



Veggie Van Training Center Request for Partners

Updated 11/5/2021

INTRODUCTION

The Veggie Van Training Center based within the Community Health Interventions Lab at the University at Buffalo is engaged in multiple research studies related to the development, training, and sustainability of mobile markets. We are working in partnership with many organizations across the country to carry out this research. We are expanding current studies and developing new ones and are interested in bringing on new partners for this work. We are seeking partners that *currently run a mobile market or are in the process of planning a mobile produce market program*. For the purposes of our research, we define mobile markets as farmers markets on wheels that travel to underserved communities to sell fresh produce (and other foods) at reduced cost. We are also open to working with partners who provide free food and are interested in transitioning to a paid model.

Your application will be considered for three current partnership opportunities:

- a. **Veggie Van Research Study:** We are looking for 2-3 partner organizations to start a mobile market program in 1-2 new communities (i.e., new mobile market stops/locations). Partners will work with the communities to engage in planning for the market and help collect data to evaluate the market.
- b. **Senior Mobile Market Loyalty Program (SMMLP):** We are looking for 4-6 partner organizations to implement a fruit and vegetable incentive program for senior mobile market customers and help evaluate the impact of the program on food insecurity.
- c. **Mobile Market Training:** We are looking for 4-6 partners that are interested in running a mobile market following the Veggie Van model to help us test different delivery methods for providing training and technical assistance.

More details about each of these opportunities can be found below and on our website: www.myveggievan.org under Opportunities: <https://www.myveggievan.org/opportunities.html>

Please note: All RFP applicants will be considered for all three opportunities.

WHY THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT

These programs will allow partner organizations to bring more healthy food to people in underserved communities across the country and provide important information on the key components of running a successful mobile market in different settings. While many people believe that increasing access to healthy food through mobile markets helps people eat better, there is still limited evidence on the best ways to do that. This work will also help us design better programming for supporting and training mobile market partner organizations. What we learn will help future programs be more successful in other communities facing food insecurity

QUESTIONS?

Contact us via email at ContactUs@myVeggieVan.org

Visit our Request for Partners page on our website:

<https://www.myveggievan.org/opportunities.html>

IMPORTANT DATES

RFP Released: November 5, 2021

Intent to Apply (online form) Due: Rolling, Priority Deadline of November 17th

Invitations for Full Application: Rolling starting November 22, 2021

Full Application Due: Three weeks after invitation (December 13th)

Partners Organizations Selected: Rolling Starting January 12, 2022

Contracts Completed & Community Sites Identified (Veggie Van Study & SMMLP Only): February 2022

Partner training, technical assistance and program evaluation begins (All Partners): March 2022

Veggie Van Study and SMMLP partners launch programs: May 2022

HOW TO APPLY

First, please complete the Intent to Apply form here: <https://forms.office.com/r/zg7N0kZvQP>

Priority Deadline of November 17th

Organizations invited to complete a full application for one or more of the opportunities will be notified starting November 22, 2021.

PARTNER ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

Any private, public, religious or government entity is invited to apply. Individuals are not eligible. We encourage you to apply if your organization meets criteria for at least one of the opportunities described below:

- **Veggie Van Research Study:** Applicant organizations must serve a predominantly urban¹ population and primarily operate in one of the following states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Delaware, District of Columbia
- **Senior Mobile Market Loyalty Program:** Applicant organizations must currently be operating a mobile market and use Farmers Register as their point-of-sale system or be willing to switch to Farmers' Register. They must also serve on average 25 or more lower-income seniors (age 50+) per week.
- **Mobile Market Training:** Any organization planning to start a mobile market in the next 6-12 months or has been operating less than 2 years. We will also consider partner organizations that have been operating a mobile market longer than 2 years, but that are interested in transitioning to the Veggie Van model.

All partners must agree to:

- Meet/talk regularly with the study team to coordinate timelines and ensure program goals are met.
- Work with the community sites and Veggie Van team on community engagement efforts.
- Work with the study team to collect evaluation measures as needed for each program funder.
- Share de-identified customer-level mobile market sales data. To facilitate sales data sharing, partners are encouraged to use Farmers' Register Mobile Market Point-of-Sale Software.
- Provide updates and feedback about the mobile market program to the study team (e.g., interviews with staff) for up to 2 years.

Additional specific details for each program can be found on the program website:

WHAT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS WILL RECEIVE

Our team includes experts with many years of experience in mobile market operation and food aggregation. In addition, members of our team specialize in food systems planning, engaging lower-income communities, program implementation and partnerships, business plan development and sustainability, changing diet and health behaviors, food benefit and incentive programs, and nutrition and cooking education. We have developed a toolkit which includes resources in all these areas. This toolkit also includes resources accumulated from working with successful mobile markets across the country.

¹ The Veggie Van model has not been tested extensively in rural areas. As we recognize that urban means different things in different locations, we encourage any organization that might qualify to fill out the intent to apply form so that we can determine if your area would be a good match.

All selected partner organizations will receive:

- Access to the online Veggie Van toolkit which includes:
 - o Veggie Van Operations Manuals
 - o Marketing and community engagement materials
 - o Financial planning resources
 - o “Point-of-sale” nutrition curriculum including a database of recipes by produce item and season, sample newsletters and activity ideas
- Training on the toolkit and ongoing technical assistance throughout the study period related to the areas of expertise discussed above
 - o Access to monthly webinars and networking sessions
 - o Access to a coach to help with mobile market planning
 - o Free registration for the Mobile Market Summit during the partnership period
 - o Invitations to special pre-summit training days for partner organizations
- Assistance with community engagement and developing a community advisory board
- License for Farmers Register Mobile Market point-of-sale software (\$800+ value) and an iPad to run the software (if not already using)
- Access to data and reporting related to mobile market evaluation outcomes.
- Assistance with developing a sustainability plan and identifying program funding sources

Veggie Van Study Partners Only will receive:

- Funding up to \$25,000 to offset the cost of running a mobile market according to the Veggie Van Model and participating in ongoing evaluation efforts.
 - o This funding is not intended to be the only funding available for running a mobile market program. In addition to market revenues.
 - o Invited applicants are asked to identify other in-kind or financial resources which could support market operation.
 - o Further details on how this funding will be distributed and limitations on usage are described on the Veggie Van Study website.
- The option to develop questions which they would like to have the study team answer within the context of the research study.

SMMLP Partners Only will receive:

- Reimbursement for fruit and vegetable incentives distributed to seniors
- \$500 to offset the costs of administering the incentive program and collecting data