

**FY 2012**

**FY 2012 West TN Farmers' Market, City of Jackson**

**Existing SNAP/EBT, Training, Advertisement, Farmers Market, Low Income Consumers, Outreach**

**\$12,985** to City of Jackson, TN, to improve access to healthy, local food at the West Tennessee Farmers Market by: 1) purchasing an EBT machine and related transaction equipment; 2) training vendors to use EBT equipment; and 3) conducting marketing and community outreach to increase awareness about the farmers market and its EBT capacity.

[Final Report](#)

**Farmers Market Promotion Program**  
**Final Performance Report**  
**For the Period of September 1, 2011 – September 30, 2013**

**Date:** November 8, 2013  
**Recipient Name:** West TN Farmers' Market, City of Jackson  
**Project Title:** New EBT Project-West Tennessee Farmers Market  
**Grant Number:** 12-25-G-1633  
**Project Location:** Jackson, TN  
**Amount Awarded:** \$12,985.00  
**Contact:** Nona Brummett, 731-425-8308, nbrummett@cityofjackson.net

**Goals and Objectives:**

To provide a way for those customers who use SNAP/EBT cards to buy fresh and healthy produce. To provide another opportunity for the farmers to sell their products direct to the consumer. To make more people aware of the W TN Farmers' Market and what it has to offer.

**Activities:**

We ordered our EBT terminal and received in a timely manner, to correspond with the peak season of the market.

We did not receive one on one training but we did however receive an instruction booklet and a CD which was exceptional in the examples and instructions. The booklet was well written and divided so that if you needed information on a particular subject it was easy to find and easy to understand. We all studied the booklet and listened to the CD in March 2013 that would include Nona Brummett, Ricky Dawson our part time employee as well as a temporary employee, Vernetta Theus. But as a note the EBT machine is very simple to use, with its on screen instructions it is a matter of reading what the next step will be. We were also given a name and phone number for Mark, who was a tremendous help setting up the machine and giving us the confidence to run the equipment. He assured us if we had any questions to just call him and he would help us at any time.

As for the vendors there was no need for training just instructions on:

- 1) To display signs that they welcomed SNAP/EBT customers. (see photo)



- 2) To only sell the approved food items.
- 3) Making sure they did not give change in the form of cash.

## **Advertisement:**

We advertised in every medium, TV, Radio, Newspapers, Flyers, Billboards, Banners, Newsletters, Signs and Facebook/Twitter.

I started our campaign in May, 2013. And from that point on we had something new coming out each week, the billboard and the local newspaper being the very last medium used. Ongoing was the banners, newsletters, signs and Facebook/twitter. We utilized the local and surrounding counties' newspapers and from them a lot of word of mouth advertising kicked in. As customers came into the office to use their cards I would ask how they heard about us and approximately 1/3 said they heard it on the radio, 1/3 newspapers and 1/3 word of mouth.

## **Records of EBT sales**

Our vendors do not keep good records but conversations with them indicate some have only seen a marginal increase whereas others have sold out of their products in record time. The following show the amounts of token passed out. There was a steady increase with the exception of the month of September. Vendors commented that there were a lot of new faces at the market this year.

April/May	\$1,273.00	just getting started
June	1,630.00	improved
July	3,253.00	lot of Radio & word of mouth advertising
August	3,402.00	Traffic really picked up
September	1,541.00	School started, lots of competition for that \$ customers may have picked up their food items as they shopped for school items.
October	3,036.00	A lot of greens and winter vegetables

## **Accomplishments:**

At the W TN Farmers' Market we do not have debit or credit terminals and have only one EBT terminal. Once we were approved and all the paperwork was signed and delivered we were up and running in a month's time. At our market we chose to use tokens, they are easy to count and I purchased a box that is normally used for poker chips, the tokens fit nicely and we can have them pre-counted into groups of ten. We also use plastic wrap to bundle up ten tokens at a time for those customers that request a larger amount. It makes it easier for the customer to handle.

We have a meeting each year at the beginning of the peak season and for 2013 it was held on March 13, 2013 with approximately 75 different vendors with workers and spouses. At this meeting all of our vendors were given the information on how we would handle the EBT and what was expected of each vendor for example what foods were allowed, what to do if they had an odd amount and so forth. Our Director of Finance, Karen Bell spoke at our meeting explaining how the system would be handled by the City. If they wanted to participate they filled out the required W9's and we collected any information as to how their business were listed.

## **Advertising before and during:**

Grace Broadcasting: 5 ads per day Mon-Sat April 1-13 and April 29-May 11  
WFKX\_FM: 28 ads 4/6/14-4/27/13  
Shaw Broadcasting: 90 spots May 2013  
WMXX-FM & WDXI-AM: 85 ads April & May 2013  
WNWS-FM: March, April & May 30+ bonus ads  
W TN Examiner: 2 months: April May  
Charter Media: 98 spots TV ads April & May  
WBBJ-TV: 42 spot June  
Billboard: 2 locations June 10-July 7  
Jackson Sun: April-June 34 ads  
Special Aprons that have SNAP/EBT logo on them for participating vendors  
Banner for the center of the market  
Table tents for each vendor participating in program  
Several ads in surrounding local newspapers

## **EBT sales average per week:**

2011/2012 n/a

2013: We started using the EBT in March 2013

Average Sales per Week:

March/April, May 2013:	\$ 106.00
June 2013:	407.00
July 2013:	813.00
August 2013:	850.00
September 2013:	385.00
October 2013:	759.00

We did have 3 vendors sign up after we started the program but that was basically because they did not come to the market with their produce until later. So the number of Vendors did not increase because of the EBT program but it was just timing. Several vendors have ask about the program as they see the positive results of other vendors using EBT's, therefore in conversation with these vendors I feel we will have more participates in the coming season.

No real problems just a matter of getting the accounting system set up.

## **Beneficiaries:**

- 1) Overall, mean household income is 35,433, the market is located a mixed income area and includes predominantly Black. The poverty rate is 26.6% with nearly 992 households residing in rent-assisted housing.
- 2) We have customers from many surrounding counties that do not have access to a Farmers' Market like ours. We have such a variety, not only the normal vegetable and fruit but also milk, meats and all sorts of whole grain and gluten free baked goods.
- 3) The vendors that participated in the SNAP/EBT program have all had an increase in sales; they vary from 5% to 15%. Many vendors said they did not increase so much in sales but they were able to sell their products in a very short time which allowed them more time to tend to their crops.
- 4) Local businesses were surveyed and all reported an increase in foot traffic on the days the market was open.

## **Lessons Learned:**

### **Challenges:**

Staffing: We definitely need a part time employee during the peak season, not only to distribute the tokens but also to process the paperwork when the vendors turn their tokens back in.

### **Positive Results:**

We all definitely noticed the number of new regular customers. It gave the vendors another opportunity to sell their produce to a whole new group of customers.

### **If I had it to do over:**

I would have considered making certain days of the month or week the only days we would accept EBT's. As I am the only full time employee it is difficult to run the market and handle all the different aspects of the EBTS.

## **Advice:**

My advice to anyone taking on the acceptance of EBTs, make sure you understand the amount of time required in dispersing, counting, receiving and reporting the use of EBT's.