



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF GENERAL SERVICES
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Empire State Plaza Farmers' Market to Accept Food Stamp (EBT) Cards

Market joins Governor Cuomo's "Fresh Connect Farmers' Markets" benefitting farmers and communities statewide.

Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn M. Destito today announced that the Empire State Plaza Farmers' Market will join other markets statewide as part of Governor Cuomo's "New York Fresh Connect Farmers' Markets" (FreshConnect) program. Beginning Wednesday, the market will accept Food Stamp (EBT) cards for the purchase of fresh, locally produced food. The program is designed to assist New York farmers by increasing the sale of locally grown food in communities and to bring fresh food to underserved communities. The market is held on the Empire State Plaza Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. through the fall.

"The FreshConnects program is off to a great start, giving families in all corners of New York access to our state's healthy, fresh farm produce," Governor Andrew M. Cuomo said. "With the Empire State Plaza Farmers' Market joining the FreshConnects efforts, residents of the Capital Region will be better able to put fresh, locally grown produce on their tables, and local farmers stand to benefit from the increased demand for their goods."

"By creating the FreshConnects program Governor Cuomo opened the door for families and senior citizens to have access to all the delicious and nutritious foods produced by the state's farmers," Destito said. "In addition to benefitting people who now have the opportunity to buy at the market, this program also increases sales opportunities for New York's hard-working farmers."

Those with food stamp benefits will be able to use their food stamp (EBT) card at the market to purchase \$1 wooden tokens. The tokens will then function as cash within the market. Card holders will be able to purchase food stamp authorized goods including: fruits and vegetables, meats, poultry, dairy, maple syrup and other maple products, honey, breads, baked goods, jams and jellies, processed foods, and even seeds and plants to grow food. Participating farmers at the market also accept other nutrition incentives such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Fruit & Vegetable Checks and Farmers' Market Nutrition Program coupons.

The FreshConnect program is part of Governor Cuomo's "Farm New York" initiative, established to promote the state's agriculture industry, one of the state's largest industries. Farm New York will focus on ways to support and expand New York farms through farm product sales, branding, marketing, distribution, local food processing innovations, and improving the business climate by reducing the regulatory burden on farmers.

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