

## Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Card Program 2013 Market Season Grant Information

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this program is to enable farmers' markets to accept Quest EBT cards to make healthy, local foods more accessible to low income Alaskans and increase sales for Alaska farmers and small businesses.

### PROGRAM PARTNERS:

- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health
- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture
- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service

**FIRST STEP FOR MARKETS:** The Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Card (FM-Quest) Program is restricted to markets that are authorized to accept SNAP benefits (also known as Food Stamps). SNAP benefits are provided on EBT (electronic benefits transfer) cards, known as Quest cards in Alaska. Markets must apply to the USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) for this authorization. Alaska FM-Quest Program activities cannot be initiated until a market has the FNS authorization number.

To be eligible for FNS authorization, a market must either:

- (A) Offer for sale, on a continuous basis, at least three varieties of qualifying foods in each of the following four staple food groups, with perishable foods in at least two of the categories:

meat, poultry or fish  
bread or cereal  
vegetables or fruits  
dairy products

OR

- (B) More than one-half (50%) of the total dollar amount of all retail sales (food, nonfood, gas and services) sold in the store must be from the sale of eligible staple foods

Eligibility requirements can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/store-eligibility.htm>. CSAs are also eligible to accept SNAP benefits. More information can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/pdfs/CSA.pdf>. The application, which is the same for both markets and CSAs, is available at [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm) or by calling the FNS office 1-877-823-4369. Please note that the federal approval process can take **up to 8 weeks**. You cannot order the wireless EBT machine until your market has an FNS number. It can take up to **4 additional weeks** for the equipment to arrive. Please take this into consideration in regards to your anticipated market start date.

**PROCESS AT THE MARKET:** The Alaska FM-Quest Program utilizes a token system for Quest and debit card customers. SNAP recipients use their Quest cards to purchase tokens at a market booth designated to house the wireless EBT machine. Tokens are typically in \$1 and \$5 denominations and are redeemable only at that market. Customers then use Quest tokens to purchase USDA approved food or plant items from participating vendors. Change cannot be given for Quest tokens, but unused tokens can be returned to the designated booth for a Quest card refund.

The wireless EBT machine can also accept debit and credit cards. Each of these transactions will incur a processing fee that will vary depending on the third party processor employed. It is the markets' decision which, if either, of these to accept. Any customer can use their debit or credit card to purchase tokens, which can be used to purchase any item at the market. These customers can receive change back. Markets can charge a fee for debit card transactions, typically \$1 - \$2 per transaction. Fees cannot be charged for credit or Quest transactions.

Vendors submit both Quest and debit tokens to the market for payment at the end of the market day. Electronic banking systems reimburse the market for those Quest and debit transactions within 24 hours.

**PROGRAM COSTS:** The Alaska FM-Quest Program 2013 Market Season Grant (May-October) will provide grantee markets up to \$7200 to cover the following equipment and financial costs:

- **One wireless EBT machine.** The wireless EBT machine (also known as a point of sale or POS) can cost up to \$800 each and is a onetime purchase. Therefore, if you already received funding for an EBT machine you will not be eligible for that funding again. There is a free wired machine available for markets without a wireless signal. This machine can only accept Quest cards.
- **Transaction and service fees for six months.** Use of the wireless EBT machine entails transaction fees plus a service fee for each month in which card transactions occur. This grant will cover the 2013 market season.
- **Salary and payroll services for a dedicated staff person for six months.** A competent, consistent person is needed to staff the EBT machine every market day. This person is also responsible for working with customers and vendors, collecting data, purchasing needed items, promoting the program, and assisting with financial reporting. This grant will provide funding for one staff person for the 2013 market season. This includes funding for payroll services to cover taxes, Worker's Compensation, etc.
- **Match program dollars.** This grant will provide up to \$1000 to implement a match program to help increase Quest customers' purchasing power. The market would match the amount charged to an EBT card with an additional amount of market tokens, thereby doubling the customer's dollar.
- **Miscellaneous program items.** This grant will provide funding for the market to print flyers and booth signs and to purchase tokens and start up items, such as a table, tent, EBT machine paper, receipt books, etc.

The FM-Quest Program 2013 Market Season Grant will be distributed by the Alaska Division of Agriculture. Grantee markets will receive  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their funding upon notification of award to purchase items before the market season starts. The remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the funding will be distributed upon successfully implementing and running the FM-Quest Program for the 2013 market season.

Grantee markets will also receive:

- **Technical and programmatic assistance.** The FM-Quest Program Partners will provide training for the FM-Quest Market Coordinator and market staff on implementing all aspects of the program.
- **Inclusion in statewide promotion plans.** This includes but may not be limited to: printed materials direct-mailed to Quest clients, printed materials available through community-based agencies and other venues, updates on the State of Alaska website and through various State listservs, press releases, and other media opportunities.

**COORDINATOR AT THE MARKET:** The market must have a designated person from the market community (*i.e.* manager, vendor, board member, community volunteer) who commits to overseeing the operations, outreach, promotions, and budgeting of the FM-Quest Program. This person must be available to meet with the FM-Quest Program Partners 3-4 times during the market season (usually phone conferences) and for other communications via phone or email. This person may or may not be the paid market staff operator of the EBT machine at the market.

**DATA LOGS AND RECEIPTS:** The market is responsible for maintaining and submitting required logs and receipts at the end of the 2013 season. The logs will consist of numbers of Quest and debit card customers and transaction amounts, number of vendors and vendor reimbursement amounts, etc. Receipts for items purchased for the FM-Quest Program will be submitted at the end of the 2013 market season.

**EQUIPMENT OWNERSHIP:** If the market successfully implements and runs the program throughout the 2013 market season, all items purchased with this grant will belong to the market at the end of the grant period. A market that disbands or discontinues accepting Quest or debit card transactions must return the equipment to the FM-Quest Program Partners.

**EQUIPMENT SECURITY:** The market is responsible for all FM-Quest Program equipment and items, and must replace lost, stolen, or damaged items that are needed to successfully run the program throughout the 2013 market season. Tokens are essentially “cash” so must be kept secure during the market and in between market days. The FM-Quest Program Partners are not responsible for lost, stolen, or misused tokens. The market is responsible for replacing the EBT machine or its batteries if they are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond repair. Machine malfunctions can be addressed by contacting the machine service provider.

**PROMOTION AND CONSUMER EDUCATION:** The market will include the FM-Quest Program in its own promotional efforts. This entails including the Quest logo and/or “we accept Quest and debit cards” on all of the market's promotional materials, such as its website, advertisements, flyers, newsletters, and e-newsletters, as well as displaying the “We accept Quest and debit cards” banner at market and appropriate signage at all vendors booths.

**MARKET PARTICIPATION:** By participating in the Alaska FM-Quest Program, it is expected that all of the market's vendors will be encouraged, but not required, to accept market tokens. All vendors who wish to participate will be expected to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the market outlining the rules and regulations, procedures and expectations of both parties. Those who sell SNAP-eligible foods can accept EBT, debit and credit tokens. All other vendors can accept debit and credit tokens (depending on which tokens the market will be using). The FM-Quest Program Coordinator at the market will ensure that all vendors understand the process and display the appropriate signage.

**VENDOR TRAINING AND COMPLIANCE:** By participating in Alaska FM-Quest Program, the market is agreeing to comply with the regulations of the USDA SNAP and Alaska Quest Programs. The market’s FM-Quest Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all market vendors are informed of and comply with SNAP regulations. Links to these regulations and training materials can be found on-line at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/store-training.htm>. The FM-Quest Program Partners will provide training materials specifically written for Alaska farmers markets and vendors.

For more information about the Alaska FM-Quest Program, please contact Kyla Byers at [kyla.byers@alaska.gov](mailto:kyla.byers@alaska.gov) or at 907-761-3880.

For an application for USDA FNS authorization to accept SNAP benefits, visit [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm) or call 1-877-823-4369.

If you have any questions or need assistance applying for the USDA FNS authorization to accept SNAP, contact Cheryl Kagee at [cheryl.kagee@alaska.gov](mailto:cheryl.kagee@alaska.gov) or at 907-465-3354.

## **Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Card Program 2013 Market Season Grant Application**

Please complete the following application and return by fax to Kyla Byers at 907-745-7242 or email at [kyla.byers@alaska.gov](mailto:kyla.byers@alaska.gov) by **Friday, March 1, 2013**.

Name of Market: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Market: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Market Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many days will this market be open during the 2013 market season (May – October)?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Does your market have a volunteer, staff or board member who is regularly at the market and can serve as the FM-Quest Program Coordinator for your market? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please provide their name and contact information:

FM-Quest Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what are your plans for finding/hiring your FM-Quest Coordinator?

3. Has your market received an authorization number from the USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) to accept SNAP benefits? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please list your FNS number here:

If no, will you be able to complete and submit an application by March 1, 2013?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

4. How long has your market been in operation? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does your market make \$100 or more in sales per month? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
6. How many vendors do you have that sell the following items on a typical market day (list number of vendors for each group):
- Fruits and/or vegetables \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fish and/or seafood \_\_\_\_\_
  - Meats and/or poultry \_\_\_\_\_
  - Dairy foods \_\_\_\_\_
  - Pickled vegetables, jams, jellies, syrup, honey, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Herbs and spices \_\_\_\_\_
  - Bread and baked goods: wrapped, labeled and intended to eat at home \_\_\_\_\_
  - Popcorn, soup mixes, etc., wrapped, labeled and intended to eat at home \_\_\_\_\_
  - Plants and seeds that grow food \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does your market conduct or participate in any other food access programs (such as WIC or Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program)? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
If yes, please list:
8. Is your market accessible to people who cannot drive or do not own cars?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
9. Can your market transmit and receive wireless signals? (You can test this with a cell phone.)  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

I have read and understand the information provided on the Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Program and the 2013 Market Season Grant.

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Printed Name

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Signature