



End Hunger Connecticut! partners with CT Department of Agriculture to increase SNAP customer access to CT Grown farm products at farmers' markets

East Hartford, Conn. – End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!), a statewide anti-hunger organization dedicated to eliminating hunger and food insecurity across Connecticut, is expanding its CT Fresh Match SNAP-doubling program this farmers' market season in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg).

EHC!'s CT Fresh Match program is a 1-to-1 reimbursement program that allows Connecticut farmers' market outlets to double customer purchases made via Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. CT Fresh Match allows SNAP households to stretch their benefits, incorporate more local, fresh foods into their diets, and support local farms and growers.

EHC!'s new contractual partnership with the CT DoAg, funded through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), provides funding for several key opportunities to expand the CT Fresh Match program. The partnership will grow the program statewide by onboarding new market outlets in every county to participate in SNAP-doubling; help EHC! streamline operations to make the program brand widely known across Connecticut; and increase access to CT Grown farm products for SNAP households.

"We are thrilled and grateful to be working with the CT Department of Agriculture to expand the CT Fresh Match program in ways that will further support Connecticut families and farmers," said Julieth Callejas, EHC! Interim Executive Director. "This partnership gives us the chance to truly take this program statewide. Adding more markets to our program allows us to reach SNAP households with increased access to local, healthy foods in every corner of Connecticut."

As part of the CT Grown focus, the partnership also allows for the debut of a new program feature that EHC! has named "*True Match*," meaning market outlets will be able to – for the first time in the program's history – double purchases of **all** SNAP-eligible items. In addition to fruits and vegetables, this includes items such as meats, dairy, eggs, honey and jams, baked goods, herbs, and seeds and plants that produce food.

"Utilizing the ARPA dollars to fund increased access to CT Grown farm products provides increased buying power to households at a time when maximizing their food budget is imperative," said Bryan P. Hurlburt, Connecticut Department of Agriculture Commissioner. "Collaborating with EHC! to bolster their existing programming in a more robust effort will benefit both families and farmers throughout the state."

EHC! has operated its CT Fresh Match program for the last four years at over 20 Connecticut farmers' markets and farmstands as a subrecipient of a federal FINI grant (now called GusNIP), in partnership with the non-profit, Farm Fresh Rhode Island. Per the grant's goals and guidance to increase access to healthy fruits and vegetables for eligible low-income households, the funding supports SNAP-doubling of produce *only* at farmers' markets.

“Over the past four years, the markets participating in our CT Fresh Match program have seen exponential growth in spending for doubled fruits and vegetables for SNAP customers,” said Molly Stadnicki, EHC! Community Resource Coordinator & CT Fresh Match Program Manager. “While fresh produce remains a huge priority for our program, launching *True Match* gives SNAP customers choice and increases access to so many of the other healthy, locally sourced items markets have to offer.”

There are currently 28 Connecticut farmers’ markets, farm stands, and mobile markets participating in CT Fresh Match. Prospective market outlets can include farmers’ markets, farm stands, mobile markets, CSAs, or any other direct-marketing farm establishment that is already set-up to accept SNAP/EBT benefits as payment. ***EHC! expects to release full eligibility details and application instructions for interested market outlets in July.*** For other questions about the CT Fresh Match program, please contact mstadnicki@endhungerct.org.

What current CT Fresh Match program participants are saying:

Bridgeport Farmers’ Market Collaborative – Seven markets/farm stands across Bridgeport, CT

"In Bridgeport, the CT Fresh Match program has benefited people all over the city, as our seven farmers markets are held in nutritionally insecure neighborhoods and at both hospitals," said Takina Pollock Shafer, Program Manager at the Bridgeport Farmers’ Market Collaborative. “Food can be medicine, and CT Fresh Match ensures people can get more of the nutrients we all need regardless of cost.”

Ellington Farmers’ Market – Ellington, CT

“The funding provided by CT Fresh Match has helped us to keep up with the growing regional need for access to fresh, local, healthy food,” representatives from the Ellington Farmers’ Market wrote in a statement. “In order to continue to foster local economic development, to fund charitable programs, and to provide educational outreach, we must rely on help from sponsors and partners. The CT Fresh Match program gives us the power to do more for the people and farmers that we serve.”

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End Hunger Connecticut! is a statewide anti-hunger and food security organization. By focusing on advocacy, outreach, education, and research, EHC! serves as a comprehensive anti-hunger resource for policymakers, community organizations, and low-income families. Our mission is to end hunger in Connecticut through legislative and administrative advocacy, outreach, and public education. EHC! is committed to providing and sustaining a culture of safety, offering clear expectations and a non-judgmental environment rooted in integrity, reliability, and generosity in the workplace. Learn more about EHC!’s work at www.endhungerct.org and on all social media platforms (@endhungerct).

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