

## **Sustainable Farming Education and Marketing Project for New Immigrant Farmer**

The project seeks to: increase economic viability and social equity for new immigrant, low-income Spanish-speaking families through effective land-based training and marketing support of farm products. It will increase new immigrant farmer knowledge of the climate and produce economy, and help farmers to successfully grow and market produce. Project goals include attracting 500-1,000 more customers per week, primarily low-income and senior residents, through the implementation of EBT/debit technology to increase awareness of the Forest Grove Farmers Market in Forest Grove, Oregon, and enhancing the health of the local community by promoting environmentally sustainable farming and increasing access to fresh and wholesome foods.

[Final Report](#)

## **FMPP Final Report-November 2007-February 2009**

### **Project Summary & Approach**

Adelante Mujeres, located in Washington County, OR, implemented a Sustainable Farming Education Project for low-income Latino farmers. This unique project is the first of its kind in Oregon. By providing an intensive, practical and comprehensive training program to aspiring farmers the project advances social equity, economic viability and environment sustainability. Adelante Mujeres also manages the Forest Grove Farmers Market which serves as an outlet for the produce these farmers grow. It implemented EBT technology while increasing its marketing effort to focus on low-income residents who often lack access to fresh, affordable produce. The project took place over 15 months, implementation of the EBT technology occurred on Opening Day of the 2008 Market Season, farmers were prepared for the 2008 season, and foot traffic doubled through the Market in the 2008 season. Alejandro Tecum, Director of the MicroEnterprise program was the primary project manager. He was supported by Gina Bell, Market Manager and Bridget Cooke, Executive Director. The project responded to the difficult situation of immigrant families and the desire to make the Market a sustainable entity while providing access to fruits and vegetables for the 27% of Forest Grove residents who live below the poverty line.

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

The goals of the project:

- increase produce at future markets by increasing new immigrant farmer knowledge of the climate and produce economy
- provide effective land-based training
- increase economic equity for low-income Latino families through marketing support of farm products
- to attract 500-1000 more customers, mostly low-income and senior residents by increased marketing and implementation of an EBT/debit system at the market

#### *Primary activity*

- Following completion of our 22 week intensive training course on April 7<sup>th</sup>, we provided mentoring services to five family farming businesses during the summer months. All five sold at the Forest Grove Farmers Market in addition to selling at one local restaurant and in three apartment complexes. These new farmers averaged \$180 a week during the market season which added an additional 36% to their monthly income.
- Participation in the Valley Individual Development Account program has proceeded very well. Three families have completed savings, two for business advancement and one for home repairs. Ten families continue monthly savings with a 3 to 1 match towards their goals, and 17 families are on our waiting list for 2009. We are also partnering with Bienestar Farmworker Housing to provide IDA's to their residents.

### *Secondary Activity*

- New Farmers Market logo created by local graphic designer. Accompanied all marketing pieces and began to create a recognizable brand for the Forest Grove Farmers Market.
- Token program (EBT) implementation at Forest Grove Farmers Market for 2008 season, including purchase of a wireless debit/EBT machine and tokens.
- Distributed 4000 fliers to households in Forest Grove area advertising the Farmers Market with special focus on our new EBT program.
- Hired 1 contract staff member to run the debit/EBT machine at the Market.
- Weekly crowd counts at Farmers Market reflect 700-1000 additional customers per week attending the 2008 Farmers Market thanks to increased marketing, especially higher numbers of low-income and senior shoppers from the area.
- Customers spent almost \$5000 using the token program. 25.8% of token sales were EBT card services. The remaining 74.2% of token purchases used debit/credit card services which subsidizes the EBT program.
- Assessment of policies as well as marketing techniques revealed that the program was somewhat successful in getting fresh, local produce in the hands of low-income and senior members of the population.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Since we increased the number of market vendors we needed to negotiate with the City of Forest Grove and downtown Forest Grove businesses to move one block onto Main Street. This took a considerable amount of time and cut into time we had scheduled for outreach to low-income, minority and senior neighborhoods. Site stabilization needs to include growth of Markets because of increased marketing efforts.
- We did not effectively track how customers found out about the market and EBT technology. This would be helpful for future marketing and will be implemented in the future. It would be helpful to have resources about how to track this information.

### **Additional Information-Future Project Plans**

#### *Primary Activity*

- We will continue offering our Organic Training Course and providing mentoring services to Spanish speaking migrant immigrants.
- We are seeking funding to reach existing Latino farmers in our area. There is no existing database that identifies how many and who these farmers are, but we do have contacts with several. We will develop and conduct a needs assessment of existing Latino farmers and begin offering services and trainings based on needs expressed.

#### *Secondary Activity*

- If resources allow, we believe we can do a much better job of attracting potential low-income, minority and senior customers through enhanced marketing and

partnerships to facilitate senior transportation. We have the marketing plan developed but need staff time to carry it out, including increasing our volunteer support for marketing activities. We are looking into options for funding this marketing work and coordinating senior transportation for the 2009 market season.

- After assessing the Token Program we will continue to offer EBT/credit/debit services as it not only increased individual and overall sales at the Market but also enhanced the health of the local community by increasing access to fresh and wholesome foods.
- We made a “how-to” guide for other markets who are interested in implementing EBT technology at their markets. Most information is relevant to Oregon markets but could prove helpful to others as well. (See attachment)
- The Oregon Farmers Market Association website [www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org](http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org) is an excellent resource for setting up EBT technology.
- We also compiled a list of places we sent marketing information to reach out to low-income and senior populations. (See attachment)

**Contact Person**

Primary Project Contact: Alejandro Tecum 503.992.2041 [atecum@adelantemujeres.org](mailto:atecum@adelantemujeres.org)

Secondary Project Contact: Gina Bell 503.992.0078 [gbell@adelantemujeres.org](mailto:gbell@adelantemujeres.org)

Executive Director: Bridget Cooke 503.992.0078 [bcooke@adelantemujeres.org](mailto:bcooke@adelantemujeres.org)

## **How To Guide for the Token Program**

### **Before the Season Starts**

There are a couple of steps that need to be taken before the season starts in order to make all the transactions necessary so this program can run smoothly.

- Create vendor packets for all the vendors that are going to be at the market. It is important to have a couple of extras because each week there are new vendors coming to the market. This packet needs to include:
  - Information letter which explains the whole process and the different types of tokens available.
  - Contract for the vendors to sign in order to protect the Farmers Market from violations of the Food Stamp regulations.
  - Vendor Reimbursement form for the vendors to fill out at the end of each market day.
- Prepare signage for the Market in order to guarantee that people know about the service being offered and how to use it. A couple ideas we used this year:
  - “How To” sheet- divided into four steps and put on the large welcome sign and on a sandwich board in the middle of the market.
  - Signs at the information booth.
  - This is something that defiantly can be expanded for future with new and creative ideas.
- Prepare documents for accounting. Make sure you have the tools (see OFMA’s website).

### **Marketing the Program**

This is also a component of the program that can be expanded in a number of ways. These are the steps we took to market the program this year which worked out well.

- Give a flier to the local DHS office so they can pass them out to people applying for or picking up food stamps.
  - Robin and Ruby are two women who work at the Hillsboro office that were helpful- [robin.shultz@state.or.us](mailto:robin.shultz@state.or.us), [Ruby.caret-WIRFS@state.or.us](mailto:Ruby.caret-WIRFS@state.or.us)
  - You can also work with Nancy Weed who works with Oregon Hunger Task Force- [nancy@oregonhunger.org](mailto:nancy@oregonhunger.org).
- Give fliers to local Food Bank pick-up sites to include in their food boxes.
  - Martha Ochoa- Gives out Food boxes Thursdays to 35-60 families a week. 503-359-2598.
  - Barbara Chapman at St. Anthony’s about 50 boxes a week. 503-357-9647.
- Distribute flyers to everyone on the EBT Marketing Contacts and Locations sheet.

### **Market Day Procedure**

- Come to the office and pick up all the supplies necessary for the market day and bring it to the information booth to set up.
  - Information Binder
  - POS Machine- make sure it is fully charged
  - Signs to advertise the POS machine

- Tokens- there will be approximately 150 of each type of token in circulation. If you need more tokens you can check them out of the “bank” but it is important to mark that change on the accounting sheets.
- Vendor envelopes (this includes the envelope, the Vendor Reimbursement form and their check from the week before)
- Hand out Vendor Reimbursement Envelopes to all the vendors before the opening bell.
- Set up your space at the Market with signs and all the other materials you may need throughout the Market Day.

### **During the Market**

- Promote Debit/Food Stamp Services at the Market
  - Work with vendors and volunteers to create signage and to promote the electronic services throughout the market day.
  - Word of mouth is key, so talk about the services whenever you can.
- Transaction Requests
  - Debit Transactions **Burgundy**- \$1.00 transaction fee which is used to subsidize the Food Stamp program.
  - Credit Transactions **Blue**- \$1.00 service fee which is used to subsidize the Food Stamp program.
  - EBT Transactions **Green**- EBT tokens are \$1 and there is no minimum purchase or surcharge. Customers can only spend the tokens at the Forest Grove Farmers Market. No hot food intended to be eaten on site is allowed to be purchased with food EBT and vendors cannot give change.
- When making the transactions make sure to keep a copy of the receipts in order to check the Settlement Report at the end of the Market day.
- How to use the machine
  - Turn on the machine by holding down the green button until it lights up.
  - Select the Soft Pay option.
  - To make a sale simply swipe the card, select the type of transaction and the amount of the sale.
  - To VOID a sale
    - With Credit Cards simply hit the void button and either select the last sale or scroll through the list to find the sale you want to void.
    - With EBT and Debit you need to CREDIT THE ACCOUNT you cannot void this type of transaction. Crediting an account is an option when you slide the card.
      - This is done using the **More** button and selecting REFUND.
    - Make sure to keep the receipts for these transactions, together if possible, in order to properly track the account.
  - End of the day
    - Collect the envelopes from all the vendors with the completed vendor reimbursement form and the tokens.

- Settle the account on the POS machine. This is done by selecting the settlement button, which will complete the day's transactions and also produce a report.
  - Turn off the machine by holding down the red button until the screen is off.
- If vendors want to pay their booth fees with tokens make sure they give the tokens to Gina before they fill out their vendor reimbursement forms.

### **Accounting System**

In order to track token usage and also to guarantee that the vendors are getting properly reimbursed we have worked with partners to create an accounting system for the program. It seems more complicated than it actually is and is a great way to double check your data entry and also keeps a thorough record of all the transactions.

1. Enter the amount of tokens each vendor turns in after each market using the **Total Vendor Returns** form. You must include the total number of tokens collected for booth fees and consignment in order to account for all the different transactions.
2. Use those totals along with the totals from the settlement report in order to fill in the Market Day Transaction Page of the Food Stamp Accounting Form.
  - a. The Bank- this is the amount of tokens you take to the market each week. The first week you will want to count these but then each week after that it is the same as the End Reconciliation from the week before.
  - b. Reserve Tokens added- you only enter something in this section if you have to take new tokens out of the reserves because of high activity.
  - c. Return Tokens- this is where you enter the totals from the Total Vendor Return Form. So this is the number of each type of token that was turned in from vendors, consignment and booth fees.
  - d. Market Day Transactions- This is where you enter the amount of transactions that occurred on the machine. You can find this information easily using the Totals Section of the Transaction report printed.
  - e. Ending Reconciliation- This is the physical number of tokens that you have at the end of the day. It is important to actually count the number of tokens you have to serve as a check on the other parts of the accounting system.
  - f. After entering all of this information in the spreadsheet you should end up with a zero in the blue box titled Overage/(shortage). If this number is not zero it is important to go back and double check your work
3. Once you have finished the Market Day Transaction Page you need to fill in the Market Day Transaction Report Summary which keeps all the information for the whole season in one spread sheet.
  - a. On this spread sheet you are going to fill in the yellow boxes and the Excel sheet should calculate the information in the green boxes.
  - b. You take the information directly from the yellow boxes on the Market Day Transaction Page and enter them into this larger spread sheet.
  - c. This document serves as yet another check for the accounting so make sure the numbers match up.

**Vendor Reimbursement**

The final stage of the process is to reimburse the vendors for the tokens that they turned in at the end of each market. In order to cut down on the cost of writing checks and the time dedicated to the program we write checks for the first Wednesday of the month. In order to do this you simply need to email Rick Rogers, Adelante Mujeres accountant, by the Friday before with the names of the vendors and how much the check needs to be made out for. Some of the vendors do not have a bank account for their business so it is important to confirm who they want the check made out to.

# Forest Grove Farmers Market

## JOB ANNOUNCEMENT



**POSITION TITLE:** Token Program Specialist

**REPORTS TO:** Market Manager

The Forest Grove Farmers Market is a project of Adelante Mujeres, a local non-profit organization dedicated to the holistic education and empowerment of low-income Latina women and their families.

### Job Summary

This contract employee will be responsible for operating the Information Booth including the debit/food stamp machine and consignment items at the Forest Grove Farmers Market, providing excellent customer service, and maintaining accurate records. Additional duties include set up and break down the booth, machine maintenance and troubleshooting, and presenting a year-end report to the Market Manager & Board of Directors.

### Hours

4-4.5 hours/week. May 14, 2008 through October 15, 2008. The Token Program Coordinator must be able to work **every** Wednesday during the season. Evening work is required. The 4-4.5 hours per week are to be completed on Wednesdays from 3:45pm-8:15pm.

### Major Duties and Responsibilities

- Staffing the Information & Consignment Booth
- Operating debit/food stamp machine at FGFM while providing excellent customer service
- Selling Market totes and Adelante Mujeres t-shirts and totes

### Required Qualifications

- Ability to work with diverse populations, particularly people of color, immigrants, women, low-income people and people with wealth
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills
- Detail oriented
- Excellent customer service skills
- The ability to perform some heavy lifting

### Desired Qualifications

- Bilingual-Bicultural Spanish/English skills
- Knowledge of accounting, farmers markets, local food movement, EBT/debit machine
- Sense of humor, flexibility and willingness to pitch in wherever necessary

*Compensation:* The starting wage for 2008 is \$10.00/hour.

*To apply:* Send cover letter and resume **ASAP** to: Gina Bell, Market Manager  
2420 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Forest Grove, OR 97116  
[farmersmarket@adelantemujers.org](mailto:farmersmarket@adelantemujers.org)

## Vendor Reimbursement Form

At the end of each market day please fill out this form with the total amount of each of the tokens you received. Then turn in the form, tokens and envelope to the information booth. You will receive your check at the next market or by mail within one week.

**Vendor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date</b>	<b>#EBT Tokens</b>	<b>\$ of EBT</b>	<b># Credit Tokens</b>	<b>\$ of Credit</b>	<b># of Debit Tokens</b>	<b>\$ of Debit</b>	<b>Total Amount Due</b>	<b>Amount Paid</b>
<b>9/17</b>								
<b>9/24</b>								
<b>10/1</b>								
<b>10/8</b>								
<b>10/15</b>								

**This form is duplicate. You will receive a copy of this form with your reimbursement check.**

CURSO PARA PEQUEÑOS PRODUCTORES ORGÁNICOS 2008-2009  
2008-2009 SMALL ORGANIC FARMERS TRAINING

FECHA <i>Date</i>	TEMA <i>Theme</i>
11-10-08	Productos orgánicos versus convencionales <i>Organic versus conventional</i>
11-17-08	Estructura y mejoramiento del suelo <i>Soil structure and soil amendment</i>
11-24-08	Composta y fertilizantes líquidos orgánicos <i>Compost and tea compost</i>
12-01-08	Planificación del huerto <i>Farm planning</i>
12-08-08	Sistemas de riego <i>Irrigation system</i>
12-15-08	Invernadero y otros cobertores (cloches) <i>Green house and cloches</i>
01-05-09	Deficiencias nutricionales de la planta <i>Nutritional deficiency in plants</i>
01-12-09	Control de enfermedades y malezas <i>Diseases and weed Management</i>
01-19-09	Recolección y almacenado de semillas <i>Seed selection &amp; how to save seeds</i>
01-26-09	Tiempo apropiado de cosecha y manejo de productos <i>Harvest and Post Harvest Handling</i>
02-02-09	Control integrado de plagas <i>Integrated Pest Management</i>
02-09-09	El Plan de Negocio <i>Business Plan</i>
02-16-09	Finanzas personales, fuentes de capital, control de riesgos <i>Personal finances, sources of capital, risk management</i>
02-21-09	Semilleros, trasplante y siembra directa <i>Seedling, transplanting and sowing</i>
03-02-09	Mantenimiento de registros, contabilidad e impuestos <i>Recordkeeping, bookkeeping, taxes</i>
03-09-09	Establecimiento de precios <i>Price twice</i>
03-16-09	Servicio al cliente, diseños del puesto de ventas <i>Customer service, booth design, best vendor practices</i>
03-23-09	Investigación de mercado, perfil del cliente <i>Market research, understanding your customer</i>
03-29-09	Gira Educativa "Meadow Farm" <i>Field Trip Gales Creeck</i>
03-30-09	Publicidad y ventas <i>Advertising and selling</i>
04-06-09	Evaluación y clausura <i>Evaluation and graduation</i>