

Milwaukee Farmers Market Coalition | SNAP EBT Farmers Market Training

“Responsible Official” SNAP Authorization Application FAQ

What is a “Responsible Official”?

This is a term developed by the USDA for the purpose of an FNS application. In general, the *Responsible Official* is the point contact person for your USDA FNS application. They are also the person responsible for everyone who helps run the SNAP/EBT program at your farmers market, whether that be a volunteer or staff person. That is, if any SNAP program violations are committed such as fraud, the *Responsible Official* (as well as the parent organization of the farmers market, if applicable) will be held accountable to those actions. To pull directly from the USDA definition:

*The Responsible Official is responsible for ensuring that all market stakeholders (i.e. him/herself, the market owner, market vendors [including vendors that do NOT sell SNAP-eligible items], and – if applicable – parent organizations, such as a nonprofit organization) adhere to SNAP laws, regulations, and policies. If any stakeholder commits a program violation, both the parent organization and the Responsible Official will be held accountable, and may face disqualification and/or monetary penalties. In other words, responsibility for violations falls to both the organization and the Responsible Official, as does prevention. To prevent a sanction from occurring, the Responsible Official should ensure all stakeholders (including **ALL** market vendors) are fully trained and understand the impact that program violations would have on all market stakeholders; and should carefully consider how liability for disqualification and/or monetary penalties would affect those stakeholders.*

Can there be more than one Responsible Official?

Yes – in the application if you would like to have more than one *Responsible Official*, you can provide information for more than one person.

What information / documents does the USDA need to apply as a Responsible Official?

- Past SNAP program violations committed, if any
- Crimes committed after June 1, 1999, if any
- Home address, email address, date of birth, and social security number
- The documents you will need to mail in are:
 - Color copy of photo ID
 - Color copy of social security card

NOTE: A copy of photo ID is also **NOT REQUIRED** for markets operated by government agencies.

Wisconsin is a community property State. What information does the USDA need from my spouse?

You will need to provide the same information listed above for spouses, partners, etc. The same exception applies for markets operated by government agencies.

What does the USDA do with my information?

The information the *Responsible Official* provides is used solely for the SNAP application authorization, as well as SNAP program monitoring. It is safeguarded and it is never shared. The reason for needing an individual's social security number is for maintaining the integrity of the program and to hold an individual accountable for any program violations if there is no organization operating the farmers market. FNS uses the SSN of the *Responsible Official* in order to run a background check on whether that individual was previously affiliated with any SNAP programs in the past, as well as any criminal charges in the past.

If someone else operates the SNAP/EBT equipment, is my SSN associated with that equipment?

Your SNAP/EBT equipment will be tied to your FNS approved number, which means that yes, your social security number will be tied to that equipment as well. That is why the training of any farmers market staff or volunteers is very important for the integrity of the program.

EXCEPTIONS:

If your farmers market is owned/operated by a parent organization that is a nonprofit, government agency, or publicly-owned corporation, your SSN is *NOT* tied to your FNS authorized number. Examples: (1) Fondy Food Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose EIN number is tied to the FNS number of the Fondy Farmers Market. (2) The Greenfield Health Department runs the Greenfield Farmers Market and does not have a SSN tied to their FNS number. If your market is operated by one of these entities, you will need to mail in the following additional documents:

- Nonprofit organization: Copy of your IRS 501(c)3 Determination Letter
- Government agency: Letter – on appropriate letterhead – proving the government entity owns or sponsors the market

Even with these exceptions, the *Responsible Official* still needs to turn in a color copy of their social security card and provide their SSN in the application in order for the FNS to run their background checks for the sake of the application process. After that, however, exempt parent organizations will not have a SSN tied to their FNS approved number.

What if we would like to change who the *Responsible Official* is for our market?

This is entirely possible! Market ownership may change, or the folks working at the parent organization may change as well. Please contact FNS in order to request what is called a "Reauthorization Application." Essentially the application is the same as the basic information provided in your SNAP authorization application, but you will just need to provide updated name, address, DOB, photo ID, SSN of the new *Responsible Official*.