



**Town of Stafford**  
**www.staffordct.org**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT**

Amber Wakley, Grants & Marketing Specialist  
Tel: (860) 331-0243 | Email: [amberw@staffordct.org](mailto:amberw@staffordct.org)

**Town of Stafford receives Connecticut Department of Agriculture's SPHERE Grant**

The Town of Stafford, in partnership with the Stafford Community Farmers' Market, is pleased to announce it has been awarded grant funds through the Produce and Honey Extra Redemption Endorsement (SPHERE) Program. Issued through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg), the funds serve as a doubling program for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), a supplemental food program for Connecticut seniors.

The SFMNP is a supplemental food program for individuals over the age of 60 or those who are disabled living in housing where congregate nutrition services are provided and meet income eligibility. Each eligible participant receives one check booklet annually that can be redeemed at authorized locations throughout Connecticut for fruits, vegetables, fresh cut herbs, and honey. Through the \$4,500 sphere grant, seniors who have received 2018 SFMNP checks will benefit by having the value of their 2018 SFMNP checks doubled. Connecticut farmers certified to accept 2018 SFMNP checks at authorized farmers' markets will benefit by selling more to seniors who have the doubling vouchers.

SFMNP check booklets are issued by the Stafford Senior Center for distribution to eligible participants. SPHERE doubling vouchers can be obtained by visiting the market master booth at the Stafford Community Farmers' Market, located at 31 Main Street every Saturday. To use a doubling voucher a senior will present a farmer at a participating farmers' market with one \$3, 2018 SFMNP check and one \$3, doubling voucher. Doubling vouchers must be used for same-day redemption.

The Stafford Community Farmers' Market is dedicated to cultivating healthy food options for all residents and SFMNP is a critical component of this effort. With the Market's new 2018 location situated on Main Street, residents in the downtown area will now have greater access to fresh, healthy food. SCFM serves as a viable solution to improving the food environment in this underserved area, an USDA defined Food Desert. In addition to helping SFMNP recipients stretch fixed budgets, the program has fostered a stronger connection to food/farmer, increased socialization, civic pride, and the opportunity to learn about local food systems. Members of the Stafford Community Farmers' Market, Town of Stafford and SFMNP recipients would like to thank the Department of Agriculture for the SPHERE Grant Program and enabling the consumption of healthy food options, regardless of social or economic constructs.

*Operating every Saturday 9am-1pm through October 27, the Stafford Community Farmers' Market (SCFM) is located at 31 Main Street Downtown Stafford, CT. SCFM is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who share a commitment to the community and desire to grow farm-direct products. Learn more at [staffordcommunityfarmersmarket.com](http://staffordcommunityfarmersmarket.com). The Stafford Senior Center is located at 3 Buckley Highway in Stafford, CT. For SFMNP eligibility inquiry, please contact Cheryl Wilson Maynard, Director of Elderly Outreach, at (860)595-7119. For additional information regarding grant funding, please contact Amber Wakley, Grants and Marketing Specialist, at (860)851-8102.*