

**Title of Project:** Burke County WIC/Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Enhancement Project

**Agency Name:** Burke County Health Department WIC Program

**State:** North Carolina

**Key Word Descriptors:** Collaboration, Special Farmers' Market Days, media coverage, improved participation

**Description of Project:**

Burke County initiated the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in 1998 as part of North Carolina's statewide expansion of the WIC/FMNP. While fairly successful in its first year, the Burke County WIC Program identified several areas for improvement. Two issues which impacted FMNP participation in its first year of operation were 1) accessibility of the local farmers' market, and 2) the hours of operation of the local farmers' market.

To address these, the WIC Program collaborated with the local Cooperative Extension Service and Farmers' Market Association. A very successful strategy was developed to address the issues of the location and hours of the local farmers' market. Special Farmers' Market Days were held at the local Human Resources Building where both the WIC office and Cooperative Extension Service office are located. These "Special Days" were scheduled on the third Thursday of the month from June through September. Local farmers came on each of the scheduled days and set up their trucks in the parking lot from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

To inform clients about the Special Farmers' Market Days, the WIC Program distributed flyers and posted the schedule on their FMNP bulletin board. The "Special Days" became popular with clients who, in increasing numbers, took advantage of these opportunities to redeem their FMNP vouchers. The "Special Days" also caught the attention of the media-several articles appeared in the local news paper highlighting the Farmers' Market and its collaboration with the WIC Program.

**Results of Project:**

As a result of this collaborative effort, FMNP participation has increased. The FMNP voucher redemption rate increased from 29% in 1998 to 36% in 2000. In addition, the county's Board of the Farmers Market is planning to open another farmers' market in the Eastern part of the county near a satellite WIC clinic. Burke County has worked hard to achieve the FMNP goals of providing WIC Program participants with the opportunity to obtain fresh produce, as well as help expand the customer base of the local farmers' market for improved small farmer sustainability.

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