

# FRESHLINK AMBASSADORS

## Key Roles, Traits and Responsibilities

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### Who are they and what do they do?

FreshLink Ambassadors are passionate and connected community members hired and trained to spread the word about farmers' markets and the nutrition incentive program in their communities. FreshLink Ambassadors participate in a series of trainings and receive support from a facilitation team to become knowledgeable about the benefits of farmers' markets in their communities.



**Spread the word** about farmers' markets, SNAP and SNAP incentives in the community.

**Effectively bridge** residents to resources for community health.

**Support residents** as they "try out" farmers' markets.

### What is the background of a FreshLink Ambassador?

There is not an "ideal" educational background or professional experiences that determine who will be a successful ambassador. However, having a mix of ambassadors with various backgrounds and knowledge makes for an effective ambassador team. Most ambassadors play multiple roles in their community, making them well connected across networks. The following are attributes of former FreshLink Ambassadors:



#### Education Level

- High school graduate
- Some college completed
- College graduate
- Masters level graduate

#### Professions

- Counselor
- Doula
- Entrepreneur
- Teacher
- Nonprofit professional
- Government

#### Community Roles

- Parent
- Family member
- Neighborhood leader
- Church leader
- Farmers' market volunteer

### What is the power of peer-to-peer influencers?

The theory of social capital highlights the value of using trusted "influencers" to spread messages. Community ambassadors are uniquely influential because they are **credible** and **relatable** sources of information. They can meet people where they are to assist in decision making about visiting a farmers' market or help customers navigate the steps involved in using a nutrition incentive program. Word-of-mouth is the most common method of learning about a farmers' market. FreshLink Ambassadors help spread information and are a trusted go-to resource for promoting a welcoming farmers' market environment.

### How does the FreshLink Ambassador approach promote change?

- Meet people where they are at and share information according to their needs
- Build trust among existing and new contacts
- Use the power of conversation and active listening to influence others
- Offer a risk-free chance to try farmers' markets through a coupon

### What attributes do they need?

- Passion for community well-being
- Motivation to serve
- Ability to be a team player
- Strong listening and communication skills

## What are your program's goals and who should you recruit?

Performance will vary from Ambassador to Ambassador, but the key is to understand your own program goals. If your goal is to distribute as many coupons as possible, recruit an ambassador who is well-connected and capable to actively reach out to many community members. If your goal is ensuring quality conversations, and higher coupon redemption rates, then recruit an active listener, with deep knowledge in this space. The following snapshot on coupon distribution and redemption is based on the activity of two (2) FreshLink Ambassadors in Cleveland, Ohio.



## Lasting benefits of the FreshLink Ambassador approach

FreshLink Ambassadors add value to the communities and farmers' markets they serve. In addition, the experience of being an Ambassador is highly beneficial. Former FreshLink Ambassadors listed several positive aspects of their engagement in this peer-to-peer outreach approach, including:

- **Devoting time to meaningful work**
- **Making connections that go beyond experience**
- **Building skills to overcome challenges**
- **Inspiring personal changes**

### Suggested Citation

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