live in urban "food deserts," where fresh, locally grown food is uncommon and the prospect of shopping for unprocessed produce and preparing it can be intimidating.

As a result, marketumbrella.org decided to use financial incentives to stimulate SNAP spending at the farmers market and so encourage food-vulnerable families and individuals to improve food knowledge and nutrition. We decided to offer MarketMatch for SNAP; for every SNAP dollar spent, the market offered customers another dollar, up to \$25 per visit. Thus, during the 8–12 week incentive campaign period, customers could get \$50 worth of produce for \$25 SNAP dollars. We hoped that this reward would be substantial enough to change consumer behavior and encourage shoppers to take the risk of venturing into a new context to buy food.

With support from the Ford Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation, marketumbrella.org launched its campaign to attract SNAP consumers to the Crescent City Farmers Market. We had an incentive program, and to make it work, we needed to get word out, so we devoted \$18,000 to outreach and marketing: advertisements on bus shelters and gospel and Spanish-language radio stations, as well as informational flyers distributed via community partners and health agencies.

OBSERVATION:

We noticed that the Market drew very few SNAP consumers.

HYPOTHESIS:

If we provide SNAP consumers with a financial incentive to shop at farmers markets, they will come; once present, they will shop. If their experiences are positive, they will return and become part of the farmers market community.

DESIGN/MATERIALS:

Wooden tokens, EBT-capable system, flyers, surveys, signage, staff time, strategic partners in public health.

PROCEDURE:

Raise philanthropic dollars for matching funds. Conduct outreach and marketing campaign to attract SNAP consumers. Train vendors and staff in SNAP rules, EBT process, and customer service. Offer shoppers dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$25 per visit, during 8–12 week incentive period. Welcome and briefly orient SNAP shoppers. Conduct micro-surveys to collect key MarketMatch data.

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RESULTS:

The MarketMatch incentive campaign succeeded in bringing SNAP consumers to the market. SNAP redemptions increased substantially.

CONCLUSION:

Incentive campaigns can expand market demographics; increase SNAP redemptions; bring repeat SNAP shoppers into the market community; and improve nutrition for food-vulnerable individuals and families by improving their access to fresh, local produce, introducing them to new foods, and increasing culinary knowledge.

NOTES:

The CCFM, like all markets, is a platform for learning about food (thanks to direct contact with knowledgeable shoppers and farmers). During a 2012 FEED (Food Environment Evaluation Device) study,

- 72% of CCFM adult shoppers indicated that they were introduced to new foods at the farmers market.
- 81% of CCFM adult shoppers indicated that the farmers market has influenced the way they shop elsewhere.

At the Market's welcome tent, we used a color-coordinated campaign brand on signage welcoming newcomers. Staff introduced themselves and the MarketMatch program, exchanged SNAP EBT dollars for our Market scrip (wooden tokens), and handed out micro-surveys to collect data on the age of SNAP cardholders, their ZIP Codes, modes of transport, and means by which they heard about the match.

The number of transactions went from 332 in 2008 (without incentives) to 729 in 2009 (with incentives). The next year, there were 1,381 transactions, and 1,545 in 2011—a 465% increase since the incentive program launched. The dollar value of the transactions has gone up from \$7574 in 2008 to \$39,664 in 2011.

Also, the average sales amount has increased from \$22.81 in 2008 to \$25.67 in 2011. This places SNAP transactions at just below the national supermarket average of purchase amounts per visit (\$26.78). This means that SNAP shoppers are spending much as supermarket shoppers do and that the Market has gone beyond "event shopping" to serve basic grocery needs. Success is also determined by repeat shoppers. Over the 3 years, on average 43% of shoppers return to CCFM more than once during the MarketMatch campaign. The median number of return visits is 3.

We are also encouraged by how MarketMatch is helping to change the demographics of the Market to more closely match the population of the city. MarketMatch has helped us reach out during the post-Katrina recovery and during difficult economic times to say, "You are welcome here at the Market."

We have spent \$10,000 of grant money each year on MarketMatch, but have spent the dollars more quickly each year (in 2009, 4 months; 2010, 3 months; 2011, 2 months). The message that the CCFM is a good value is reaching SNAP consumers.

Further Resources:

marketumbrella.org offers consulting and training services as well as technical assistance in conducting incentive campaigns. Contact us at help@marketumbrella.org to learn more.

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