



Nevada City's Farmers' Market

Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Your Success Story and Lessons Learned

Nevada County Money Market Pilot Program

Intervention Summary

The County of Nevada's Public Health and Social Services departments, partnering with 2-1-1 Nevada County, a local community-based organization, planned and implemented a "Market Money" program for EBT recipients in three of our county's farmers' markets.¹ This program was the first of its kind in the county. A Market Money program was first conceptualized as part of the Nevada County Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP) project and after NEOP engaged the Department of Social Services in the planning process, Social Services was able to allocate the funds for the project. The Market Money program was implemented in three markets, with each EBT recipient who participated receiving \$25 in tokens to spend at the three participating markets. In this first year, nearly 900 EBT recipients participated in the Market Money program, with \$21,903 of tokens distributed for those recipients to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers. GPS data analysis from EBT users at the markets, an analysis that was performed for the first time as part of this project's evaluation, informed us the markets are more than neighborhood markets, but that they all draw EBT shoppers from across the county and beyond.

All Nevada County EBT participants received a mailing explaining the program and the partners worked with the market managers to build awareness of the token program. Interested participants would then check-in at the 2-1-1 booth that was present at each of the participating markets, and upon proof of EBT participation, would receive \$25 in wooden tokens that they could spend at any of the market booths selling fruit and

¹ The story and numbers reported here are for FY 13/14, as those data were unavailable by last October's reporting cycle and so are included in our FY 14/15 report. In line with that timing, numbers for FY 14/15 will be reported next year. The project was implemented again this year, FY 14/15, following up on the success of the pilot project which is discussed in this success story.

vegetables. Awareness of the program was also built through newspaper advertisements, flyers, posters and an automated call to EBT participants.

Anecdotes suggest that the program was very well received by participants and impacted their shopping habits and potentially their future EBT usage. For example, a number returned to the booth to show what they had purchased. A few shed tears upon receiving their tokens. A few offered blessings to 2-1-1 for the market match program, and one stated that they'd earned "a few credits to heaven." 2-1-1 reported that "many" participants had not shopped at a farmers' market prior to the Market Money program and that they didn't know, prior to the Market Money program, that they could use their EBT cards at these markets.

In addition to the EBT participants, the markets reported that they were pleased with the program. Several vendors told 2-1-1 that they would be pleased to offer a testimonial to the success of the program, including the president of the farmers' market association was one of those vendors.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

One of the preliminary barriers to the implementation of a market money program was a series of bureaucratic hurdles. Although the relevant county departments were enthusiastic and committed to the project, the county's auditor-controller had strong objections to that type of project being implemented internally. As a result of these objections, 2-1-1 was brought in as a community partner to implement the program with Nevada County funding.

The partnership between Public Health, Social Services and 2-1-1 Nevada County was new and coalesced specifically around the Market Money program. With funding from Social Services; facilitation, planning, and support from Public Health; and with implementation and on-the-ground services by 2-1-1 Nevada County, all three partners were committed to the success of the project and worked diligently during the planning and initial implementation phases to build a strong collaboration. Building these new relationships, along with a somewhat foreshortened planning period, took more time and energy than anticipated, but the partners worked together to create an exciting and successful program.

In addition, other natural factors impacted program participation. The Market Match program was very successful when the weather was mild and clear. Over the course of the market season, from June to November, 2-1-1 reported that participation was negatively impacted by smoke from forest fires, and from extreme heat and cold. This barrier is difficult to impact, but the project planning can now accommodate weather as an on-going challenge to participation.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

The partners have agreed to move past the pilot phase and to implement the Market Money program again. In addition, NEOP's PSE intervention of working to bring EBT to an additional market in Nevada County, the Truckee Farmers' Market, dovetails with the Market Match program and potential expansion. Now that the relationship between the funding and implementation partners has been cemented, the facilitator role of NEOP is no longer required and Public Health is able to step back and support the project on an as-needed basis. The Department of Social Services has committed to providing funding for at least an additional year, and 2-1-1 plans to implement the Market Match again.

Efforts to bring an EBT program to the Truckee's farmers' market located in a CX3 neighborhood is finally moving forward. While the market is located in Nevada County it serves both Placer and Nevada County residents. As a result of this initiative, Nevada County NEOP developed a partnership with Placer County NEOP, via the Health Education Council who administers the program. That partnership resulted in Nevada and Placer County NEOP's working together on a USDA grant application to create an EBT program in markets that serve Placer County residents. The Health Education Council was recently awarded \$250,000 for that grant. One of the goals of that project is to implement EBT at the Truckee market.

Contact information about this Narrative

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