

NEIGHBORHOOD ROOTS

Where community and food are cultivated

February 25, 2024

MN Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee
2116 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Putnam and Members of the MN Senate Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee,

Neighborhood Roots strongly supports the updated language in SF3404, item G. Without this language, grant recipients would assume personnel costs, which are the most expensive part of administering food assistance programs.

Neighborhood Roots is a Minneapolis based non-profit operating 3 neighborhood farmer's markets: Fulton, Kingfield, and Nokomis Farmers Markets. We are passionately committed to serving our community of customers, farmers, and artisans by connecting buyers with vendors of local and affordable food and goods. Food assistance programs like SNAP and SFMNP are central to our work, and we spend many hours administering and marketing them.

These programs are powerful tools for addressing food insecurity while supporting our local foodshed. Therefore, it's our hope that as many markets as possible can implement them, and we believe this state-funded grant opportunity is an excellent step in the right direction. However, supporting infrastructure for food assistance programs is not enough. Certainly, there are infrastructure costs, but the lion's share of expense comes from staff hours spent managing these programs.

The updated language addresses a clear need for investment into farmer's markets and their hardworking staff and volunteers. More markets with well-managed SNAP and SFMNP systems means more purchasing power for low income Minnesotans and more dollars to local farmers and makers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erica Lanning, Market Manager and Mara Wack, Development Manager
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