

Frequently Asked Questions

PROJECT FRESH

CUSTOMER FAQS

Where can I use my Project FRESH coupons?

Coupons can be redeemed at any participating farmers market or roadside stand. For a list of farmers markets near you, check out the Michigan Farmers Market Association.

What does “locally grown produce” mean?

When referring to Project FRESH, “locally grown” means non-processed fruits and vegetables grown in Michigan or the counties that border Michigan in Ohio, Wisconsin, or Indiana. Canadian produce does not qualify.

My mother isn't able to go to the market. How can she redeem her Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH coupons?

A proxy can be arranged. Ask the local agency that distributes the coupons for additional information.

How many Project FRESH booklets can I receive?

One booklet of coupons (worth \$20) is issued per client; a maximum of two (2) booklets is issued per family. For example, if a pregnant woman has a child between the ages of 1 and 4 years, she would receive two booklets. If she had two children, she would still qualify for only two booklets. If the combined income of two seniors in one family is below the federally defined poverty level, they would receive two booklets.

How do I know if I'm eligible for Project FRESH?

In order to qualify for either WIC or Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH a family must earn no more than 185% of the federally defined poverty level.

Who benefits from Project FRESH?

Project FRESH helps many people. The program helps meet the nutritional needs of children, ages 1-4; pregnant, breastfeeding, or post-partum non-breastfeeding women; and seniors. In addition, farmers and local economies are benefited.

I'm disabled but under the age of 60. Am I eligible for Project FRESH?

Adults with disabilities living in subsidized senior housing complexes are eligible for Project FRESH/Market FRESH coupons.

Can I buy Michigan cheese or cider with my coupons?

No. Although the list of authorized fruits and vegetables is quite extensive, Project FRESH coupons cannot be used to purchase non-produce items like cheese, cider, or nuts. However, many Project FRESH clients may be eligible to receive EBT benefits which can be used to purchase processed foods at the farmers market. For a complete list of eligible foods for WIC Project FRESH and Senior Project FRESH, see attached charts.

How can I find out how to cook and store the items I buy at the market?

This website from Michigan State University Extension provides you with an alphabetized way to access information on how to can, freeze and dry your market purchases.

Can I use my coupons to buy fruit or vegetables at the grocery store?

No. Project FRESH coupons are for use only at certified farmers markets and roadside stands. To see a list of farmers markets that accept coupons visit the Michigan Farmers Market association.

What happens if the item I want to buy costs more (or less) than the value of the coupon?

If the item costs less than \$2, the farmer is not allowed to provide change. Instead, he or she may give you the balance in produce. On the other hand, if the item costs more, you will need to pay the balance. So, for example, if you purchase something that costs \$2.75, you'll need to give the farmer one of your coupons plus 75 cents.

I have never shopped at a farmers market before; what can I expect to find there?

Expect to find a lively atmosphere and a wide variety of fresh vegetables and fruits. You may also find baked goods, maple products, honey, eggs, artisanal cheeses, apple cider, jams and jellies, flowers, and even poultry and meats. Each farmers market is different so availability of these items varies from market to market and season to season.

I received some Project FRESH coupons. How do I use them?

The coupons are used like cash with participating farmers at certified farmers markets. Look for the "Project FRESH Coupons Welcome Here" sign at individual farmers' stalls at the market. If you don't see the sign just ask the farmer if he or she participates in the program.

When are Project FRESH coupons available?

Each county decides when it will make coupons available to clients, during June through September each year. The coupons must be redeemed by October 31. Check with your local WIC office or Senior agency for more information.

FARMER FAQS

How long does it take to get reimbursed?

Most farmers are reimbursed in about a week, but it can take up to three weeks in some cases.

GENERAL FAQS

How many people participated in Project FRESH in 2007/8?

Project FRESH impacted the lives of many Michigan citizens. More than 37,000 clients and 800 farmers in 75 counties participated, generating nearly one half million dollars in revenue!