

Utilizing External Funding for FMNP

WIC FMNP

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), established in 1992, enhances WIC's mission by connecting WIC participants with fresh, locally-grown produce for families, fostering both nutritional well-being and community development!¹ FMNP provides annual benefits during the farmers' market season, which can be used to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs from authorized farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands.¹

Increasing Access to Healthy Foods Through Farmers' Markets Initiative

As part of a three-year initiative, the National WIC Association published the [Farmers' Market Nutrition Program \(FMNP\) Landscape Scan Report](#) which examines the implementation of FMNP, electronic FMNP (eFMNP), and Cash Value Benefit (CVB) programs across the nation, focusing on key facilitators and barriers to success. These insights shaped the strategies shared in this Case Study to strengthen FMNP efficiency.

Leveraging Partnerships and Funds to Expand FMNP: Lessons from New Mexico and District of Columbia

A persistent challenge for many FMNP sites is securing sufficient funding to support and grow their programs. Recent federal funding trends have made these challenges more pressing. Since fiscal year (FY) 2023, funding for FMNP has declined. While Congress allocated \$26 million in both FY 2022 and FY 2023, funding dropped to \$10 million in FY 2024 and FY 2025. The House appropriations proposal for FY 2026 maintains this reduced funding level at \$10 million.

Findings from the 2024 NWA FMNP Landscape Scan Survey found that 91% of FMNP sites rely on one or more sources of supplemental funding, indicating that creative and strategic approaches to securing additional funds or adding program services have become essential. State and Local Agencies are securing a mix of public and private funding and sharing resources through local partnerships, to fill funding gaps and improve program functionality. This Case Study highlights how New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) and District of Columbia FMNP have leveraged such opportunities to expand WIC participant access to FMNP and support program sustainability.



New Mexico: Multifaceted Strategies for Funding

As one of the first FMNP pilot sites, New Mexico implements WIC FMNP through the New Mexico Department of Health. They accept e-solutions for WIC FMNP redemption at farmers' markets.

As New Mexico worked to grow their FMNP, they identified funding needs. As stated by a WIC FMNP State Agency staff member, "...with growing the program from what it was to where it is now. I had to find some way of getting funding for this program; because federal funds would not have covered it." To resolve this, a multifaceted strategy was used to fund FMNP, combining state and federal funds garnered by grant writing and policymaker education.

¹ Food and Nutrition Service. Overview. Accessed March 18, 2025. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/overview>

In New Mexico, one major concern was how to support participating farmers located in areas with limited or no internet or cell service. The proposed solution was to provide farmers with tablets and hotspot devices. There was not enough money in the federal FMNP budget to pay for these devices, therefore New Mexico DOH had to seek additional funds. One source of funding came through the Governor's Food, Farm, and Hunger Initiative. This initiative sought to transform the state's approach to addressing food insecurity and strengthen nutrition services. The initiative boosted funding for agriculture and hunger relief by enhancing support for local growers and expanding resources for organizations working to combat hunger across the state. By educating the Governor's Food Policy Advisor on the importance of providing reliable technological and internet access to successfully transition to paperless transactions at farmers' markets and farm stands, the New Mexico DOH staff secured \$185,000 from this initiative for FMNP. With this funding, they were able to purchase devices through their contract with a mobile payment application.

In 2023, they were able to fund device expenses by applying for and receiving funds through the USDA's E-Solutions Grant. This secondary source of funding replaced the one-time state funding and allowed them to continue to use their federal FMNP funds for other program expenses.

The DOH maintains communication with the Governor's office and consistently educates the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff and Food Policy Advisor about FMNP outcomes and community events. As a result of their ongoing education efforts and strong relationship, DOH was able to secure \$1 million in one-time state funding for FY 2026.

To build long-term sustainability, the DOH FMNP leaders are conducting outreach to state senators and representatives, continually presenting FMNP-related outcomes to educate them on the nuances and effectiveness of the program. They've also worked with legal and marketing departments to distinguish FMNP from WIC and gain support for future funding. As stated by a New Mexico State Agency staff member,

“For us to have state money, you need to showcase your program. You need to share what your program is, and I know a lot of states are afraid to. They think, well, you can't lobby. I'm not lobbying, I'm educating. I'm teaching our senators.”

New Mexico DOH has been successful in acquiring funding through grant writing and legislator education. Both methods involve touting the success of their FMNP. It is important to note that New Mexico was able to gain access to state officials through a staffer whose job aligned with FMNP goals. Therefore, it is important for FMNP sites to be intentional about where and with whom to initiate these educational efforts and ensure that their interests and efforts align with those of FMNP.



District of Columbia: Strategic Budgeting, Partnering, and Resource Sharing

DC FMNP implements the program through DC Health and accepts e-solutions for WIC FMNP redemption.

DC FMNP has brought innovation to the program by leveraging the 2% market development funds from the federal FMNP grant to modernize and expand program access. Most notably, these funds have supported the development of an online ordering platform and the implementation of home delivery services for FMNP families, through partnership with a local organization. Through this creative use of funds, DC has demonstrated how thoughtful investment in technology and service delivery can enhance program reach and utilization.

Additionally, DC has shown that online ordering and home delivery remains a highly valued service among FMNP families, post-pandemic, as transportation and time constraints continue to pose barriers. With online shopping now a normalized and expected way to receive groceries, these services help improve access.

DC FMNP also partnered with a locally funded nutrition incentive program called Produce Plus. Like FMNP, Produce Plus provides low-income residents with benefits to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. The program funds two outreach and support positions that help customers and farmers

navigate all incentive programs, including FMNP. These positions 'Market Champions' and 'Food Access Associates' are community members and often previous or current program participants, that provide support over the phone and in-person at farmers' markets. Additionally, Produce Plus funds equipment that facilitates the processing of eFMNP transactions. Through this partnership, DC FMNP has enhanced support for participants and saved administrative costs by utilizing resources provided by aligned local organizations.

Conclusion

These Case Studies highlighted several key strategies for securing additional funding and partnering with aligned organizations to expand participant services and sustain program success. Partnering with State and Local Agencies that share a mission around hunger reduction proved especially effective in aligning goals and accessing shared resources. Applying for federal and state grants emerged as a strategic method for managing the gaps in the federal FMNP budget and expanding financial resources. Understanding nuances in the line items of the federal budget will allow sites to set aside funding for future innovations. Educating state and local government officials about FMNP outcomes and community benefits helped build support and open new avenues for public funding. Together, these lessons emphasize the value of strategic collaboration, proactive outreach, and clear communication in building sustainable food access programs.

