



Farmers Market Promotion Program Grants Available

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WASHINGTON, April 5, 2012 – Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking grant applicants for the 2012 Farmers Market Promotion Program.

Approximately \$10 million is available for marketing operations such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture and road-side stands. The grants, which are administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), are available through a competitive application process on www.grants.gov. The grants aim to increase the availability of local agricultural products in communities throughout the country. They will also help strengthen farmer-to-consumer marketing efforts.

"These grants will put resources into rural and urban economies, and help strengthen efforts to provide access to nutritious and affordable foods," said Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan. "This program not only supports the health and well-being of local communities but also the economic health of their farms and businesses."

Projects that expand healthy food choices in food deserts or low-income areas (where the percentage of the population living in poverty is 20 percent or above) will receive additional consideration. USDA, in coordination with the Departments of the Treasury and Health and Human Services, seeks to increase access to fresh, healthy and affordable food choices for all Americans, while expanding market opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

Information on applying for a Farmers Market Promotion Program grant will be published in the April 6, 2012, Federal Register and available online at www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP. Applications will only be accepted via grants.gov and must be received by May 21, 2012. Applications that are incomplete, hand-delivered, or sent via U.S. mail will not be considered. Applicants should start the grants.gov registration process as soon as possible to meet the deadline. Contact Carmen Humphrey, Program Manager, by phone: (202) 720-8317, or e-mail: usdafmppquestions@ams.usda.gov for more information.

Authorized by the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 and amended by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (the Farm Bill), the Farmers Market Promotion Program is in the seventh year of funding direct markets that benefit local and regional economies.

The Farmers Market Promotion Program is part of USDA's commitment to support local and regional communities. These investments are highlighted in USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF) Compass. The KYF Compass is a digital guide to USDA resources related to local and regional food systems. The Compass consists of an interactive U.S. map showing local and regional food projects and an accompanying narrative documenting the results of this work through case studies, photos and video content.

A large selection of USDA-supported programs and projects is also visible on the KYF Map, which can be displayed by theme, program, or recipient type. Both the KYF Compass and map will be regularly refreshed with new data and case studies.

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