

Orange Farmers Market, Inc. Fact Sheet

Background

The Orange Farmers Market, Inc. (OFM or Market) is a 501c3 (non-profit) organization that is registered with the State of Massachusetts. OFM has been in existence for over 25 years. During that time the Market has evolved and grown while serving the needs of the community and local farmers.

Dates and Hours

The Market is located at the Orange Armory, 135 East Main Street in Orange, MA. The Market is open from mid-May to mid-October each year. For 2022 Market dates are May 12th to October 20th. Hours are 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Rain or Shine!

Vendors and Products

Approximately 12 vendors can be found at the Market each week. For 2022 we expect to be adding several new vendors. A wide range of Farm products and craft items are available each week at the Market, with increasing variety of produce available as the season progresses. Vegetables, honey, eggs, maple syrup, beef, veggie and flower starts, perennials, smoothies, bouquets, crafts, milk and ice cream are just some of the locally grown and produced products available to the public each week.

The OFM accepts multiple forms of payment for products. Cash is always good! Many vendors will accept credit and debit cards. SNAP, HIP and Farmers Market Coupons are also accepted. Visit our volunteer at the Rachel's Everlastings tent for further assistance with SNAP and HIP purchases.

Music and Community Activities

The Entertainment Tent and Community/Kids Tent make up this part of the Market. The Community Tent is currently sidelined due to lack of volunteers and additional funds to operate it, with the lack of volunteers the more important factor.

Entertainment primarily in the form of music, is a relatively new addition to the Market over the past few years. Local musicians perform for the public weekly, as long as the funding holds out. Funding is primarily provided by a grant from the Orange Cultural Council. Thank you to the Cultural Council for funding this effort from the very beginning. Unfortunately, if OFM did not have this grant, we would not be able to provide music/entertainment at anywhere near the current (almost weekly) level.

Financials and Administration

The Orange Farmers Market Committee (Committee) administers the Farmers Market annually. The Committee is made up of vendors and volunteers who meet regularly to make the decisions that are necessary to run a successful Market operation. The

Market Manager handles day-to-day Market and financial operations. The Market Manager receives an annual stipend in exchange for her efforts. The Market Manager is also a vendor and donates many hours to the cause for a small stipend. If the current Market Manager were to move on our costs for this expense would likely double or triple.

The Annual budget for the Market is approximately \$4000.00. The budget is low due to lack of funds. Currently, income is primarily generated from the Vendors themselves and occasional grants. Market improvements and outreach are limited by this lack of funds or lack of volunteers.

Community Support and Cooperation

The Farmers Market enjoys the support of local organizations and the general public and we greatly appreciate it! The Town of Orange is very supportive of the Market. Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is a major partner with OFM, assisting in meeting administration, outreach and planning. Quabbin Harvest Food Coop supports the Market and local vendors and is a key source of the volunteers which support our weekly activities. CISA is also a partner in all areas. Local individuals, and the vendors themselves serve as volunteers. We greatly appreciate their assistance. Unfortunately, we are short on volunteers to help us run the market at the current time.

The effort over the past few years to expand the use of HIP and SNAP at the Market and to serve the underserved local population is paying dividends. We see many people who can walk to and from the Market due to its location at the Armory. Through help from CISA, we have made HIP and SNAP accessible to more members of the public. Healthy food can mean healthier citizens and we cherish our small role in helping to make that possible.

Volunteer Program

Volunteers are a key component in operating the Market. The vendors work hard to get the produce to market, set up their tents/booths and serve the public. Volunteers are needed to help us with all the other parts of running a successful market each week.

We are in need of volunteers to help us weekly in managing the Market. Specifically:

SNAP/HIP Assistant: The SNAP/HIP Assistant

Set-up/Take-down Assistance: There is much to do each week at the Market. We need assistance setting up signs, tables and tents. Pedestrian traffic flow, through signs, cones and flagging must be put up and taken down weekly. Hours are from 2:00 to 3:00 pm and 5:30 to 6:30 pm each Thursday during the season.

Market Outreach Coordinator: This person assists with outreach to the public and the news media. Helps with or handles newspaper and facebook ads. Writes news

releases and more. Conducts customer surveys. A positive attitude, ability to write and communicate clearly, and a familiarity with social media are required. We are looking for a one-year commitment and estimate that about 5 hours per week would be required.

Volunteer Coordinator: This is a year-long commitment. The Volunteer coordinator does just what the title says; Administers and coordinates the OFM Volunteer Program. Qualifications include: Ability to organize and work with people, positive attitude and a commitment to the success of the OFM.

Contact ***Rachel Gonzalez*** at 978.413.0740 if you are interested in volunteering.

Fund Raising Needs

The OFM Committee is proud of the progress we are seeing in making the Market viable over the long term. The Reality is that the costs of our program efforts exceed our income on an annual basis. Without the Cultural Council Grant, there would be little to no music at the Market for example. This year (2022) our expenses are estimated to exceed our income by over \$2,000.00. Items including; insurance, porta-potty rental, music, market manager stipend, and other annual and one time expenses make up the bulk of our budget. Vendor Fees were raised 2 seasons ago to help address our shortfalls, so the farmers and other vendors are already doing their part to keep us solvent

We need your help! Just to be level funded will require us to raise at least \$2000, each year. To expand and serve the public more, will require more funding. We are in desperate need of a web site, paid volunteer coordinator, increased funding for the Market Manage stipend, additional funds for music/entertainment, funds to rent a porta-potty and more.

How You can help! Do you own a business in Town are in the North Quabbin? Are you a regular Farmers Market Customer? Do you have skills which could benefit the Market? Please consider volunteering or donating to our Fiscal solvency. *Donations can be made by cash or check. You can mail your donations to the Orange Farmers Market, Inc. at 185 Prentiss Street, Orange, MA 01364.*