



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 15, 2020

Wolf Administration: Farmers Market Nutrition Program Connects Hungry Pennsylvanians with Fresh, Local Food

Harrisburg, PA – At the new Allison Hill Farmers Market in Harrisburg today, the Departments of Agriculture, Aging and Health reminded Pennsylvania's low-income seniors and WIC recipients to use their vouchers from the Pennsylvania Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to purchase fresh, local fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farmers markets and farm stands across the commonwealth.

"In a state as agriculturally rich as Pennsylvania, no one should go hungry. The way this program connects farmers directly with individuals in need to provide fresh, local, nourishment is ideal," said Agriculture Secretary Redding. "COVID-19 has created a broad community of need in Pennsylvania – but our food assistance programs, like FMNP, were designed for times like these. I encourage everyone with vouchers to use them, go pick up some local comfort food. And know that you're supporting a local farm family by redeeming your vouchers."

From June through November, the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs provide low-income seniors and eligible participants in the WIC program with vouchers to purchase Pennsylvania-grown fruits, vegetables, and fresh-cut herbs from approved farm markets and farm stands across the commonwealth. In an effort to protect vulnerable Pennsylvanians and effectively mitigate against COVID-19, vouchers are distributed to participants via mail from WIC clinics and Area Agencies on Aging.

"Older adults who suffer from food insecurity have inadequate diets, a higher risk of depression and other poor health outcomes. Programs such as the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program make it possible for vulnerable adults, 60 years of age and over, to access nutritious foods and help them live healthy lives," said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. "I urge all older Pennsylvanians to contact their local Area Agency on Aging for any assistance they require to receive their free vouchers, and to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines when visiting these markets."

To be eligible, seniors must be 60 years old by December 31, 2020 and have incomes that do not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty level, which is currently \$23,606 per year for a single person or \$31,894 for a household of two. Eligible seniors can contact their local [Senior FMNP Agency](#) for additional information regarding how to apply for vouchers. Women and children ages 1-4 who are participating in WIC are eligible to receive vouchers under the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. These vouchers are being distributed to eligible recipients either through the mail or via a drop box at their local WIC agency. Each eligible recipient receives four \$6.00 checks to spend throughout the season. Participants may redeem vouchers from June 1 through November 30, 2020.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged Pennsylvanians to take precautions to protect the health and well-being of ourselves and those around us and the attention to our nutritional

needs should not stop in the midst of this crisis,” said Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine. “In addition to washing our hands and wearing a mask, it is important to eat the proper foods to maintain a healthy lifestyle. While utilizing food assistance programs like the WIC program or FMNP, Pennsylvanians have the opportunity to learn, develop and form healthy eating habits that can have life-long benefits.”

Just last year, the Department of Agriculture launched the FMNP Market Locator app for iOS and Android devices. The free app is available in the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#). Once loaded on a mobile device, users can either enable their location services on the phone or manually enter a location (city, town, zip code) to find participating markets or farm stands nearby. The app will show the market location, address, directions, phone number, and hours.

“Tri County Community Action (TCCA) is excited to have the Allison Hill Farmers Market, which provides families in our community with access to fresh, local produce through partnerships with local farmers and organizations,” said TCCA Executive Director Jennifer Wintermyer. “Knowing how important fresh produce is for a family's well-being, we encourage vendors who participate in the FMNP, and have even launched a SNAP Market Match. Meaning, families who spend \$10 of their EBT credit will receive an additional \$10 in Market tokens to use for eligible produce. The combination of FMNP, SNAP, and Market Match can make a huge impact on a family's budget and overall health, all while supporting local growers and vendors.”

The Allison Hill Farmers Market and its vendors are eligible to apply for the [Fresh Food Financing Initiative COVID-19 Relief Fund](#), announced last week by Governor Wolf, to make infrastructure improvements to effectively mitigate against COVID-19 and provide improved access to fresh, nutritious foods for the community they serve. The market would be prioritized as a result of their service to a low-income and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community.

For more information on the [Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) or other Food Security resources in Pennsylvania, visit agriculture.pa.gov/foodsecurity.

Note: Photos and video from this event will be available at PAcast.com.

MEDIA CONTACT: Shannon Powers – 717.783.2628

###