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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
June 19, 2018

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**Bridge Card holders can double their purchasing power at farmers markets**

LANSING, Mich. – As summer arrives, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan Farmers Market Association remind families receiving food assistance benefits that they can buy fresh food at farmers market while maximizing their purchasing power.

In addition to accepting Bridge Card payments, 144 Michigan farmers markets and farm stands also participate in the Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks, which allows Bridge Card holders to get double their money for fruits and vegetables – a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$20 every market day – while supporting local growers. For example, a family that spends \$10 in food assistance benefits at a participating farmers market gets \$10 in Double Up Food Bucks to buy locally grown produce.

"It's important to MDHHS to make available healthy options at an affordable price for Michiganders who receive food assistance benefits to feed their families," said Terry Beurer, MDHHS deputy director for Field Operations Administration. "Michigan's farmers markets provide nutritional food and Double Up Food Bucks allows them to buy more food with their benefits."

Currently, 164 Michigan farmers markets accept Bridge Cards that are loaded with food assistance benefits.

To find a farmers market that accepts Bridge Cards, visit the Michigan Farmers Market Association Find a Farmers Market feature online at [www.mifma.org/findafarmersmarket](http://www.mifma.org/findafarmersmarket). The site allows visitors to search for a farmers market by city, county or day of the week. They can search based on the food assistance benefits they will use while shopping – [Bridge Card \(food assistance only\)](#), [Double Up Food Bucks](#), [WIC Project FRESH](#), [Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH](#) or [Hoophouses for Health](#).

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“The positive impact that food assistance programs have on farmers markets is immense. It becomes not just a win for the client, but also for the farmers market and the vendors selling at the market,” said Joe Lesausky, food access manager at the Michigan Farmers Market Association. “Every year, I continue to see new market managers reaching out, and asking how they can start accepting Bridge Cards.”

Temporary food assistance for eligible low-income families and individuals is available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and is referred to as the Food Assistance Program in Michigan. Learn more at [www.michigan.gov/FoodAssistance](http://www.michigan.gov/FoodAssistance).

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