



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Calling All Farmers!

AAA7 Recruiting Farmers to Participate in Expanded Senior Farmers Market Program

During the Summer of 2019, the Ohio Department of Aging announced that part of the State budget for 2020-2021 would include funding to support an increase in access to healthy, locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables for older Ohioans. Historically, this type of access has been offered through the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which provides eligible older adults with \$50 in coupons each growing season to use at participating farmers' markets and roadside stands to purchase produce.

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a federally funded program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services Agency and in Ohio, by the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA). ODA provides additional state funds to support SFMNP operation within Ohio.

Prior to the expansion of funding in Ohio, the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was available in 45 of Ohio's 88 counties. In the Area Agency on Aging District 7's (AAA7) ten-county district, Ross County was the lone county that was designated to participate in the program. Now, thanks to the increased funding in the State budget, the AAA7 is able to expand the SFMNP to the other counties in the district including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Scioto and Vinton.

As part of the expansion process, the AAA7 is seeking farmers to participate in the SFMNP from the nine counties that have been added to the project (Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Scioto and Vinton). To become a participating farmer, the following criteria must be met:

- Must be an individual who grows and sells authorized, local produce, herbs and/or honey at farmers' markets or road stands in the nine counties mentioned beforehand.
- Participate in a training for new farmers participating in the SFMNP.
- Follow and comply with guidelines and responsibilities as set forth by the Ohio SFMNP.

- Provide information to the appropriate oversight agencies about the farmers' market/roadside stand including name, location, hours of operation and other operational information.
- Meet set USDA regulations and meet any training requirements as determined.

"We at Area Agency on Aging District 7 are committed to rolling out this exceptional program throughout our region," stated Nina R. Keller, Executive Director of the AAA7. "For many years, we have requested expansion money so eligible individuals in all of our ten county region would have the opportunity to improve their nutrition through increasing their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. This is a win for the individual senior and for the farmer who can receive reimbursement for their locally grown produce. We encourage individuals who might be eligible and farmers who want to participate to contact us today!"

Any farmers who are interested can print an application online by visiting the AAA7's website at www.aaa7.org. Farmers can also call the Agency toll-free at 1-800-343-8112 with any questions or e-mail FarmersMarket@aaa7.org.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis in ten counties in Southern Ohio including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Agency staff member who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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