



Farmers Market Managers Professional Certification Program

Curriculum

Module 1: Nuts and Bolts of Managing Markets

Sessions:

Defining a Market Manager's Role

The market manager is probably the single most important factor in market success so it is critical to get the right person for the job and for the manager to have a clear understanding of what the job entails. This session will look at the many hats a farmers market manager whether in-season or off-season, whether on site or off. This workshop will set the standards for the many duties of farmers market managers.

Fair and Enforceable Rules

Market rules ensure that everyone in the market has a clear understanding of expectations, responsibilities and consequences. They help to ensure that consumer expectations are met, maintains the integrity of the market and allows all farmers and vendors to operate on a level playing field. There are key elements required of a good set of rules and regulations. Those will be defined in the workshop, along with samples of how these elements can be covered in various situations. It will also look at the expectations and requirements that markets expect of their vendors: i.e. insurance coverage, health regulations and licenses, and permits. Finally, the rules should cover penalties for non-compliance, as well as a grievance procedure to be followed. Learn how to develop a set of effective and enforceable rules for your farmers market.

Setting up Operational Systems

Keeping track of everything a manager needs to have can be a daunting task. Things like vendor payments, paperwork, and licenses need to be collected and tracked. What about SNAP tokens? How are you tracking sales and farmer redemptions. Finances need to be tracked as well, especially if you are operating on any grants or other funding that requires reporting. This workshop will help you set up a market budget and tracking systems for your operations that will help you minimize the effort and reduce the stress. This session will also discuss creating a budget for your market that will help you set vendor fees and establish fundraising goals to match your expenses and keep your market in the black.

Understanding Insurance

Insurance is the necessary evil in every farmers market! But why is it so important and what should the market have? This session will explain what insurance markets should carry and what should be required of participating farmers and vendors.

We'll also take a critical look around your market. Can you identify the potential risks to your customers/ Maybe a crack in the sidewalk, or a pothole in the center of the market? Who is responsible for those problems? You, the property owner, the municipality? Most often, the answer is everyone! It doesn't matter where your market is located or who owns the property. Learn to identify potential risks and sensible solutions to minimize those risks. But when an incident does occur, this workshop will help you understand what to do when that happens: what to say or not say, who to contact, how to create an incident report, etc.

Market Organizational Structures

Every farmers market is uniquely structured. It may be an independent organization with a board of directors, a program on a community nonprofit or an arm of the local government. Some markets are youthmarkets or Urban Farm Stands. Some are online, most are face-to-face. This workshop will examine the many different market models and discuss the pros and cons of each, from a management standpoint, as well as a legal standpoint.

Farmer/Vendor Recruitment

Most every market is looking for new farmers and vendors to round out their product offerings and attract more consumers to their markets. But with the rise in the number of farmers markets it is getting increasingly difficult to find new farmers, particularly if you are a new market. The first step is to understand what farmers need from market participation and then show how you plan to meet those expectations. Then you must understand what is missing or insufficient in your market to know what types of farmers and vendors you need. Finally, you must come up with strategies to reach these new farmers and encourage their participation in your market. This session will help you to understand farmer needs, determine your product needs and saturation point and develop recruitment strategies.

Conflict Management

Conflicts are bound to happen when you have competing vendors, hordes of consumers and a manager that tries to control the chaos. Learn how to minimize the conflict in your market and strategies for dealing with and resolving the conflicts that come up in your market.

Module 2: Reaching out to the Market Community

Programs and Services for Successful Markets

What programs and services will help your market build community, attract new consumers, build market sustainability and support your farmers? This workshop will explore program ideas, offer implementation strategies, and identify potential community sponsors.

Nutrition Programs to Grow Your Market

Nutrition assistance programs are key tools to help bring more consumers to markets, provide added revenue for farmers, and to help encourage consumers to eat a healthier diet. We'll learn what types of nutrition assistance programs are available to markets and how nutrition education can help make them successful for your consumers and your farmers.

Events Management

Special events can draw new consumers to your market, keep people at the market longer, provide entertainment or educate consumers on local food, nutrition, gardening, etc. Planning and organizing the event can spell the difference between success and failure. Get some ideas on successful event ideas, as well as hints and tips to organize and implement these events to draw people to the market, encourage them to shop and invite them back to the market week after week.

Branding and Creating Marketing Materials

Branding and a clear and concise marketing message are critical to successfully promote your market. Learn how your brand can help you build customer awareness and budget-friendly techniques to reach your target audience.

Fundraising

It can be difficult to operate a market solely on vendor fees. If a market wants to expand a program, hire a paid manager or increase the advertising budget, it may be necessary to do some fundraising. Market events, like local food dinners, can add to the market's finances. Sponsorships are another means to add to your budget, while gathering community partnerships. There are lots of ideas to share for fundraising events and lots of ideas on potential sponsors for the market. The key is to develop a successful plan with the idea that everyone gets something from the event or sponsorship. Learn how to develop an event and reach out to potential sponsors with an irresistible plan.

Writing a Winning Proposal

Grants are an important means for funding special projects and programs for your market. But grant proposals can be intimidating. This workshop will helpful hints and tips for writing a successful grant proposal.

How Best to Communicate with your Customers

Understand who your customer is and how best to reach them with an effective message, including social media, newsletters, emails, press releases, blogs and websites.

Module 3: Building Market Systems

Building Community Around your Market

A market that is successful in building their market's community is rewarded with long term partnerships from residents, organizations, businesses, and the municipality. The partnerships can translate to a number of benefits, such as financial, program assistance, volunteerism, a growing customer base and general support. Learn the importance of building community around your market, what markets and partners can accomplish together, suggestions on who those community partners might be, and how to approach a potential partner.

Expansion to Year Round Markets

Farmers and farmers markets are responding to consumer demand for local food with the establishment of winter farmers markets. But winter markets require unique considerations, such as finding space indoors and the contracts that accompany that space, maintaining parking lots with snow removal, directing your customers to the winter location, and dealing with the invisibility of an indoor location, among some of the considerations. This session will provide you with guidance on expanding your market through the winter and give you helpful hints and tips on the many unique considerations of a winter market.

Crisis Management

Markets are natural gathering places with a great number of competing uses and activities. This combination of people and activity makes having a written plan to handle emergencies critical to the long-term success of a Market. Identify the types of crises that can occur at the market and learn how to formulate a plan to deal with any crisis. Your plan should also include a plan for dealing with the media. This session will help you craft your crisis plan and media response.

Food Safety at Farmers Markets

Food safety is on the top of every consumers mind and should also be top of mind with farmers and market managers too! It's important consumer service to ensure the food at the farmers market is safe from contamination and safe for our consumers. This session will look at food safety from the retail side – what can be done at the market to ensure food is protected while at the market. We'll also look at the science behind the suggested steps for maintaining safe foods at the market.

Friends of the Market and Volunteer Management

How does a small, understaffed market build capacity without adding staff? A Friends of the Market organization is one answer! The organization is a group of dedicated volunteers who can make programs, events and fundraising happen to help benefit the market for everyone! You will leave this webinar with resources to help you identify the model Friends organization that would work best for your market, templates for the organizational structural organization of a Friends of the Market, and guidelines for managing volunteers.

Strategic Planning for Farmers

Strategic planning is a roadmap that directs the future of the market. It could be programs or services to add to build market community or fundraising goals or a combination of many things. But have a clear, well thought out plan can be instrumental in guiding the future success of your market. This session will outline the process and help you to clearly understand what the results of a strategic plan can mean for your market sustainability and community building.

Farm Inspection Program

Customers expect a farmers market to offer local products from local producers. One way to ensure the integrity of your farmers market and compliance with market rules is through a farm inspection program. This can be a daunting task without guidance. This workshop will demystify the process, provide some templates for the paperwork and help you secure the cooperation of your farmers when scheduling and conducting farm inspections.

Documenting Market Success

Markets provide multiple benefits for farmers, consumers and the community, but how do you measure those benefits and why do you need the information. This session will focus on the importance of collecting information that documents the value of your market to all participants and will review tools for measuring market performance.



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