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benefits the SNAP program provides at Farmers' Markets and rely on boxed and processed food products to feed their families.

Furthermore, this area has been designated as a food desert after the local grocery stores closed, leaving a gap in nutritious food products for family diets. Many families must walk, drive (if they have access to a vehicle), or bus several miles to buy food, increasing the strain on their budgets. The [REDACTED] Market is the closest fresh food source available to them.

By providing educational demonstrations designed to improve understanding of benefits, nutrition, and the use of fresh produce, and by making them available online, the [REDACTED] Market will develop a better-informed public. This information will immediately affect these households by allowing them to make better nutritional choices for their families.

Over the last few years, there has been an increase in requests for EBT services at the [REDACTED] Market. This will be the first year EBT services are available to City Market customers. We expect the participation in SNAP at the [REDACTED] City Market to increase significantly after we expand EBT services and participants become aware of the options for their families. Information gathered at the workshops and the City Market over the course of one year will provide data for both qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

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## Farmers' Market SNAP Support Grant (FMSSG) Program – 2015

### FNS-10-545A -- PROJECT NARRATIVE

#### 5. Requested FMSSG Grant Funding:

\$

#### 6. Entity Type

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmers' market  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit corporation             | <input type="checkbox"/> State or local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farmers' market association | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development corporation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal government         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public benefit corporation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional farmers market authority |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                |  |  |

#### 7. Background Statement:

In the immediate area surrounding the business district of [REDACTED] are some of the lowest income households in the State of Missouri. According to the latest census data, of the nearly 11,000 households in the eight census tracts surveyed, the average income is just above \$25,000 annually and more than 30% of these households are below the poverty level. Of these households, nearly 3,000 households participate in the SNAP program with an average annual income of just over \$13,000.

According to Feeding America, the food insecurity rate in Greene County is 16.9%, or nearly 47,000 individuals in need of food assistance. Of this number, 60% are below the SNAP threshold of 130% poverty, and 17% percent are between 130% and 185% of the poverty level, and receive WIC assistance. The child food insecurity rate is 22.7%, and of the more than 13,000 children included in this study, 76% are likely income-eligible for federal nutrition assistance.

Numerous households are unaware of the benefits the SNAP program provides and rely on boxed and processed food products, or food pantries to feed their families. This results in low-nutritional meals and/or fast-food, which is quick and inexpensive. By educating SNAP users to the availability, ease, cost, and higher nutritional content of fresh produce, and how they can provide healthy inexpensive meals for their families through the [REDACTED] City Market, we can raise the level of nutrition in their diets and create a more informed public.

Furthermore, this area has been designated as a food desert after the local grocery stores closed, leaving a need for nutritious food products in family diets. Many families must walk, drive (if they have access to a vehicle), or bus several miles to buy food, increasing the strain on their budgets. The [REDACTED] City Market is the closest healthy food source for these households.

Studies have shown that children who lack consistent nutritious meals do not perform as well as those with healthy diets. Many of the families in the area surrounding the [REDACTED] City Market are part of this affected population. They do poorly in school and see no way out of the situation they have little or no choice in. A great number of problems associated with success in life stem from inadequate nutrition.

“It’s a SNAP!” can improve the nutritional aspects of SNAP participants’ lives and improve the educational success of their children by informing and educating low-income families to the availability

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and advantages of purchasing farm fresh produce, meats, baked goods, and other food products from reliable and conscientious farmers at a convenient location.

Another aspect of this population is the reliance on food pantries, which are already strained by the degree of need in this area. Although food pantries serve a valuable function in our community, they do not address the need for fresh produce as opposed to canned and boxed items typically found in the pantry setting.

██████████ supplies some fresh produce to these households, but they too cannot meet the demand. In addition, much of the produce donated to the ██████████ is left over from unsold items at groceries and markets. "It's a SNAP!" benefits this program as well by educating families in how to use fresh produce and how to store items as they are available, and how to repurpose them when they are not.

Without "It's a SNAP!" families will most likely continue purchasing less healthy food products for their families or survive on the limited resources of the food pantries. Knowledge is power, and by educating this under-represented population, they will be able to make better choices for their families and empower themselves to healthier lifestyles. Through educational workshops, "It's a SNAP!" can improve their knowledge in the preparation and decision-making skills for their families that will help them learn how to plant gardens, choose healthier and higher nutritional foods, plan healthier meals, and prepare foods for storage in times where fresh produce is unavailable.

Through education and information, the lives of thousands of households can be improved and enhanced with farm-fresh, nutritious food products, instead of food products with lower nutritional content.

## **8. Goal(s)/Purposes of the Project:**

Goal #1: To inform and educate SNAP households to the benefits available to them through the SNAP program.

Goal #2: To make SNAP participants and the community aware of the kinds of goods and products available to them at Farmers' Markets.

Goal #3: To educate SNAP households about healthier eating habits and the advantages and value of healthy nutritious food for their families.

The first goal of "It's a SNAP!" is to educate SNAP households to the benefits of the SNAP program. Many families are not aware of the extent to which their benefits reach. This limits them to the choices available as they prepare meals for their families. Many times this results in boxed or processed foods or inexpensive, low-nutrition fast-food. In making SNAP participants aware of the fresh items available at the ██████████ City Market, they will learn how to incorporate fresh meals into their limited budgets in a quick efficient way.

By educating SNAP participants in how to grow, select, use, and store fresh produce, they will be able to make healthier lifestyle choices for themselves and their families year-round, and the ease at which this can be accomplished. This will also provide incentive to use fresh produce rather than processed items by empowering them with the knowledge to make these kinds of decisions for their families.

Although the ██████████ City Market has been in operation for ten years, this is the first year the ██████████ City Market will use EBT services. There has already been an interest in expanding this service,

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and we look forward to doing this. As we create a higher volume of SNAP participants at the C-Street City Market, we will be able to expand current EBT services. Each of the above goals increase SNAP accessibility and participation at Farmers' Markets, and supports the expansion, and promotion of SNAP/ EBT services.

## **9. Approach:**

“It’s a SNAP!” is an educational program designed to promote community awareness and understanding of SNAP and to educate participants to the advantages of nutritional lifestyle choices, as well as all the benefits available through SNAP. In addition, it supplies much needed information on how to grow, select, prepare, and store fresh produce for their families. This program consists of monthly workshops, each targeting specific aspects of healthy, nutritious food, preparation, storage, and solutions, presented by specialists exhibiting their field of expertise for that particular subject.

The second component to “It’s a SNAP!” is an effective media campaign. This aspect of “It’s a SNAP!” is an integral part of the program and will distribute six direct mailings to SNAP participants in the immediate area of eight census tracts noted to encourage them to participate in the educational workshops. An additional mailing will be distributed prior to the beginning of the workshops, which addresses SNAP benefits specifically. Additionally, the media campaign will provide the topic and date of the workshops to the general public, information on the program, and the value of nutritious fresh food products to create awareness and sensitivity to SNAP community-wide.

Workshop topics are:

- “It’s a SNAP!” Learn about your benefits - discusses SNAP benefits in detail, outlining information that SNAP participants may not be aware of and how they can use them at the ██████████ City Market.
- “Gardening is a SNAP!” - focuses on how to prepare, plant, and grow fresh produce in an urban setting.
- “Picking produce is a SNAP!” – focuses on all aspects of selecting fresh produce to use in their households. This will include how to choose the right combination of items for meals, nutritional content, and how to choose quality items.
- “Storing Produce is a SNAP!” – focuses on which items may be frozen or dehydrated and how to prepare and store them.
- “Spring Cooking is a SNAP!” – focuses on how to use fresh produce in preparing meals. This includes vegetarian, as well as supplemental portions. In addition, it will address how to combine items for a balanced diet.
- “Summer Cooking is a SNAP!” – focuses on using fresh produce in preparing meals.
- “Fall Cooking is a SNAP!” – focuses on using fresh produce in preparing meals.
- “Canning is a SNAP!” – focuses on the process of canning. This will address beans, tomatoes, and other vegetables using the pressure method of canning.
- “Pickling is a SNAP!” – focuses on using the Hot Water Bath method of canning. This will address aspects of pickles and peppers for storage.
- “Jam is a SNAP!” – focuses on how to prepare jams or jellies and the process of canning.
- “Bread is a SNAP!” – focuses on how to prepare fresh bread at home using simple ingredients.
- “Grilling is a SNAP!” – focuses on how to prepare fresh vegetable on a grill.

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Each workshop will be supervised by market management, the creative team, and videotaped by professional videographers, each with years of expertise in their fields. Workshops will be held monthly over the course of one year and supervised by program management.

Workshops will be held at the [REDACTED] City Market pavilion weather permitting and when applicable, as well as [REDACTED]'s culinary school, [REDACTED], and participating restaurant kitchens as per required by topic.

At the conclusion of each workshop, heuristic surveys will collect data documenting participant satisfaction, informational content, and helpfulness in each topical area.

Recordings will be available online and on DVD at no charge, so they may be viewed at will or on multiple occasions, continuing the process of education once funding has ceased.

## **10. Impacts:**

“It’s a SNAP!” addresses specific deficiencies in information to SNAP participants and gives them the tools to make better choices for themselves and their families. By providing educational workshops dedicated to areas of concern for low-income families, this program will improve the lives of individuals, families, and children by empowering them with knowledge. This in turn will increase the number of SNAP participants at Farmers’ Markets and address the primary focus of the SNAP program directly. In addition, it will expand and increase participation of EBT services at the [REDACTED] City Market by providing accessibility to EBT equipment.

Each workshop will address a need in the community and create an educated population that is empowered to make positive nutritional choices for themselves and their families. Many of these subjects are learned behaviors that have not been passed from generation to generation as in rural or more affluent households. This program provides the means for improvement and betterment in a population that needs it the most. In addition, the marketing of the workshops will position the [REDACTED] City Market as a resource for nutritional foods in the middle of a food desert.

The media campaign aspect of “It’s a SNAP!” is an integral part of the program and will distribute six direct mailings to SNAP participants in the immediate area of eight census tracts noted to encourage them to participate in the educational workshops. An additional mailing will be distributed to inform them about their SNAP benefits prior to the beginning workshops, which addresses SNAP benefits specifically. Additionally, the media campaign will provide the public the topic and date of the workshops, information on the program, and the value of nutritious fresh food products.

As a side benefit of the “It’s a SNAP!” marketing campaign, many additional households will be reached above the target audience, increasing awareness and sensitivity for the SNAP program community-wide. A far greater number of families will be impacted than the eight census tracts surrounding the area of the Historic District, and more families will benefit from the informational workshops through online access. As the workshops will be available to the general public, we anticipate reaching significantly more than the 11,000 households in the target area.

This is the tenth year of operation for the [REDACTED] City Market, but this will be the first year EBT services will be instituted. We have seen an increased demand from EBT users over the last few years for expansion of services. At the end of the market season, we will have the baseline data to evaluate the effects of the marketing efforts, which will give us accurate information as to the effectiveness and numbers of “It’s a SNAP!” in a meaningful way.

Qualitative evaluation will be made through heuristic surveys using a Likert scale designed to elicit responses about the content and benefits of the workshops, as well as participation numbers and oral feedback at each workshop. Quantitative evaluation will be made through the heuristic survey and

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increased use of EBT services through increases in dollar value of SNAP transactions, and increases in number of SNAP transactions. As this is our first year with EBT services, it will be easy to document increases in participation for both the market and workshops. Target goals cannot be determined at this time, as there is no historical information from which to draw, although we anticipate a strong response from the community and significant increases in participation from EBT users once workshops have begun.

## 11. Partnerships and Donations (include Matching Funds, if any):

### Partnerships

As one of Springfield's oldest civic organizations, [REDACTED] has guided the growth and development of [REDACTED] for nearly a century and a half. The [REDACTED] City Market is a committee, an activity of Commercial Club. As such, it is a partnership between a membership organization and the community at large whose goal is to improve conditions physically, socially and economically in and around the district. This partnership extends well beyond the boundaries of the district as [REDACTED] works directly with the neighborhood organizations in the census tracts noted in the attachments: [REDACTED] Neighborhood Association, [REDACTED] Neighborhood Association and [REDACTED] Neighborhood Associations. These associations formed to address negative impacts of poverty through education and community development. Recently, the city has begun to partner with these groups in order to focus on issues in these specific areas (attachment xyz.) Neighborhood Associations also play a significant role in establishment and maintenance of community gardens in the surrounding area and we plan to include them in all aspects of our "It's a Snap" program

Educational partnerships are one of the strengths of [REDACTED] "It's a SNAP!" concept. The Market currently has an exciting, established partnership with the [REDACTED], a cooking school for men out of prison that trains them in a new career and gives them a new direction in life. Students from [REDACTED] have been providing cooking demonstrations and free tastings showing simple uses for fresh produce sold at the [REDACTED] City Market on a weekly basis during market season for over a year now.

Pending partnerships for "It's a Snap" workshop locations include [REDACTED] Community College, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. We have a long history of partnering with [REDACTED]. They have established [REDACTED]" which is an off-campus classroom and art gallery offering classes in weaving, art administration and community studies in architecture. I was students of two different Design/Build classes of [REDACTED] School of Architecture at [REDACTED], under [REDACTED] able guidance, who built first our Market Pavilion, then, several years later, our Co-op booth. [REDACTED] was instrumental in securing the funding and partnering on design needs for our community market space. We look forward to further developing our relationship with [REDACTED] through their programs that work with challenged neighborhood families. Additionally, we plan to pursue a mutually beneficial relationship with [REDACTED] Community College, [REDACTED] University and their Culinary Schools in providing presenters and possible locations for the "It's a Snap!" workshops.

### Donations

The [REDACTED] administers the [REDACTED] City Market's through a board of 7 members and a Market Committee. Whatever financial support is needed by the Market is provided through Club funds, raised through memberships and community events. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Community College have consistently sponsored [REDACTED] providing \$1,000 a year





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### 13. Key Personnel Biographies:

██████████ - ██████████ has a long history of leadership in Springfield and specifically, on ██████████ ██████████. She moved her two-year old business into the first building she purchased on the street in 1980. As owner/operator of ██████████, she developed campaigns and media strategies for her many clients for over 25 years. In 1995, ██████████ and her husband ██████████ formed ██████████ consulting and restoring historic structures. She wrote and administered CDBG grants for construction of corner treatments and landscaping in the ██████████ ██████████, totaling over \$500,000, through ██████████. It was due to ██████████ efforts that \$750,000 in MODOT and city funds were secured over 8 years in order to restore The ██████████ ██████████, the second longest pedestrian footbridge over functioning railroad tracks in the country and the site of the ██████████ City Market pavilion. She chaired the ██████████ and served as the Council liaison to the ██████████ Regional Arts Council. She is a founding member of Springfield Rotary North, Preservation Springfield and The Urban Districts Alliance. ██████████ served her community as an at-Large Councilperson for two terms or 8-years. Her tenure resulted in the formation of a TIF (tax increment financing) and a CID (community improvement district) for Commercial Street Historic District, resulting in a dramatic increase in investment in the area. Her efforts on ██████████ ██████████ have resulted in ██████████ receiving a Gift of Time award and, most recently, in 2013, one of Missouri's most prestigious statewide Historic Preservation awards, the McReynolds Award for her significant contribution to the revitalization of ██████████.

██████████ - During the course her adult life, ██████████ has served on many administrative boards, both professional and non-profit, including the AD 2 of the *Advertising Club of Kansas City*, *The Print Production Club of Kansas City*, *The Tall-Grass Prairie Preserve*, and *The KC Clay Guide*. During her tenure on those boards she received many awards, accolades, and recognition for her dedication to the purpose of the boards. ██████████ has also chaired many awards competitions, organized numerous fund raising events, and held many different offices. While Vice President of *The Tall-Grass Prairie Preserve*, ██████████ worked extensively with *The Nature Conservancy* to coordinate the successful hand-off of the 300+ acre *Prairie Center of Kansas* to the custodial care of *The Nature Conservancy*. ██████████ is currently in her 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure on the Board of Directors for ██████████, and after several years of being on the general Market Committee for the ██████████ City Market, is now serving as both Chairperson and ██████████ Board Liaison for that committee. Besides her extensive involvement with ██████████ and the ██████████ City Market, ██████████ is a full-time resident of ██████████ and holds a strong interest in the preservation of this ██████████.

██████████ – ██████████ experience, coupled with her education, make her a well-qualified person to manage the ██████████ City Market and its SNAP program. She organized and implemented the EBT authorization process for the ██████████ City Market, and was an administrator for the ██████████ ██████████ SNAP services. She has experience recording transactions and reimbursing farmers for the dollars spent with each vendor. ██████████ is also very familiar with the regulations that relate to SNAP usage.

██████████ – ██████████ has been in the agricultural industry for 40 years. Thirty of that at ██████████ ██████████, a family wholesale/retail greenhouse as one of the top horticulturists in the area, advising

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customers about growing and planting concerns. He served on the Board of Directors for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for two years and for the last ten years has been the owner of a private professional gardening service. His considerable expertise in the field of horticulture and gardening will be utilized in the workshops. [REDACTED] will finish his Master's Degree at [REDACTED] in December, where he developed goal-oriented coursework for his instruction in Teaching Technical Writing, and a TESOL course for the [REDACTED].