



# FRESHFARM

nourishing our food future

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **DC Health and FRESHFARM Partner to Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables for District Residents**

*Produce Plus brings Fresh Local Produce to District Residents and Strengthens Local Farmers Markets*

November 17, 2021 (Washington, DC) -- The District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health) has awarded FRESHFARM with funding to administer a city-wide Produce Incentive Program, locally known as Produce Plus. Mayor Muriel Bowser invests more than \$1 million dollars annually to increase access to fresh produce and strengthen local farmers markets through the Produce Plus program. FRESHFARM will implement an evidence-based, multi-level nutrition intervention at farmers markets across the city to improve food retail environments, food access, and nutrition security for residents with low incomes.

Disparities in access to food persist across the District, leaving some communities without equitable access to fresh, healthy foods. COVID-19 continues to impact rates of food security in the District, particularly among residents aged 60+, children, undocumented individuals, and unhoused individuals. The city's Produce Plus program aims to create long-term system changes and solutions to ensure that every resident has meaningful access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate fruits and vegetables.

“Ensuring access to healthy, affordable food is crucial as the District continues to recover and rebuild after the public health emergency,” explains Anjali Talwalkar MD, MPH, Interim Senior Deputy Director for the Community Health Administration at DC Health. “DC Health looks forward to partnering with FRESHFARM to continue expanding the reach of the Produce Plus program to residents across the city and to help strengthen our local food economy.”

As the new administrators of Produce Plus, FRESHFARM will work to increase redemption of incentives, offer home delivery, and connect District residents with additional federal and local food access programs across the city.

“DC Health’s Produce Plus program is one of the most progressive and generous programs of its kind in the entire country,” notes FRESHFARM Incentive Programs Director Nick Stavely. “FRESHFARM sees this as an opportunity to take this significant investment by the government of the District of Columbia and expand upon it by working with private and public funders to improve food access and strengthen our regional food system.”

FRESHFARM will apply its decades of expertise in making local food accessible across the region to support DC Health in scaling up the Produce Incentive Program. FRESHFARM has long been committed to increasing food security and decreasing rates of diet-related illnesses in communities across the city. In 2008, FRESHFARM’s H Street NE market was the first in the District to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (otherwise known as SNAP) as well as offer SNAP matching, which provides double the amount of the SNAP benefits used by a customer at the market.

“We are extremely excited to partner with DC Health in the design and implementation of this program to provide agency and choice to DC residents and improve their health outcomes,” adds Hugo Mogollon, Executive Director of FRESHFARM. “Farmers markets and mobile markets in the District have been the implementing arm of this program since its inception, and we look forward to continuing offering that collective support to the city.”

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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.](#)