



Manitowoc County Farm Markets Ranked High in Wisconsin for FoodShare Sales!

Challenge

Farm markets are a great source of fresh fruits and vegetables for the nearly 8,000 low-income residents in Manitowoc County. Buying directly from farmers supports both the farmers and the local economy. However, some people don't use their FoodShare benefits at farm markets because of transportation issues, limited hours, or not knowing how to use FoodShare at the market.

Approach

In Wisconsin, SNAP is called FoodShare. To accept FoodShare, a farm market needs to have an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) machine. By 2016, only Wilfert Farms and the Downtown Manitowoc Farm Market accepted EBT. The Downtown market had funding for a FoodShare incentive program but only had five regular FoodShare customers and just over \$100 in sales.

FoodWise partnered with the Downtown Manitowoc Farm Market to improve access. Together, we increased

outreach to low-income residents, offered guided market tours, improved signs, educated vendors, shared seasonal recipes, and staffed the information table with an intern to help customers use their benefits and understand how FoodShare works at both Wilfert Farms and the Downtown Manitowoc Farm Market.

In 2021, the number of people using FoodShare at the Downtown Manitowoc Farm Market grew from 19 to 106, and sales increased from \$528 to \$3,048. By 2024, the market had 129 FoodShare users and \$5,503 in sales, showing steady growth over time.

Results

In the 2024 market season, Manitowoc County ranked 6th in Wisconsin for total FoodShare dollars spent at farmers markets and 3rd for the percentage of total market sales made with FoodShare. In 2025, Sullivan Family Farm also began accepting EBT, so we expect even more growth.

This success reflects the dedicated work of many partners to improve access to healthy, local food for low-income families in Manitowoc County.



Our work at the Downtown Manitowoc Farmers Market led to a major increase. From just 5 FoodShare users and a little over \$100 in sales to 129 users and \$5,503 in sales.



Our partnership with FoodWise has played a key role in increasing both SNAP sales and participation at the market. Their ongoing support, promotion, and collaboration enable us to reach and serve more families each season. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, our Double Bucks program further extends the value of these families' food dollars, making fresh, local food even more accessible.

ADAM TEGEN, DOWNTOWN MANITOWOC FARMERS MARKET

