



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

CITY OF JERSEY CITY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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Contact: **Jennifer Morrill**
Press Secretary
Ph: 201-376-0699
Email: jenniferm@jcnj.org

Jersey City Receives Grant from Wholesome Wave & Joins Nationwide Effort to Increase the Purchase of Fresh Produce Among Low-Income Consumers Participating in SNAP

The Wholesome Wave grant, through the USDA’s Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI), allows Jersey City to provide double bucks incentives to SNAP recipients at point of purchase for fresh fruits & vegetables

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services** are proud to announce that Jersey City has been awarded nearly \$25,000 as part of a nationwide initiative from the **Wholesome Wave Foundation** and the **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** to double the dollars SNAP recipients can spend on the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at three participating farmers’ markets in Jersey City.

The funding, which was announced as part of a \$31.5 million grant by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack through the federal Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI), will be used to support increased access to fruits and vegetables for the food insecure of Jersey City, while also benefitting small and mid-sized farmers in the region.

“Our administration continues to think creatively about how we can expand access to healthy living for all of our residents and this grant is another great example,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We are doubling the funds for residents so they can make healthy food choices for their families and shop at farmers’ markets right in their own neighborhood.”

With the award from Wholesome Wave, the **Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services** will implement incentive programs at three of the city’s 10 farmers’ markets – the Arlington Park, Lincoln Park and Riverview Park farmers’ markets, who all volunteered to participate. **JC Double Bucks, which will launch on Sept. 5th, 2015, will be provided to SNAP Consumers in the form of tokens. For every \$2 spent, SNAP consumers will receive a \$2 match to spend, up to \$10.** FINI funds will also support multi-cultural promotional materials aimed at ensuring that incentive information reaches Jersey City residents citywide.

Expanding access to healthy food options is another example of the Fulop administration’s commitment to a culture of health. Last August, Mayor Fulop announced tours of grocery stores for 2,000 Jersey City WIC clients and senior citizens who learned how to make smart food choices at the supermarket. The tour concluded with a \$10 gift certificates for all participants to spend on healthy groceries. The Fulop administration has also doubled the farmers’ markets from five to 10 with markets in each ward of the city.

(more)

The Jersey City Department of Health And Human Services is one of 31 community-based organizations around the country that will join Wholesome Wave in this large-scale FINI Project. Wholesome Wave’s network is a robust community of innovation and learning, linking incentive programs through uniform data collection and evaluation to support the expansion and adoption of incentives through policy. Wholesome Wave’s project is one of many that received support as part of the total \$31.5 million granted by USDA in this cycle.

“We are thrilled to be working with such a diverse and competent group of incentive operators across the nation,” said **Wholesome Wave founder and CEO, Michel Nischan**. “This network brings together organizations ranging from a flourishing farmers’ market group to a large scale nonprofit, capitalizing on the grassroots expertise of community leaders, while also building regional and national impact that allows us to enact the kind of large-scale policy change we see in legislation like FINI.”

The Jersey City Department of Health And Human Services has been committed to **meeting the health and social needs of Jersey City residents**. The grant issued will increase affordable access to fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP/Family First consumers in Jersey City, NJ, while also supporting local agriculture.

The Fulop administration is committed to reducing the incidences of chronic disease and obesity in Jersey City through proactive efforts and focused on increasing access to healthy foods throughout Jersey City, especially for low-income residents. This funding from Wholesome Wave for the JC Double Bucks incentive program will make fruits and vegetables available at farmers’ markets affordable to a population who could most benefit while creating additional income for participating farmers.

“We believe markets should be inclusive and accessible to all residents, and the Double Bucks program goes a long way in helping the WSCA Farmers Market at Lincoln Park attain our goal of providing fresh, whole, local food to ALL residents of Jersey City,” said **Mira Prinz-Arey a coordinator of the Lincoln Park Farmers’ Market**. “This program helps dispel the notion that farmers’ markets are an exclusive amenity that only some residents can enjoy, and we are pleased to partner with the City of Jersey City on this program.”

About the Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services:

The **Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services** is a multi-purpose public agency employing competent individuals, committed to meeting the health and social needs of the residents of Jersey City. The Department of Health and Human Services is dedicated to providing health services, social support systems and celebrating the cultural diversity of residents through many of its programs. The staff serves as public advocates for adults, children and families.

About Wholesome Wave:

Wholesome Wave is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that strives to create a vibrant, just and sustainable food system. By making fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables affordable and available, WW enables underserved consumers to make healthier food choices. Through innovative initiatives, WW is improving health outcomes among low-income families, generating additional revenue for small and mid-sized farm businesses and bolstering local and regional economies. WW initiatives are implemented nationwide in collaboration with community-based partners at farmers markets, community health centers, hospital systems, food hubs, and retail outlets. Each year, our initiatives reach more than 50,000 underserved consumers and their families, as well as thousands of farmers. To learn more about Wholesome Wave visit www.wholesomewave.org or call [203-226-1112](tel:203-226-1112).

To learn more about Jersey City’s double bucks incentive program at Farmers’ Markets, call the Jersey City Department of Health & Human services at (201) 547-6800.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-376-0699 or jenniferm@jcnj.org./././