

Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Partners with Farmers Markets to Combat Food Insecurity - May 14, 2025

Initiative to Increase Access to Fresh Produce in Central and Southern Illinois

CHICAGO, May 14, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [Meridian Health Plan of Illinois, Inc.](#) (Meridian), announced today their ongoing health equity efforts to partner with farmers markets in communities with high food insecurity across central and southern Illinois throughout 2025. Meridian is a provider of government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs and a [Centene](#) company (NYSE: CNC).

Through this initiative, Meridian will help increase access to fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables by offering vouchers individuals can use to purchase healthy food at the farmers markets along with health education materials. Meridian members who present their member ID card will receive \$15 in vouchers for use during market visits throughout the 2025 season. Non-Meridian members visiting the Meridian booth will receive \$10 in vouchers to encourage healthy eating, while voucher supplies last.

In addition, the participating farmers markets will double the value of SNAP/Link (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) purchases under the Link Match program, which means \$25 in SNAP benefits would become \$50 in fresh fruits and vegetables for recipients.

The farmers markets participating in this program include:

- May 17, 2025 – [Farmers Market of Carbondale](#)
- June 17, 2025 – [The Land Connection Champaign Farmers Market](#)
- June 24, 2025 – [Food Works Mobile Market](#) – Murphysboro
- June 25, 2025 – [Food Works Mobile Market](#) – Marion
- June 26, 2025 – [Food Works Mobile Market](#) – Anna-Jonesboro
- July 31, 2025 – [East St. Louis F.R.E.S.H. Farmers Market](#)
- August 16, 2025 – [Farmers Market of Carbondale](#)
- August 28, 2025 – [East St. Louis F.R.E.S.H. Farmers Market](#)
- September 3, 2025 – [Food Works Mobile Market](#) – Marion
- September 18, 2025 – [Food Works Mobile Market](#) – Anna-Jonesboro
- September 23, 2025 – [Food Works Mobile Market](#) – Murphysboro

Fighting Hunger, Fostering Health: Meridian at the Market Program

This program builds on the success of Meridian's previous involvement with the Farmers Market of Carbondale. In 2024, Meridian's presence at the Carbondale market in September and December resulted in 321 attendees receiving 540 vouchers, totaling more than \$3,750 in vouchers for fresh produce. This initiative also supported SNAP recipients and introduced new participants to the benefits of using their SNAP benefits at the farmers market.

"Meridian is deeply committed to the health and well-being of our members and the communities we serve, and that starts with how we fuel our bodies," said Rutu Ezhuthachan, MD, Meridian Chief Medical Officer. "At Meridian we believe food is medicine. Providing our members with access to farmers markets with fresh fruits and vegetables will help our members to be healthy and happy. We recognize that access to nutritious food is a fundamental component of good health, and we are proud to partner with these local farmers markets to make fresh, affordable produce more accessible in areas where it is needed most."

Each participating farmers market will offer a unique experience for attendees and will support local farmers. Details on specific activities, such as recipe cards at the Mobile Market, food samples in Carbondale, and a health fair in East St. Louis, will be shared as they become available.

Meridian will conduct outreach to encourage its members and share details via its social channels and events page for the community to take advantage of this opportunity to access healthy food options.

For additional dates and locations including those to be announced soon visit lmeridian.com/events.

About Meridian Health Plan of Illinois

Meridian Health Plan of Illinois, Inc. and its family health plans provide government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs. This includes Meridian's Medicaid and Medicare-Medicaid plans, and YouthCare HealthChoice Illinois. YouthCare is a specialized program designed to address the healthcare needs of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) youth in out-of-home placement and former foster youth. Meridian connects members to care and offers comprehensive services to support lifelong health and wellness. Meridian is a wholly owned subsidiary of [Centene Corporation](#), a leading healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. Learn more at lmeridian.com.

SOURCE Meridian of Illinois

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<https://investors.centene.com/2025-05-14-Meridian-Health-Plan-of-Illinois-Partners-with-Farmers-Markets-to-Combat-Food-Insecurity>