

# CalFresh/EBT Toolkit for CSA Farmers and Farm Stands

## Why? ...Should you sign up?

### Helps your farm and the local food system:

- Expands your customer base: 35,000 Sonoma County residents receive CalFresh and spend \$5.4 million in benefits every month<sup>1</sup>.
- Increases the buy-in of current customers
- Provides recognition and free outreach from Sonoma County Health and Human Services
- **WHY NOW?** Makes use of a grant that pays for wireless Point of Sale (POS) devices to direct market farmers (\$1000 value)

### Benefits low-income consumers:

- Improves access to fresh, local, nutritious produce
- Provides an opportunity to enhance nutrition education and food literacy
- Makes a direct connection to YOU, their farmer

## Who? ...Would this work for your farm?

Your farm customers receive their food in face-to-face encounters:

- The EBT card must be physically swiped by an authorized staff member or volunteer.
- It may, however, be swiped for two subsequent CSA boxes up to 14 days in advance<sup>2</sup>.

You expect to have a minimum of \$100 in EBT sales per month during your harvest season.

- Minimum requirement is waived the first year.
- If you sell at a farmers' market that accepts EBT, those sales cannot be counted toward the monthly sales requirement since you must participate with the market's EBT system.

## How to get started?

- Contact CA Department of Social Services EBT Specialist Dianne Padilla-Bates before you start the process. She will answer questions, provide assistance and let you know when you've been approved.
- Gather your documentation (see below).
- Go to this link to start the application.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers-0](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers-0)
- Allow yourself 1-2 hours to complete the application.

### **Dianne Padilla-Bates**

Farmers' Market Specialist  
CA Dept of Social Services

Ph: 916-654-1396 / Fx: 916-657-2207

[dianne.padilla-bates@dss.ca.gov](mailto:dianne.padilla-bates@dss.ca.gov)



## Documentation you'll need:

- SS Cards & Photo IDs of all owners, partners, shareholders and spouses if community property
- Business License
- EIN Number
- Prior year's retail sales

## What will FNS do with this information?

FNS will verify your information with the IRS; however, all of the information you provide to be certified is for that purpose only. They cannot share this information with any other department of the government.

## Clarification of application

questions: (ask Dianne with questions)

Some of the terminology on the application is intended for retail stores and may be confusing for direct market farms:

- Type of business entity
- Type of retail outlet: CSA & Farm Stands fit under (Farm Stand/Stall/U-Pick)
- Hours: Must indicate hours of operation even if it's only one afternoon a week

Toolkit created for Sonoma County, but applicable through out California.

## What's Next? ...After completing online application it may take 45 days until you're up and running.

- Once approved, you'll receive an email in a few days with a form to complete for your wireless POS device. After you send in the form, it will be another 10 days until you receive your device.
- You will receive your wireless device along with phone contact from FIS (the device provider) and they'll schedule a 30 minute telephone training for you.

## Spread the word:

- Sonoma County Human Services Dept. will alert CalFresh recipients that your farm accepts EBT. Contact Greg Baker 707-565-2092
- Foodies Project will promote you on their webpage and in their outreach to CalFresh recipients as well as provide answers and help with the process. Contact Angela Wooton 707-704-1853  
[www.foodiesproject.com/foodie-farmers](http://www.foodiesproject.com/foodie-farmers).
- CA Dept. of Social Services will provide free EBT/ CalFresh posters for use at Farm. Contact Dianne Padilla-Bates (see front page)
- Ecology Center helps Farmers' Markets and hopes to include CSAs in the future [ecologycenter.org](http://ecologycenter.org).
- Don't forget your farm supporters: include in CSA Newsletter, farm communications, social media.

## Collaborate with a CBO (Community Based Organization):

Consider partnering with a CBO to assist you with:

- Administering pick-up
- Collecting payment via POS device; and/or
- Managing incentive program & donated funds

Examples of CBOs to work with:

- Non-Profits

Petaluma Bounty - Suzi Grady 707-775-3663

[www.petalumabounty.org](http://www.petalumabounty.org)

Foodies Project [www.foodiesproject.com](http://www.foodiesproject.com)

- Faith-Based Organizations

Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaboration

[www.interfaithfood.org](http://www.interfaithfood.org)

- Community Clinics/Health Centers



## Consider an Incentive Program:

- CalFresh users report the cost of locally grown food as a barrier for participation and farms report higher attrition rates for CalFresh users. Incentive Programs have been found to lower this barrier.
- Collaborating with a CBO such as Foodies Project or Petaluma Bounty help farms by managing donated funds. (See Field Studies below.)

## Field Study: Laguna Farm - CSA & Farm Store

- Laguna Farm is a 400 member CSA & Farm Store.
- CalFresh members pay for their boxes at every pick-up and must pick-up at the Farm Store.
- The EBT card is swiped at pick-up; first CSA box is free and then each weekly payment covers the subsequent week's box.
- A \$5 *incentive* is offered for \$20 in EBT purchases.
- After the Laguna Farm became EBT certified in 2013, some paying members switched to EBT; some prior members rejoined the CSA.

## Field Study: Singing Frogs Farm - CSA only

- Singing Frogs Farm is a Year-Round Single-Farm CSA with 140 members.
- CalFresh members are billed every two weeks and must pick-up at the farm; the rest of CSA members are billed quarterly or annually.
- A 20% *Incentive Program* is offered CalFresh members, i.e. they pay \$20 with their EBT card and receive a \$26 box.
- The *Incentive Program* is funded by donations from other members: when they cancel a box, the value of their box is donated to this fund.

1 County of Sonoma Human Services Department, Press Release, 1/17/14

2 SNAP Provisions of the Agricultural Act of 2014, P.L. 113-79 via Dianne Padilla-Bates