

WIC FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM GUIDELINES SUMMER 2016

GOALS

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) has dual goals. One goal is to improve the nutritional status of WIC participants by issuing coupons to them for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. A second goal is to stimulate business for the local farmers and create a greater awareness of the farmers' market. The program operates in thirty-six (36) counties across North Carolina.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for issuance of FMNP coupons, a participant must be:

- Currently certified in the WIC Crossroads system and eligible to receive WIC on that day;
- A child who is at least two years old at the time of issuance and who has not reached his/her fifth birthday; or
- A woman who is
 - ✓ Pregnant,
 - ✓ Postpartum,
 - ✓ Partially-breastfeeding, or
 - ✓ Breastfeeding

DESCRIPTION OF ELIGIBLE FOODS

Coupons may be used at authorized Farmers' Markets for any fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

FMNP coupons **cannot** be redeemed for peanuts, honey, jelly, jam, eggs, baked goods, plants, flowers, or other non-food items, or items not grown by local farmers.

INFORMATION TO GIVE TO FMNP PARTICIPANTS

Each household should be given the FMNP participant flyer that describes how to use the coupons and the locations of nearby participating farmers' markets.

Also use the flyer to explain the program to participants, including the following information:

- Purpose of program
- Description of eligible foods
- How to use coupons at authorized markets
- Restriction on coupons
- Expiration dates for coupons
- Descriptions of participating farmers' markets and operating hours
- Location of nearest market(s) and transportation information

Applicable nutrition education material should also be distributed to coupon recipients.

USING COUPONS AT FARMERS' MARKETS

Participants may use coupons with authorized farmers at any participating farmers' market. Authorized farmers will have a poster indicating they accept WIC FMNP coupons. Each coupon is worth \$4.00; no change is given for coupon purchases. Multiple coupons can be used together for a single purchase.

Participants must use the coupons between the "First Date to Spend" and the "Last Date to Spend". They cannot be used at grocery stores or roadside farm stands.

ISSUANCE OF COUPONS

- 1) Coupon issuance at the start of the season should begin upon notification from the State WIC Agency.
- 2) Coupons are issued in sets of six. Each participant receives a total of \$24 worth of coupons on a one-time basis. Participants can only receive one set of coupons per year.
- 3) The participant/parent/proxy must sign the signature pad for issuance.
- 4) If the participant/parent/proxy should receive the coupons, but not sign for them, write "RCVD BY (Name of Recipient)" where the signature should be and initial and date it.
- 5) Instruct the participant/parent/proxy to sign the coupons at the participating farmers' market. Only a single signature is required, at the point of purchase.
- 6) A designated WIC proxy may pick up coupons.
- 7) Coupons cannot be mailed to participants.

CHECK STOCK/COUPON SECURITY

Check stock and unclaimed coupons must be kept in a locked storage area. Local Agency management staff must ensure that the key to the unclaimed coupons/check stock storage area is in a secure place, accessible to a controlled group of individuals.

COUPON REPLACEMENT

Do not replace issued coupons which participants report as lost, stolen or damaged.

PROGRAM MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

A farmers' market coordinator from the State WIC Agency will monitor at least 50% of the participating Local WIC Agencies during the course of the summer to review program procedures and discuss program issues with local staff.

Failure to comply with FMNP regulations, such as failing to follow procedures for issuing coupons, selling coupons for cash, theft, or other actions intended to produce illegal financial gain, may be violations of Federal or State law, and violators may be prosecuted.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

During or following the coupon issuance period, your Local WIC Agency may be monitored regarding program operations and impact. Surveys are completed by Local WIC Agency staff and a sample of farmers and program participants at the end of the season.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Local WIC Agencies are required to document participant complaints as well as farmer/market manager complaints that are directed to the Local WIC Agency. These should be recorded on the FMNP complaint form and kept on file. A copy must be sent to the State WIC Agency to assure resolution of the complaint. The complaint file will be reviewed as part of the monitoring visits.

QUESTIONS???

System-related questions regarding issuance should be directed to the NSB Customer Service Desk at 919-707-5795.

Programmatic questions should be directed to Gerell Smith at gerell.smith@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-707-5748.