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WNC Double SNAP Network to Expand Farmers Market SNAP Incentives

ASAP, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, and MountainWise have formed the network to sustain and expand SNAP incentives, increasing access to fresh, local food across the region

ASHEVILLE, NC (December 18, 2023)—Beginning in January 2024, ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) will partner with Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture and MountainWise to expand Double SNAP for Fruits and Vegetables programs to more farmers markets, farmstands, and groceries in Western North Carolina. This group has established the WNC Double SNAP Network in order to bring together existing programs and expand to new sites, making SNAP incentives more accessible throughout the region.

SNAP programs that center local food and farms can significantly improve individual and community health. They make fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible, keep food dollars in the local economy, and connect participants with positive food and social environments in their communities.

“ASAP, Mountainwise, and Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture currently operate successful SNAP incentive programs at 26 sites, which connect participants with fresh food and farms in their communities,” said Mike McCreary, ASAP’s Farmers Market Program Manager. “By combining efforts and resources, we’ll not only be able to deepen the impact of our existing programs, but also create adaptive programs that meet the needs of communities that don’t currently have access.”

The first phase of the project focuses on strengthening existing programs across sites operating January through March, including:

- **Asheville City Winter Market**, 52 N. Market St., Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Winter King Street Market**, 252 Poplar Grove Rd., Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Columbus Winter Market**, 35 Locust St., 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **High Country Food Hub**, 252 Poplar Grove Rd., Boone, online ordering with Wednesday pick-up, 12–6:30 p.m.
- **Jackson County Winter Farmers Market**, 110 Railroad Ave., Sylva, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Jarrett Brothers IGA**, 191 Main St., Rosman, daily, 7 a.m.–9 p.m.
- **North Asheville Tailgate Market**, 275 Edgewood Rd., Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **River Arts District Farmers Market**, 350 Riverside Dr., Asheville, 3–5:30 p.m.
- **Rutherford County Winter Farmers Market**, 146 North Main St., Rutherfordton, 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Saluda Winter Market**, 64 Greenville St., 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Transylvania Farmers Market**, 200 E. Main St., Brevard, Saturdays, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
- **Weaverville Tailgate Market**, 60 Lakeshore Dr., Saturdays, 3–6 p.m.

More participating sites, including farmers markets and farmstands, will be announced in the spring. Over the next three years, the Network plans to expand to include nearly 40 sites across Western North Carolina.

In most cases, the way shoppers access Double SNAP benefits at farmers markets will not change. Shoppers will swipe their SNAP/EBT card at the market information booth and receive SNAP tokens for the transaction amount, as well additional tokens to shop for fruits and vegetables. Individual sites will post information about changes to program operation as applicable.

This partnership and program expansion is made possible in part by funding from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program. ASAP, as the lead organization, is one of 19 awardees across the country that received funding for nutrition incentive programs, which increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by providing incentives for income-eligible households participating in SNAP.

"USDA is delivering on its promise to bolster food and nutrition security for underserved communities," said USDA Chief Scientist and Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young. "Investments like this enable people to afford and eat healthy fresh fruits and vegetables so they don't have to make a choice between healthy eating and cheaper less healthier options."

Additional support for this project comes from Alleghany Wellness Coalition, Dogwood Health Trust, MANNA Food Bank, Walnut Cove Members Association, and other private foundations and donors.

[High-resolution photos [at this link](#). Contact Sarah Hart at sarah@asapconnections.org for more.]

ABOUT ASAP (APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT)

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. To learn more, visit asapconnections.org.

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