


A vibrant photograph of fresh produce, including several large watermelons with dark green, striped rinds and several slices of cantaloupe with bright orange-red flesh and green rinds. The background is a soft, yellowish-green gradient.

Brooklyn Park Farmers Market

Summer 2017 | Annual Report

Cultivating Communities of Wellness



Anne Arundel County Public Schools and the Anne Arundel County Department of Health's Community Education and Health Equity Program partnered again in 2017 to improve county residents' access to local, fresh, and healthy food.

A collaborative group of county agencies transformed Brooklyn Park Middle School into a hub of nutritious provisions every Monday between June 19 and August 28.

As part of the initiative, neighborhood youth enjoyed free meals provided through the United States Department of Agriculture Summer Meals Program, and community members filled their shopping bags with fresh fruit and vegetables from the farmers market.

The project's key operators considered lessons learned from the previous year, and subsequent adjustments yielded positive results.



The Farmers Market

2017 at a glance

As it did in 2016, the Brooklyn Park Farmers Market operated from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Monday. The number of market days increased from eight to eleven due to the extended summer break to comply with Governor Larry Hogan's executive orders to start school after Labor Day.

JUNE		JULY		AUGUST	
DATE	ATTENDEES	DATE	ATTENDEES	DATE	ATTENDEES
6/19	180	7/3	138	8/7	86 ¹
6/26	152	7/10	198	8/14	226
	332	7/17	188	8/21	221
		7/24	225	8/28	167
		7/31	213		700
			962	¹ Inclimate weather	
Market Attendance Estimate Total for Summer 2017:				1,994	

Additionally, the fourth of July did not fall on a Monday this summer. The market attendance remained strong all summer, demonstrating the viability of a longer summer market season in the community.

The Maryland Farmers Market Association (MDFMA) hosted a training prior to the 2017 market season to provide market team members with the skills and knowledge needed to manage market activities.

This training incorporated a range of new tasks brought about by changes in the market's operating structure, including a market-level token system that handled *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* (SNAP) benefits more efficiently.

The customers using SNAP at the market were able to swipe their *Electronic Benefit Transfer* (EBT) card at the market manager tent in exchange for \$1 wooden tokens to spend at the market.

In Anne Arundel County only two markets, the Brooklyn Park Farmers Market and the Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC) Farmers Market, participated in the *Maryland Market Money* (MMM) program. Both markets provide matching dollars to customers using their federal nutrition benefits.



Food-insecure households utilized the Farmers Market Matching program.



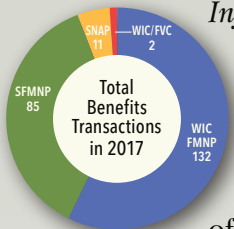
To celebrate National Farmers Market Week, which takes place during the first full week of August, the market increased its match from the standard per customer per market day cap of \$5 to an unlimited match. This increase was sustained through the end of the market season and was made possible by the generosity of a local benefactor whose contribution supported 93 percent of matching needs for 2017.

Overall, Brooklyn Park Farmers Market's second season was one of growth and expansion. Compared to 2016, the number of benefits transactions and amount of benefits spent at the market grew by 65 and 81 percent respectively. Ninety percent of all MMM distributed was then spent at the market, demonstrating a high rate of usage. The amount of MMM matching dollars distributed more than doubled.

In 2016, the number of benefits transactions were split relatively equally between SNAP, *Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program* (SFMNP), and *Women, Infants, and Children* (WIC) FMNP benefit type; in 2017, the WIC FMNP transactions far outpaced all other benefits transactions at the market. This may be secondary to the continued promotion and increased presence of WIC at the market. The number of SNAP transactions decreased and is reflective of statewide trends. In 2016 and 2017, WIC *Fruit and Vegetable Checks* (FVC) participation was minimal. The fact that WIC FVC transitioned to an electronic format not yet viable at farmers markets compromised any potential for increasing WIC FVC usage at the market in 2017. Once the electronic format is able to be used at farmers markets, an increase in FVC participation is expected.

Additional data was collected this summer to determine how far federal nutrition benefits customers were traveling to come to the market. Fifty-seven percent of customers using benefits lived within 2 miles of the market; another 31 percent lived within 3 to 5.5 miles. Of the 47 percent that lived in the Brooklyn Park zip code, 91 percent were Anne Arundel County residents.

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Brooklyn Park Summer Meals

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Food & Nutrition Services once again utilized the Brooklyn Park Middle School as a site to provide free breakfast and lunch to area youth ages 2–18 years old.

- ◆ Breakfasts Served – 1,031
- ◆ Lunches Served – 2,506

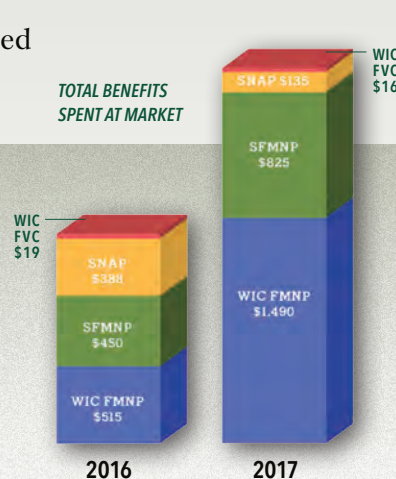


Community Supported Agriculture

A weekly community-supported agriculture (CSA) \$20 produce bag was available for purchase by the partnering agencies to help support the market. An average of 30 (29.7) bags were purchased each week which was twice the average of summer 2016. CSA bags served to ensure vendor sales in a new market and as a worksite wellness initiative for partnering agencies.

An 8-week fall CSA was piloted and had an average of 33 (32.75) bags purchased each week.

Overall, Brooklyn Park Farmers Market's second season was one of growth and expansion.



Graphic Acronym Key:

- SFMNP – *Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program*
- SNAP – *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*
- WIC FMNP – *Women, Infants, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program*
- WIC FVC – *Women, Infants, and Children Fruit and Vegetable Checks*

Promotion

- ◆ The market was highlighted and promoted via various media outlets, including newspaper articles, cable TV and radio spots, Facebook and Twitter posts, and website calendars.
- ◆ 2,000 promotional magnets were provided to all students at Brooklyn Park Elementary, Hilltop Elementary, and Brooklyn Park Middle at the end of the 2016–2017 school year.
- ◆ Promotional yard signs were provided to all twelve schools in the North County Cluster. Signs were also provided to Brooklyn Park Community Library, Brooklyn Park Volunteer Fire Company, Northern District Police Station, and North County Health Services.
- ◆ Outreach and promotion to Healthy Anne Arundel Coalition (HAAC) members included meeting announcements, flier distribution, and email announcements. Outreach was also provided by the members of the Obesity Prevention and Community Engagement Subcommittees of HAAC.
- ◆ The Brooklyn Park Farmers Market was listed in a variety of guides, including Maryland Farmers Market Association's online listing and map, Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission Farmers' Market Guide available online and as a printed brochure, and Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation's Anne Arundel County Agriculture Guide and Farmers' Market flier available online and in print.

Successes

- ◆ Planning agencies hosted an opening day community and media kick-off event with special guests and leadership from Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Department of Health, and United States Department of Agriculture.
- ◆ Children attending the market could select a free new book each week provided by AACPS Media Services, and Anne Arundel County Library provided Summer Reading program sign-ups and incentives.
- ◆ Provided fresh fruit and vegetable samples to children and adults.
- ◆ Engaged both children and adults with games and educational activities, such as basil seed planting, bean bag toss, and spin the wheel of health.
- ◆ Anne Arundel County Police were present building community trust and highlighting Police programs such as Explorers and Cadets, Crossing Guards, Bike Patrol, Northern District Police and Community Together (PACT), and Youth Activities Program (YAP). *Comfort*—the Facility Assistance Dog, was especially popular.
- ◆ WIC distributed FMNP coupons at five of the eleven market days throughout the summer.
- ◆ The market served as a site to implement the Brooklyn Park community food assessment surveys. Over fifty customers living in Brooklyn Park elected to participate, and they received a \$6 coupon to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables after completing the survey.
- ◆ The market team provided market tours and promotion packets every week to organizations and community leaders, including six Hispanic church leaders, the AACPS Deputy Superintendent, a Board of Education member, and an elected official.
- ◆ Tennis Alliance of Anne Arundel County provided Free Family Tennis during one market day.
- ◆ Promoted free trash receptacle program for Brooklyn Park residents from the Anne Arundel County Department of Health Environmental Health Bureau. This was an Anne Arundel County Executive initiative.



Recommendations for 2018

- ◆ *Increase the MMM program match to \$10 as a means of increasing customers' food budgets for purchasing local, fresh, and healthy foods at farmers markets while also directly supporting the farmers.*
- ◆ *Recruit a fruit vendor to increase agricultural producers from one to two. The market is in its third year, and with focused and consistent marketing, the market may support an additional producer. In addition, there is potential to research and explore school garden partnerships as agricultural vendors.*
- ◆ *Expand market promotions and partnerships.*





Thank you to all project partners who played a role in this season's success:

Anne Arundel County Police

Anne Arundel County Public Library

Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks

Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corporation

Brooklyn Park Senior Center

Chesapeake Arts Center

Maryland State Department of Education

USDA, MSDE, and AACPS are equal opportunity providers

Photos courtesy of the USDA

