

*Welcome to the second installment in the WIC Outreach Planning Series **Partnership Development**. This is one of six focus areas to support local agencies in developing a strategic, comprehensive outreach plan to build and sustain caseload, and improve delivery of service.*

## **Partnership Development – Reaching out to Farmers**



This year, WIC has an amazing opportunity with the influx of Farm Direct checks to connect WIC participants with local produce. Below, two WIC agencies are being recognized for the different ways they are engaging and reaching out to farmers.

### **Malheur County WIC – Establishing a WIC Farmers’ Market**

Malheur County WIC has a reason get excited about local produce. They will host their first-ever, on-site WIC Farmers’ Market this August! The idea grew out of two meetings held last fall and another this March with farmers and local agency staff. The purpose of the meeting was to figure out how WIC participants could buy local produce using their Farm Direct checks and Fruit and Veggie vouchers....and the Malheur County WIC Farmers’ Market was born! WIC participants will now be able to use their Farm Direct checks and Fruit and Veggie vouchers, and farmers will be able to sell their produce. A win, win for all!

Malheur County WIC is engaging a number of partners to ensure a successful event. Some include the city, Ace Hardware Rental, the library, OSU extension, and the newspaper and local radio station to name a few. Promotion for this event will happen at the WIC office, through flyers, T-shirts, magnets, feather flags (reading “Walk-ins Welcome” and “Farmers’ Market”), and an air dancer with “WIC” down its side.

Investing a little time in partnerships can lead to great ideas and opportunities to better serve WIC participants and the community. Kudos to Sandy Ackley and Malheur County WIC!

## **Lincoln County WIC- Connecting with Market Managers**

Lincoln County WIC decided to take a different approach to connecting with their local farmers. Because of the extra Farm Direct checks, they wanted to let market managers know about the possible influx of WIC participants, and encourage newer farmers to sign up to accept Farm Direct checks, in addition to WIC Fruit and Veggie vouchers. Lincoln County WIC identified the market managers in their area and sent them a one-page email. The market managers were encouraged to forward this communication onto their farmers.

*The sample email is provided as a word document titled "Sample letter to Farmers 2012" with this morsel. If you choose to use this template, be sure and adapt it to your county. All the blue highlights are where you plug in your local information.*

Here are two places to find farmers' markets and farm stands in your county:

**Oregon Farmers' Market Directory** – This webpage lists markets by name. Click on the market name to pull up the market manager's contact information.

<http://oregonfarmersmarkets.org/directory/directory.html>

**Oregon Farm Direct, Roadside/Farm stand and Market Directory** – This is the website on your *Find a Farm Stand or Farmers' Market* green card. This site allows you to identify farmers that are enrolled as WIC vendors and also search by county and/or city.

[http://myoregonfarm.org/fdnp\\_wic\\_shopperguide](http://myoregonfarm.org/fdnp_wic_shopperguide)

*A special thanks to Erin Dooher, dietetic intern at Lincoln County WIC, for providing this idea and the sample email/letter to the farmers.*



Dear farmers' market manager,

This year the **County X WIC program** will be distributing significantly more Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP) checks than ever. This means more money to our local farmers! Here is some information to ensure this is a successful season for everyone. Please pass this information along to your participating farmers:

- **In 2012 in County X, we will have ### sets (a value of \$###) of FDNP vouchers as opposed to ### sets (\$###) last year!** This will be a great year for vendors to start participating. We expect to give vouchers to all WIC participants in the county, as well as their regular WIC fruit and veggie vouchers. If your market has WIC and FDNP vendors, then WIC clients will be more likely to attend that market.
- **Newly participating vendors** can call the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) at [503-872-6600](tel:503-872-6600) to request an application packet. They will likely mail out the packet the same day or the next business day. Once ODA confirms the vendor's eligibility, State WIC will coordinate training between the vendor and their market manager, which is required prior to authorization.
- **Farmers may sign up to accept two different benefit types:** Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP) checks and WIC fruit & veggie vouchers. There are some slight differences in the way the types of benefits are handled. Usually, two-thirds of farmers who accept FDNP checks also choose to accept WIC fruit & veggie vouchers. The farmer indicates their choice on the application.
- **In the past, some FDNP vendors have put produce into \$4 bundles** - the denomination of each FDNP check. They've said it helps WIC participants (including seniors) easily spend their FDNP checks.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas on how we can partner to best serve our community. WIC wishes you a great market season in 2012!

Regards,

**Your name and title**

**Phone number**

**Email address**