

Grow Your Business with Equity

Strategies to Advance Equity in Farmers' Markets

Bringing a farmers' market into your neighborhood offers great opportunities to advance equity in your community. Involving the local community not only helps strengthen business but also contributes to the economic vitality of the area. Below are some strategies for creating farmers' markets where all community members can participate and prosper.

- **Engage a broad range of residents and community groups in the market's design and operation** – Involve community members and ensure meaningful community engagement from market idea to implementation. Residents and stakeholders can provide crucial insight into issues such as location, hiring, and product mix. Recruit and support the involvement of low-income community members and people of color to ensure the market is an economically and racially inclusive space. The following Community Engagement Resource Guides are helpful for thinking about how to engage your community:
 - [Community Engagement Resource Guide: What It Is](#)
 - [Community Engagement Resource Guide: Why Use It](#)
 - [Community Engagement Resource Guide: Checklist](#)
- **Select an accessible market location** – To ensure a broad customer base, place the market in a neighborhood where people of color and low-income people reside. If possible, select a site that is close to a public transportation stop to meet the needs of transit-limited customers. To attract local residents, consider locating at a church, school, faith-based facility, or affordable housing site.
- **Make the market a community asset** – In addition to offering healthy food, the physical appearance of the market can help revitalize a neighborhood. Work to organize and lay out the market in a manner that will make it an inviting, appealing asset to the community.
- **Ensure the market accepts government nutrition program benefits** – SNAP, WIC, and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provide direct, effective support for low-income families, mothers, and seniors to purchase fresh and healthy foods. Accepting these benefits increases your customers' purchasing power.
- **Employ members of the community** – Local hiring can help un- or under-employed residents of economically isolated communities benefit from the neighborhood economic development brought by the market. Food system jobs are often an opportunity to employ workers who have previously been excluded and overlooked.
- **Contract with small, local businesses** – Purchase the goods and services needed to operate the market from local businesses whenever possible. These partnerships provide opportunities to enhance the local economy and support local entrepreneurship.
- **Include local farmers of color** – Identify and reach out to farmers and vendors of color to support marginalized producers and the regional farm economy. Immigrant farmers and farmers of color may sustain a large customer base seeking culturally appropriate food.

- **Outreach and marketing** – Advertise and promote the market in gathering spaces where communities of color and low-income communities will hear about your business. This can include local churches, recreation sites, community centers, and schools.
- **Make sure that market operating hours accommodate neighborhood residents' schedules** – Operating hours should be determined by surveying community members to establish the times when the market can have the highest potential attendance.
- **Cultural preferences** – Make sure your farmers' market is a resource to the community. Offer products that reflect the needs and preferences of the local consumers.

Check out PolicyLink's **Farmers' Markets Tool** in the [Equitable Development Toolkit](#) – It's available online [here](#).