



Market Match FAQ

This information sheet is intended to answer commonly asked questions about Market Match and how it works for people with CalFresh. If you have further questions that aren't answered here, please reach out to the Market Match team at marketmatch@ecologycenter.org or call us at (510) 925-4001.

What is Market Match?

Market Match is a nutrition incentive program that offers extra money to customers using CalFresh EBT at around 250 participating farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs, and mobile farmers' markets. The Ecology Center (ecologycenter.org), a nonprofit in Berkeley, CA, spearheads this program with dozens of partners across the state.

How does it work?

At a farmers' market

- Find a market staff person or go to the market info booth, swipe your CalFresh EBT card for the amount of your choice, receive CalFresh tokens/vouchers in exchange, plus additional free Market Match tokens/vouchers, and spend them with vendors at the market on eligible foods. At most participating markets, you can get an extra \$10 (e.g. Spend \$10 of CalFresh, get \$20 total to spend at the market), however that amount varies market to market. [Watch this video \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=voT76e6lYgQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voT76e6lYgQ) for a visual explanation of how it works.
- Individual vendors in the market are typically not set up to swipe CalFresh EBT cards directly -- this is why customers must go to the info booth or market manager first, to swipe their card and get tokens/vouchers to spend with the vendors in the market.

At a farmstand, CSA, or mobile farmers' market

- Generally, Market Match is offered as a 50% discount. This means you pick out your produce, swipe your CalFresh card at the point of sale, and receive 50% off the purchase price (e.g. Purchase \$20 worth of produce for only \$10).
- *What are CSAs and mobile farmers' markets?*
 - A CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is a box of produce that is usually distributed by a farm or food hub. A customer generally has to sign up in advance for a subscription, and then receives the produce box on a weekly or bi-weekly basis throughout the growing season.
 - A mobile farmers' market is like a farmstand on wheels. They are usually in a refrigerated truck and have weekly stops where they set up for a few hours to sell local produce.

Who can use Market Match?

Anyone with an active CalFresh EBT, Pandemic-EBT, or Disaster-EBT card can receive and use Market Match once per market day, up to a daily maximum. California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) benefits can also be used to receive Market Match.



Where can I use Market Match?

Around 250 farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs, and mobile farmers' markets across California offer Market Match. To find a location near you, visit [FMFinder.org](https://www.fmfinder.org) and look for the green pins on the map. You can also reach out to Ecology Center staff directly by email at marketmatch@ecologycenter.org or phone at (510) 925-4001 to get up to date information on Market Match locations.

What can I buy with Market Match (and CalFresh)?

- Market Match can be spent on fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh-cut herbs, and plant starts that produce edible foods.
- CalFresh may be spent on any items that are SNAP eligible (i.e. fruits, vegetables, nuts, eggs, honey, meat, baked goods, edible plant starts, hummus, jams, pickles, etc). CalFresh may not be spent on hot and ready-to-eat foods--same as the grocery store. If you have questions about specific items in the market, ask the market manager.
- No change may be given for CalFresh or Market Match tokens/vouchers. Customers should try to get as close to the nearest dollar as possible. Vendors usually help with this and are often quite generous! Vendors are not allowed to charge customers spending CalFresh or SNAP tokens or scrip higher than customers paying in other currency types like cash or credit card.
- CalFresh or SNAP Tokens/vouchers do not expire, meaning that if a customer does not spend all of their tokens/vouchers in one day, they can bring them back the following week.
- Each farmers' market association typically has its own tokens/vouchers which can only be spent only at markets run by that association. Check with the market manager to find out if there are other locations where the tokens may be spent.

Why should I shop at the farmers' market?

- When you shop at a certified farmers' market, you're buying directly from the farm that grew the food. This means you're supporting the local economy and helping farmers get a fair price. Aside from local farms, you may also shop with other local/small businesses, such as bakeries, creameries
- All of the produce at a certified farmers' market is grown in California and harvested when it is in-season, meaning that everything is fresh, full of flavor, and often priced comparably with a grocery store. Because the produce is generally not stored for as long as produce at a grocery store, it has higher nutritional value.
- The food has traveled fewer miles to get to the market than food at the grocery store, meaning it has a smaller carbon footprint. Many small and mid-sized farms that sell at farmers' markets also implement climate-friendly farming practices, such as cover-cropping and rotational grazing.
- It's fun! You can often enjoy live music, taste food samples, and find activities for kids.

What kind of foods will I find at the farmers' market?

You will usually find a variety of in-season fruits and vegetables, herbs, nuts, eggs, honey, meats, fish, dairy and cheeses, baked goods, edible plant starts, hummus, jams, pickles, and



more. You'll also often find hot food vendors/food trucks, local craft vendors, and flower vendors (though you cannot spend EBT/Market Match on those items).