

## CHAPTER 1

# How to Use the Kentucky Farmers' Market Toolkit

This toolkit is a collection of research-based recommendations and step-by-step instructions, broken down by topic, to help farmers' markets (and their boards, members, and supporters), ensure that their market is accessible to limited-resource Kentuckians.

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### How to Use the Farmers' Market Toolkit

The toolkit is for community stakeholders, including Cooperative Extension, local farmers' markets, and community members, who are interested in increasing an existing market's sales, particularly to limited-resource audiences.

### Increasing Profits and Engaging More Customers Presentation

Change can be hard. You can use this PowerPoint © presentation to help farmers' market boards, members, and community stakeholders learn about the financial benefits of ensuring that their market is accessible to limited-resource Kentuckians.

### Farmers' Market Promotion Assessment

Before suggesting changes in a farmers' market operation, it's important to document a snapshot of current practices. This assessment tool will help in identifying opportunities for improvement, developing a plan of action, and evaluating policy,



systems, and environment changes. You can use the Farmers' Market Promotion Assessment tool, found in this section, to conduct this assessment.

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## Accepting Food and Nutrition Program Benefits

This section outlines the various food and nutrition benefits programs available to farmers' markets across Kentucky and provides information about how a market can accept each program. Programs covered are SNAP, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, WIC, and Fresh Rx for Moms. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of accepting farmers' market nutrition benefits programs at the end of this section.

## Developing Incentive Programs

In addition to accepting food and nutrition benefits at farmers' markets, markets can apply for or develop their own resources to increase the amount of money available for limited-resource customers to spend at farmers' markets. This section describes the Kentucky Double Dollars Program as well as ideas on how individual markets can provide similar programs and support with local partnerships. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of developing incentive programs at the end of this section.

## Addressing Access to Farmers' Markets

This section provides ideas on how farmers' market operations can support an increase in participation by SNAP-eligible customers. Topics covered are Fresh Stop Markets, Mobile Markets, Hours of Operation, Parking, Transportation Options, Visibility, and Handicapped Accessibility. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of farmers' market access at the end of this section.

## Market Safety

Safe customers are happy customers. This section provides an overview of both general safety recommendations and food safety requirements to ensure farmers' market customers have a good experience. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of farmers' market safety at the end of this section.

## Promoting Your Farm Business

Individual farmers can increase their sales by setting up a market stall that is visually attractive. Furthermore, farmers interested in capturing more dollars from benefits programs should consider specific labeling and display techniques to make their produce more attractive to shoppers with limited resources.

## Market Promotion Resources

Advertising or "marketing" your farmers' market and all of the great resources the market can provide SNAP-eligible customers is key to increasing the market customer base. This section of the toolkit provides ideas as well as templates for advertising your farmers' market. Topics covered in this section include Building Market Awareness, Using Social Media, Advertising Affordability, Special Events and Youth Activities, and Sampling. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of market promotion activities at the end of this section.

## Establishing Community Partnerships

Building a strong network of community members and organizations that support the farmers' market is a great way to build a sustainable market. This section provides suggestions of whom and how to approach potential partners followed by examples of successful partnerships from across Kentucky. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of building community partnerships at the end of this section.

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## Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

Creating a welcoming atmosphere and providing good customer service is an excellent way to build the market customer base. This section provides ideas and examples of how markets can create an atmosphere that is open and welcoming to customers of all income levels. You can find evaluation tools to measure the impact(s) of changes to the market atmosphere and customer service at the end of this section.

## Additional Resources and References

Throughout the toolkit, many Kentucky and regional organizations are mentioned. While links are provided within the text, this section lists the names, descriptions, and websites of the many organizations that support the local food systems in various ways. This toolkit began with a literature review, and the references section provides a list of all resources accessed from that beginning throughout the process.

## Acknowledgements and Formative Research

The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (UKCES) Farmers' Market Toolkit was developed by a team of UKCES Nutrition Education Program staff members in collaboration with an advisory group. The research that led to the development of this toolkit came from focus group conversations with 81 SNAP-eligible Kentuckians in eight counties across the state. The lived experiences of these SNAP-eligible individuals, shared in the Formative Research section, was vital to informing the creation of this toolkit.

## What is the Farmers' Market Toolkit?

This toolkit is a collection of research-based recommendations broken down by topic, to help farmers' markets and all their members and supporters to ensure that their market is accessible to limited-resource Kentuckians. It contains the following pieces:

- PowerPoint© presentation and accompanying handout to establish the value of marketing to limited-resource Kentuckians
- Assessment tool to identify steps to improve ability to advertise their market to limited-resource Kentuckians
- Information on benefits programs that can increase farmers' sales by providing funding specifically to limited-resource Kentuckians to shop at farmers' markets
- Information on how markets can apply to participate in farmers' market benefit programs
- Information, tips, and best practices about how to implement those recommendations
- Evaluation resources
- Templates and other marketing tools
- Additional resources
- References

This toolkit is the result of the UK NEP Farmers' Market Social Marketing Project. The project gathered input from current research, Extension agents, farmers' market managers, farmers, community organization members, Kentucky Department of Agriculture representatives, and Nutrition Education Program assistants. Limited-resource Kentuckians willing to discuss their experiences with farmers' markets also provided input via focus groups held across the state. The quotes sprinkled throughout the toolkit are from these focus groups. More detailed

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information about the formative research can be found in the Overview Section. If you are interested, you can find a summary of the focus group results in “Acknowledgements and Formative Research” (chapter 12).

## How to Use the Farmers' Market Toolkit

The toolkit is for community stakeholders, including Cooperative Extension, local farmers' markets, and community members, who are interested in increasing an existing market's sales, particularly to limited-resource audiences. (If you are in the beginning stages of starting a farmers' market, connect with Community Farm Alliance for support. ([www.cfaky.org](http://www.cfaky.org).) Cooperative Extension agents from many different disciplines may work together to help implement the toolkit resources. These may include Agriculture and Natural Resources agents, Family and Consumer Sciences agents, Horticulture agents, 4-H Youth Development agents, Extension assistants, and even Community and Economic Development/ Fine Arts agents.

First, secure the interest of the farmers' market manager, farmers' market board, and individual members of the market. The PowerPoint© presentation “Increasing Profits and Engaging More Customers” and accompanying materials included in the toolkit may be useful in securing their interest. The Farmers' Market Promotion Assessment

is a starting point to identify opportunities for strengthening the market's ability to serve limited-resource Kentuckians. Cooperative Extension agents may want to assist the market manager or complete the assessment together with members of the market. Once you have identified opportunities for changes, you can develop a plan of action. The toolkit provides tools, tips, and best practices for implementing each step of the plan.

## Summary

1. Secure the interest of the farmers' market manager, farmers' market board, and individual members of the market to implement the program. The PowerPoint© presentation and promotional flyer included in the toolkit may be useful in securing their interest.
2. Work with the market manager and/or members of the market to conduct the Farmers' Market Promotion Assessment.
3. Once you have identified opportunities for change, work with market leadership to prioritize the areas of need to develop a plan of action.
4. Consult corresponding sections of the toolkit to identify tools, best practices, resources, and evaluation techniques for the plan of action.
5. Implement and evaluate the plan. You can find evaluation ideas in corresponding sections of the toolkit. Agents can report results of the implementation in KERS and Qualtrics.

Let's get started! Download the Marketing Presentation and Farmers' Market Promotion Assessment and start collaborating.

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