

# EBT Equipment and Manual Vouchers

## Farmers Markets and Direct Marketing Farmers

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### EBT Equipment

Farmers Markets and Direct Marketing Farmers are classified as an exempt retailer through the United States Department of Agriculture (UDA) Food & Nutrition Services (FNS). As an exempt retailer, the state of Colorado is required to provide no-cost EBT equipment. Colorado has limited funding and currently is providing 18 wireless machines to exempt markets. Colorado will provide a wired no-cost device to any exempt market. Markets have three options for accepting SNAP at their market:

1. Wireless POS Device
  - Provided by Colorado, if funding is available
  - Provided through a free equipment program offered by FNS, the Colorado Farmers Market Coalition, or another grant program
  - The market can purchase wireless equipment through a Third Party Process (the market will be responsible for the cost)
2. Wired POS Device
  - Colorado will provide a no-cost wired device to an exempt market
    - ❖ Required to an Ethernet connection
    - ❖ The wired device can be located at the market or offsite at another location
      - The market would complete a manual voucher process at the market, and clear/redeem the voucher on the device after the market
3. No POS Device - Manual Voucher Only
  - The market is required to have a signed Exempt Merchant Agreement (contract) with FIS
  - FIS cannot clear a voucher without the agreement in place, part of the agreement is providing the markets banking information for FIS to settle the voucher

The individual(s) that is the market owner or has been authorized by the market owner to act as a responsible party authorized under the FNS# are required to set-up the EBT equipment.

### What are manual vouchers?

Manual vouchers are used to manually process SNAP benefit purchases or return transactions in the absence of a POS device, or if the POS device is not working. A manual voucher is a form completed by the cashier and the EBT cardholder and authorized by calling the Retailer Help Desk for your state at the time of the transaction.

### How do I process an EBT transaction with a manual voucher?

It is important that your market has an agreement/contract in place with your Third Party Process (TPP) or with FIS before completing a manual voucher. The agreement must be completed and signed by the individual authorized with FNS/USDA under the SNAP FNS number.

1. The cashier fills out the voucher information including, but not limited to:
  - Date
  - Retailer's seven-digit FNS number
  - Transaction amount

- Retailer store name & address
- Cardholder's name & EBT card number

2. Once the voucher is filled out, it must be authorized by calling the Retailer Help Desk to ensure there are enough funds in the cardholder's EBT account for the transaction. It is very important not to dispense any goods to the cardholder until the Authorization Code is received. During this call you will need the following information:

- Program Type: Food Assistance/SNAP
- Voucher Type: Purchase or Return
- FNS number
- EBT card number
- Voucher number
- Transaction amount

At this point, a hold is placed on the cardholder's EBT account for the amount of the transaction, until the voucher is cleared for the retailer to be reimbursed.

3. Once the transaction has been authorized, the customer service representative will issue an Authorization Code. It is imperative to write this Authorization Code on the voucher, and both the retailer and cardholder sign the voucher.

After the Authorization Code has been noted on the voucher and the voucher has been signed by both parties, the goods can then be provided to the cardholder. The cardholder signature is in place of the cardholder's PIN, and the customer should always be given a copy of the voucher.

It is important that the voucher is fully completed and legible. The Retailer Help Desk will not be able to clear the voucher if they are unable to read the information or it is incorrect.

### How long do I have to clear a manual voucher?

The manual voucher must be cleared within 30 days of the transaction for the retailer to be reimbursed (i.e., settle the transaction amount to the vendor's bank account). However, it is recommended to clear the manual voucher within the first few days of receiving the Authorization Code. After the 30 days, the Authorization Code expires, and the hold of funds on the EBT account is released, and the SNAP monies are made available to the EBT cardholder. The retailer will not be paid for the food items sold.

FIS, the Retailer Help Desk for Colorado, notifies retailers that they have 15 days to clear a voucher. Some states only allow 15 days, so their standard communication is the 15 days. Colorado allows 30 days, but the market should clear them ASAP to allow for any unexpected delays.

### Where do I get a manual voucher?

Contact your Third Party Processor (TPP) to confirm that they can accept and clear manual SNAP vouchers. The TPP should also provide the retailer with the paper forms used for the voucher process.

If the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) provided your device, contact the FIS Retailers Help Desk to obtain manual vouchers. See the FIS Retailer Help Desk section for contact information. FIS offers free manual vouchers for FIS approved merchants; this is the preferred voucher to use.

A retailer can also get a free version of a manual voucher from [www.goebt.com](http://www.goebt.com). The free version does not have a pre-populated voucher number, which is required to obtain the Authorization Code and clear the voucher. The retailer can select a random 7-digit voucher number to complete the transaction; it is important that the same 7-digit number used to obtain the authorization code is the same number used to clear the voucher.

## How do I clear a manual voucher?

There are three ways to clear a manual voucher:

1. POS device once functioning
2. Merchant Services Portal (see FIS Retailer Help Desk section)
3. Mail voucher to PO BOX 290, Milwaukee, WI 83201-0290 (allow time for mailing as the voucher must be received by the 30<sup>th</sup> day)

There is not an option to clear a manual voucher by phone.

## FIS Retailer Help Desk

FIS is the EBT processor for Colorado and for providing no-cost wired equipment to farmers markets and direct marketing farmers. CDHS is currently providing wireless POS equipment to 18 markets in Colorado. CDHS does not have the funding to provide any additional EBT wireless devices, and CDHS continues to explore funding options to expand the number of wireless devices offered.

- FIS main Merchant Services number: 1-800-894-0050
  - General questions or to request free manual vouchers
- FIS Merchant Services to process a manual voucher (obtain Authorization Code): 1-877-262-9905
- The email address for questions and support: [Merchant.Services.Support@fisglobal.com](mailto:Merchant.Services.Support@fisglobal.com)

FIS also has an online Merchant Services Portal located at [www.ebtEDGE.com](http://www.ebtEDGE.com), select “Merchant Login” on the left side of the screen. As of September 2018, only retailers with a wired EBT-only device issued by CDHS can utilize the portal. FIS is working on making [www.ebtEDGE.com](http://www.ebtEDGE.com) available to wireless merchants, but this is currently not available.

## CDHS Contact Information

Sarah Bender, EBT Supervisor  
(303)866-2327  
[Sarah.Bender@state.co.us](mailto:Sarah.Bender@state.co.us)

## FNS/USDA Contact Information

SNAP Retailer Service Center 1-877-823-4369  
PO BOX 7228  
Falls Church, VA 22040  
Please note: UPS and FedEx will not deliver to a PO Box address

## FNS Free Equipment Program

[www.mysnapetequipment.com](http://www.mysnapetequipment.com)