



# FRESH FOOD, FRESH ACCESS

AN EVALUATION OF JUST HARVEST'S EBT AT FARMERS' MARKETS PROGRAM



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February 2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just Harvest extends its profound thanks to the many individuals and organizations who contributed their time, expertise, and enthusiasm to the first year of Fresh Access and to this report. We appreciate the work of our partners at Citiparks and the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council for their collaboration on Fresh Access, and the generous support of the Motorola Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and the Heinz Endowments' Summer Youth Philanthropy Project for making the program possible.

We are also grateful to the Fresh Access customers and vendors who offered their feedback, and whose valuable insights will help us grow the program in the coming seasons to serve more members of the greater Pittsburgh community.

Finally, we are thankful to the Congressional Hunger Center for placing Emerson National Hunger Fellow Adrien Schless-Meier with us during the fall and winter of 2013-2014, and to Adrien for her work on this report. We greatly value the CHC's assistance to Just Harvest over the past decade.

Kenneth C. Regal, Executive Director  
Just Harvest  
February 2014

## ABOUT JUST HARVEST

Founded in 1986, Just Harvest educates, empowers, and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty, and economic injustice in our communities by influencing public policy, engaging in advocacy, and connecting people to public benefits. We are guided by the understanding that hunger is a symptom of poverty and that poverty is a product of social and economic injustice. Rather than charity, public policies which respond to these conditions and to the needs of low-income people are the best approaches to the elimination of hunger and poverty.

## ABOUT THE CONGRESSIONAL HUNGER CENTER

The Congressional Hunger Center (CHC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that works to make issues of domestic and international hunger a priority to policymakers in the U.S. government, and to raise a new generation of leaders to fight against hunger and poverty. Its mission is to train and inspire leaders who work to end hunger, and to advocate for public policies that create a food secure world. Its Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program is a social justice program that trains, inspires, and sustains leaders, and supports a diversity of local and national approaches to eliminate hunger, poverty and social inequality, particularly racism. Fellows gain field experience fighting hunger and poverty through placements in community based organizations across the country, and policy experience through placements in Washington, D.C. The program bridges community-based efforts and national public policy, and fellows develop as effective leaders in the movement to end hunger and poverty.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates the first year of Fresh Access, a program that enables Pittsburgh residents to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly food stamps) as well as credit and debit cards to buy fresh, local foods at six Citiparks farmers' markets. Just Harvest, in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PFPC), launched Fresh Access at the two largest Citiparks markets in East Liberty and the Northside in May 2013. The program expanded ahead of schedule to four additional markets in the Southside, Carrick, Bloomfield, and Beechview in August 2013. Data for this evaluation come from customer satisfaction surveys, customer focus groups, vendor satisfaction surveys, an end-of-season meeting, rapid market assessments, and overall sales information.

Just Harvest received financial support for the program's administrative and operational costs from the Motorola Foundation and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The Heinz Endowments' Summer Youth Philanthropy Project supported PFPC to promote all Citiparks farmers' markets and Fresh Access.

## WHY FRESH ACCESS?

Research shows a strong link between the inability to buy fresh foods and public health issues like obesity and diabetes. Nearly half of all Pittsburgh residents are unable to buy affordable fresh, healthy foods in their own neighborhoods, and 71 percent of these residents are low-income. Additionally, approximately two-thirds of adults qualify as overweight or obese and over 11 percent have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

The health of our entire region benefits when all Pittsburgh residents have reliable access to fresh, affordable food. Fresh Access makes buying local food at farmers' markets easier for low-income people by accepting Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, which hold users' SNAP benefits. The program also de-stigmatizes the use of SNAP at farmers' markets by creating a central point of sale for shoppers using EBT, credit, and debit cards alike. Additionally, Fresh Access boosts local and regional economic activity by connecting farmers and small business owners with customers who would have otherwise been unable to shop at farmers' markets.

## HOW IT WORKS

Just Harvest has a booth at each participating Citiparks farmers' market. Fresh Access customers decide how much they want to spend at the market, then buy wooden tokens in denominations of \$0.50 for EBT users and \$1.00 for credit/debit users. Having distinct EBT and credit/debit tokens enables Fresh Access vendors to comply with USDA regulations regarding SNAP-eligible foods. Shoppers can use tokens at all Citiparks farmers' markets until the season ends.

At the end of each market, vendors turn in any tokens spent at their booths to Just Harvest with a record of that day's sales. We then reimburse vendors for each week of electronic sales.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

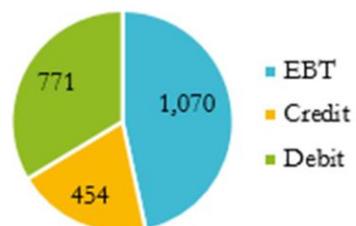
Our results point to the success of Fresh Access' first season. The program achieved a total sales volume of \$42,281 from 2,295 transactions across all six farmers' markets. Shoppers using EBT cards accounted for 42 percent of total sales and 47 percent of all transactions. These results highlight low-income people's purchasing power in the local food economy.

## FRESH ACCESS AT A GLANCE

- \$42,281 in total sales



- 2,295 transactions



## CUSTOMERS

Fresh Access had a strong impact farmers' market shoppers' ability to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. The program also boosted consumption of fresh produce among participants.

- Among survey respondents, **96 percent** of EBT and **68 percent** of credit/debit users rated Fresh Access as “very important” or “important” for buying produce.
- **80 percent** of EBT and **59 percent** of credit/debit users surveyed reported eating more fruits and vegetables since they started using Fresh Access.

These findings suggest that Fresh Access is a positive step forward in mitigating some of Pittsburgh's diet-related health disparities.

## VENDORS

Farmers and small business owners who participated in Fresh Access were overwhelmingly satisfied with the program, noting that increases in sales and number of customers made an impact on their overall business during the 2013 Citiparks farmers' market season.

- **74 percent** of vendors surveyed reported having a higher sales volume because of Fresh Access.
- **39 percent** noticed more customers at their booths because of Fresh Access.
- **100 percent** were satisfied with their overall experience participating in Fresh Access.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The vast majority of Fresh Access participants, including customers, vendors, and partner organizations, were very satisfied with the program. Nonetheless, members from all groups identified a number of ways to improve and strengthen Fresh Access in the coming seasons. Below are the three primary recommendations we identified during our evaluation of Fresh Access:

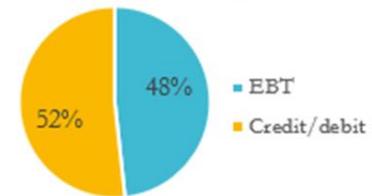
1. **Increase targeted promotion of Fresh Access to low-income people.** Most farmers' market shoppers heard about Fresh Access on-site or through word-of-mouth. In 2014, Just Harvest, PFPC, and Citiparks should increasing marketing and promotion efforts to draw more customers to the markets, particularly low-income customers.
2. **Create and implement an incentive program for SNAP recipients.** Focus group participants emphasized that the best strategy to get SNAP recipients to shop at farmers' markets is to increase their purchasing power. Creating a system where EBT users receive free, additional tokens enables them to stretch their food budgets further and lessens the impact of severe SNAP cuts, such as those found in the 2014 Farm Bill.
3. **Increase public support for Fresh Access and SNAP.** Public stakeholders like Citiparks, vendors, and market sponsors will ensure that Fresh Access continues to enable low-income Pittsburghers to have greater control over their food choices by contributing to the program's financial stability and integrating it into overall market operations in the seasons to come.

The positive results from the first year of Fresh Access indicate that the program is one promising solution to address limited access to healthy foods in Pittsburgh, particularly for low-income people. We recommend on-going support across all sectors for Fresh Access and additional strategies to ensure that all Pittsburgh residents have consistent access to healthy foods and the resources to buy them.

## FRESH ACCESS AT A GLANCE

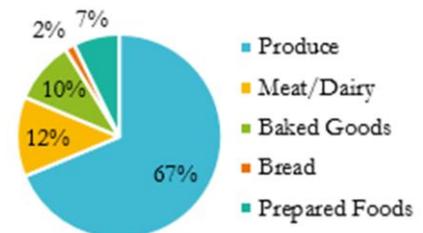
- **1,225 customers—38 percent** used Fresh Access more than once

Returning Fresh Access Users by Card Type



- **43 participating vendors**

Percentage of Fresh Access Sales by Vendor Type



## INTRODUCTION

Even as the U.S. economy slowly begins to recover from the recession that began in 2008, millions of Americans still struggle to make ends meet. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, assists over 47 million U.S. families in purchasing food and is our nation's most critical defense against hunger. In Allegheny County, more than 80,000 households—nearly 1 in 7 families—receive SNAP, bringing \$19.5 million in federal nutrition funds to the region every month.

While Just Harvest strongly supports SNAP and the significant impact it has on the lives of low-income people, we also recognize that access to public benefits is only one factor that affects the health and vibrancy of our region. Our 2013 report *A Menu for Food Justice* found that nearly half of Pittsburgh residents live in limited supermarket access (LSA) areas where they are unable to purchase affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. Seventy-one percent of these residents are low-income.

Farmers' markets provide one solution to the issue of limited supermarket access across Pittsburgh, as shoppers can purchase locally produced meats, cheese, eggs, fruits, vegetables, bread, and baked goods once a week in or near their neighborhoods. During the 2013 market season, 15 farmers' markets regularly took place in Pittsburgh and an additional 22 markets operated in Allegheny County.

Despite the prevalence of farmers' markets in Pittsburgh, most locations are not equipped to process Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, the mechanism through which SNAP benefits are dispersed. Historically, food stamp recipients could use paper coupons at Pennsylvania farmers' markets beginning in the 1960s until EBT was implemented statewide in 1998.<sup>1</sup> This shift occurred without significant federal effort to ensure that farmers' markets could process the new EBT cards, effectively cutting SNAP recipients off from a valuable source of fresh, local foods.

In May 2013, Just Harvest and the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PFPC) launched Fresh Access, a program that allows customers to use EBT, credit, and debits cards to buy food at six Citiparks farmers' markets. Citiparks manages the largest number of long-standing neighborhood farmers' markets of any other single entity in Pittsburgh, making it an excellent candidate for this kind of partnership. The collaboration between Just Harvest, PFPC, and Citiparks models a promising and effective cross-sector solution to increase access to healthy food across Pittsburgh.

As the leading anti-hunger advocacy organization in Southwestern Pennsylvania, we at Just Harvest are committed to ensuring that low-income people have access to the full range of food choices as their more affluent peers, including shopping at farmers' markets. With Fresh Access, our goal is to make buying fresh, local foods at farmers' markets more practical, accessible, and friendly for SNAP recipients. We also aim to de-stigmatize the use of SNAP at farmers' markets by offering Fresh Access to EBT, credit, and debit users alike.

Additionally, at Just Harvest we think that a strong regional economy that supports local food production is an economic benefit to all residents of our area. Fresh Access boosts our area's economy by opening new revenue streams for local farmers and promoting both the demand for and supply of fresh local food in the greater Pittsburgh area, particularly in low-income neighborhoods.

This report evaluates the first year of Fresh Access from May to November 2013, and offers recommendations to improve the program and to expand to additional farmers' markets in the coming seasons.

## HEALTH DISPARITIES IN PITTSBURGH: WHY FOOD ACCESS MATTERS

Recent public health studies of the greater Pittsburgh area paint a grim picture of our region's overall health outcomes. In 2010, nearly two-thirds of Allegheny County residents qualified as overweight or obese and eleven percent of adults had been diagnosed with diabetes. More recent data suggest that urban residents often fare worse than those who live outside of city limits, as Pittsburghers are nearly twice as likely to rate their health as "fair" or "poor" than their suburban counterparts. Pittsburgh residents are also less likely to have health care or to be able to afford emergency medical assistance.

While these findings raise concerns about our area's overall health, it is important to note that people of color and low-income people disproportionately experience negative health outcomes. In Pittsburgh, Black residents are more likely than white residents to qualify as overweight or obese, less likely to have access to health care, and less likely to be able to afford emergency medical assistance. Better access to health care and emergency medical assistance are also correlated to higher incomes, though obesity is not. Additionally, Black residents in Allegheny County are more likely to have been diagnosed with diabetes than their white counterparts, and diabetes diagnoses decrease as income and education levels rise. While race and income have independent effects on health outcomes, people of color in Pittsburgh have significantly lower median incomes than white residents, which underscores the strong correlation between the two indicators.

The inability to buy fresh, healthy foods negatively impacts community health outcomes and has been linked to obesity and diet-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease, particularly among low-income people and people of color. Increasing fresh food access in low-income areas and communities of color is one strategy to address our region's public health concerns. Pittsburgh has already seen success in projects like Fresh Access and the opening of the new Shop'n'Save supermarket in the Hill District. These efforts demonstrate that our region thrives when stakeholders from all sectors, including governments, business owners, non-profits, hospitals, community leaders, and residents, come together to make Pittsburgh a healthier place to live for everyone.

As Just Harvest prepares for the second year of Fresh Access, we will continue to push for continued investment in and support for additional community-driven projects to address the issue of limited food access in Pittsburgh, particularly among those residents who experience the deepest inequities.



Figure 1. Just Harvest staff sell Fresh Access tokens at the Northside farmers' market.

## OVERVIEW OF FRESH ACCESS

In 2010, researchers from Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University evaluated several models of programs that accept EBT at farmers' markets in other metropolitan areas. Based on CMU's recommendations, Just Harvest applied for a license from the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and currently processes all EBT transactions at six Citiparks farmers' markets.

Just Harvest received grant funding from the Motorola Foundation and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to launch Fresh Access in May 2013. These funds cover our day-to-day operational and administrative costs. The Heinz Endowments' Summer Youth Philanthropy Project also awarded PFPC with funding to develop and implement an advertising plan for Citiparks farmers' markets, as well as Fresh Access. In addition to Just Harvest and PFPC's roles in implementing and promoting the program, Citiparks operates the markets and provides stall space for the Fresh Access booth at each location.

## WHERE IT OPERATES

Fresh Access opened at the two largest Citiparks farmers' markets in East Liberty and Northside in May 2013, and expanded ahead of schedule to four additional markets in Southside, Carrick, Bloomfield, and Beechview in August 2013. With the exception of Beechview, which closed in early September, Fresh Access was available at each market until the end of the market season in late November 2013. A detailed map of the farmers' markets can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1. Days of operation, vendor and customer counts, and sales volume estimates for six Citiparks farmers' markets. All markets take place from 3:30-7:30pm until Daylight Savings Time ends, and from 3:00-7:00pm thereafter. Vendor estimates are based on on-site observations. Customer and sales volume estimates are based on PFPC rapid market assessments (RMAs). PFPC did not estimate sales volume at Southside, Carrick, Bloomfield, or Beechview.

|                     | Day of the week | # of vendors | # of shoppers | Sales volume      |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <i>East Liberty</i> | Monday          | 25-30        | 1,600         | \$23,190-\$40,285 |
| <i>Northside</i>    | Friday          | 15-20        | 1,600         | \$25,574-\$43,016 |
| <i>Southside</i>    | Tuesday         | 5-10         | 300-400       | *                 |
| <i>Carrick</i>      | Wednesday       | 3-5          | 300-400       | *                 |
| <i>Bloomfield</i>   | Thursday        | 5-10         | 400-500       | *                 |
| <i>Beechview</i>    | Thursday        | 3            | <100          | *                 |

## HOW IT WORKS

Fresh Access operates at each market location from one central booth where customers buy wooden tokens using either an EBT or credit/debit card. These tokens come in denominations of \$0.50 for EBT users and \$1.00 for credit/debit users and can be used to purchase food from any participating vendors at the market. The distinction between EBT and credit/debit tokens enables participating vendors to comply with USDA regulations regarding SNAP-eligible foods. The tokens are transferable between all participating Citiparks farmers' market and can be redeemed until the end of the season.

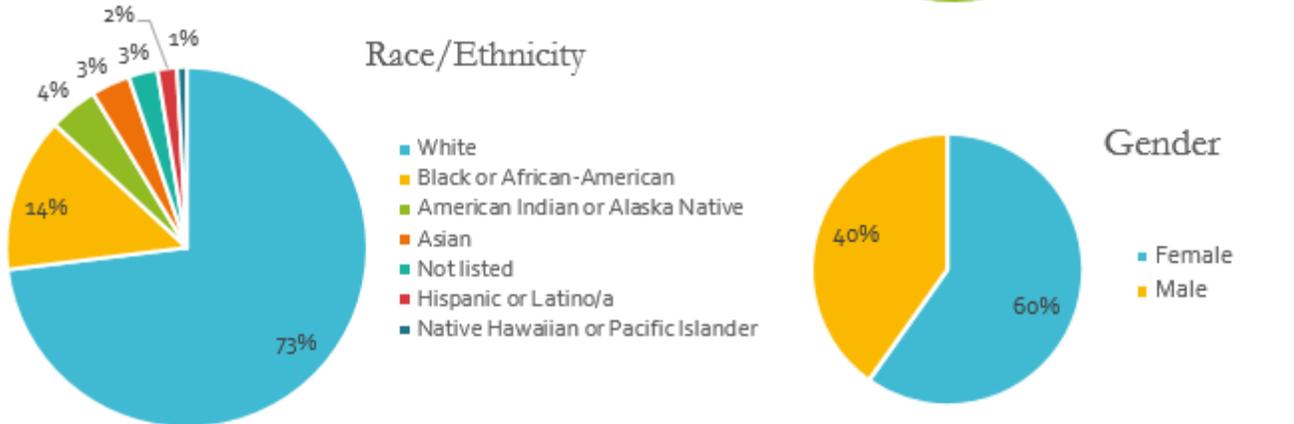
Vendors collect the tokens spent at their booths at the end of each market and turn them in to Just Harvest with a written log of that day's sales. After confirming each vendor's tally, Just Harvest reimburses participating vendors for each week of electronic sales.<sup>ii</sup>



Figure 2. Vendors post signs at their booths to advertise that they accept Fresh Access tokens.

## WHO USES IT

Based on total transactions from 2013, approximately 47 percent of Fresh Access shoppers use EBT. The graphs in this section highlight aggregate demographic information for both EBT and credit/debit shoppers who filled out our customer satisfaction surveys. White respondents and women are both overrepresented in our sample, compared to city-wide demographics. There is no demographic data on Citiparks farmers' market shoppers in general to indicate whether our sample accurately mirrors the overall clientele.



## ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

PFPC spearheaded the promotional campaign for Fresh Access in cooperation with Just Harvest and Citiparks. The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), a PFPC member organization, added Citiparks farmers' markets to its regional Buy Fresh, Buy Local (BFBL) campaign and included BFBL insignia on all promotional materials. During the 2013, the project team:

- Designed and printed two 14-foot event flags to post at the entrance of each farmers' market.
- Organized a series of ads on Pittsburgh Port Authority buses 2013 to advertise the markets and Fresh Access. These ads ran from September to October 2013.
- Created and distributed over 150 posters and 1,100 postcards to advertise the expansion of Fresh Access in August 2013.
- Hosted at least one special event at each Citiparks farmers' market, which included local artists, musicians, and performers. The largest of these events, a corn roast at the East Liberty market, featured corn from local producers and drew over 350 shoppers.



Figure 3. Example of on-site event flag to promote Fresh Access.

Fresh Access also received considerable news coverage from a range of local media outlets, including newspapers, community and government bulletins, and television stations. These stories highlighted the program's launch at East Liberty and Northside and its early expansion to four additional markets, as well as the program's overall success in increasing access to fresh, local foods for low-income Pittsburghers.

## METHODS

This report summarizes the main findings from Just Harvest’s evaluation of Fresh Access from September to November 2013, PFPC’s rapid market assessments (RMAs) during July and August 2013, and overall sales data for the entire market season. We also add information from on-going on-site observation at each of the farmers’ markets to the following sources of data:

- **Customer satisfaction surveys:** Every week from September to November 2013, Just Harvest staff asked Fresh Access customers at each market (except Beechview) to fill out a survey after they had purchased tokens at our booth. The survey asked customers to rate their satisfaction with Fresh Access and the farmers’ markets in general, to indicate what factors motivate them to shop at farmers’ markets, and to gauge the relative impact Fresh Access had on their purchasing power. Of the 119 completed surveys we received, 75 were completed by EBT shoppers and 44 by credit/debit shoppers.
- **Customer focus groups:** During December 2013, Just Harvest organized two focus groups with EBT shoppers who filled out our customer satisfaction survey. The first focus group solicited feedback about Fresh Access’ advertising materials, outreach strategy, and messaging. During the second focus group, participants discussed the impact Fresh Access had on their shopping and eating habits, as well as additional challenges they face in regard to purchasing healthy foods.
- **Vendor satisfaction surveys:** At the end of 2013 season, Just Harvest distributed surveys to 38 participating vendors to rate their experience during the first year of Fresh Access and their overall experience selling at Citiparks farmers’ markets. We received 23 surveys, giving us a response rate of 60 percent. This group represents 43 percent of all vendors who sell at Citiparks farmers’ markets.
- **End-of-season vendor meeting:** Just Harvest and PFPC organized an end-of-season vendor meeting in mid-December 2013 to request feedback on Fresh Access’ first year and to discuss potential improvements for next year. In addition to Just Harvest and PFPC staff, four vendors and one representative from Citiparks were in attendance.
- **Rapid market assessments:** PFPC members conducted one RMA at each of the farmers’ markets in this report during July and August 2013. The RMAs estimated total market attendance and identified the primary neighborhoods where market shoppers live. Additionally, the RMAs at the East Liberty and Northside farmers’ markets estimated daily sales volume (Table 1).



Figure 4. Focus group participants discuss Fresh Access with Just Harvest staff.

## MARKET LOCATIONS

The descriptions of each market and their surrounding neighborhoods combine qualitative observations and quantitative data. Appendix B contains additional information about neighborhood demographics.

### EAST LIBERTY

The farmers' market at East Liberty operates in Penn Circle West in the center of the neighborhood's commercial district. The MLK Jr. East Busway and the adjacent railroad tracks that divide East Liberty in half signify a stark divide between higher- and lower-income Pittsburghers. Those who live north of this boundary experience limited supermarket access, unlike their neighbors to the south. While the neighborhood has seen a recent surge in development dollars, many long-time residents of East Liberty—particularly Black and low-income residents—have lost their homes and are being priced out of the area.

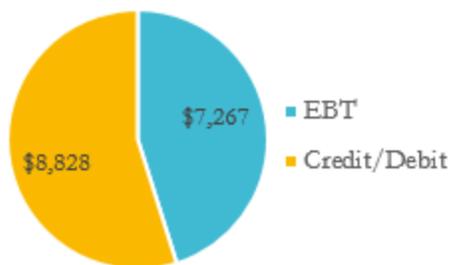
With the exception of its namesake neighborhood, shoppers at the East Liberty market typically come from higher-income areas with access to several supermarkets, such as Highland Park, Shadyside, Squirrel Hill, and Point Breeze. While the farmers' market draws a large clientele from more affluent neighborhoods, its location in East Liberty itself is crucial in providing access to fresh, local foods for Pittsburghers with the greatest need in that area. Furthermore, nearly one-third of East Liberty's token sales were purchased with EBT, indicating that the market draws a strong low-income customer base.

Fresh Access Sales at East Liberty



### NORTHSIDE

Fresh Access Sales at Northside



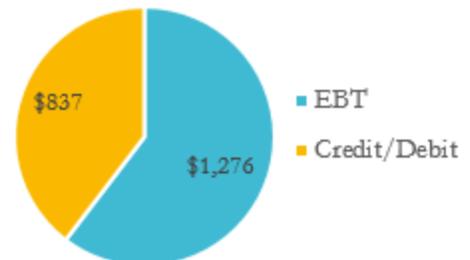
The Northside farmers' market occurs on a tree-lined section of Allegheny Commons along Cedar Avenue. Shoppers at this market typically come from nearby neighborhoods, particularly East Allegheny, Central Northside, Allegheny Center, and Perry Hilltop. These are all considered LSA areas, except for the southern half of East Allegheny that borders a Giant Eagle supermarket. Overall, the Northside is a largely low-income area, with neighborhood median income levels below the city average, poverty rates that hover between 25 and 35 percent, and unemployment rates in the double digits.

Northside had the highest total EBT sales of all markets during the 2013 season, which indicates that that this market likely reaches the broadest population of low-income Pittsburghers of all Citiparks farmers' markets.

### SOUTHSIDE

Residents and tourists alike regularly flock to the Southside's numerous restaurants, bars, and retail shops. The area's farmers' market sits in the center of the East Carson Street commercial corridor at 18<sup>th</sup> Street, and has struggled due to a number of location changes over the past several years. Most shoppers come from nearby Southside Flats and Southside Slopes, while a few live in adjacent Hilltop neighborhoods that sit higher in elevation in Pittsburgh's South Hills. Both Southside neighborhoods are predominantly white, middle-class areas. The Hilltop neighborhoods, in contrast, have higher proportions of Black residents and are largely working-class. All of the neighborhoods have some limited supermarket access, though there is a Giant Eagle supermarket in the eastern corner of Southside Flats that serves some Southside and Hilltop residents.

Fresh Access Sales at Southside

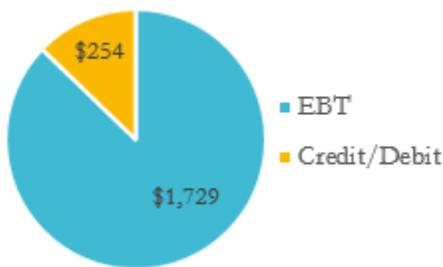


Total EBT sales from the Southside market were more than 50 percent higher than credit/debit sales. This suggests that while the market itself is located in a relatively affluent neighborhood, there is still a consumer base of low-income clientele, likely from neighboring Hilltop areas.

### CARRICK

The Carrick farmers’ market takes place in a parking lot behind a shopping center on Brownsville Road near the Carrick Regency High Rise, a low-income senior housing complex managed the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Carrick has struggled in recent years because two prominent produce vendors left the market in 2012 and no new vendors currently fill the vacant space. Only five vendors attend regularly, causing the number of shoppers to dwindle and making it difficult for Citiparks to attract new vendors.

**Fresh Access Sales at Carrick**

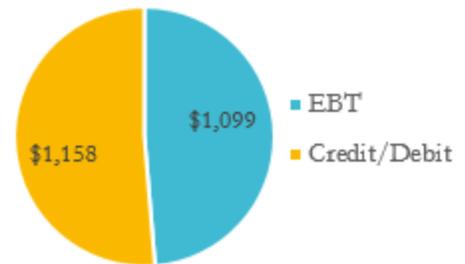


Historically a predominantly white, working-class neighborhood, Carrick has seen a large influx of Bhutanese refugees since the early 2010s.<sup>iii</sup> There was a rise in the number of Bhutanese shoppers at the Carrick farmers’ market in 2013, the majority of whom used EBT. Carrick had the highest proportion of EBT sales of any farmers’ market, which suggests that Fresh Access addresses a significant unmet need for the neighborhood’s newer residents. This is also a positive sign for Citiparks staff who might address recent struggles by adapting to meet the needs of the market’s shifting clientele.

### BLOOMFIELD

The Bloomfield farmers’ market operates in parking lot of St. Maria Goretti School. The surrounding neighborhood boasts the moniker “Pittsburgh’s Little Italy,” and several Italian restaurants and groceries line the nearby Liberty Avenue business district. Shoppers typically live in Bloomfield, with a small handful from nearby Friendship and Garfield. Penn Avenue divides the neighborhoods between predominantly white, affluent residents in Bloomfield and Friendship and predominantly Black, low-income residents in Garfield.

**Fresh Access Sales at Bloomfield**

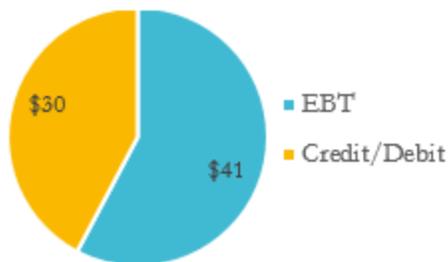


Bloomfield and Garfield are both LSA areas, but the geographic, racial, and socioeconomic separation between the neighborhoods likely shifts the clientele of the farmers’ market whiter and wealthier.<sup>iv</sup> Nonetheless, the area’s overall poverty rate falls between 20 and 30 percent, and EBT sales were approximately equal to credit/debit sales, indicating both a need and demand for Fresh Access.

### BEECHVIEW

The Beechview farmers’ market takes place in the parking lot of St. Catherine of Siena church across from a senior housing complex. Beechview has struggled to attract clientele because a small number of vendors offer a limited selection of products, and because it has changed locations twice in the past three years.

**Fresh Access Sales at Beechview**



The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly white and working-class, though the area also has the highest proportion of Latino residents of any of the neighborhoods included in this report and double the proportion in Pittsburgh. Census data for Beechview indicate that Latino residents earn significantly lower median incomes than their white counterparts, which suggests that the area’s growing number of Latinos could benefit from Fresh Access and that both the program and the market could adapt to suit the neighborhood’s changing demographics in coming years.

## PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Fresh Access achieved over \$42,000 in sales volume during its first season—a higher total than the first year of EBT at farmers’ market programs in both New York City and Boston. East Liberty was by far the largest market, accounting for nearly half of all Fresh Access sales (\$20,421), and Northside was a close second with \$16,094 in total sales. The four markets that opened in August 2013—Southside, Carrick, Bloomfield, and Beechview—collectively added nearly \$6,500 to the program’s overall sales, indicating the potential for these markets to continue to grow in coming seasons. Additionally, over 41 percent of total sales across all markets were made by EBT shoppers, which highlights the purchasing power of low-income people in local food markets.

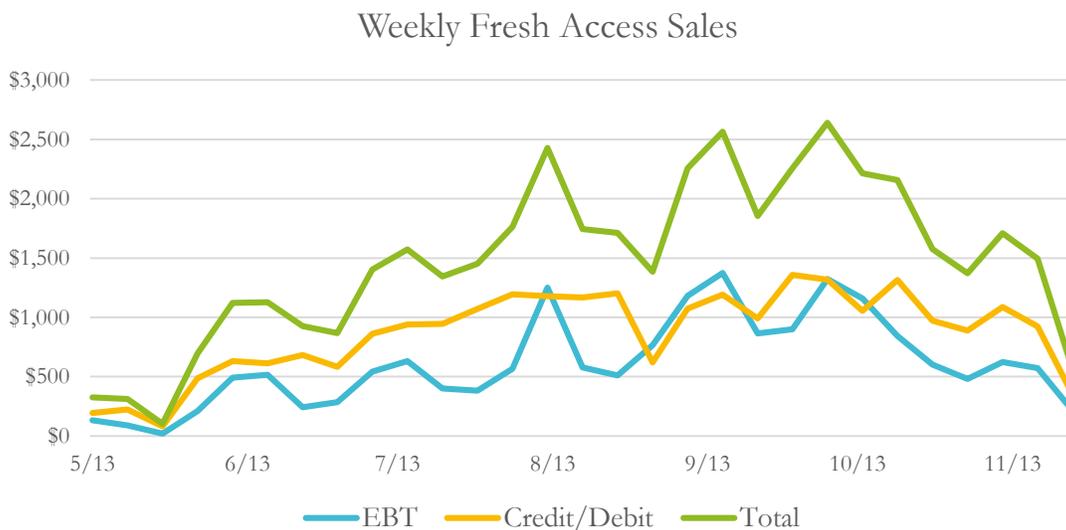


Figure 5. Weekly Fresh Access sales for six Citiparks farmers' markets.

## FRESH ACCESS CUSTOMERS

Data from customer surveys and focus groups highlight both the impact of Fresh Access and the continued hardships many SNAP recipients face in meeting their food needs. Below are the primary findings from the 2013 farmers’ market season.

### SNAP recipients are more likely to experience limited food access

Among the 75 survey respondents who used EBT, only 53 percent said that there are other places in their neighborhoods where they can regularly purchase affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. In contrast, of the 44 survey respondents who used credit/debit, 77 percent noted their neighborhoods had reliable supplies of fresh produce. Focus group participants, all of whom receive SNAP, explained that they develop strategies to find the highest quality food available from a range of sources, including supermarkets like Giant Eagle, Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods, and ALDI, food pantries and Produce to People events, and dumpster diving. Many participants noted that this process is time consuming, and those who rely on public transit pointed out the difficulty in purchasing bulk foods, which are often less expensive, and transporting them via bus or train.

### Farmers’ markets give low-income people the option to buy the foods they prefer

All focus group participants said they strongly prefer high quality fresh foods, and farmers’ markets are often one of the few nearby places where SNAP recipients can find them. The vast majority of EBT users rated the quality (78 percent) and selection (69 percent) of the fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets “much better” than other places they might shop, such as supermarkets, grocery stores, and corner stores. This reinforces

**A lot of times farmers’ markets are the only place where people can get food.**

—Fresh Access focus group participant

our results from *A Menu for Food Justice*, which found that food retailers in low-income areas are less likely to carry high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables than in higher income areas.



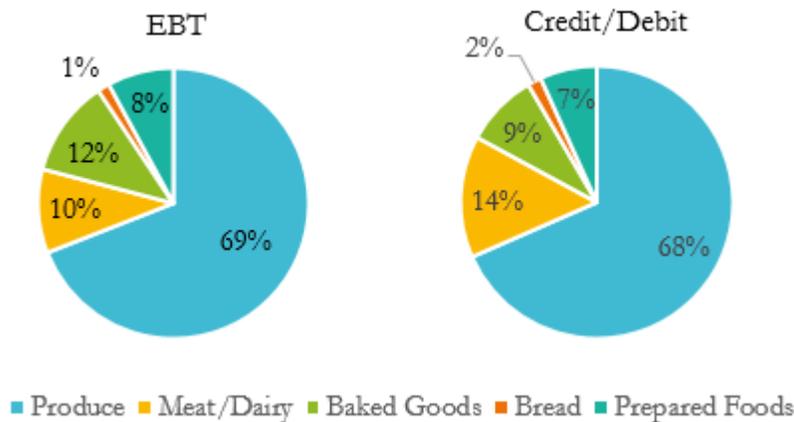
Text reads, "Because of Fresh Access, I can get a variety of fresh, good-tasting vegetables for my family."

Over 61 percent of EBT respondents also rated the price of produce at farmers' markets as "much better" or "a little better" than at retail stores, which suggests that some low-income farmers' market shoppers do not perceive farmers' markets to be prohibitively expensive, or are willing to pay slightly higher prices for much higher quality products. These results highlight the critical importance of protecting public benefits and increasing the availability of healthy foods, as doing so maximizes low-income people's ability to choose the foods they prefer.

### Farmers' markets meet a range of food needs

Conversations among focus group participants emphasized that Fresh Access and farmers' markets enable them to cover several of their families' food needs, including purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. During the entire 2013 season, nearly 70 percent of Fresh Access tokens were spent on fruits and vegetables, with the remaining 30 percent allotted to meat and dairy, baked goods, prepared foods, and bread.

### Total Fresh Access Sales by Product Type

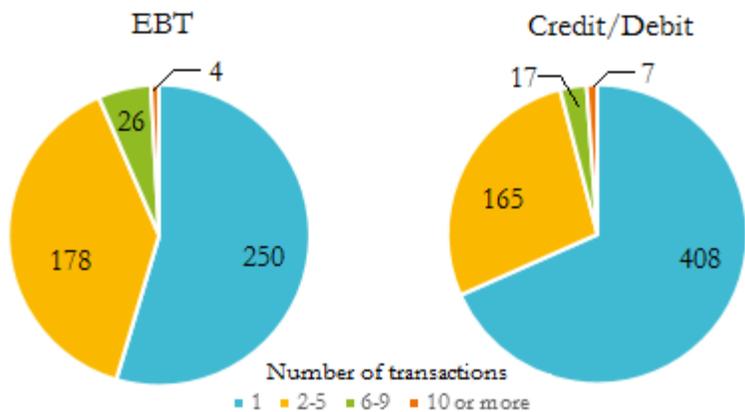


### Fresh Access reaches both regular shoppers and newcomers at farmers' markets

Transaction data from our card swipe machine show that nearly half of EBT users and nearly one-third of credit/debit users were repeat Fresh Access customers.<sup>v</sup> This information does not indicate whether shoppers who used Fresh Access one time continued to shop at farmers' markets using cash.

Results from our survey suggest that our sample was skewed in favor of regular Fresh Access users. Over 82 percent of all survey respondents said that they shop at farmers' markets weekly or several times

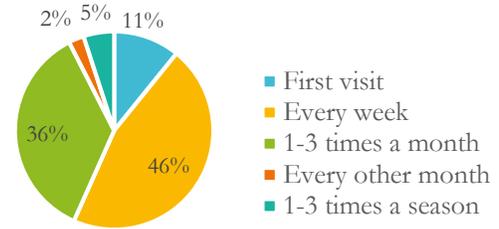
### Number of Fresh Access Users by Frequency of Use



per month. Fifteen percent of EBT users were first-time shoppers at a farmers' market, which suggests that Fresh Access encouraged new clientele to come to the markets.

Focus group participants noted that they often struggle to stretch their SNAP benefits until the end of the month, which likely explains why the percentage of regular credit/debit shoppers is higher (93 percent) than the percentage of regular EBT shoppers (75 percent).

How often do you shop at a farmers' market?



**Mostly I still went [to the farmers' market] because it was tradition. My son and I go every Friday...I certainly don't let him know that we don't have any money left.**

—Fresh Access focus group participant

Nonetheless, several focus group participants said they try to keep shopping at farmers' markets after their benefits run out, even if they typically purchase fewer items. Participants with children were particularly committed to attending markets regularly, regardless of their SNAP balance, in order to teach their children about local produce and healthy eating.

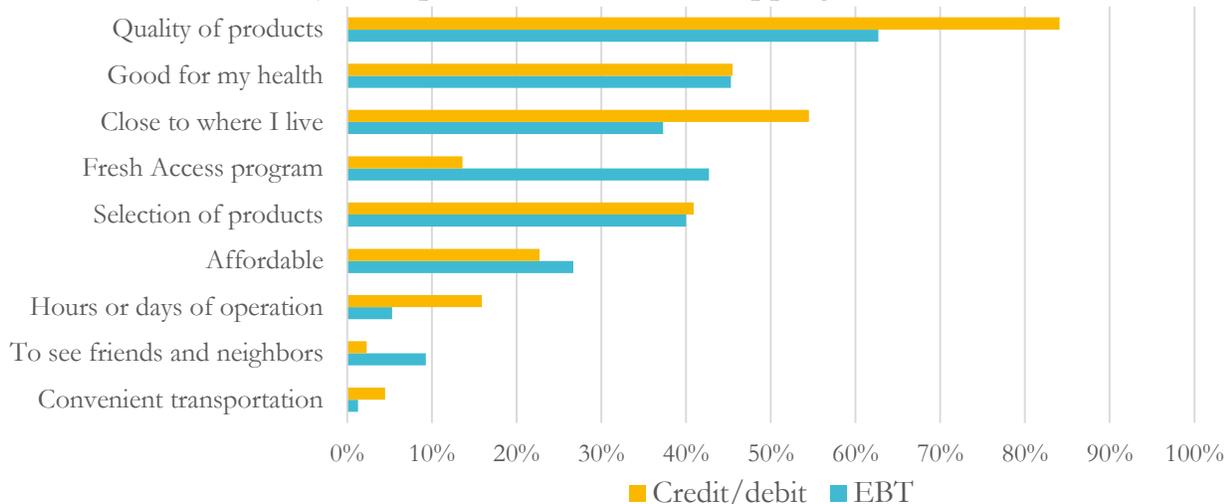
EBT and credit/debit users shop at farmers' markets for similar reasons

Approximately 63 percent of EBT and 84 percent of credit/debit customers cited product quality as one of their top three reasons for shopping at a farmers' market, making it the most common response regardless of income. In addition, 45 percent of both groups said they shop at farmers' markets because they believe that doing so is good for their health. Convenience is also important, as 37 percent of EBT and 54 percent of credit/debit users noted that a market's proximity to where they live is a primary motivation in their decision to shop.



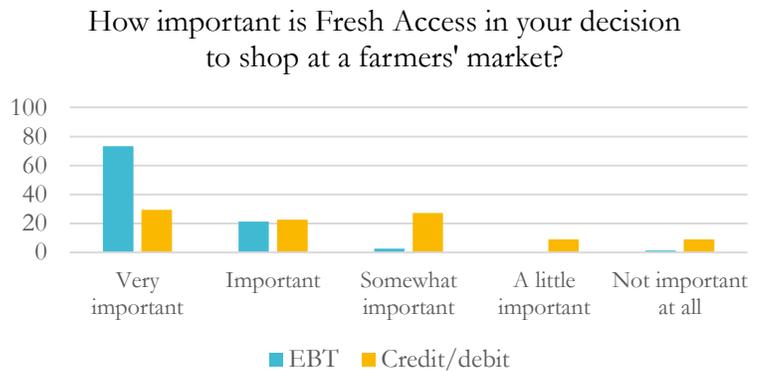
Text reads "Because of Fresh Access, my children and I can enjoy fresh food while supporting local farmers."

What are your top three reasons for shopping at a farmers' market?



## Fresh Access is a significant factor in drawing SNAP recipients to farmers' markets

EBT users were over three times more likely than credit/debit users to list Fresh Access as one of the top three reasons they shop at a farmers' market. Furthermore, nearly 95 percent of EBT users rated Fresh Access as "very important" or "important" in their decision to shop at a market, compared to 52 percent of credit/debit users. This suggests that while most people buy food from farmers' markets for reasons related to personal health and product quality, Fresh Access uniquely incentivizes SNAP recipients to participate.

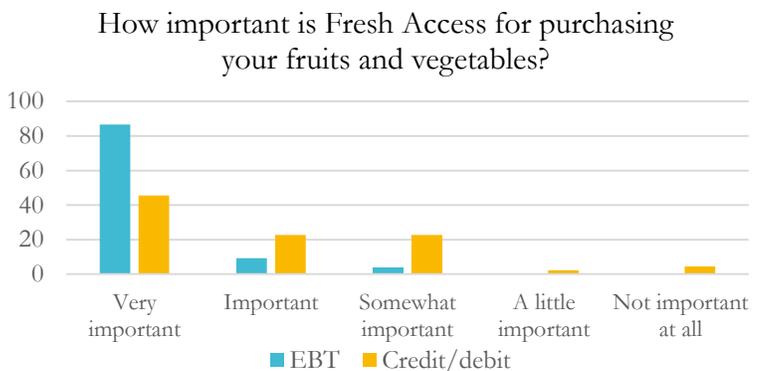


Several focus group participants also said they had attended farmers' markets for years but stopped when they fell on financial hardship. Fresh Access drew those shoppers back to farmers' markets and allowed them to buy more and higher quality fresh produce than before.

## Fresh Access increases both SNAP recipients' ability to buy and consumption of fresh produce

A full 96 percent of EBT users and 68 percent of credit/debit users said that Fresh Access is either "very important" or "important" for their ability to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.

Fresh Access also had a strong impact on shoppers' consumption of fresh produce. Eighty percent of EBT users and 59 percent of credit/debit users reported they ate more fruits and vegetables since they started using the program.



## Fresh Access encourages SNAP recipients to add variety to their diets



Focus group participants agreed that Fresh Access enabled them to try new foods and to experiment with cooking at home. They emphasized that vendors' willingness to let customers try unfamiliar foods encouraged them to buy more items and diversify their diets. The range of available products also motivated shoppers to spread their spending across the market, creating an additional sales boost for as many vendors as possible.

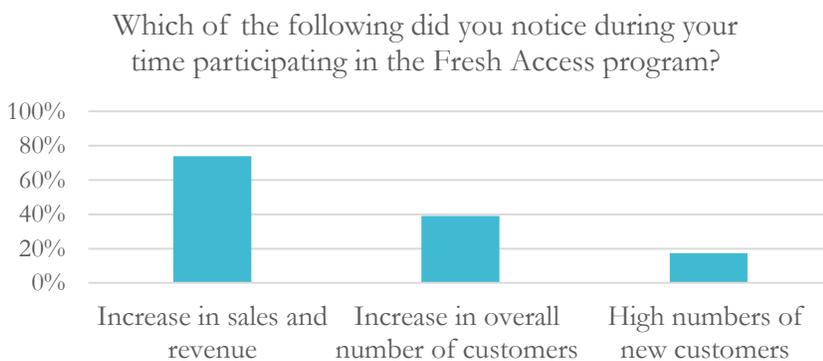
Text reads "Because of Fresh Access, my son and I have a chance to try new and nutritious foods while supporting local farmers."

## FRESH ACCESS VENDORS

Our results indicate that Fresh Access vendors are overwhelmingly satisfied with the program, in large part due to the boost in sales during the 2013 season. Vendors also expressed enthusiasm for the program’s mission to encourage more low-income people to shop at farmers’ markets. Additionally, vendors are satisfied with their overall experience selling at Citiparks farmers’ markets, but did identify some key recommendations, detailed in the final section, to strengthen the markets for the upcoming season.

### Farmers’ markets support small business owners—and Fresh Access boosts sales

Most vendors who participated in our survey are the sole proprietors of their farm or business, and all but four have sold at Citiparks farmers’ markets for at least two years. The majority of the participating farms and businesses are relatively small—over sixty percent of respondents listed their gross income from the 2013 season as less than \$20,000. Nonetheless, more than half of respondents said that Citiparks farmers’ markets are “very important” to their overall business and an additional 39 percent said that the markets are “somewhat important.” Over 65 percent of vendors said that high sales volume is one of their top two reasons for choosing to sell at a particular farmers’ market.



For most vendors, Fresh Access had a moderate impact on their sales during the 2013 season. Nearly 74 percent said they noticed an increase in sales at their booth as a direct result of participating in Fresh Access, which indicates the program made a meaningful impact on vendor sales, and contributed to the overall impact of Citiparks farmers’ markets as a revenue stream.

### Farmers’ market vendors prioritize their customers

Over 60 percent of vendors said that having strong relationships with market customers is one of their top priorities in choosing a farmers’ market. Thirty-nine percent also noted that they had an increase in customers, many of whom were new to their booths, as a result of Fresh Access.

Vendors were supportive of expanding access to farmers’ markets to low-income Pittsburghers. One vendor who attended our end-of-season meeting installed an EBT machine at his storefront location, noting that the program had inspired him to market his products to more customers. These results suggest that Fresh Access encourages new relationships to develop between vendors and EBT customers.

[With Fresh Access], people who normally wouldn't be able to buy our product had the chance.  
—Fresh Access vendor

### Fresh Access is easy for vendors to use

All of the vendors who participated in our survey said they were very satisfied with their overall experience during the first year of Fresh Access. Vendors were also very satisfied with the availability of Just Harvest staff at the markets and the timeliness of receiving reimbursement checks. The majority of vendors were also very satisfied with the ease of collecting tokens at the market, though three vendors indicated that they were only somewhat satisfied. These vendors further explained that clearer messaging to customers about how to use the tokens would help mitigate this problem.

## CHALLENGES

While Fresh Access was undoubtedly successful during the 2013 season, customers and vendors identified some key challenges to address for the upcoming seasons, particularly in regard to marketing and promotion. We detail these challenges below and offer recommendations to address them in the following section.

### Promotion of Fresh Access and Citiparks farmers' markets reached a limited audience

Results from our customer surveys revealed that the vast majority of respondents learned about Fresh Access on-site at the farmers' market. A small percentage of shoppers heard about the program through word-of-mouth, but very few had seen or heard promotional materials in their neighborhoods. This suggests that Fresh Access customers either regularly shopped at farmers' markets already, or started using the program coincidentally after walking past a market. In either case, these findings indicate that the marketing strategy for Fresh Access had a limited reach, particularly in attracting new clientele to the farmers' markets.

Vendors also expressed some dissatisfaction with the overall promotion of Citiparks farmers' markets in 2013, including special events; among return vendors, dissatisfaction was higher for 2013 than in previous seasons. Vendors mentioned that the banners PFPC designed and created to display on market days were a good start, but urged both Citiparks and Just Harvest to engage in additional promotion.

### Fresh Access only catered to English-speaking customers

The Carrick and Beechview farmers' markets struggled during the 2013 season, in part due to a shift in customer demographics. Just Harvest was unable to translate survey materials into Nepali, which prevented us from administering surveys to the Bhutanese shoppers who made up a large proportion of Fresh Access users at Carrick. While we did not collect any survey data at Beechview due to the short market season, we were also unable to translate our promotional materials into Spanish for Latino shoppers at that market.

### SNAP cuts weakened low-income people's purchasing power and the impact of Fresh Access

During our focus groups, participants noted that SNAP benefits are often meager because they have never been intended to cover an individual's or family's entire food budget. Despite this, many families still try to limit the amount of cash they spend on groceries and develop ways to stretch their food supplies until the end of the month when their benefits are renewed. One participant also explained that the program is not sufficiently responsive to fluctuations in income, as her family's SNAP benefits decreased dramatically after both parents became employed even though the second income did not make up for the loss in benefits.

Cuts to SNAP, such as the one that occurred when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) expired in November 2013, deliver a huge blow to recipients' purchasing power and overall wellbeing. Many focus group participants discussed that they have experienced higher levels of stress following the November cuts, due to a heightened awareness of how much less food their benefits can buy in a month.

The most recent Farm Bill slashes \$8 billion from the SNAP program over the next ten years. These cuts will disproportionately affect Pennsylvanians, because they target our state's "Heat and Eat" provision that allows SNAP households to receive home utility benefits through the federal LIHEAP program. We strongly emphasize that concerted political support from all levels of government for federal programs like SNAP *and* local programs like Fresh Access is necessary to ensure that low-income people have full control over their own lives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based on the insights shared during our conversations with customers, vendors, Citiparks staff, and PFPC members, we have identified several general and market-specific recommendations to strengthen both Fresh Access and Citiparks farmers' markets in 2014. Where applicable, we also outline Just Harvest's current plans for implementing these recommendations.

### Target promotion of Fresh Access and Citiparks farmers' markets to low-income people

Both SNAP customers and vendors suggested strategies to strengthen the marketing of Fresh Access and farmers' markets in the coming season.

For Just Harvest and our partners at PFPC, these ideas include:

- Conducting on-going outreach to community- and faith-based organizations that serve low-income people. This could involve distributing fliers and postcards throughout the market season, writing copy for community and organizational newsletters, and delivering short presentations on the program to neighborhood residents.
- Promoting Fresh Access through social services agencies like WIC offices, senior centers, and community health clinics. These efforts could encourage people who receive WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP) or Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons in addition to SNAP to combine their benefits at markets.
- Developing partnerships with schools and daycares in farmers' market neighborhoods to inform parents and children about Fresh Access, as well as the WIC FMNP.
- Prominently featuring an image of the Pennsylvania ACCESS EBT card on all promotional materials for Fresh Access and Citiparks' farmers markets, both on-site and in the community at large.
- Tabling at events in farmers' market neighborhoods, such as arts festivals, concerts, and street fairs, to promote awareness of Fresh Access.
- Passing out fliers and postcards at food pantries and events sponsored by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, such as its monthly Produce to People fruit and vegetable distributions.

For Citiparks and other City agencies, additional recommendations include:

- Creating a social media campaign to increase the online visibility of Citiparks farmers' markets and to give customers real-time information about farmers' markets on any given day.
- Cross-promoting farmers' markets with other Citiparks programming, such as the Schenley Ice Rink.
- Working with vendors to plan special events that feature seasonal local products.
- Increasing signage in neighborhoods on farmers' market days.
- Partnering with neighborhood business districts to increase promotion of farmers' markets and draw more foot traffic to commercial areas on market days.
- Developing a series of radio ads for local stations like KDKA, WYEP, and Essential Pittsburgh to promote the farmers' markets, particularly during peak season.

### Solicit on-going customer and vendor feedback to improve individual farmers' markets

Soliciting on-going feedback from both customers and vendors will allow Citiparks to recruit specific vendors for individual markets based on customer preferences, and will ensure that vendors have a consistent and reliable customer base. Citiparks will also be able to effectively adapt to markets in transition by making a concerted effort to respond to customer and vendor needs. Based on our evaluation, we recommend the following courses of action for individual markets:

- **East Liberty:** Conduct targeted outreach to residents who live in East Liberty, particularly low-income residents. The farmers' market currently draws the majority of its clientele from more affluent areas of Pittsburgh, but EBT sales from 2013 show the potential to grow the market's SNAP customer base in the coming seasons.

- **Northside:** Increase visibility of Fresh Access booth. Due to the layout of the Northside market, several Fresh Access customers noted that the Fresh Access booth is easy to miss. Moving the booth to a more prominent location and/or increasing signage will address this issue in 2014.
- **Bloomfield:** Work with nearby parking lot owners and St. Maria Goretti School administrators to expand free parking and to allow vendors to set up booths prior to 3:00pm. Vendors noted that the inability to get into the parking lot until 3:00pm puts them behind schedule for the opening bell, and the lack of free parking discourages customers, particularly low-income customers, from attending.
- **Southside:** Increase access to free parking, work with business owners on East Carson Street to promote the market, and target outreach to Hilltop residents. The lack of free parking at the Southside market is likely a barrier to shoppers, particularly from Hilltop neighborhoods. Vendors expressed the need for more advertising at this location, and scaling up promotion both on East Carson Street and in the Hilltop will likely draw a mix of clientele to the farmers' market.
- **Carrick:** Recruit additional vendors and require vendors to participate regularly. Adding new vendors and ensuring regular participation from vendors will encourage both long-time and newer shoppers to attend the market.
- **Beechview:** Increase vendor pool, work with St. Catherine of Siena Church and local businesses to promote the market, and post additional on-site signage. As at Carrick, recruiting additional vendors to commit to the full market season will create an incentive for shoppers to participate. Additionally, keeping the farmers' market in the same location and increasing its overall visibility in the neighborhood will boost Beechview's customer base.

In general, both groups agreed that the most successful markets have a consistent, diverse vendor pool, ample signage and advertising, and plenty of space for customers and vendors alike to park.

#### Make Fresh Access more accessible for non-English-speaking shoppers

In January 2014, Just Harvest was awarded a grant<sup>1</sup> to work with partners in Carrick and Beechview to make Fresh Access more accessible to the Bhutanese and Latino shoppers, respectively, in those neighborhoods. These improvements will complement the suggestions listed above to strengthen both markets. In preparation for the coming season, we will work with the Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh in Carrick and the Prospect Park Family Center near Beechview to translate our promotional materials into Nepali and Spanish and to identify culturally appropriate products for each market. Penn State Extension, a member of PFPC, has offered support to vendors who are interested in growing products that better serve Bhutanese and Latino shoppers.

#### Use Fresh Access to recruit new vendors to Citiparks farmers' markets

Vendor survey results indicate that Fresh Access increased overall sales and drew new clientele to farmers' markets, boosting vendors' overall satisfaction. Citiparks could encourage new vendors to participate at struggling markets by highlighting the effects of Fresh Access on sales. Technical support from PFPC, as mentioned above, and the presence of a strong Fresh Access customer base could further encourage new vendors to join Citiparks or returning vendors to sell at additional markets in the 2014 season.

#### Increase public support for Fresh Access and farmers' markets

A combination of grant funding from private foundations and state entities supported Fresh Access during its pilot year. In order to maintain the program's viability in the coming seasons and to mitigate fluctuations in available grant funds, beneficiaries of farmers' markets, such as public stakeholders like Citiparks, vendors, and market sponsors, should contribute to Fresh Access' on-going financial sustainability and integrate the

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<sup>1</sup>This grant was awarded by a joint program of Vibrant Pittsburgh and the Urban Affairs Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Community Relations Council.

program into broader market operations. Increased ownership of and investment in Fresh Access will ensure that all city residents can participate in farmers' markets, regardless of income.

#### Expand Fresh Access to additional farmers' markets in Pittsburgh

Given the prevalence of farmers' markets in Pittsburgh, Just Harvest plans to expand Fresh Access to additional neighborhoods in 2014. We will focus on markets that serve a large proportion of low-income residents and that demonstrate the capacity to oversee the operational aspects of the program.

#### Create an incentive program to boost SNAP recipients' purchasing power and vendor sales

Fresh Access focus group participants agreed that the single most effective strategy for drawing SNAP recipients to farmers' markets would be to increase their purchasing power. Incentive programs, which provide EBT users with additional tokens free of charge when they buy tokens at farmers' markets, have been extremely successful in cities like New York, Boston, and Portland, OR. These programs are particularly important in the face of SNAP cuts, which severely limit low-income people's ability to purchase fresh food. Incentive programs also increase sales for local farmers and small business owners by encouraging low-income people to spend more money at farmers' markets.

Participants in our focus groups suggested creating an incentive program in which EBT users receive an additional dollar amount for every fixed increment in tokens they purchase. They noted that this model has the greatest potential to increase their overall purchasing power. While the exact match amount Fresh Access will offer in the coming season depends on the availability of grant funds, participants indicated that \$2 in additional tokens for every \$10 spent would make a significant impact on their ability to purchase fresh, local foods.



Figure 6. Fresh Access tokens.

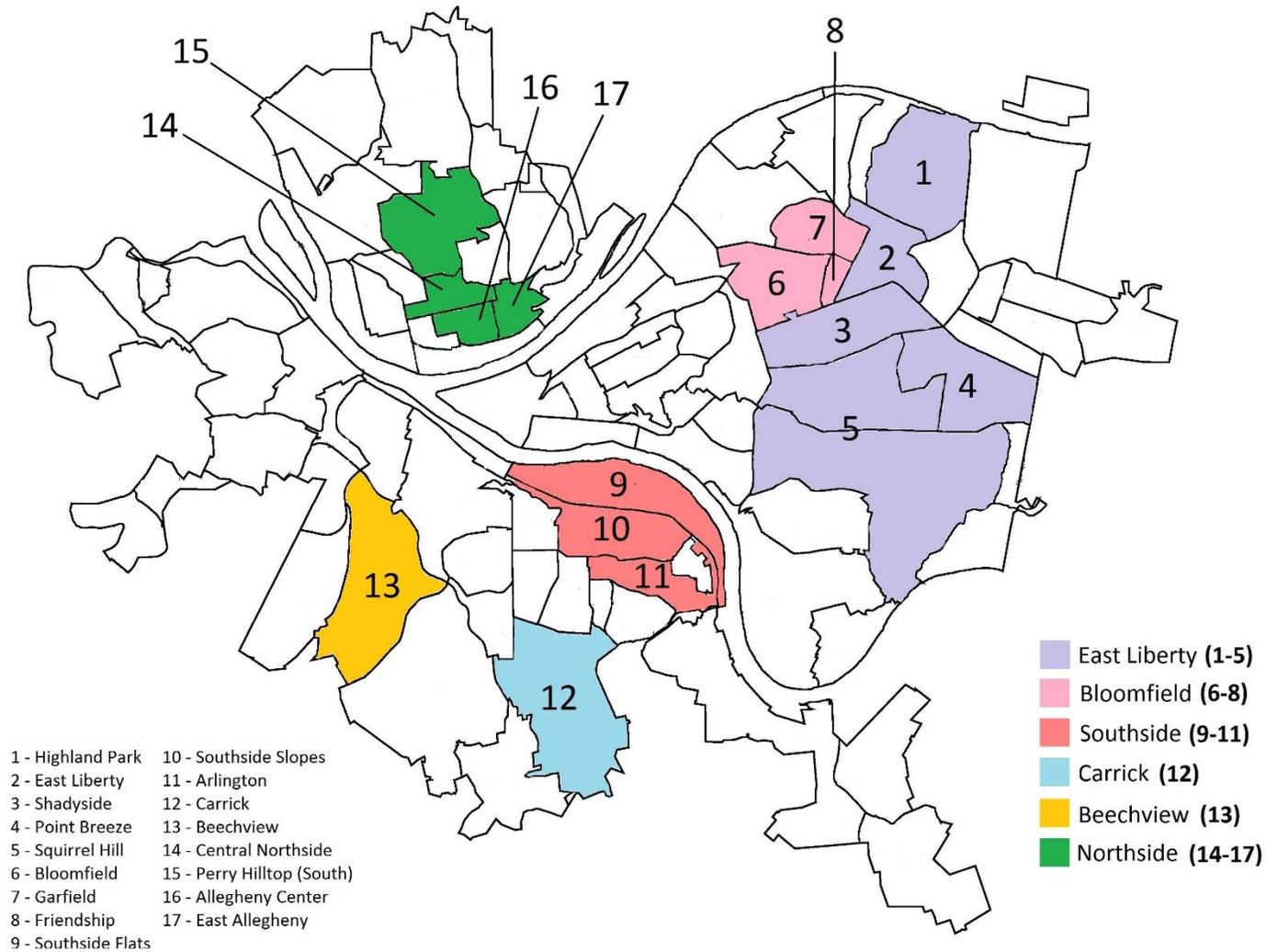


Figure 7. Map of Pittsburgh neighborhoods. The color labels correspond to the specific farmers' market that serves a neighborhood or neighborhoods. Each neighborhood including in this report is labeled by name. Data from the City of Pittsburgh.

**APPENDIX B**

Table 2. Demographic information for the neighborhoods adjacent to the six Citiparks farmers’ markets that offer Fresh Access as well as the city of Pittsburgh at large. Neighborhoods are grouped by color to indicate their associated markets, as listed below the table. Data from PolicyMap and the 2010 U.S. Census.

| Neighborhood            | Population     | Race/Ethnicity |             |            |            | Median household income (\$) | Bachelor's degree or higher (%) | Residents below poverty line (%) | Unemployed residents (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                         |                | White          | Black       | Asian      | Latino     |                              |                                 |                                  |                          |
| East Liberty            | 5,869          | 25.0           | 67.8        | 3.2        | 2.4        | 25,658                       | 25.9                            | 27.7                             | 11.0                     |
| Highland Park           | 6,395          | 66.5           | 26.3        | 3.4        | 2.9        | 63,856                       | 62.2                            | 10.3                             | 6.3                      |
| Shadyside               | 13,915         | 71.9           | 5.4         | 19.9       | 3.3        | 48,614                       | 81.9                            | 16.1                             | 6.1                      |
| Squirrel Hill           | 26,473         | 78.5           | 3.2         | 14.2       | 3.7        | 70,749                       | 72.9                            | 13.3                             | 5.6                      |
| Point Breeze            | 5,315          | 89.1           | 4.7         | 3.4        | 2.6        | 99,345                       | 76.5                            | 6.2                              | 3.6                      |
| Allegheny Center        | 933            | 40.8           | 48.6        | 6.0        | 2.9        | 21,052                       | 39.5                            | 34.8                             | 13.8                     |
| East Allegheny          | 2,136          | 62.7           | 30.1        | 1.1        | 4.0        | 22,446                       | 26.3                            | 32.3                             | 11.4                     |
| Central Northside       | 6,086          | 49.2           | 46.1        | 8.0        | 2.7        | 46,279                       | 39.9                            | 26.7                             | 11.7                     |
| Perry Hilltop           | 4,145          | 26.5           | 68.7        | 0.5        | 1.1        | 30,070                       | 19.1                            | 29.9                             | 11.9                     |
| Southside Flats         | 6,597          | 93.1           | 2.9         | 2.2        | 2.5        | 45,325                       | 47.2                            | 20.2                             | 3.6                      |
| Southside Slopes        | 4,423          | 88.5           | 7.1         | 0.9        | 2.1        | 37,657                       | 38.8                            | 26.7                             | 4.5                      |
| Arlington*              | 1,869          | 76.5           | 19.9        | 0.2        | 1.4        | 20,938                       | 4.7                             | 30.7                             | 7.2                      |
| Carrick                 | 10,195         | 86.0           | 9.6         | 1.1        | 1.6        | 35,544                       | 13.5                            | 16.4                             | 10.2                     |
| Beechview               | 7,974          | 80.9           | 12.1        | 1.6        | 5.6        | 39,931                       | 22.5                            | 17.9                             | 8.7                      |
| Bloomfield              | 8,442          | 81.6           | 8.8         | 6.4        | 2.6        | 38,658                       | 38.6                            | 20.0                             | 6.3                      |
| Garfield                | 3,675          | 13.6           | 80.1        | 2.6        | 1.4        | 22,111                       | 11.9                            | 30.3                             | 18.5                     |
| Friendship              | 1,785          | 62.8           | 20.3        | 12.7       | 4.3        | 24,738                       | 61.9                            | 21.0                             | 12.4                     |
| <b>Pittsburgh Total</b> | <b>307,532</b> | <b>66.2</b>    | <b>25.8</b> | <b>4.4</b> | <b>2.5</b> | <b>37,161</b>                | <b>34.4</b>                     | <b>22.2</b>                      | <b>8.9</b>               |

\*Arlington is the nearest Hilltop neighborhood to the Southside market and provides a general picture of the overall Hilltop area.



## GLOSSARY

**BFBL: Buy Fresh, Buy Local.** Statewide campaign in Pennsylvania to promote regional agriculture through shared advertising, labeling, and promotion.

**EBT: Electronic Benefits Transfer.** Electronic system that distributes government assistance benefits to recipients using a card with a magnetic strip, similar to a credit or debit card.

**LIHEAP: Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.** Federal block grant program that helps low-income families pay for their home heating and energy costs.

**LSA: Limited supermarket access.** The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) defines an LSA area as “one where the residents must travel significantly farther to reach a supermarket than the ‘comparatively acceptable’ distance traveled by...residents of well-served areas.” Well-served areas have incomes greater than 120 percent of the area’s overall median income.

**PASA: Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture.** Member-based organization that promotes sustainable farming and healthy food production for all residents of Pennsylvania.

**PFPC: Pittsburgh Food Policy Council.** Collaborative advisory organization with members from multiple sectors of Pittsburgh’s food system. PFPC has been in operation since 2011.

**SFMNP: Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program.** Federal grant program that provides states with funding to distribute coupons to low-income seniors to purchase fresh local foods at farmers’ markets and farm stands.

**SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.** Federal entitlement program that provides eligible individuals and families with monthly benefits to purchase food. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net.”

**USDA: United States Department of Agriculture.** Federal department that oversees programs related to food and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and rural development. USDA administers the SNAP, WIC, WIC FMNP, and SFMNP programs.

**WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.** Federal grant program that provides food, health care, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant and postpartum women, as well as infants and children under the age of 5 who are at nutritional risk.

**WIC FMNP: WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program.** Supplemental nutrition program that provides WIC-eligible women, infants, and children with coupons to purchase fresh local foods at farmers’ markets and farm stands.

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<sup>i</sup> EBT replaced paper stamps in all U.S. states and territories in 2004 (U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service).

<sup>ii</sup> Vendors may opt to receive reimbursements after their sales have reached a certain cut-off point (e.g. \$100). Just Harvest makes a note of these preferences and distributes funds accordingly.

<sup>iii</sup> Carrick has the largest number of Bhutanese refugees than any other neighborhood in Pittsburgh (Jones 2012).

<sup>iv</sup> The Garfield Community Farm, which cultivates three acres of urban land in its namesake neighborhood, runs a community supported agriculture (CSA) program to increase access to fresh, local foods among Garfield residents.

<sup>v</sup> Based on data from July 15, 2013 until the end of market season. While this range does not capture the complete season, it encompasses all six markets and is less likely to be skewed in favor of the East Liberty and Northside markets. The data do not take into account shoppers who used their EBT or credit/debit cards on the same day.