



Tips and Best Practices for Operating Farmers Markets and Farm Stands during COVID-19

Farmers Markets and Farm Stands are considered essential businesses under the current City of Philadelphia COVID-19 guidance. We recognize that Farmers Markets and Food Stands are an essential resource and as long as grocery stores are open they must be open as well.

The Health Department's Office of Food Protection issued formal Guidelines for Farmers Markets to adhere to during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as new requirements for a COVID-19 Operating Plan. Please view them here:

<https://phillyfpac.org/meeting-for-farmers-market-operators-and-partners/>

Please also see the Health Department's *Farmers Market Operators Guide* for registration information and general procedures for operating a market in the City:

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20181002153429/Farmers-Markets-in-the-City-of-Philadelphia-Market-Operator-Guide.pdf>

COVID-19 related information is being updated daily on the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's webpage: www.phila.gov/covid-19

Please read below for additional tips and best practices for operating a market from Parks and Recreation and the Health Department's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention to further ensure the health and safety of market operators and staff, customers and residents.

Considerations for the following are included here:

1. Safety protocol
2. Market space design
3. Signage
4. Planning considerations

SAFETY PROTOCOL TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR MARKET OPERATORS, VENDORS AND CUSTOMERS:

1. Market managers are responsible for ensuring that crowds are staggered in adherence to social distancing recommendations.
2. Use mask signage to communicate the requirements for masks, tell your staff and vendors that customers will not be served without masks.
 - There are bilingual opportunities with signage; your staff might not speak a specific language, therefore utilizing multilingual signage can help communicate market rules.
 - If information is on a sign it helps decrease confrontation because staff and vendors can point to it as “the community or market rules.”
 - Signage can include non-discriminatory market rules (e.g. no animals in the vendor areas or market area, no talking without mask (even on cell phones) in the market area)
3. Consider “point and purchase” market rules that allow customers to only point at the item they want and purchase it. With this model, customers are not permitted to touch the food and items available at the market.
 - Some vendors will want to do this, some might not. Therefore, it is important to check in with your vendors every market time to understand what “rules” they are going to exercise that day.
 - If all vendors want a “point and purchase” model, then consider standardizing that rule by putting it on signs throughout the market.
4. All markets should be laid out to have a separate entrance and exit.
 - Think about the flow of your market, consider having customers enter and exit the market in one direction.
5. Sanitary gloves should be available for market staff and vendors who handle money or vouchers. If gloves are not available, assign a relief person to step in for cashiers so they can wash their hands periodically.
6. When possible, provide handwashing stations for customers, staff and vendors, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) for participants to use before and after handling produce.
7. Locate all wash stations, sanitary supplies and restrooms at the entrance.

8. Ensure handwashing stations are provided adjacent to restroom facilities (e.g. porta-potty) and stocked with hand washing soap and paper towels at all times.
 - Ensure your staff and vendors understand the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing
 - Increase cleaning and sanitation practices, focusing on customer high-contact objects and surfaces
 - Schedule handwashing breaks every 30-60 minutes, and encourage hand sanitation periodically
9. Vendor food preparation booths are not permitted.
10. Cooking demonstrations are not permitted
11. When possible, encourage customers to call ahead or place orders online so that staff can select and pack up groceries for customers to pick up or have delivered. Ensure customers who use SNAP benefits have access to the same delivery services and pick up options.
 - For markets that only offer pick up options, consider creating stations for pre-ordered items to be picked up efficiently and reduce physical contact. Pick up hours can be the usual market times.

MARKET SPACE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE MINIMAL OR NO PERSON-TO-PERSON CONTACT:

- Space tables at least six-feet away from neighboring vendors.
- Customers must also be at least six-feet away from each other. Use outdoor materials (e.g. tape, cones) to show what 6-foot social distancing space looks like.
- Consider redesigning the market layout to increase social distancing. For example, use an “L” shaped line or a single row. Avoid parallel rows of customers entering the market.
- Avoid gatherings of customers or tables set up in circle shapes.
 - Determine the capacity of the market based on the six-foot guidelines, and add cones, ropes and signs at the entrance that help orient customers.
 - Limit the number of customers allowed in at any given time. Consider wait time signage to ease waiting customers.

SIGNAGE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Post signs reminding customers of the following procedures:
 - Maintain a six-foot distance between yourself, vendor employees, and other customers.
 - Customers and vendors should regularly use hand sanitizer and wash their hands. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds according to the CDC Guidelines.
 - Customers and vendors must wear masks or protective face coverings based on recommendations provided by the market.
 - Cover your sneeze or cough, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Wash all produce before consumption of food purchased at the market.
 - Please stay home if you're sick. Seek medical advice and testing if you exhibit COVID-19 symptoms including: High fever, dry cough, sore throat, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.
 - Residents and businesses can get COVID-19 updates sent to their phones. Text COVIDPHL to 888-777 to receive free alerts with information and updates from the Health Department. COVID-19 related information is being updated daily on the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's webpage: www.phila.gov/covid-19

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR MARKET:

- Markets might have to prioritize their vendors if there are space constraints after spacing the vendors out at least six-feet apart. An example of prioritizing your vendors could look like this (numbered by priority):
 1. Vendors that provide fresh produce and food producing seeds and starts
 2. Vendors that provide package food products
 3. Vendors that provide wellness products
 4. Vendors that provide non-food products, e.g. flowers, drinking alcohol
- Consider “pay it forward” options. Residents with stable incomes could pay extra so that farmers and vendors can provide free food or discounted food and products to residents that are experiencing food insecurity.
- SNAP and Food Assistance Access: All markets must consider that low-income residents who have food assistance are largely not permitted to

purchase food online. Therefore, markets only providing “pre-order and purchase” options online further creates discriminatory barriers for residents. Do what you can to address this barrier and consider reaching out to other markets to learn from them in how they are making their markets accessible to all residents.

- If your organization provides any food assistance vouchers (e.g. Food Bucks, Farmers Market Nutrition Program), please consider not requiring participation in an activity to receive these benefits.
 - Consider working with organizations such as the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging or the Food Trust to ensure market customers have access to and know how to get access to these vouchers.
 - Consider working with local organizations and government offices (WIC office, Health Department) to distribute vouchers at your market.
- Consider delivering food or door to door options to residents that are immobile, or residents that have to travel on public transit to get their groceries.