



Fresh Bucks 2021 Retailer Selection Process

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are answers to questions raised during information sessions and through individual inquiries. As more questions come up that are relevant to all applicants, the Fresh Bucks team will update this document. You can skip to small and large retailer-specific questions using the following links.

[Small Food Retailer Questions](#) | [Supermarket/Grocery Store Questions](#)

General Questions

Q: Will customers only be using the e-benefit, or are vouchers still available?

A: We plan to have retailers selected in 2021 only process the e-benefit. Paper vouchers will be phased out when we transition to an e-benefit that allows customers to purchase produce using a benefits card or mobile app.

Q: Which store staff will the Fresh Bucks team provide training for? Will training be provided for managers or also cashiers and other front-line staff?

A: Training will be adjusted based on the needs of the store. The City plans to provide an initial onboarding training for any staff the store leadership thinks should attend. We will also provide train-the-trainer and reference materials for stores to orient front-line staff. Selected retailers will be expected to have a plan in place to train new staff on an ongoing basis so turnover does not impact Fresh Bucks customers. The City will provide updated training materials for stores to share with relevant staff members outlining program updates on an as-needed basis.

Q: Will the training be virtual or in-person?

A: We will work with selected retailers to provide the format of training that makes most sense for their needs.

Small Food Retailers

Eligibility Questions

Q: Are farms that offer a CSA eligible to apply as a small food retailer?

A: If a farm stand or other retail location includes a CSA along with other purchasing options, Fresh Bucks customers can use their benefits for the CSA. If the CSA is all that is offered by the retailer, then they are not eligible to become a Fresh Bucks retailer through this process. However, they may be a good fit for Fresh Bucks to Go. If you're interested in learning more



about that program, please email us at FreshBucksRetail@seattle.gov and we'll provide more information.

Q: If my farm is outside of the city but I sell produce at farm stands in the City, am I eligible to apply?

A: Yes, you can submit the Seattle stand(s) where you distribute this produce for consideration under the [small food retailer](#) selection process.

Q: Why are small food retailers required to have 10 varieties of produce available?

A: We've included this requirement for a couple of reasons: 1) Stores will get the most out of being Fresh Bucks retail partners if they provide a wider selection of produce. Customers will be able to use more of their benefit in the store, which will also make the technology integration required to use Fresh Bucks more worthwhile for the grocers. 2) The Fresh Bucks program does not currently have the capacity and resources required to help stores start, scale up and maintain their fresh produce selection. This will not be the only time the Fresh Bucks team is seeking new retail partners, so stores who may not have a wide variety of produce now could qualify for a future recruitment process.

Technical Assistance

Q: What technical and other assistance is available for small food retailers?

A: OSE staff will provide technical assistance (TA) to selected grocers and will provide support to deliver this TA in-language as needed. We will provide translated materials with more details about how the program works and partner expectations. Each grocer will also have access to up to \$3,500 per year over two years in capacity funds to cover startup costs needed to implement Fresh Bucks.

[Supermarkets & Grocery Stores](#)

Eligibility Question

Q: I am a grocery store chain with locations both inside and outside the Seattle city limits. Can customers use Fresh Bucks at store locations outside of Seattle?

A: The Fresh Bucks program is for income-eligible Seattle residents so retailers must have a Seattle business license to be eligible. However, if retailers with a Seattle business license also have store locations outside of the City, customers will be able to use their benefit at those stores if the retailer is integrating the e-benefit technology into their point of sale system (POS system). If a retailer is choosing to use the mobile-based app that is processed separately from the POS on a tablet or mobile device, they must prioritize making this available at locations in Seattle city limits. If the retailer has capacity to add tablets and mobile devices at the locations outside of the city in addition to the Seattle stores, that is permissible.

For more information about the different e-benefit transaction options, see page 5 of the supermarket/grocery store guidelines [available here](#). Store locations outside of Seattle will not be considered as a part of the application scoring.



Produce Selection Questions

Q: How will the produce list be used?

A: The goal of the produce list is to understand the range of produce available in your Seattle locations on an average day. It is a point-in-time snapshot to be used during the selection process to help the review panel understand the variety available in your store. Selected stores will work with the e-benefit vendor to delineate eligible SKUs through a separate process.

Q: The number and variety of produce in our stores changes based on the season. From what timeframe should we pull the produce list?

A: The produce list should be meant to be a snapshot of the produce available in your stores now. Please provide produce available in your stores in the month of April. We have updated the application materials to clarify this timeframe. We recognize the variety of produce available changes throughout the year, so we also added a space for you to tell us about your produce variety in peak seasons.

Q: For retailers that have multiple store locations, how should we provide information about produce regularly offered and local sourcing of produce? Are you looking for a general overview or do you want us to pinpoint certain stores?

A: If you have more than one store location in Seattle, please respond to these questions using information from up to two store locations that have the highest percentage of SNAP sales. We have updated the application materials and guidelines ([available here](#)) to provide more clarity on these questions, particularly pages 4-6 of the application materials.

Q: When stores are selected, how is the list of eligible produce items kept up with the e-benefit vendor?

A: The City is in conversations with Solutran to determine this process and plans to involve selected retailers in determining a process for updating eligible produce items on an ongoing basis.

Selection Criteria Questions

Q: One of the selection criteria is about a store's proximity to Race and Social Equity Index priority neighborhoods. How will the scoring work on this criterion for a retailer that only has one store location versus a retailer with multiple?

A: Retailers will receive a score for proximity to Race and Social Equity Index priority areas. Retailers will receive full points if all their stores are located in or near one of those areas. This means a retailer that only has one store location will receive full points if that store is in or near the priority areas, and a retailer that has five store locations all in or near priority areas would also receive full points.

Q: If multiple retailers in the same neighborhood apply, how will this impact the selection process?

A: To best serve a geographically and culturally diverse Fresh Bucks customer base, the review process will include an assessment of gaps that need to be filled across the full Fresh Bucks retail network. When reviewing large and small retailer applications/interest forms, we will consider how location and populations served fill those gaps. Our goal is to give Fresh Bucks customers as many fresh produce access points and culturally relevant options as possible.



Q: The City has said it is selecting up to 3 supermarkets and grocery stores. Does a store chain count as one store, or do you count each individual store within a chain?

A: A grocery store chain counts as one. If the Fresh Bucks team selects a retailer with 10 store locations in Seattle city limits, for example, that would count as one. To clarify, we will update the selection language to say the Fresh Bucks team will select up to three **companies** rather than stores.

Q: Is the annual revenue calculated based on Seattle revenues only?

A: Yes. We will assess annual revenue based on business and occupation tax filings to the City of Seattle Finance and Administrative Services department. Please see page 5 of the application materials [available here](#) for the full statement about annual revenues.

Non-Disclosure Question

Q: Are there non-disclosure options for information requested in the application and POS system configuration for stores that are selected?

A: All materials received or created by the City of Seattle are considered public records and therefore subject to the state's Public Records Act (reference RCW Chapter 42.56, the Public Records Act). If you believe any statements or items you submit to the City as part of this application are exempt from disclosure, you can fill out the form on page 11 of the updated application materials ([available here](#)). If you do not have any concerns about the information provided in the application, you do not need to fill out the form. An overview of exempt information is available on the Office the Attorney General's [website](#) and here is the [2020 list](#) of exemptions.