

# LET'S TALK Farmers Markets



## HEALTHY FOOD IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT TO OVERALL HEALTH.

Unfortunately, many Minnesotans do not have access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, which makes it difficult to live a healthy lifestyle. Improving access to healthy foods, particularly for low-income residents, is considered one key way to improve population health and reduce health inequities.

## THE ENDLESS BENEFITS OF MARKETS



### FRESH & AFFORDABLE

The food available for purchase at your neighborhood farmers market is fresh, affordable and locally grown.



### FRESH & ACCESSIBLE

Many farmers markets accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, making it easier for people with lower incomes to buy more fresh produce and offer healthy options to their families.



### FRESH & LOCAL

Shopping at farmers markets supports local farmers and growers, which has a positive impact on the overall community and local economy.



### FRESH & SOCIAL

Farmers markets provide an opportunity to create connections among other community members. Statistically, people visiting a farmers market have between 15 and 20 social interactions, versus one to two at a traditional grocery store<sup>1</sup>.





## REAL STORIES OF MINNESOTANS PULLING TOGETHER

At the University of Minnesota — Morris, only 16 percent of its college students ate the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. In addition, a 2007 College Student Health Survey found that 40 percent of UMM students were classified as overweight, obese or very obese. UMM officials found that cost and limited access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables made it difficult for students to eat healthy. Over a five-year period, University of Minnesota — Morris Healthy Eating addressed this issue through several tactics, including increasing awareness around local farmers markets by reaching out to low-income and Latino populations, and offering free transit for senior citizens to the markets.

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## STEPS FOR ACTION

### ✔ SUPPORT

Support local efforts that offer people with lower incomes or transportation issues access to the market.

### ✔ EXPLORE

Check to see if your local market accepts SNAP/ EBT. If they don't, reach out to the market manager to discuss potential opportunities to expand access.

### ✔ SPARK CURIOSITY

Farmers markets are great destinations for the whole family. Offering children a window into where their food comes from often sparks curiosity and adventurousness for even the pickiest of eaters, which can help establish healthy eating habits for the future.

#### Resources:

<http://www.nutrition.gov/farmers-markets>

<http://minnesotagrown.com/member-directory/>

<http://www.misa.umn.edu/FarmFoodResources/LocalFood/AccessToLocalFood/SNAPFarmersMarkets/index.htm>

<sup>1</sup>[http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/WhyMarkets\\_August2013.jpg](http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/WhyMarkets_August2013.jpg)