

WIC Perks



Free bonus dollars for families receiving WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons.

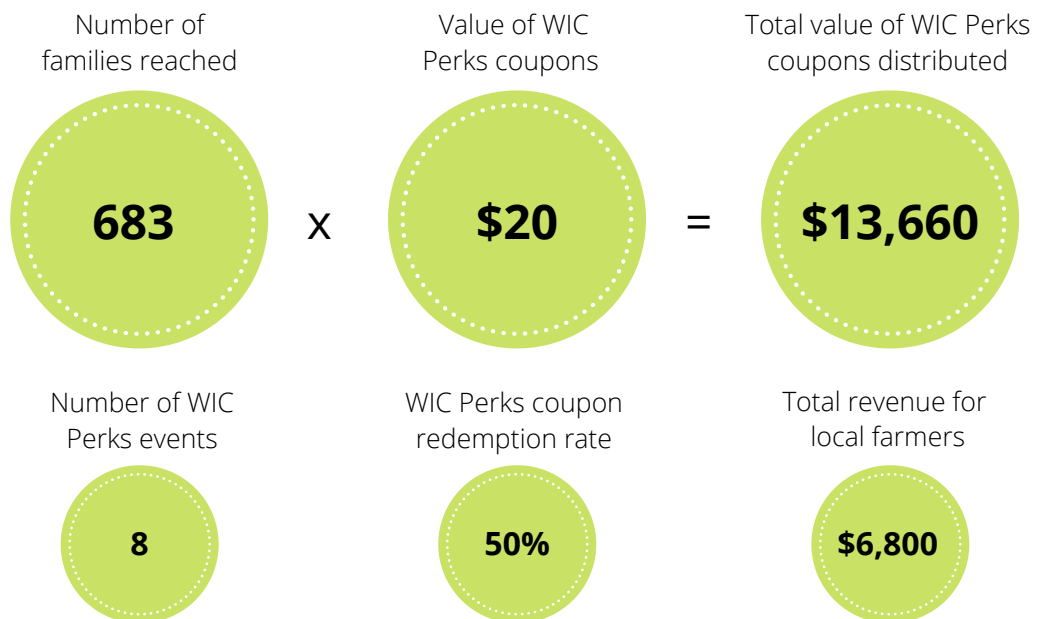
2019 WIC Perks Pilot

The WIC Perks pilot was an expansion of the Produce Perks nutrition incentive program in Cuyahoga County. Produce Perks offers Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients a dollar-for-dollar match when shopping with an Ohio Direction Card at local farmers' markets across the state. The WIC Perks pilot expanded the Produce Perks program to serve families receiving Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons.

The WIC Perks program was piloted by Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program*, and four local farmers' markets. The pilot partners decided to work collaboratively and leverage resources to offer additional services to WIC clients at 8 of the 26 scheduled WIC FMNP distribution dates in 2019. After families received WIC/FMNP coupons on one of the eight select distribution dates, they had the option to engage in a short cooking demonstration, taste testing, or educational activity. In exchange for their participation, families received an additional set of coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables valued at \$20 and relevant culinary tools.

2019 Pilot Impacts

The WIC Perks pilot aimed to serve 500 families but that goal was exceeded due to the demand for the additional coupons. The pilot served 683 families, providing them with \$13,660 worth of coupons to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs at local farmers' markets *in addition to the WIC FMNP coupons they received*. The redemption rate for WIC Perks coupons was approximately 50%, providing local farmers with an additional \$6,800 in revenue.

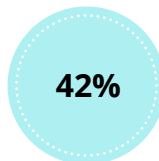


*143 families opted to complete a follow-up survey with an additional \$2,860 in WIC Perks being distributed for a total of \$16,500. Redemption for coupons received from follow-up survey is not reflected in the redemption values listed above.

Exposure to Produce Perks

During the WIC Perks pilot families were provided with an overview of the Produce Perks program and how they could use their SNAP benefits at the farmers' market to receive free matching dollars. Many families were excited to learn about Produce Perks for the first time at WIC Perks events.

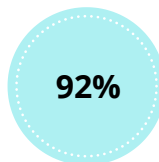
Follow-up survey results show positive trends for exposure to Produce Perks and interest in utilizing the program.



Percent of families who reported receiving SNAP benefits.



Percent of families receiving SNAP who reported knowing about Produce Perks prior to WIC Perks event.



Percent of families receiving SNAP who reported they planned to use Produce Perks in the future.



Increases in SNAP Sales at Farmers' Markets

Families attending WIC FMNP distribution on WIC Perks dates were also able to use their SNAP benefits to receive Produce Perks, if desired. Compared to regular market dates, SNAP sales at farmers' markets increased on dates when WIC Perks programming occurred.

For example, increases in SNAP sales at the Lakewood Farmers' Market in August 2019 can be seen in the chart to the right (sales occurring on a WIC Perks date highlighted in green).



Market Date	SNAP Sales	Produce Perks
8/3	\$73	\$73
8/10	\$125	\$110
8/17	\$128	\$128
8/24	\$416	\$379
8/31	\$50	\$50

*WIC Perks date highlighted in green.

Impact on WIC FMNP Distribution

When comparing WIC FMNP distribution at farmers' markets during 2018 and 2019, it appears as though the opportunity to receive WIC Perks may have influenced which market dates families chose to attend. Increases in WIC FMNP distribution in 2019 were seen only at sites that offered WIC Perks.

WIC staff promoted WIC Perks to their clients by highlighting WIC FMNP distribution dates in green lettering on the printed schedule to indicate when WIC Perks would be offered. WIC participants were excited about the opportunity to receive the additional farmers' market coupons and culinary tools, often referring to WIC Perks events as "green days."

Farmers' Market	2018	2019	Percent Change
Coit Road Farmers' Market	\$1,000	\$720	-28%
Kamm's Corners Farmers' Market	\$6,080	\$5,680	-7%
Lakewood Farmers' Market	\$5,080	\$7,620	+50%
Old Brooklyn Farmers' Market	\$3,920	\$6,220	+59%
North Union Farmers' Market at Cleveland Clinic	\$1,340	\$1,080	-19%
North Union Farmers' Market at Shaker Square	\$4,240	\$5,260	+24%
North Union Farmers' Market at University Hospitals	\$2,300	\$1,480	-36%
North Union Farmers' Market at Van Aken	NA	\$2,640	NA
Tremont Farmers' Market	\$2,760	\$1,300	-53%

*WIC Perks sites highlighted in green.

Thank You to Our Partners

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would like to thank the Cuyahoga County WIC program and staff for partnering with us on WIC Perks. Cuyahoga County WIC staff were immensely supportive of the pilot since the initial concept was developed in 2018. Cuyahoga County WIC did an incredible job informing participants about WIC Perks, which undoubtedly contributed to the pilot's success. Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County would also like to thank the staff and volunteers of the Lakewood Farmers' Market, the Old Brooklyn Farmers' Market, and North Union Farmers' Market for their data collection and tracking efforts during the pilot. Finally, we would like to thank our partners from Food Access Raises Everyone (FARE) for their invaluable support and guidance throughout the development of the pilot program. All program partners provided support to the pilot in-kind, receiving no financial compensation for their time.

Thank You to Our Funders

Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County extends our deepest gratitude to our funders. Without their generous financial support this work would not be possible.

For questions about WIC Perks contact Amanda Osborne with Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County at osborne.414@osu.edu or 216-429-8200.

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