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Mayor Fulop Announces Department of Health & Human Services is Now Accepting Applications for Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Vouchers as Access to Fresh Produce is Expanded Citywide

Farmers' Markets Double Under Mayor Fulop and are Now Located in Every Ward of Jersey City; Farmers Market Vouchers Will Assist Low-income Seniors Maintain Healthy Eating Habits on a Budget

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop and the Department of Health and Human Services announced today that applications for vouchers for the **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)** for the 2015 season are now available as the Fulop Administration continues to expand access to fresh produce citywide. Under the Fulop Administration, **farmers' markets have doubled from five to 10 and are now located in every ward of the city.**

“We have doubled the number of farmers' markets with locations in every ward of our city for the first time in Jersey City's history,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We know how important access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables is for everyone, but especially our seniors on fixed incomes. This is just one of the many ways we are supporting our senior citizens as we continue to make healthy living a priority.”

The SFMNP program, which is funded annually through the federal Farm Bill, provides low-income seniors with vouchers that can be spent on fresh fruits and vegetables at our local farmers' markets. This year, Jersey City has been allocated enough vouchers to serve at least 2,500 seniors.

“Fresh equals healthy,” said **Amanda Mullane, Chief Dietician at the Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas Health**. “Eating a diet rich in nutrients found in fresh fruits and vegetables helps you control your weight and will help prevent conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. As a Jersey City resident and dietician, I am thrilled about the abundant availability of farmers' markets and myself and the other dieticians will be sure to share this expanded schedule with the seniors citizens we consult at the Jersey City Medical Center.”

Expanding Senior's access to healthy food options is another example of the Fulop administration's commitment to a culture of health. Last August, Mayor Fulop announced tours of grocery stores for 2,000 Jersey City seniors and WIC clients who learned how to make smart food choices at the supermarket. The tour concluded with a \$10 voucher for all participants to spend on healthy groceries.

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The expansion of farmers markets into each ward of the city is just one highlight of expanded programming for seniors under the Fulop Administration. Earlier this year, the administration announced the addition of two new buses to the senior affairs fleet, providing more ways for seniors to participate in city-sponsored shopping trips, movie outings, and other recreational activities. The City also launched a new program, *Conversation of a Lifetime*, that offers guided and supportive programs aimed at helping seniors initiate discussions about advanced care and medical decision making with their loved ones as the years advance.

Under Mayor Fulop, recreational programming for seniors has also expanded offerings with the launch of Senior Power Walk at Hudson Mall, senior power fitness at NJCU, and the doubling of senior shopping trips. Last year, the City hosted the first Senior Games, in which more than 100 Jersey City seniors participated in games like line dancing, basketball, billiards, and other activities.

“I am grateful to the city for providing me these vouchers to help me purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and am so pleased there are additional farmers’ markets in my neighborhood to make my shopping easier,” said **Mary Harper of the Maureen Collier Senior Center**. “The expanded programming and additional services for senior citizens is a great benefit as we continue to enjoy our golden years.”

This year’s income guidelines for senior farmers’ market vouchers for qualifying seniors are \$21,775 maximum for individuals and \$29,471 maximum for married couples. In 2015, couples may apply using a single application, instead of having to fill out 2 separate applications. Only Jersey City residents age 60 or older are eligible to apply. (Please bring valid ID with Jersey City address.)

Applications will be processed in the order in which they were received by the Department of HHS. The SFMNP vouchers for approved applicants are ready for distribution now. The vouchers will remain valid from July through November 30th of 2015.

This year, applications for vouchers can be obtained from the Division of Senior Citizen Affairs, at 199 Summit Avenue, Suite C2, Jersey City, NJ 07304. Residents may call (201) 547-5750, email eclestonj@jcnj.org, or visit the Senior Citizen Affairs office to obtain an application and pickup a voucher in person.

If you have any questions about SFMNP, or any senior-related activities, please contact Carol Pasquale in the Division of Senior Citizen Affairs at (201) 547-5750.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.////