

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WIC Vouchers Available to Purchase Fresh Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs at St. Charles County Farmers Markets**

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – A new program introduced by Missouri’s Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) enables participants to obtain vouchers exchangeable for fresh produce at the Lake St. Louis Farmers’ and Artists’ Market, the New Melle Country Market, the Farmers’ and Artists’ Market of O’Fallon and other select locations around the state from June 1 through Oct. 31.

“Taking advantage of the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program allows our families the opportunity to obtain flavorful and nutritious produce that was picked straight from the tree, vine or soil just days ago,” says St. Charles County WIC Program Coordinator Megan Hickey. “Since these products are at their peak when picked by local farmers, they’ll be high in many important nutrients that improve health and development for mothers and children, and they’ll typically be available at a lower cost than fruits or vegetables shipped to our community from around the nation and the globe.”

The Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program offers up to four \$5 benefit vouchers (\$20 per year) for every WIC participant (including women and children ages 4 months - 5 years). This means a mother and her two children (ages 2 and 4) could receive up to \$60 in produce through the program. Eligible foods include fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables and fresh cut herbs.

**How to Participate**

To participate in the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, a family must be enrolled in the WIC program. St. Charles County’s WIC services are open to pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and infants and children up to age 5 that meet program eligibility. St. Charles County’s WIC office is located at 1650 Boone’s Lick Road in St. Charles. For information on WIC eligibility or registration, please visit [sccmo.org/WIC](http://sccmo.org/WIC) or call 636-949-7402.

**Why Choose Fruits and Vegetables?**

Because of their many benefits, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends Americans fill at least half their plates with fruits and vegetables and offers [a guide for peak times for selecting produce](#). Studies show that a diet high in fresh produce is associated with a decreased risk for heart diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure and some cancers. In addition to adding flavor, fruits and vegetables are excellent sources for important nutrients like potassium, vitamins A and C, folate, and fiber. Here is a sampling of the benefits gained from a diet that includes colorful produce:

- Red fruits and vegetables (such as watermelon, apples, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, and beets) – promote heart health, improve memory, and reduce certain cancer risks
- Orange fruits and vegetables (such as cantaloupe, mangos, carrots, and sweet potatoes) – improve eyesight, lower cholesterol, and reduce blood pressure
- Blue and purple fruits and vegetables (such as blueberries, prunes, and eggplant) – boost the immune system, reduce cancer risks, and aid in digestion
- Green fruits and vegetables (such as melons, grapes, avocado, spinach, broccoli, and peas) – lower blood pressure, reduce cancer risks, strengthen bones, and aid vision

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**Media Contact:** Doug Bolnick, Department of Public Health Public Information Officer, 636-949-7408



## NEWS RELEASE

### **About St. Charles County WIC**

*Funded and administered at the federal level through the USDA and managed at the state level by the Missouri DHSS, Bureau of Nutrition Services and WIC, [the St. Charles County WIC program](#) is operated through the Department of Public Health. In accordance with Federal law and USDA policy, the Department of Public Health is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC, 20250-9410 or call 800-632-9992 (voice) or 800-877-8339 (TTY) or 800-845-6136 (Spanish). This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*