



Go Fresh Mobile Market Summer Season Evaluation June – October, 2021

***Meeting the needs of Springfield families through fresh
produce deliveries***



Acknowledgments

Thank you to the sponsors, funders, partner organizations and dedicated staff who contributed to the success of the Go Fresh Mobile Market this summer season. Thank you especially to the Public Health Institute of Western Mass and the Go Fresh Advisory Committee who supported Go Fresh through this transition year as Wellspring Community Harvest began as the new operator of the mobile market. The program continued without interruption with the ongoing leadership of Riley Gilroy as program director. We appreciate the support of our advisors and partner agencies especially during the challenging start of the season, given the changing landscape of the pandemic. We are also indebted to CISA for supporting the development and translation of materials to reach diverse communities in Springfield. This community leadership enabled Go Fresh to continue to serve the needs of food insecure families across Springfield.

Project Partners:

- Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts
- Wellspring Community Harvest
- City of Springfield, Health and Human Services
- Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
- Gardening the Community
- Mosque 13
- UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program
- Mercy Medical Center

Thank you to the sponsors and foundations that provided support for this program:





Distribution

Go Fresh Mobile Market delivers fresh produce to senior housing sites, low income housing complexes, healthcare centers and community organizations across Springfield. The mobile market enables customers to purchase fresh produce using state Healthy Incentive Program (HIP) benefits that can only be used at farmers markets. Go Fresh targets families who have limited access to transportation or who live in food deserts, and will therefore benefit the most from a mobile farmers market delivering to their residences and community centers. This direct access to produce is particularly significant during the Covid epidemic when vulnerable populations are socially isolated and limiting travel to other food stores.

Go Fresh's 2021 summer season began under new leadership, as the mobile market transitioned from the Public Health Institute of Western MA to Wellspring. It opened during the week of June 15 and ended the last week of October; a period of 20 weeks. Startup of the market was delayed by uncertainty about the pandemic as the 2021 summer season was being planned. During the 2020 season the mobile market shifted to produce box deliveries rather than the in-person mobile market as people isolated themselves at home to prevent the spread of COVID. This seemed necessary as the new summer season was being planned, and Go Fresh received approval from the Department of Transitional Assistance to offer a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program where families could sign up for regular deliveries of produce in season. However as COVID concerns subsided by summer and customers voiced a great preference for choosing their own produce, Go Fresh pivoted to a regular delivery season.

During the regular season, produce is picked up twice a week from area farms in the Pioneer Valley, with an emphasis on sourcing from area farmers of color. Selection of produce was based on the purchasing interests of customers from diverse cultural backgrounds and a general interest in accessing fruit. Produce is displayed on the van's drop down shelves for customers to select and then purchase using their HIP or SNAP benefits, WIC or senior coupons or occasionally paying with cash or credit cards.

Site Partners

Baystate Place
Berkshire Avenue
Colonial Estates
Forest Park Manor
Gentile Apartments
Independence House
Linden Towers
Mosque 13
Mercy Medical Center
Riverview Apartments
Saab Court
Seniority House

The mobile market visited four sites a day on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and spent an hour at each site. Serving seniors is a major focus for the Go Fresh Mobile Market, and senior housing sites included Seniority House, Riverview Apartments, Berkshire Avenue Congregate Housing, Gentile Apartments, Forest Park Manor Senior Center and Independence House. Additional affordable housing sites and community and health partners are among our site partners. When the Go Fresh van arrives at these sites each week, there are often customers waiting to purchase their produce for the week.

19,792 pounds of produce distributed

6,000 estimated people served

12 low income and senior housing and community sites served

20 weeks of produce distribution



Promotion and Outreach

Go Fresh developed posters to advertise both the mobile market and the SNAP/ HIP program at each of our delivery sites. Posters were developed in English and Spanish, which represent the most common languages across all sites. The explanation about the SNAP/HIP program was also translated into Portuguese, Vietnamese and Russian to encourage participation from these sizable communities. Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) assisted with identifying and paying for translators. Below are samples of these promotional materials.



Local Fruits and Vegetables in Season
Delivered Fresh to You

Go Fresh Mobile Market

USE YOUR HIP/SNAP BENEFITS



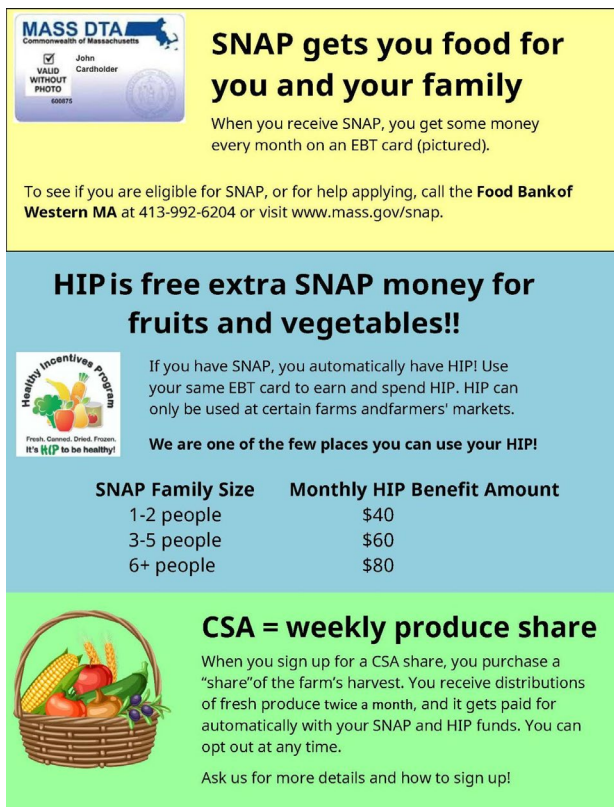
Apples	Potatoes
Oranges	Tomatoes
Lemons	Peppers
Cabbage	Squash
Lettuce	Corn
Greens	Onions

SIGN UP FOR PRODUCE BOX DELIVERIES
For forms and more information email us or visit our website at

 email@domain.com
 www.gofreshmobilemarket.com

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Stay Safe Stay Healthy



MASS DTA
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
John Cardholder
VALID WITHOUT PHOTO
88875

SNAP gets you food for you and your family

When you receive SNAP, you get some money every month on an EBT card (pictured).

To see if you are eligible for SNAP, or for help applying, call the **Food Bank of Western MA** at 413-992-6204 or visit www.mass.gov/snap.

HIP is free extra SNAP money for fruits and vegetables!!



If you have SNAP, you automatically have HIP! Use your same EBT card to earn and spend HIP. HIP can only be used at certain farms and farmers' markets.

We are one of the few places you can use your HIP!

SNAP Family Size	Monthly HIP Benefit Amount
1-2 people	\$40
3-5 people	\$60
6+ people	\$80



CSA = weekly produce share

When you sign up for a CSA share, you purchase a "share" of the farm's harvest. You receive distributions of fresh produce twice a month, and it gets paid for automatically with your SNAP and HIP funds. You can opt out at any time.

Ask us for more details and how to sign up!

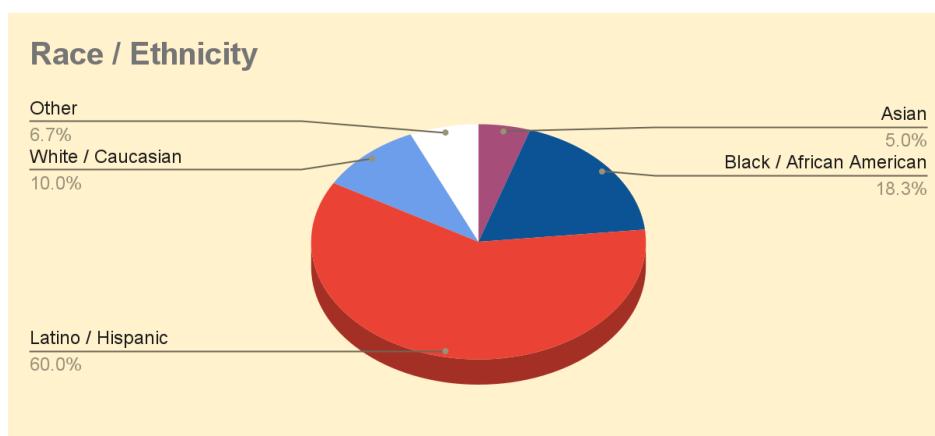
Education about HIP benefits continues to be an important priority for Go Fresh given the confusing nature of the program. All participants in the federal SNAP food program are automatically enrolled in the Massachusetts HIP program. However the amount of HIP benefits that recipients can use at any one time is limited by the value of their SNAP benefits at the time. HIP benefits are replenished when they are used, up to the monthly allocation, so someone's card can be swiped multiple times to access all of their HIP benefits. HIP benefits can only be used for produce at a farmers market. Customers often choose not to use their SNAP benefits, which can be used for other food products. These basic concepts are described in the flier above that CISA helped Go Fresh to develop. Go Fresh staff are constantly explaining to new people how the program works and the benefits of using their family allocation of HIP benefits at the mobile market.

Survey Results

During the final weeks of the 2021 Summer distribution, 60 participants completed surveys regarding the Go Fresh Mobile Market initiative. This included 23 surveys in Spanish. The facts and opinions expressed in these surveys enable the program staff to expand and improve as we move forward. These results reflect individuals completing the survey which is only a fraction of Go Fresh Mobile Market participants.

Who we served

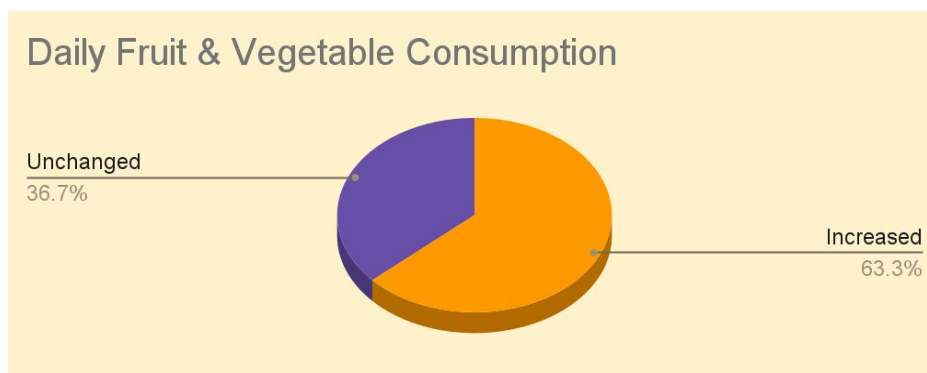
- 76% of the survey respondents were over the age of 50.
- The majority of respondents, 6 in 10, were Latinx. The next largest group of respondents identified as Black.
- 90% of survey respondents had households between 1 - 3 residents.



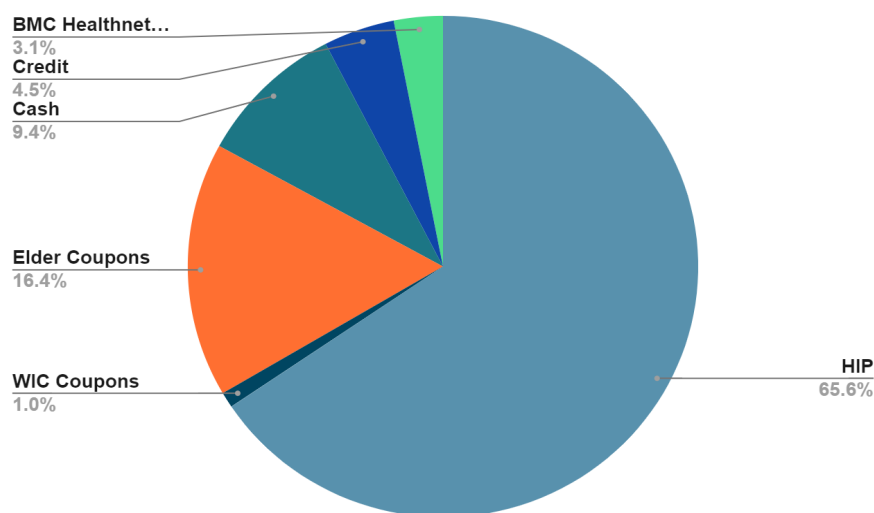
Impact

Go Fresh Mobile Market initiative has become a lifeline for many households and an easy, affordable way to purchase fresh produce and honey using the Healthy Incentive Program, senior coupons and other food access benefits.

- 63% of respondents shared that their daily fruit and vegetable consumption had increased since becoming a part of the initiative.



- Almost 70% of the survey participants were aware they could use their SNAP HIP benefits to purchase produce. Of the 60 respondents that were aware, a large majority (90%) actually used their HIP benefits.
- The vast majority of Go Fresh market participants' purchasers (86.1%) are low income families utilizing food access benefits, with the HIP program creating the greatest access to fresh produce. These funding sources are summarized below.



- The majority (42%) of households have shopped with the program at least ten times or more this season. While for many respondents (15%), this was their first time.
- Most GFMM participants (98%) expressed a desire for the program to run throughout the year, preferably with an indoor produce market in their residential building each week.

Based on survey results, consumer comments show a very positive outlook about the market and appreciate the “friendly staff”. They are using their benefits with some frequency and like the opportunity to select their own produce. Some suggest that if possible, the selection could be expanded to include a wider variety of produce preferred in Asian and Latinx communities. As one respondent stated, “Keep it going. It’s a great service to the community; especially for older people.”

Next Steps

The Mobile Market’s success in reaching so many families during the summer season, along with the request for year-round service from most of our surveyed participants, demonstrates the value of continuing the program through the winter months. Funding to expand the program has been made possible through a three year “Where Health Matters” grant from Health New England! These funds will support expansion of the Go Fresh Mobile

Market into a year-round program, and will enable the market to reach more families during future summers as well. Most summer sites agreed to participate in the winter market, which began in November just two weeks after the summer market ended.

Go Fresh has received permission from the Department of Transitional Assistance to operate a SNAP CSA, where families sign up for automatic delivery of produce using their HIP benefits. During periods of high Covid transmission, the SNAP CSA maintains social distance and removes the need for use of the EBT card machine. However survey results found little interest (12%) in participating in the SNAP CSA because families would prefer to pick their produce themselves. In addition to this survey result, we heard anecdotally from customers about their reluctance to make an upfront commitment to use HIP for an ongoing CSA. However, given the uncertainties of the pandemic, Go Fresh will continue to explore whether the SNAP CSA or some version of produce boxes could gain more interest.

In the year ahead, Go Fresh looks forward to expanding the mobile market allowing more families to benefit from the convenient delivery of fresh produce without having to worry about transportation. There are also plans to continue to expand HIP awareness and usage as well as continuing to diversify produce offerings to include more foods preferred by Asian and Latinx populations.

