
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Project FRESH gets free Michigan grown fruits and vegetables to WIC recipients

GRAND RAPIDS - The Kent County Health Department is offering clients of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) the opportunity to get \$20 worth of free food from area farmers markets beginning June 1st.

In addition, participants receive a brief class about the program, nutritional tips, and recipes. Those who qualify for the program will also get an insulated grocery tote perfect for bringing fresh fruits and vegetables home from area farmers markets and participating roadside stands.

Applicants must make an appointment at the Kent County Health Department by calling (616) 632-7200 to sign up for one of the classes. Classes will be held at various locations in both English and Spanish until late July.

During the class the funds will be electronically deposited on clients Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Several Kent County Farmers Markets and Roadside stands are equipped to transact sales using the EBT or Bridge cards. Anyone who is eligible and attends the class will receive a list of those locations.

“The benefits of this program are two fold,” said Christopher Bendekgey, Director of the Community Clinical Services Division at the department. “We are able to get fresh fruits and vegetables into the hands of our clients, free of charge to them, and we’re able to keep the funding for the program in the local economy by supporting the farmers and growers of Kent County.” \$22,500 dollars was made available for the program from the United States Agriculture Department.

As the continuation of a pilot program launched in 2012, Kent County remains the only county in the nation in which farmers and growers have been equipped, trained and authorized to accept EBT funds for this program.

While the program runs from June 1, 2015 until October 31st Project FRESH is a once a year benefit, meaning each recipient will only receive the \$20 benefit one time this season.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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