

The **Food Project** of Lincoln, MA received \$63,657 to create a comprehensive media campaign; engage in innovative partnerships with nutrition and health education programs; and purchase advertising on public transportation all in order to support the Boston Bounty Bucks program.

[Final Report FY10](#)

**The Food Project**  
**“Boston Bounty Bucks: Strengthening Urban Markets for Local Farms and Improving  
Community Food Security”**  
**MA-438-2010-G-1156**  
**Final Report to the USDA Farmers’ Market Promotion Program**

**Project Summary** *An outline of the issue, problem, interest, or need for each project.*

When the SNAP program, then called food stamps, was still based on paper coupons, users were usually able to and often did spend their benefits at farmers’ markets. In the 1990s, however, a national transition to a debit-card style system called EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) took place. While the transition was well intentioned, streamlining the system and reducing stigma for food stamp users, it also had the unintended consequence of shutting shoppers out of farmers’ markets—creating the loss of a customer base for local farmers and of a source of fresh, healthy food for low-income consumers. Based on a successful pilot at our Lynn Central Square Farmers’ Market in 2006, The Food Project’s Boston Bounty Bucks program, launched the following year, was designed to enable and encourage Boston’s SNAP recipients to shop at the city’s farmers’ markets once more, creating mutually beneficial connections that support local agriculture and community health alike. The need for such a program was, and remains, great.

The epidemics of diabetes and obesity are on the rise, and nowhere are these trends more pronounced than in communities with limited resources. Nationally, 45 percent of children living in poverty are overweight or obese, compared to 22 percent of children who live more comfortably. Right here in Boston, a 2008 study found that the average adult obesity rate in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan—three of Boston’s lowest-income neighborhoods—was 34 percent, nearly double the 19 percent average of the rest of the city and more than quadruple the rate in Back Bay, one of the city’s wealthiest neighborhoods.

Many cite a lack of access to, and consumption of, fresh, healthy food as a primary driver of these chronic health issues; indeed, the two are correlated in the City of Boston. In another 2008 study surveying the city’s six most underserved neighborhoods, 60 percent of respondents reported that they did not eat vegetables every day in their home, and 14 percent that they consumed no vegetables at home at all. Meanwhile, Massachusetts’ SNAP caseload has increased nearly 85 percent between September of 2007 and September of 2011, the most recent month for which these figures have been finalized. These figures illustrate both a tremendous need and a significant potential customer base for local farmers: approximately 100 million dollars of SNAP benefits are distributed in the state each month.

As Bounty Bucks became solidly established as an effective method to improve community health and keep SNAP dollars in our local food system, we developed a second, complementary pilot program—now known as the Farm Fresh Coupon program—that distributes market incentive coupons through partner organizations, like community health centers, to offer to underserved community members who engage in their health education initiatives. This program expands the reach of Boston Bounty Bucks to low-income consumers not necessarily enrolled in federal nutrition assistance, and helps to strengthen the ties between food purchasing and the nutrition, cooking, and general health education that can ensure that fresh produce is not only procured, but prepared and consumed in a healthful manner.

**Project Approach** *Descriptions of how the issue or problem was addressed. Identify the processes, techniques, tools, events, technology, and actions taken to implement the project.*

*Boston Bounty Bucks: Program Techniques and Implementation*

The Boston Bounty Bucks program provides SNAP access at participating farmers' markets in the City of Boston by providing these markets with wireless EBT terminals. It also promotes the use of these benefits through a dollar-for-dollar matching incentive to all SNAP purchases up to \$10. The Food Project holds regular training sessions for market managers on the use of these EBT machines, performs periodic site visits on market days to ensure smooth and correct program implementation, and administers and publicizes the program. The Food Project also creates and distributes the Boston Bounty Bucks coupons themselves—scrip that EBT users are given to use at the market after swiping their EBT cards—and reimburses vendors for the value of this scrip (either directly or through a market manager), using funds secured from the City of Boston and other key partners.

After extensive technical difficulties during the program's first season and subsequent improvements, 2010 was a true breakout year for Boston Bounty Bucks, due at least in part to our initial grant from the Farmers' Market Promotion Program. That season, the program facilitated total combined SNAP and matching incentive sales of \$77,179 at 21 participating markets (almost four times the 2009 season's combined sales total of \$20,904, and a 50 percent increase over its 14 participating locations). Moving into the 2011 season, our goal was to maintain the strong momentum that we had built in 2010 and achieve further sales growth of 50 percent. We anticipated that key factors in our success would include ongoing administration, strong continued training and support for market managers, and a cohesive outreach and advertising campaign. In addition, we aimed to secure a plan for the program's long-term sustainability.

As described in our April progress report, over the past year we reached out to a number of partners to discuss the possibility of transitioning out of our role as the program's primary coordinator. In the process of this search, we discovered that the Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness (BCFF), a citywide group of more than 60 organizations that was founded in 2006 and supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, was already in the process of planning to hire Boston's first citywide Farmers' Market Coordinator. By integrating management and promotion of the Bounty Bucks program into this new position, we believe that both market managers and participants will benefit from a more holistic approach to farmers' market support and outreach; the BCFF agreed to take on the administration of the program this past spring, and a smooth transition of program management became another key goal for the 2011 season.

After evaluating the 2010 program's successes and challenges, our staff focused on beginning preparations for the season to come. In the spring, The Food Project organized a number of training sessions for farmers' market managers and staff. This included our annual pre-season meeting and training for all participating farmers markets, followed by several one-on-one sessions for market managers that were hired later in the season, temporary staff that managed unexpected transitions, and those unable to make the initial meeting. During this period, we also processed applications from participating markets to ensure that all market information was correct both for promotional and administrative purposes. Due to the opening of one market and the closure of two others, the program saw a drop from the previous season to 20 participating markets, though the percentage of total active markets in Boston participating in the program actually increased to 80 percent.

At this time, The Food Project also provided a training session for participants in a new SNAP Ambassador program, a partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) that allows recipients of EBT Cash Assistance to earn work credit by volunteering to assist with SNAP and Bounty Bucks implementation and outreach at farmers' markets. In addition, we participated in training for a new web-based reporting system for double value coupon

programs, spearheaded and managed by our national partner, Wholesome Wave, and provided extensive input on the system's design. This system allowed market staff to easily report all of the pertinent data from their markets, streamlining the reimbursement process and providing more timely updates throughout the course of the season. We partnered with Wholesome Wave to run a webinar training in this system for market managers, and provided one-on-one support as needed. By the end of the season, nearly all of the managers had mastered the use of this highly efficient reporting system.

Lastly, The Food Project provided hands-on support for markets to ensure that they were ready for their seasons to begin. This included assisting in programming machines, ensuring that wireless service accounts were properly activated, providing additional Bounty Bucks scrip, customizing and printing outreach supplies, and more. As markets began to open in May, June, and July, The Food Project's staff conducted numerous site visits to partner markets, visiting each at least twice (and most many more times), especially during the first several weeks of the season. These site visits helped to ensure that the program was being implemented correctly and consistently, that market vendors felt comfortable and informed, and that critical outreach and promotional elements were in place. Any major issues that affected more than one market were addressed via emails to all participating markets, with personal follow-up taking place by phone, in further emails, and during site visits.

#### *Boston Bounty Bucks: Outreach and Promotion*

In general, The Food Project used a similar outreach and promotion strategy in 2011 to that which we used in the successful 2010 season, building upon and updating tools that were deemed to be the most useful. These included consistent branding across posters, ads on mass transit, and postcards, as well as instructional materials (referred to as "rack cards") for use at the farmers' markets. These rack cards were translated into more languages than in previous years (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Albanian, and Haitian Creole), and printed in multiple versions to reflect the two different systems used by markets to distribute and redeem Bounty Bucks. (Some smaller markets use a receipt-based system where shoppers first select their produce and then pay, whereas at larger markets such a system is impractical.)

In the late spring, The Food Project secured the participation of professional basketball player Glen "Big Baby" Davis of the Boston Celtics as a celebrity spokesperson for the program. Drawing on his own personal focus on healthy eating, Mr. Davis' image was used as part of a cohesive advertising campaign that included more than 500 posters on local mass transit (buses and trains, targeted at low- and moderate-income Boston communities), 11"x17" posters, and postcards that included a full list and schedule of participating markets. All of these advertising elements included images of Glen Davis, Food Project youth, and fresh produce, as well as the tagline "Big Baby & Boston Bounty Bucks are teaming up to help you eat healthy for half the price."

The materials also included basic information about the program and the address of its website, [www.bostonbountybucks.org](http://www.bostonbountybucks.org), and directed interested parties to a service that would allow them to receive further information and a link to the site via text message, a service that was utilized 360 times. The Bounty Bucks website itself was updated for 2011, including a minor structural reorganization and updated information about participating markets and refined explanatory text. Glen Davis also participated in a season kickoff event and press conference with Boston Mayor Thomas Menino at the Boston City Hall Farmers' Market. The event, which also featured state Agricultural Commissioner Scott Soares, The Food Project's then-Executive Director Margaret Williams, and one of our youth interns, drew several local media outlets and generated both print and broadcast coverage.

Finally, one major achievement of 2011 was the development of a stronger relationship between the Boston Bounty Bucks program and the DTA, which manages SNAP in the state. In August, Food Project staff worked with State Commissioner Julia Kehoe and our local regional director to plan two major information sessions for the caseworker supervisors who deal directly with all Boston SNAP recipients. Our staff provided training on the program for these supervisors, many of whom were not familiar with Bounty Bucks despite efforts to distribute educational materials in previous seasons. The DTA staff was enthusiastic about the partnership and took large boxes of promotional materials to post and distribute, including information sheets that The Food Project produced specifically for DTA workers. DTA staff members also provided valuable feedback on outreach material design, and their suggestions have been passed along to BCFF for the coming year.

#### *Farm Fresh Coupon Program*

Beginning in February 2011, The Food Project's then-Director of Community Programs Campbell Watts and Boston Bounty Bucks Coordinator Maxwell Gitlen began to analyze our data from the 2010 season of the Farm Fresh Coupon program, then known as Health Bucks. Using research conducted on the program by Emerson National Hunger Fellow Aisha Amuda as a guide, the pair examined our distribution and redemption numbers and identified the primary attributes that distinguished successful partnerships from those that were less effective. As a result, we discovered two essential partner program characteristics. First, a group trip to a nearby market as a part of official program activities was necessary—those programs that included such a trip saw much higher redemption rates than those that simply distributed the coupons and left participants to locate and attend markets on their own. Second, programs needed to take a holistic approach and develop strong and multifaceted relationships with their participants; the more points of contact programs had with their participants, and the more services they provided—not only engaging in group physical activity but pairing it with nutrition counseling, for example—the more effective they proved to be.

Based on this information, our staff created a Request for Proposals (RFP), attached to this report for your reference, soliciting partners for the 2011 season of the Farm Fresh Coupon program. On April 28, this RFP was released through our blog, our Facebook page, and several listservs, and distributed directly to organizations that we believed were strong candidates for the program—based either on previous interaction with The Food Project or the recommendation the Boston Public Health Commission, which assisted us in identifying potential partners. We received proposals from 16 organizations by the May 20 deadline, encompassing many individual applications from unique programs administered by these organizations: for example, the Bowdoin Street Health Center submitted two separate applications for its cooking class and its diabetes self management group. Our staff reviewed these proposals and responded to applicants by mid-June, selecting 12 organizations and 19 individual programs with which to partner. While this number was slightly lower than what we had hoped, we were happy to include among our partners several organizations we had not worked with previously, such as the Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center, the Boston Living Center, and the Center for Integrated Medicine and Healthcare Disparities at the Boston Medical Center. While reviewing the proposals, we also worked with the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets (FMFM) to develop the physical coupons themselves, as well as a plan for tracking their redemption. By the fifth of July, we had signed formal letters of agreement with each of our partners, a full list of which is attached to this report. Immediately after these agreements were signed, \$11,250 in coupons was distributed along with a pre-program survey.

Partner programming ran from July through September, during which time Mr. Gitlen performed site visits with approximately half of the participating programs. A post-program survey, designed to assess any changes in participant behavior around healthy eating, was

distributed in September. In early October, we also distributed the guidelines for a brief narrative report to accompany these surveys, to be completed by program managers. Both the survey and the report were due on November 25, though many of these materials arrived significantly after the deadline.

**Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes Achieved** *Descriptions of the results, outputs, outcomes, accomplishments, and conclusions. Outputs and outcomes are the direct results of program activities.*

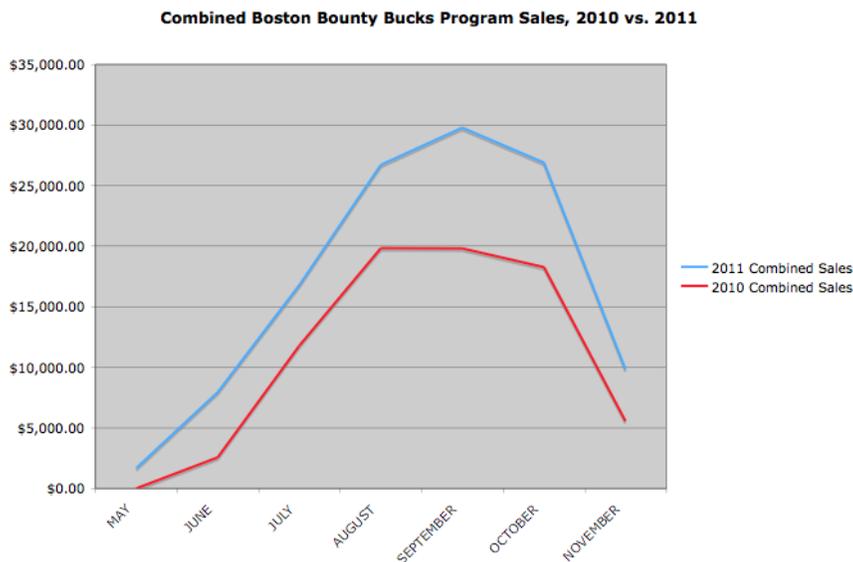
#### *Farm Fresh Coupon Program Participation*

As we received many of the reporting materials from Farm Fresh Coupon partners after our given deadline, and have not yet received Farm Fresh Coupon redemption information from the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets, we do not have currently have meaningful insight into the achievements of the program this season. Mr. Gitlen, the program's coordinator, was hired on a seasonal basis to work through December 16. Not possessing enough information to complete an end-of-season evaluation of the program before completing his employment with us, he has agreed to return for several days in January to do so. As per our discussion with Karl Hacker of the USDA FMPP on December 20, we will provide a full report on the achievements of this program as an addendum to this report as soon as this information becomes available, likely in mid-January.

#### *Boston Bounty Bucks Sales*

The growth in program participation and SNAP expenditures for 2011 was strong. Please note that for all calculations regarding program sales and participation in this report, we are considering the end of November as the close of the conventional market season. While some markets are continuing beyond November in 2011, and some new markets are even opening for the 2011-2012 winter season (both exciting developments), we are considering the period from May through November as the conventional market season for the sake of comparison with previous seasons.

During this period we exceeded our target of 50 percent growth over the 2010 season. Program sales for the season totaled \$63,404.99 in SNAP and \$56,112.99 in matching incentives, for a total of \$119,517.98 in sales, a 58.5 percent increase over 2010 levels. In dollar terms, this represents an increase of \$44,113.32. Sales by month followed a similar pattern to those in 2010, as illustrated by the graph below:



Sales at individual markets varied widely, as is expected given the tremendous variation between participating markets. These range from Copley Square, with 29 vendors selling two days per week, to two single-vendor farmstands, and every size in between. The breakdown of sales by market for 2011 was as follows:

	<i>SNAP Sales</i>	<i>Match Distributed</i>	<i>Match Redeemed</i>	<i>Total SNAP and Match Sales</i>
<i>Allston</i>	\$866.50	\$745.50	\$699.50	\$1,566.00
<i>Ashmont/Peabody Sq</i>	\$808.00	\$683.00	\$692.00	\$1,500.00
<i>Boston Medical Center</i>	\$580.12	\$476.12	\$476.12	\$1,056.24
<i>BPM @ Boston City Hall</i>	\$4,859.55	\$4,393.47	\$3,892.58	\$8,752.13
<i>BPM @ Dewey Sq</i>	\$4,152.60	\$3,981.55	\$4,131.80	\$8,284.40
<i>Bowdoin Geneva</i>	\$522.75	\$520.75	\$520.75	\$1,043.50
<i>Codman Square</i>	\$1,470.95	\$1,226.05	\$1,274.05	\$2,745.00
<i>Community Servings</i>	\$1,411.75	\$1,174.50	\$1,078.25	\$2,490.00
<i>Copley Square</i>	\$24,895.00	\$22,951.00	\$22,853.00	\$47,748.00
<i>Dorchester House</i>	\$553.75	\$769.50	\$575.00	\$1,128.75
<i>Dudley Town Common</i>	\$2,861.06	\$2,469.16	\$2,469.16	\$5,330.22
<i>East Boston</i>	\$2,920.00	\$2,619.00	\$2,664.00	\$5,584.00
<i>Fields Corner</i>	\$8,728.00	\$7,879.00	\$7,970.00	\$16,698.00
<i>Hyde Park</i>	\$350.75	\$258.50	\$258.50	\$609.25
<i>Mattapan</i>	\$248.00	\$254.00	\$236.00	\$484.00
<i>Mission Hill</i>	\$1,937.70	\$1,710.25	\$1,604.30	\$3,542.00
<i>Roslindale Village</i>	\$3,808.50	\$3,094.50	\$2,732.00	\$6,540.50
<i>South Boston</i>	\$2,064.00	\$1,697.00	\$1,620.00	\$3,684.00
<i>ReVision Urban Farm</i>	\$366.01	\$366.01	\$365.98	\$731.99
<b>All Markets</b>	<b>\$63,404.99</b>	<b>\$57,268.86</b>	<b>\$56,112.99</b>	<b>\$119,517.98</b>

In analyzing this data, we have also paid close attention to the variable rates of growth from 2009 to 2010 and 2010 to 2011. A chart of these rates is as follows:

	<i>2009 Sales</i>	<i>2010 Sales</i>	<i>2011 Sales</i>	<i>% Change 2009-2010</i>	<i>% Change 2010-2011</i>
<i>Allston</i>	\$1,530.00	\$2,052.00	\$1,566.00	34.12	-23.68
<i>Ashmont/Peabody Sq</i>	\$1,283.00	\$1,594.00	\$1,500.00	24.24	-5.90
<i>Boston Medical Center</i>	\$801.50	\$1,711.61	\$1,056.24	113.55	-38.29
<i>Bowdoin Geneva</i>	\$524.92	\$1,567.00	\$1,043.50	198.52	-33.41
<i>BPM @ Boston City Hall</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$6,050.76	\$8,752.13	<i>n/a</i>	44.65
<i>BPM @ Dewey Sq</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$2,938.00	\$8,284.40	<i>n/a</i>	181.97

<i>Codman Square</i>	\$1,356.20	\$4,686.00	\$2,745.00	245.52	-41.42
<i>Community Servings</i>	\$1,912.00	\$2,170.00	\$2,490.00	13.49	14.75
<i>Copley Square</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$24,032.00	\$47,748.00	<i>n/a</i>	98.69
<i>Dorchester House</i>	\$1,487.00	\$2,424.50	\$1,128.75	63.05	-53.44
<i>Dudley Town Common</i>	\$2,923.40	\$3,549.59	\$5,330.22	21.42	50.16
<i>East Boston</i>	\$2,860.50	\$6,106.00	\$5,584.00	113.46	-8.55
<i>Fields Corner</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$5,293.20	\$16,698.00	<i>n/a</i>	215.46
<i>Hyde Park</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$205.00	\$609.25	<i>n/a</i>	197.20
<i>Mattapan</i>	\$536.50	\$358.00	\$484.00	-33.27	35.20
<i>Mission Hill</i>	\$1,851.75	\$1,960.00	\$3,542.00	5.85	80.71
<i>ReVision Urban Farm</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$419.00	\$731.99	<i>n/a</i>	74.70
<i>Roslindale Village</i>	\$1,668.00	\$5,350.00	\$6,540.50	220.74	22.25
<i>South Boston</i>	\$1,359.00	\$2,938.00	\$3,684.00	116.19	25.39

Many factors specific to each market and their respective neighborhoods play into their relative strengths or struggles, and numbers never tell the full story. Nonetheless, certain figures do command attention.

Fields Corner Farmers' Market is a remarkable success story. The small market has just two vendors, one of which does the lion's share of the business at the market, yet it has grown to become the second most successful Bounty Bucks market in the city, with \$16,698 in combined sales to SNAP users. This dramatic success can be attributed largely to the informal word of mouth campaign that has caught on within the area's Vietnamese community, as well as the market's long history. While many markets in Boston's low- and moderate-income communities are relatively new, Fields Corner has existed for decades. Of course the Copley Market remains the largest single source of sales in the program by a considerable margin, contributing 40 percent of total SNAP and Bounty Bucks sales citywide. Similar to Fields Corner, the strong growth at Copley (where the program's sales almost doubled in 2011) can be attributed in some large part to the development of a strong customer base amongst the city's Russian community. In both of these cases, we see the importance of building momentum amongst a grassroots community.

With regard to markets that experienced declines in sales during 2011, we first considered whether there might be a trend of successful markets growing more successful while those that had lower sales slipped further behind. The data, however, does not seem support this theory. In fact, in comparing the average annual rates for the top half of markets (by total sales volume) with those from the bottom half, we found that these rates grew less disparate between 2010 and 2011. While this data is not perfect, especially given that many of the larger markets did not participate in 2009, it did motivate us to look for other potential answers.

One striking trend was that of the six markets that saw a sales decline in 2011, four had received promotional sub-grants in 2010, which were used for a variety outreach programs specific to each market, including market coupons. All but one of these markets saw sales increase in 2010. This indicates that such short-term incentives and outreach efforts may generate sales, but not be effective in the longer term. In the case of the two remaining markets that saw sales declines in 2011, representatives from one hypothesized that this decline may have been due to the huge success of another farmers' market incentive program in their neighborhood, a fruit and vegetable "prescription program" at the health center that sponsored the market.

### *Boston Bounty Bucks Survey Data*

Toward the end of the 2011 market season, The Food Project worked with Wholesome Wave and a number of partner markets to survey Bounty Bucks customers regarding their experience of the program, how it had impacted their shopping and diet, and more. With the support of Wholesome Wave we were able to provide a two-dollar market scrip incentive to customers for each survey that was completed; we received 127 completed surveys from 11 markets. The results were largely similar to those from 2010, confirming much of what we already know. Respondents were overwhelmingly female (78 percent), and they indicated that the SNAP access was a critical factor in getting them to shop at the market and that Bounty Bucks makes a major difference in the amount of fresh produce they consume. Some notable data and year-to-year comparisons include:

- Fewer participants reported being new to the farmers' markets, and more were very regular customers. Of the respondents, 34 percent said that this was their first season shopping at the market, as compared to 48 percent in 2010.
- Participants were shopping more frequently at the markets: 66 percent reported shopping there weekly or more than weekly, whereas in 2010 only 50.3 percent said that they shopped there three or more times per month. Although we do not have a 2010 figure for comparison, 55 percent reported purchasing all, almost all, or most of their produce at the market, and another 30 percent reported purchasing about half there.
- Bounty Bucks and SNAP access may be even more important to participants than in the past. 100 percent of respondents reported that the Bounty Bucks program was very or moderately important in getting them to spend their SNAP dollars at the market, as compared to 89 percent in 2010, and none said that they would have spent their SNAP dollars there without them.
- Local agriculture is becoming a higher priority for participants, as 90 percent said that "supporting local farmers or businesses" was very important, up from 80 percent in 2010.
- The program continues to have a strong impact on health, with 49 percent reporting that because of the market their consumption of fresh produce has increased greatly, and 37 percent that it has increased some (a slight increase from 2010).

**Beneficiaries** *Description of the people, organizations, marketing entities, and/or communities that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and a quantitative measure of the current or future benefits to be derived from the project.*

The Boston Bounty Bucks program's primary beneficiaries were the local farmers who gained access to federal nutrition assistance funding and The Food Project's matching incentives—a total value, this season, of \$120,000—and the local SNAP recipients who were able to redeem their benefits for fresh, local produce valued at this amount. The Farm Fresh Coupon program's primary beneficiaries were the participants in the programs with which we partnered, who received a modest sum of incentive coupons for use at local markets, as well as the organizations that ran this programming (a full list of which is attached), which were able to pair their educational curriculum with market access—reinforcing their message and hopefully improving participants' health outcomes. Both of these programs had a strong impact in Boston's underserved communities—including Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, East Boston, and others—and also generated impacts on low-income people living and/or shopping in other neighborhoods.

**Lessons Learned** *Lessons learned for each project. If outcome measure were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help expedite problem-solving. Identify impact, i.e., organizational,*

*community, and/or system level changes, that result from the project implemented. These may include improved conditions, increased capacity, and/or changes in the current policy.*

#### *Boston Bounty Bucks Program*

This season, we noticed that at larger markets like Copley a growing amount of scrip was not being redeemed on the same day that it was distributed. This issue was pronounced in the earlier part of the season, as many users collected their maximum \$10 benefit each day whether they intended to spend it or not, and simply stockpiled the difference for use later in the season. While we had seen this occur before, it reached new levels in 2011, perhaps owing to a growing confidence that the program would not suddenly end, or simply the increased total sales volume.

This phenomenon, referred to as “float” by some market staff, presents challenges. First and foremost, it became difficult to keep a sufficient supply of Bounty Bucks scrip (particularly \$1 scrip) on hand, as over \$100 worth would be distributed but not redeemed in a single market day. As soon as this problem was identified, we ordered the printing of additional scrip, but delays in production meant that for well over a month The Food Project’s staff had to shuffle scrip from market to market in order to ensure a steady supply. While the discrepancy between scrip distributed and redeemed reached several thousand dollars at its peak, the gap closed late in the season.

One disappointing figure is the degree to which the Bounty Bucks program is leveraging SNAP sales. The simplest way to determine this is by considering the ratio of SNAP dollars spent to match dollars distributed—in other words, the extent to which Bounty Bucks users are spending their own SNAP dollars beyond the \$10 amount that is being matched by incentives. This figure showed a significant increase from 2009, where SNAP users spent only 8.2 percent more than the match provided, to 2010, where this figure rose to 13.6 percent. In 2011, this figure dropped slightly to 13 percent, signaling that the program is having limited impact in encouraging SNAP sales without the matching incentive. This is reinforced by the survey results indicating that shoppers would not come to the market without the incentive. While this indicates that the program is of critical importance, it is disappointing and certainly warrants further consideration.

There is widespread anecdotal speculation amongst market and program staff that a chief cause of this may be related to the issue of float—that many shoppers automatically and strictly stick to the maximum benefit (\$20 for \$10 in SNAP), seeing this as their best value regardless of whether they would like to buy more or plan to spend less. Some market staff have tried to address this, encouraging customers to look around the market first and base their Bounty Bucks use on what they intend to purchase, but generally have reported a lack of interest from the customers. Bounty Bucks staff and market managers have discussed the possibility of switching the program to a different, more progressive incentive system. In nearby Rhode Island, for example, a smaller match is provided (\$2 in match for \$5 in SNAP) with no cap on the benefit, which provides a greater incentive for customers to spend their own SNAP dollars. We strongly recommend that, in preparation for the 2012 season, the BCFF look into alternative models and consider their benefits and risks.

As supported by the figures and conclusions presented in previous sections, we believe the program has continued to have a significant impact on the health, well-being, and financial stability of low-income families and small farmers in the Greater Boston area, and that this impact has increased with the scale of the program this year. We look forward to witnessing the program’s further growth and evolution under the administration of the BCFF.

### *Farm Fresh Coupon Program*

Initially, we had planned to involve our youth interns in delivering workshops and otherwise partnering with the agencies enrolled in the Farm Fresh Coupon Program. We were surprised, however, by our partners' lack of interest in such an opportunity. Though we made it clear to all participating agencies that this service was available, none of them responded, either positively or negatively. Our interns have, however, been involved in the program's administration and analysis.

Though we are only in the very beginning stages of our evaluation, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that to facilitate more interest in such opportunities, and perhaps to expedite reporting processes as well, deeper relationships may need to be developed with the participating agencies. As many of these groups are already shouldering overwhelming workloads, the relatively small sums distributed to each partner may simply not be enough of a motivation to encourage deep and timely participation absent additional collaboration. As we are beginning to orient our other Community Programs—such as our Build-a-Garden and Farm to Family programs—toward a more integrated, partnership-based model in which The Food Project works with schools, health centers, and community organizations to create “hubs” of food access and education, it seems there may be an opportunity to build a stronger Farm Fresh Coupon program on the basis of these more comprehensive inter-agency partnerships.

We will provide further information as to the lessons learned from the outcomes of this program in our follow-up report, mentioned earlier, to be submitted in January 2012.

**Additional Information** *Include specific contributions of project partners and any relevant information available (e.g. publications, web sites, photographs)*

Additional information—including a full list of Farm Fresh Coupon Program partners, the Farm Fresh Coupon Program Request for Proposals, and sample Boston Bounty Bucks promotional materials—is attached to this report.

**Contact Person** *List the contact person for each project with telephone number and email address.*

#### Boston Bounty Bucks (past season) and Farm Fresh Coupon Programs:

Brandy Brooks, Director of Community Programs, The Food Project  
(781) 259-8621 x28; [bbrooks@thefoodproject.org](mailto:bbrooks@thefoodproject.org)

#### Boston Bounty Bucks (current operations):

Karen Spiller, Project Director, Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness  
(617) 534-2647; [kspiller@bphc.org](mailto:kspiller@bphc.org)

# BIG BABY & BOSTON BOUNTY BUCKS

are teaming up to help you eat healthy for half the price

when you use your EBT Card

at Boston farmers' markets!



[www.BostonBountyBucks.com](http://www.BostonBountyBucks.com)

Boston Bounty Bucks is sponsored by Mayor Menino's Fresh Food Fund and The Food Project with support from USDA AMS (FMPP G-1156), Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness, Walmart Foundation, Whole Foods Market and the Wholesome Wave Foundation.



50% off SNAP/EBT Purchases up to \$20 With Boston Bounty Bucks at Over 20 Participating Farmers' Markets! ▶

Market Name	Location	Dates	Days	Times
Allston Farmers' Market	Western Ave and N Harvard St, Allston, MA	6/17 - 10/28	Fri	3:00pm - 7:00pm
Ashmont/Peabody Square Farmers' Market	Dorchester Ave and Ashmont St, Dorchester, MA	7/8 - 10/14	Fri	3:00pm - 7:00pm
Boston City Hall Plaza Farmers' Market	One City Hall Plaza, Boston, MA	5/23 - 11/23	Mon & Wed	11:00am - 6:00pm <i>(except on holiday Mondays)</i>
Boston Medical Center Farmers' Market	One Boston Medical Center Place, Menino Pavilion, Boston, MA	6/17 - 10/14	Fri	11:30am - 2:30pm
Boston Public Market at Dewey Square	One Financial Pl., Boston, MA <i>(across from South Station)</i>	5/26 - 11/22	Tues & Thurs	11:30am - 6:30pm
Bowdoin Geneva Farmers' Market	230 Bowdoin St, Dorchester, MA	7/7 - 10/27	Thurs	3:00pm - 6:30pm
Codman Square Farmers' Market	Washington St and Talbot Ave, Dorchester, MA	6/23 - 10/27	Thurs	1:00pm - 6:00pm
Community Servings' Farmers' Market	18 Marbury Terrace, Jamaica Plain, MA	6/15 - 10/19	Wed	4:00pm - 7:00pm
Copley Square Farmers' Market	Copley Square, 139 Saint James Ave, Boston, MA	5/17 - 11/22	Tues & Fri	11:00am - 6:00pm
Dorchester House Farmers' Market	1353 Dorchester Ave, Dorchester, MA	6/28 - 10/18	Tues	1:00am - 1:30pm
Dudley Town Common Market	Dudley St and Blue Hill Ave, Roxbury, MA	6/2 - 10/27	Tues & Thur	3:00pm - 7:00pm
East Boston Farmers' Market	Central Square, East Boston MA	7/7 - 10/20	Thurs	3:00pm - 6:30pm
Egleston Square Farmers' Market	Peace Garden, 3127 Washington St, Roxbury, MA	Starting 7/7	Thurs	4:00pm - 7:00pm
Fields Corner Farmers' Market	Dorchester Ave and Park St, Dorchester, MA	7/2 - 10/29	Sat	9:00am - 12pm
Frederick Douglass Square Market	998 Tremont St., Boston, MA	8/6 - 10/29	Sat	11:00am - 5:00pm
Grove Hall Farmers' Market	469 Blue Hill Avenue, Boston, MA	7/12 - 10/25	Tues & Sat	T: 3:00pm - 7:00pm S: 10:00am - 2:00pm
Hyde Park Main Streets Farmers' Market	1196 River St, Hyde Park, MA	7/9 - 10/1	Sat	2:00pm - 5:00pm
Mattapan Farmers' Market	Mattapan Sq, 525 River St, Mattapan, MA	7/9 - 10/1	Sat	9:00am - 1:00pm
Mission Hill Farmers Market	Brigham Circle, Boston, MA	6/16 - 11/18	Thurs	11:00am - 6:00pm
Roslindale Farmers' Market	Cummins Highway and Washington St, Roslindale, MA	6/4 - 10/29	Sat	9:00am - 1:30pm
South Boston Farmers' Market	446 W. Broadway, South Boston, MA	5/2 - 11/21	Mon	12:00pm - 6:00pm <i>(except on holiday Mondays)</i>
Union Square Farmers' Market (Allston)	Cambridge St and Brighton Ave, Allston, MA	7/9 - 9/27	Every other Saturday	11:00am - 3:00pm
Victory Programs' ReVision Urban Farm Stand	1062 Blue Hill Ave, Dorchester, MA	7/7 - 10/15	Thurs, Fri & Sat	Th & F: 2:30pm - 6:30pm S: 10:00am - 2:00pm

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To learn more, text  
'bigbaby' to 69940!



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L to R: Mayor Thomas Menino, Glen “Big Baby” Davis, and TFP Intern Phil Nguyen



The Food Project

**The Food Project**  
**Request for Proposals: Farm Fresh Coupon Program**  
**April 26, 2011**

*Program Overview and Goals*

The Food Project is pleased to announce that, for the second year, we are seeking to work with partner agencies to distribute farmers' market coupons as a component of a holistic, multifaceted strategy to improve community health and nutrition. The Farm Fresh Coupon Program seeks to partner with existing efforts to increase the health of individuals in underserved Boston communities and the viability of local farmers' markets. We will do this by providing coupons for participants of programs that encourage increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. By mutually reinforcing the message that fresh produce is important, accessible and affordable, we hope to have a lasting impact on participants' shopping and eating habits.

We are seeking up to 20 partner agencies that will receive an average of \$600 each (with a maximum of \$1,500) in farmers' market coupons to distribute to constituents that will be engaged in programs addressing health and wellness. The coupons will be valid to spend on fruits and vegetables only at any farmers' market in MA that accepts WIC and SFMNP coupons (this includes the vast majority of markets). The coupons must be distributed in conjunction with activities that help to promote the purchase and consumption of produce from farmers markets, as detailed below under "Program Activities."

The Food Project's mission is to grow a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system. We produce healthy food for residents of the city and suburbs and provide youth leadership opportunities. Finally, we strive to inspire and support others to create change in their own communities.

*Eligible Organizations*

We encourage applications from Boston organizations that are engaging residents of primarily low- and moderate-income communities in any sort of programming that encourages the increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and supports participants in making healthy lifestyle choices. Potential partners may include, but are not limited to, health care providers, community organizations, youth- or family-serving organizations. Organizations must have a demonstrated track record of similar work, and must be a 501(c)3 organization or have a partner 501(c)3 to act as a fiscal agent.

*Program Activities and Selection Criteria*

Based in large part upon the outcomes of activities in 2010, proposed programs are asked to adhere to the following criteria:

- Programs, interventions or other activities with participants must be ongoing or consist of multiple sessions, rather than limited to a single interaction.
- All partner programs must arrange for the coupons to be distributed in conjunction with field trips to and/or tours of farmers' markets, and we encourage other hands-on activities, such as cooking and tasting.
- Educational components, activities, or interventions should be multifaceted, and so in addition to the required activity above, programs must include at least one additional component, such as (**but not limited to**): nutrition education/counseling, cooking classes, tastings, support for chronic disease management or prevention, physical fitness and gardening.

*We have a strong preference for programs that integrate multiple components.* The Food Project may be able to provide support in the form of youth-led workshops regarding healthy eating choices and the food system, though availability will be limited. Please contact us to discuss this potential resource if you are interested in including it in your proposal.

- The distribution of Farm Farm Fresh Coupons must take place within the months of July and August, in order to ensure a wide selection of fresh, local produce to program participants as well as sufficient time to assess changes in shopping and eating habits.
- You must be willing to administer pre- and post-program surveys, as designed by The Food Project, as close to the start and end of the program as possible. The pre-program survey must be administered prior to the distribution of the coupons, and the post-program survey at least 6 weeks following the first distribution. You must work with us to organize a post-program focus group or participant interviews, if requested.

In addition to ensuring that partner programs meet the criteria above, The Food Project will select partners based on our confidence that the partnership will help us to meet the goals of the Farm Fresh Coupon Program, as stated above.

### ***Proposal Format***

The proposal must be no more than three pages. The first two pages should include:

- The organization's name and address and the name, title, email address and phone number of the contact person for the proposal.
- A brief overview of your organization, its mission, the services it provides, and the link between your organization and the goals of this program that will partner with the Farm Fresh Coupon Program.
- A description of the program, the activities that it includes, a description of its target participants and the number of participants that it will reach, the total value of coupons that are being requested, and the intended outcomes of the program.
- A description of how and when the coupons will be distributed, the amounts that will be made available to each participant, and the way in which you propose to use them. The coupons will be issued in \$2.50 denominations. Please demonstrate that the program activities adhere to the criteria above.

The final page should consist of:

- A brief program timeline, including start and end dates, the number of sessions or activities, when coupons would be distributed, when pre- and post- program evaluation could take place, and any other significant steps or milestones.

### ***Submission Deadline and Details, Project Timeline and Agreement***

**Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011.** Submissions must be made via email, in either Word or PDF format. Email submissions should be sent to [mgitlen@thefoodproject.org](mailto:mgitlen@thefoodproject.org).

We are happy to discuss programmatic ideas and provide feedback and input prior to the submission of your proposal. Please contact the program coordinator, Max Gitlen, at [mgitlen@thefoodproject.org](mailto:mgitlen@thefoodproject.org) or (781) 259-8621 x31 for support.

The Food Project will select program partners no later than June 7, 2011. We may contact applicants to discuss clarifications or suggested changes to their proposed programs in the weeks following proposal submission. Farm Fresh Coupons will be made available to selected partners during the month of June, for distribution in July.

**The Food Project**  
**List of Farm Fresh Coupon Program Partners**  
**for the USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Brief Description of Activities</b>	<b>\$ of Coupons Distributed</b>
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	Green Thumbs	Intergenerational Gardening, Cooking, Healthy Eating	\$300
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	Food Dollars	Elder Nutrition, Budgeting, Cooking	\$900
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	Living Well Head Start	Cooking Demo., Nutrition Ed., Budgeting, Menu Planning	\$1,500
Boston Living Center	n/a	Market Tour, Healthy Snack Prep., Nutrition Ed.	\$800
Boston Medical Center	n/a	Cooking Classes, Integrative Health Consultation	\$1,500
Bowdoin Street Health Center (BSHC)	BSHC Diabetes Self Management Group	Diabetes Management	\$450
Bowdoin Street Health Center (BSHC)	BSHC Cooking Class	Children's Cooking Class, Family Meal	\$100
Commonwealth Land Trust	Summer Food Education Program	Cooking Classes, Nutrition Ed., Shopping, Prep., etc.	\$500
Community Servings	Farmers' Market Cooking Classes	Cooking Classes	\$900
Community Servings	Urban Edge	Nutrition Ed., Food Pantry	\$200
Dimock Community Health Center	Health and Wellness Education Certificate Program	Cooking, Menu Planning, Food Diary, Nutrition Ed., Physical Activity, & more	\$270
Dimock Community Health Center	Diabetes Support	Nutrition Ed., Discussion, Diabetes Support, Recipes	\$200
East Boston Neighborhood Health Center/Lets Get Moving	The Energy Out Challenge Game	Exercise Game	\$1,270
Mission Hill Health Movement	Diabetes Self Management Group	Monthly Shared Meal, Discussion, Recipes, Walking to Market	\$680
Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center	Heart and Sole	Exercise, Weigh-In, Food Sampling, Discussion	\$760
Uphams Corner Health Center	Weight Loss Group	Support Group, One-on-One Counsel	\$100
Uphams Corner Health Center	Kids Cooking Class	Cooking	\$120
Uphams Corner Health Center	Walking Group	Walking	\$50
United South End Settlements	Summer Day Camp	Weekly Cooking, Exercise, Farm Truck Visit	\$650

<i>Total Value of Coupons Distributed:</i>	<b>\$11,250</b>
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