

# Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH in Michigan with Michigan State University Extension

[Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH](#) (SPF), which is part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm bill, is a program aimed at older adults, helping them incorporate more fresh fruit and vegetables in their diet. Senior Project FRESH was created to benefit the restricted income senior and a secondary benefit to the Michigan farmer.

While SPF is in all 83 counties in the State of Michigan, Michigan State University Extension is the lead agency, providing nutrition education and coupon distribution in 17 counties, and we provide nutrition education with other distributing agencies, this varies from year to year.

## Things you should know:

- Coupon distribution is on a first come- first served bases.
- While the coupons are received in your home county, it can be spent at any authorized market that accepts SPF coupons throughout the State of Michigan.
- There are purchasing limitations
- Distribution is administered by a wide variety of agencies in the State of Michigan. See *Find Lead Agency\**
- The program runs from May 1 to October 31 of any given year, coupons expire on October 31 of a given year.
- If you are receiving coupons from a MSU Extension staff person you may need to attend a nutrition class, with more resources. This class can be attended by zoom video, zoom audio or over the telephone.

## Who is eligible:

All three (3) conditions must be met; age, residency and income

- By age – Adults 60 years and older, **or 55 and older and a member of a Michigan federally recognized tribe or community group.**
- By residency – you must live in the county where the coupons are being distributed.
- By income – your income must at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guideline:
  - Visit the 2021 Federal Poverty Guidelines, then see the chart for 185% of poverty to see if you are eligible:
    - <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>
    - For 2021, this is what 185% of poverty is determined to be:

Household/Family Size	Annual Income	Monthly Income
1	\$23,828	\$1,986
2	\$32,227	\$2,686
3	\$40,626	\$3,386
4	\$49,025	\$4,085
5	\$57,424	\$4,785

## Limitations of the coupon:

- The coupon can only be spent at designated farm stands, roadside stands, farm markets and growers. The vendor will usually have a sign indicating they accept Project

FRESH/Senior Project FRESH coupons. The agency distributing the coupons will have an idea where you can spend the coupons.

- There are purchasing limitations:
  - Purchase is restricted to Michigan-grown produce, even if the farmer or vendor sells produce from other regions or states.
  - No processed fruits and vegetables can be purchased with the coupon, like jellies, jams, pickles, canned produce, etc.
  - You cannot receive change after spending the coupon; it is best to supplement the coupon with cash.  
Example: Apples are \$2.50, your choices are:
    - Spend one coupon at \$2, plus 50 cents cash, or
    - Spend two coupons at \$4, and lose the \$1.50.
  - Coupons are like cash, they cannot be replaced if lost or stolen.

### What you get:

- One coupon booklet per growing season
  - Ten (10) coupons of \$2.00 each, a total of \$20.00 for purchasing fresh fruit, vegetables, honey and/or herbs.
  - Coupons are contained in a **holder**, the **holder** must accompany the coupons at all times:
    - The **holder only** is signed by you or a \*proxy before going to the market.
    - At the market you or a proxy will sign each coupon, in front of the farmer when it is spent. The signature on the **holder** is compared to the signature on the coupon.
    - \*A proxy is a trusted individual who you authorize to spend the coupons on your behalf, when you are unable to go to the market yourself. It may be helpful to let the person distributing the coupons know that you have a proxy.
    - You are allowed up to two (2) proxies.

### What do you need to provide to receive the coupons?

For 2021 this information may be collected **by telephone for a web-based application or a paper application, or you may fill out a paper application yourself**, depending on the county and/or agency distributing the coupons.

- Name
- Birth date
- Gender
- Ethnicity and Race
- Address
- Number in household
- Income eligibility, by accepting coupons or signing an application form, you indicate that you have seen, or you have received a copy of the current income guidelines, and your income does not exceed the income for the household limit.
- Do you participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.
- Do you participate in other assistance programs, like Medicaid, home delivered meals, food banks, commodities, pantries, etc.

**To find the lead agency doing education and distribution in your county of residence:**

**Important:** Please note that the last date this list has been updated is in 2019; the agency responsible in 2021 may have changed. Visit:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/osa/2019\\_Senior\\_Project\\_FRESH\\_County\\_Contacts\\_652412\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/osa/2019_Senior_Project_FRESH_County_Contacts_652412_7.pdf)

(Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Adult Services Agency)

**For *Making Health Choices for Seniors* newsletters, visit:**

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/making\\_healthy\\_choices/newsletters-for-seniors](https://www.canr.msu.edu/making_healthy_choices/newsletters-for-seniors)

**Freezing and Blanching:**

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/e3195\\_blanchfreeze\\_wcag\\_2.0.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/e3195_blanchfreeze_wcag_2.0.pdf)

**Food Preservation:**

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/food\\_preservation/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/food_preservation/)

**Michigan produce availability guide:**

Visit: [https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/59248/MI\\_Availability\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/236/59248/MI_Availability_Guide.pdf)