

Farmer's Market Nutrition Program Annual Report

2012



**3E'S OF HEALTHY LIVING —
EDUCATION, EXERCISE AND EATING RIGHT**

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Charge	5
2012 Summary	6

Executive Summary

In March 2012, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) assumed administration of the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) from the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). DSHS previously administered the program under the name WIC FMNP. Due to state budget cuts at DSHS that eliminated the agency's ability to fund the state match for the program, DSHS chose to no longer administer the program. TDA developed and implemented a plan for continuing the program with no state funds and took over the program to avoid program elimination. TDA currently operates the program using federal funds and state in-kind contributions.

To accomplish this program continuation without state funding dedicated to the federally-required match, TDA developed a partnership with food banks to administer the program in their respective areas. Their administrative costs satisfy the state match requirement. Rather than distributing vouchers through WIC clinics, as was previously the case, the vouchers are administered by food banks to their clientele who meet WIC eligibility requirements. This has increased the voucher utilization percentages. At the same time, future years will see improvement on voucher issuance percentages.

The Farmer's Market Nutrition Program allows qualified participants to buy nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables using FMNP vouchers from participating farmers' market associations to improve their diets. FMNP:

- Operates in four metropolitan areas to maximize limited resources;
- provides resources to low-income women and children in the form of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and culinary herbs from farmers' markets in Texas
- increases the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by helping develop or expand domestic farmers' markets.

Due to the mid-year transition of the program between state agencies, the full scope of operational efficiencies to ensure effective distribution of vouchers will be realized in future years. In federal fiscal year 2013 TDA plans to implement several strategies to increase voucher distribution. The farmer's market program period will be extended to 6 months (April-September) and TDA will facilitate the sharing of best practices between food banks. In addition, TDA is actively researching other avenues such as the current partnership with Sustainable Food Center to effectively distribute vouchers to qualified participants.

In federal fiscal year 2012 (October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012) 3 Texas area food banks and 1 independent non-profit assisted TDA in distributing vouchers to qualified participants. On average, participants redeemed 85% of vouchers distributed, up from 29% in 2011, resulting in the redemption of over \$142,000 in vouchers.

TDA plans to take the successful redemption outcome in federal fiscal year 2012 and use the existing model to expand program distribution which would result in higher utilization of the funds. Specifically TDA has identified 10 contracting entities that will expand the administration of the program to additional communities within Texas in federal fiscal year 2013. TDA will also identify best practices that result in the successful distribution and redemption of vouchers and share relevant information with contracting entities.

Charge

Agriculture Code, Title 2. Department Of Agriculture, Chapter 15. Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, Subchapter A

Sec. 15.006. Annual Report. The department and the Texas Department of Health shall jointly prepare an annual report concerning the special nutrition program and submit a copy of the report to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives. The report must include information on the condition of the program, persons served, amount of food coupons redeemed, and funds received and expended.

2012 Federal Fiscal Year Summary

Farmer's Market Nutrition Program 2012 Summary	
Funds Received ¹	\$1,122,348.00
Funds Expended	\$182,834.77
Amount of Coupons Redeemed	\$142,432.00
Number of Persons Served	9,683

¹ For detailed information regarding funds received versus funds expended please refer to the Executive Summary