



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK
ANNOUNCE INVESTMENT IN MOBILE FRESH FOOD MARKET IN CHICAGO**

Healthy Food Bus to Be Added to Increase Fresh Food Access in City's Southside Communities

CHICAGO - Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today to announce a targeted investment in Chicago's mobile fresh food market, as part of the Emanuel Administration's goal to expand healthy food access in Chicago and the Obama Administration's similar efforts to increase access to healthy food in urban and rural communities throughout the country.

Through funding made available by the USDA and a partnership with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), local non-profit *Fresh Moves* will double the mobile fresh food operations of its Mobile Market Bus, expanding its existing routes on the west side of Chicago to new routes in south side communities with the addition of another Mobile Market Bus. *Let's Move* estimates this will double the number of people who are able to access healthy, affordable and fresh fruits and vegetables through their Mobile Market Bus in areas that lack access to this basic nutrition. This will bring healthy, affordable and fresh fruits and vegetables to areas that lack access. Both buses accept SNAP benefits.

"Targeted investments in creative programs like this will help us increase healthy food access in Chicago," said Mayor Emanuel. "It's absolutely unacceptable that nearly 400,000 Chicagoans live without easy access to fresh, healthy food, and I've committed to reducing that number during my first term. I thank Secretary Vilsack for recognizing the efforts Chicago is making towards this goal and for supporting innovative solutions, like the Fresh Moves mobile market program."

This announcement comes on the heels of the Chicago City Council's approval of an ordinance that spurs small business development by encouraging new fresh, healthy food carts to operate in neighborhoods across the city, particularly underserved communities. The CTA has donated an out-of-service CTA bus to *Fresh Moves* for the Mobile Market Bus expansion and also committed to providing an unlimited supply of spare parts for necessary bus repairs. The funding made available through the USDA will be used to completely retrofit the bus to be a fully-operational mobile market. Currently, *Fresh Moves* operates one bus, also retrofitted from an out-of-service bus

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donated by the CTA, in the Lawndale and Austin neighborhoods on the west side. The second Mobile Market Bus will hit the road by September 2012.

A grant from LINK UP Illinois has also allowed the mobile bus to provide a 50 percent discount on fresh produce to customers using LINK food stamps; doubling the buying power of local, healthy food for low-income families. A complete list of *Fresh Moves'* current scheduled stops and more information about the program can be found here: <http://freshmoves.org>.

Secretary Vilsack commended the Mayor's commitment to healthy food access during the event. "There are over 23 million Americans lacking access to fresh, healthy food – including approximately over 400,000 residents of Chicago," said Secretary Vilsack. "Mobile markets are an innovative model to help bring healthy and nutritious food and fresh produce to people in their own communities – whether urban or rural - often directly from the farmers who produce the food. Mayor Emanuel has shown he's committed to promoting healthy food access through innovative solutions – solutions such as new farmers markets in underserved neighborhoods and mobile retail markets that bring healthy food directly to communities in need."

In addition to helping *Fresh Moves* serve twice as many people with a second bus, USDA is supporting Gorge Grown Food Network, which provides access to healthy food in the rural Columbia River Gorge region of Oregon and Washington and is expanding to serve additional communities with its Veggie Express truck. These new services are being supported in part by \$70,000 in USDA funding. USDA is also initiating a research project to assess the impact of mobile markets as a strategy to increase healthy food access in both urban and rural communities; both the *Fresh Moves* and the Gorge Grown Food Network programs will be included in this research.

This is one piece of the Emanuel Administration's efforts to increase access to healthy, fresh foods across Chicago. Starting this month, 5 new farmers markets will open on the west side, a commitment that was announced at the Mayor's Food Access Summit in October 2011 with First Lady Michelle Obama and Chicago community groups. Mayor Emanuel has also received commitments from grocery and pharmacy store executives to open 17 new stores and retrofit 19 stores to sell fresh fruit and vegetables in areas that currently have limited access to these resources. And in July 2011, the city passed an ordinance fully legalizing urban agriculture and indoor aquaponics and expanding size limits on community gardens.

USDA's support for mobile markets is just one of many steps that the Obama Administration has taken to increase access to healthy food. USDA coordinates with federal partners and shares resources with Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Treasury, and others to identify successful strategies to increase healthy food access nationwide. Just last



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month, USDA announced \$4 million to help States expand availability of wireless technology in farmers' markets not currently participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which will provide SNAP participants with greater access to fresh and healthy food while supporting American farmers and local economies. In April, USDA announced that it will invest in farm to school programs nationwide to help eligible schools improve the health and wellbeing of their students and connect with local agricultural producers. USDA is also working to implement the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which will mark the most comprehensive change to food in schools in more than a generation, including updated school meals nutrition standards to increase fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy, consistent with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This month, USDA is also celebrating the first anniversary of MyPlate, which provides the public, particularly school children, with the 'how-tos' to put into action the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans' recommendations.

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