

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)

EBT is part of the SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formally known as Food Stamps. In order to become an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)/SNAP approved farmers’ market, call the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Application line at 1-877-823-4369.

Once authorized, decide on technology to process transactions. Possible options include:

- FREE EBT only Point of Sale (POS) machine from EBT vendor – requires a phone line and electricity
- Wireless device – can be expensive, but most versatile and can also accept Credit and Debit transactions
- Paper Vouchers – most cumbersome, requires a phone call authorization

Also, wooden tokens can be obtained from Connecticut’s Department of Agriculture and utilized at farmers’ markets for this program.

Process at the Market

The Market Master (MM) or their designee processes transactions upon the request of an EBT client and hands out wooden tokens. The transaction is processed either by swiping the EBT card and having the client enter their PIN or filling out the paper voucher and placing a phone call to “hold” the funds:

EBT clients can spend their wooden tokens only on food stamp approved items. Individual farmers collect wooden tokens throughout the market day. At the end of the day, they turn the wooden tokens over to the MM. Arrangements are made to pay the individual farmer by the MM.

The MM receives payment/settlement from EBT the vendor electronically, usually the next day. If paper vouchers are used, the MM must “clear” the vouchers electronically via an EBT only machine within 15 calendar days. This can be done at a location other than the market, as electricity and a phone line are required.

EXEMPT SALES OF MEALS AND FOOD ITEMS

The following are among the circumstances under which sales of meals and food items **are exempt from sales and use taxes:**

- Sales of items purchased with federal food stamps; Conn. Gen. Stat. §12-412(57) and §12-412e.

Other items are also eligible but not relevant to farmers’ markets.

EBT Eligible Foods

Eligible Items

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Breads and Cereals
- Meats, Fish, and Poultry
- Dairy Products
- Vegetable Plants

NON Eligible Items

- Beer, Wine, Liquor, Cigarettes or Tobacco
- Any Nonfood Items, such as:
 - Pet Foods
 - Soaps, Paper Products
 - Household Supplies
- Vitamins and Medicines
- Ready to Eat Foods or Food Eaten in the Store/Market
- Hot Foods

For further information on accepting Electronic Balance Transfers, please contact the Connecticut Department of Social Services:

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