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Farmer's Markets Now Accept Food Assistance Cards

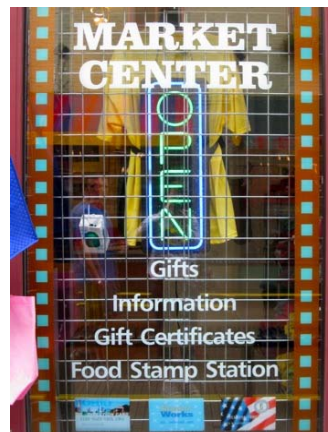
Cincinnati (June 30, 2011) Hamilton County families receiving state food assistance have a healthier option for fresh produce at two local farmers' markets that are now accepting the state's food debit card.

Findlay Market and Wyoming Ave. Farmers' Market will now accept the food cards from the 138,000 residents of Hamilton County who are assisted by the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services in meeting their daily food needs. One out of every six Hamilton County residents receives food assistance. In 2010, Hamilton County Job and Family Services distributed \$216.6 million in food assistance.

"We are extremely happy Hamilton County families now have another healthy option that also supports local farmers and other vendors," said Moira Weir, director of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services. "Anything that increases the choices available to families and improves their access to healthy food is a positive for this community."

The number of people receiving government food assistance has grown significantly over the past few years as the country struggles through an economic downturn. Over 44 million Americans are using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), up from 33 million just two years ago. In Hamilton County, the numbers have jumped from 84,000 in June of 2008 to 138,000 now. In Ohio, more than 1.8 million Ohioans are now using SNAP. For current state data, click here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/29snapcurpp.htm>

Local farmers' markets will have signs that say the market accepts Food Assistance, SNAP, EBT and/or the Ohio Direction Card.



Findlay Market is located just blocks from downtown in Over-the-Rhine, on Elder Street between Elm and Race. The Farmers Market at Findlay Market is open seasonally (April through November) on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and beginning June 7, Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. To find out more about Findlay Market, go to <http://www.findlaymarket.org/>

Wyoming Ave. Farmers' Market is open May through October. Market hours are 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Tuesdays. The market is located in downtown Wyoming at 522 Wyoming Avenue, the corner of Wyoming Avenue and Van Roberts Place. To find out more about Wyoming Ave. Farmers' Market, go to <http://www.wyomingfarmersmarket.net/>

To find a farmers' market near you, go to <http://www.ohioproud.org/searchmarkets.php>. If the Ohio Direction Card is not accepted at your local market, speak with the market manager about possibly accepting the Ohio Direction Card. If they are interested, please refer them to the following link: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm>.

Watch this video on how to use your Ohio Direction Card at Farmers' Markets. <http://ohiofarmersmarkets.osu.edu/videos/ebt/>

For valuable information on how to use the Ohio Direction Card, go to <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ofam/InfoCustomer.stm>

To find stores and markets near you that accept the Ohio Direction Card, go to <http://www.snapretailerlocator.com/>

About Hamilton County Job and Family Services

Hamilton County Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, elderly protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food assistance and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands each year and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.