



Growing Your Grassroots: Employing Local Community Leaders for SNAP & Incentive Outreach

Questions that were answered live can be viewed in the recording of the webinar.

Q: We are in Lincoln Park, Michigan, outside of Detroit, we tried to apply for the Food Navigator program a number of years ago. 19.9% of my city is below the poverty line. However, our market is located in a parking lot that is in an area that is not considered low income. So we don't qualify despite the neighborhood across the street being low income. How do we qualify or get funding to have a Food Navigator at our market? Or do we look at other grants and funding?

A: Over the years, qualifying sites have evolved. In the beginning, we were only able to engage with markets within qualifying census tracts. We are now working through some additional qualification methods with our SNAP-Ed Partner organizations to increase the number of markets that could qualify under SNAP-Ed funding. It's possible you could work with a local SNAP-Ed Partner org and work through site qualification in that way.

We are also working to make the program available for organizations or markets to implement the program outside of the SNAP-Ed model if you have access to other funding sources.

If you have more specific questions, I'd recommend reaching out to resources@michiganfitness.org so we can be sure to answer all your questions.

Q: Rachael Sommer: Did I hear correctly that the FM funds the ambassadors? How are these funds raised by the FM?

A: Thank you for your question. In our case the program was funded by a grant from the CDC. However, the program could be funded via FINI (now GusSchumacher) grants. Farmers' Markets funded the stipend of \$160 total, during the duration of the program (3 months - in summer). We could provide more info on this during our TA sessions.

The farmers' market covered the cost of a stipend for ambassadors (essentially they would cover 10/week for ambassadors to buy fruits and vegetables). CWRU paid ambassadors hourly about 5 hr/week



Q: Could either of the panelists speak more about their strategies and processes for recruiting ambassadors?

A: For the Food Navigator program, our goal was to reach a community member that was already shopping at the market they would be attached to, with a perk of them already understanding the food assistance programs and a knowledge of how they worked within the market. The recruiting/hiring process during the initial pilot phase was also performed by MIFMA, during that phase we did request support from the Market Managers during the process.

We also reached out to community partners such as community development corporations, Job and Family Services, Block Clubs, our advisory board for the center, newsletter, on foot in the neighborhoods we worked in ,, fliers at places like Libraries, day cares, corner stores, elementary and high school, social services

Q: My question is for Fresh Link-- can you clarify how much the ambassadors are paid and where the funding comes from?

A: We had a grant to pay ambassadors an hourly rate - we used a 3rd party to manage the payments (deposits to accounts and taxes etc). In the end, it was about 19/hr with the charge we had to pay to the 3rd party company most ambassadors worked 5 -10 hr week.

Q: Did you work with the vendors at all to make their stalls more welcoming/accessible to Fresh Link participants?

A: Ambassadors and market managers worked closely together. The ambassador booth was next to the market manager booth so once the customer arrived they could be ready to help them make sure they knew how to use SNAP, SNAP Incentives, etc and introduce them to vendors. Diane, for example, might show them what produce was really good and tasted well that day and introduce customers to vendors. They also provided education recipes food demos and games at the market