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**FRESHFARM Awarded a \$1.4 Million USDA Grant to Expand Food Access In  
Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia**

*The Four-Year Grant Will Establish a Metro Washington Region Incentive Program Coalition and  
Improve SNAP/EBT Incentives for Regional Farmers Markets and Community Supported  
Agriculture Programs*

December 1, 2021 (Washington, DC)--The US Department of Agriculture has awarded FRESHFARM a \$1.4 million four-year Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant to establish a one-of-a-kind, multi-state, and multi-sector SNAP Incentive Coalition and incentivize the use of nutrition benefits among eligible residents to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at more than 110 farmers markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

This new Coalition will increase SNAP shoppers' convenience and agency at regional farmers markets and CSAs by creating incentive program reciprocity across borders, consolidating incentive program outreach and marketing efforts, and supporting improved management, data collection, and financial reporting systems.

The Metro Washington Region is a unique environment with highly porous borders. Market customers and farmers alike frequently connect to buy and sell at farmers markets across state lines. "For folks that live in Maryland or Virginia but work in DC (and vice versa), taking full advantage of healthy food nutrition incentive programs is complicated by a lack of regional coordination," explains FRESHFARM Incentive Program Director Nick Stavely. "Efforts to increase food access across the region are almost always localized, with next to zero organizations working regionally. The new Coalition will benefit the region by creating reciprocity and connectivity among existing state incentive programs: Virginia Fresh Match, Maryland Market Money,

and DC Fresh Match. Collective action will allow us to achieve our goals better together."

"This grant comes at a critical moment as food insecurity in Metropolitan Washington continues to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic," comments DC Councilmember Mary Cheh, Chair of the Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee at Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, a group of local elected officials and food system experts, co-chaired by Montgomery County Councilmember Craig Rice and City of Fairfax Councilmember Jon Stehle. "I'm thrilled that FRESHFARM received this funding—not only because it provides a greater opportunity to expand SNAP user access to healthy, locally-grown foods—but because it demonstrates the value of organizations who look to innovate and reach across state lines to build a stronger regional food system," the Councilmember adds.

"The GusNIP grant brings \$1.4 million in federal dollars to the region, to increase fruit and vegetable purchases and consumption for more than 20,000 SNAP households in the Metro Washington Region," adds Hugo Mogollon, FRESHFARM's Executive Director. "Such outcomes are possible thanks to the unique regional reach of FRESHFARM and the collective impact of our coalition members, the Local Environmental Agriculture Project and the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, which operate Virginia Fresh Match and Maryland Market Money, respectively."

FRESHFARM looks forward to working with regional governmental agencies and dozens of local stakeholders to build healthy communities where people have the agency to purchase local fruits and vegetables, and to strengthen our regional food system by improving the livelihood of local farmers.

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### **About FRESHFARM**

FRESHFARM is a nonprofit based in Washington, DC that finds innovative ways to solve critical problems across our regional food system to build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable food future. We operate producer-only farmers markets that provide vital economic opportunities to local farmers and food producers, pioneering food distribution programs that increase food access for low-income neighborhoods, and innovative food education programs that build healthier communities. [Learn more.](#)