

TO: The Lawrence City Commission and the Douglas County Board of Commissioners

FROM: The Douglas County Food Policy Council

DATE: April 7, 2014

SUBJECT: SNAP MATCH AT LAWRENCE FARMERS' MARKETS

SNAP (food stamps) match programs are gaining momentum throughout the country. These programs match dollar for dollar the food assistance dollars spent at farmers' markets with additional funding from private foundations or local government. SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly known as food stamps, can be processed at local farmers' markets through an EBT (electronic benefit transfer) device. Dollar for dollar match programs allow those receiving SNAP to potentially double their spending money at local farmers' markets increasing their access to healthy, affordable food. These programs also offer the opportunity for economic development by supporting the local food producers that sell at the market.

Lawrence farmers' markets currently accept the Vision card which is the Kansas program for distribution of SNAP. Additionally, EBT machines are already available, which would allow for an easy transition into a dollar for dollar match program. SNAP usage at two Lawrence markets (Downtown Lawrence Farmers' Market and Cottin's Hardware Farmers' Market) last year was an estimated \$22,825. The initiation of a SNAP match program has the support of both the Downtown Lawrence Farmers' Market and the Cottin's Hardware Farmers' Market.

Benefits of this program to the community include:

- Increases access to healthy foods for low-income members of our community.
- Addresses the Lawrence Douglas County Health Roadmap Goal to increase our communities' access to healthy, local foods.
- Supports the 100+ small business, local food vendors at our area markets.
- Supports the economic development and small business retention goals of the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Supports the Douglas County Food Policy Council initiatives to support small farms and increase food access.
- Helps to build relationships in the community around food by breaking down some of the social stigmas around SNAP and addressing price perceptions of the farmers' markets.

Recommendation:

Partner with the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, and LiveWell Lawrence to provide the following funding level to support a SNAP Match Pilot Program for the 2014 market season (16 weeks in June-Sept). Funding is requested from:

City of Lawrence: \$10,600

Douglas County: \$10,600

LiveWell Lawrence: \$3,800

Total pilot funding for 2014: \$25,000

The \$25,000 pilot funding would provide for the following program budget:

Category:	Amount Requested:
Dollar-for-dollar matching funds.	\$21,200
Design and distribution of marketing materials.	\$1,000
Staff time for a coordinator to administer program details, track funds, and evaluate the pilot.	\$2,800
Total:	\$25,000

A pilot program in 2014 will allow us to evaluate the major challenges and opportunities and the long-term sustainability model for supporting SNAP matching at farmers' markets.

Program Administration Details:

SNAP dollar for dollar match funds would be redeemed at the EBT terminal at the farmers' market. Once the Vision card is swiped, the user would indicate the amount of SNAP funds they would like to redeem. The program will provide matching funds up to \$25.00 per day. The SNAP user would then receive the initial SNAP redemption amount as well as matching funds in the form of wooden farmers' market tokens.

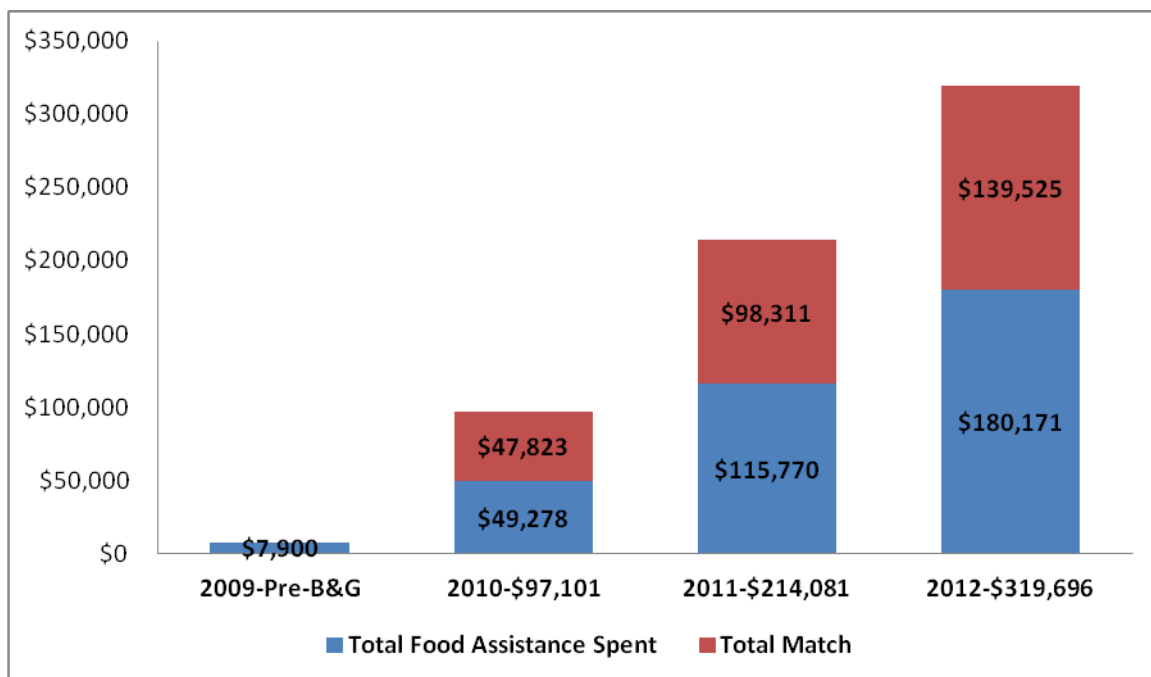
Funds to be put toward the dollar for dollar match program would be deposited into a program-specific Lawrence Farmers' Market bank account; LFM being a non-profit can administer the funds. EBT SNAP receipts will be turned in weekly from Cottin's Farmers' Market and Lawrence Farmers' Market and matching funds will be reimbursed to vendors from the LFM bank account. Weekly reimbursements will allow for monthly balance reports and program tracking.

An integral part of this program is informing SNAP customers that this pilot program is available beginning in June. Program information in both English and Spanish will be made available at current SNAP education sites such as Health Care Access and Heartland Community Health Center. Partnerships with local grocery stores such as Checkers or The Merc would allow for program promotion at the cash registers.

Program Design Background:

In designing this pilot program, we have drawn from the Kansas City Beans & Greens program which provides an excellent model for Douglas County to learn from and adapt to our community's needs.

The Kansas City Beans & Greens program, based out of Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri, is a Double Value Program which provides matching funds for those on SNAP and those receiving Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits. With the match, low income residents are encouraged to shop at the local farmers' markets. A person receiving SNAP carries an EBT card, which when used at participating markets, automatically transfers funds back into the participating markets bank accounts. The market issues market tokens for the desired amount of SNAP dollars plus the match to be used with any of the participating farmer vendors at the market. Markets must submit invoices and the weekly transaction data to the Beans & Greens offices and then Beans & Greens wire transfers the match reimbursement into their bank accounts. Markets will match SNAP up to \$25.00 per transaction per week at most markets. Beans & Greens markets have experienced dramatic increases in the sales of healthy, locally produced food since their establishment in 2010. The graph below shows total food assistance spent at the participating markets prior to Beans & Greens followed by the total food assistance spent and total match in the years 2010, 2011, and 2012.



Total sales of \$630,878 over three years translates into \$1,129,271 in Local Economic Benefit.¹

¹ Based on the USDA SNAP Multiplier of 1.79; provided by Beans & Greens market sales data report of years 2009-2012