

# Vendors' Experiences with Food Access Programs

from the 2025 Washington Farmers Market Vendor Survey

JANUARY 2026

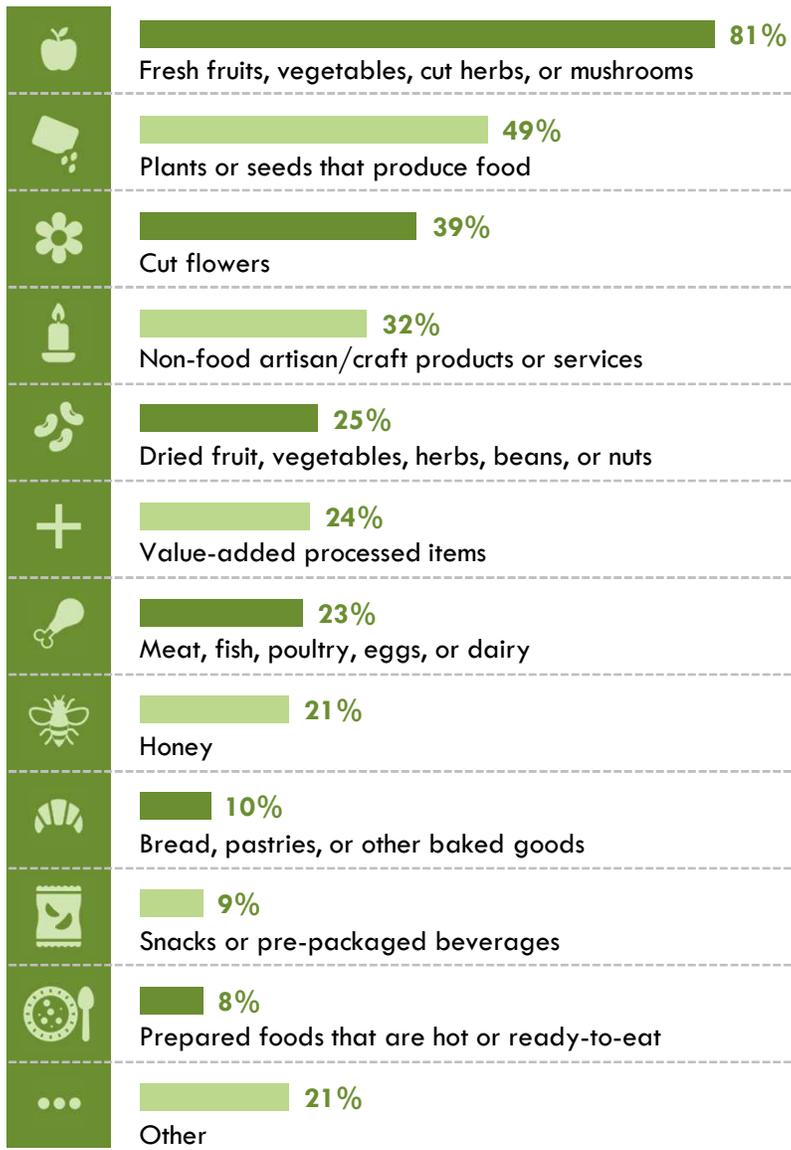


**423 farmers market vendors** participated in the survey!

- Vendors from **38 of Washington's 39 counties.**
- 70%** said farming is their primary occupation.
- 96%** said farmers market sales were important to their overall income in 2024.
- 67%** of participants were 45 or older.
- The average age was 54.

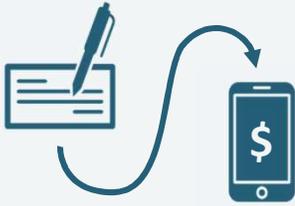
## Products sold by survey participants at farmers markets

Participants could select all that applied.



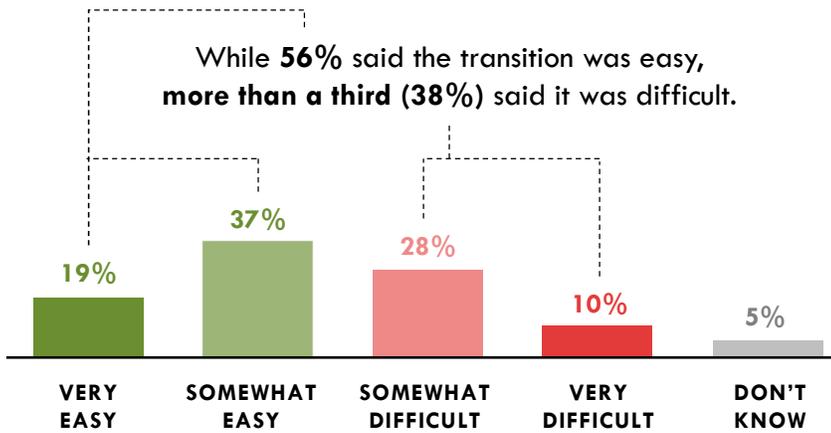
In 2024, Washington families used over **\$4.6 million in food access benefits** to buy fruits, vegetables, and other foods directly from Washington farmers and food businesses at farmers markets (WSFMA "Vital Statistics Report" 2025).





## In 2023, the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) transitioned from a paper check to an electronic benefit.

Vendors are required to log into a website (the WIC Direct Vendor Portal) on a smart device where they scan shoppers' QR codes, and have the shoppers enter their PINs to complete a sales transaction.



**97%**

of participants are comfortable using devices like smartphones, tablets, and computers.

### Most common challenges related to accepting the WIC and/or Senior FMNP benefit:



Customers having trouble keeping track of their PINs



More time-consuming sales transactions



Device or internet glitches



Cumbersome or confusing to navigate the payment process for shoppers and vendors



**17%** said the change to the electronic system **decreased their farmers market sales** from FMNP

**COMPARED TO**



**30%** who said the change **increased their FMNP sales.**



**27%** said they didn't know.



**“Transaction processing takes longer, which is problematic when lots of customers are shopping and waiting to check out.”**

— Survey participant

Survey participants said the following aspects of the electronic FMNP QR code payment system are **“very valuable”**



Ability to also accept WIC Fruit and Vegetable Benefits



Weekly direct deposits instead of needing to deposit paper FMNP checks



Ability to charge shoppers exact amount



Ability to track sales electronically

## Areas in which participants said they needed support



62%

Having the farmers market manage SNAP EBT tokens and SNAP Market Match currency at the info booth.



61%

Training shoppers on what they can buy with food access currencies like SNAP EBT tokens, SNAP Market Match, WIC & Senior FMNP.



59%

Help marketing products to shoppers that use food access currencies.



53%

Getting food access program signage for market booths.



53%

Support problem solving food access program-related technical issues for shoppers.



**[The best part of accepting food access currencies at the farmers market is] seeing the relief on someone’s face that they are able to purchase what they need. It also helps us so much!”**  
– Survey participant

## Vendors' participation in food access programs at farmers markets

**57%** were approved to accept WIC & Senior FMNP in 2024.

**76%** accept payment from EBT tokens or other scrip.

**71%** accept payment from SNAP Market Match.

**63%** are interested in participating in a pilot project where shoppers could swipe their SNAP EBT card at their booth instead of using tokens.

## Food access programs support vendors' sales and desire to help others.



**92%**

said shoppers' payments from food access programs are important to their farmers market sales.



**94%**

said it is important that food access programs enable people with low incomes to shop at farmers markets.



**We feel good about offering healthy, affordable, local food to our community, and in exchange, we earn a living."**

*– Survey participant*

## THE FULL "WASHINGTON FARMERS MARKET VENDOR SURVEY REPORT"

is available on the WSFMA website: [wafarmersmarkets.org](http://wafarmersmarkets.org). For more information about this project, please call (206) 706-5198 or email [info@wafarmersmarkets.org](mailto:info@wafarmersmarkets.org).



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