



In response to the request from The Rules Committee on its hunger project, Reading Terminal Market would like to highlight the importance of SNAP benefits and being a space to support local farmers, growers, producers, and chefs.

One of America's largest and oldest public markets, the Reading Terminal Market serves as a public trust providing a venue for independent local businesses to showcase the Philadelphia region's culinary bounty and cultural diversity. Housed since 1892 in a National Historic Landmark building, the Market offers an incredible selection of farm fresh produce, meats and poultry, plus the finest seafood, cheeses, baked goods, confections, flowers, kitchenware, jewelry and crafts. The Market is managed by a not-for-profit management company as a tenant of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority, which has owned the historic Reading Terminal since 1990. In 2014, the American Planning Association named Reading Terminal Market as one of the 10 Great Public Spaces in America and has been named the Best Public Market in America by USA Today's 10Best in 2021 and 2022.

Below is a breakdown of Reading Terminal Market facts relevant to hunger in Philadelphia:

- Fourteen merchants accept EBT/SNAP at the Market. The variety of product in combination with the accessibility to RTM, makes it an invaluable shopping experience for those shopping with EBT/SNAP and opens an additional channel of business for small, family-owned businesses. EBT/SNAP eligible product includes fresh poultry, meats, produce, dairy, herbs, spices, lunch meats and cheeses.
- The change in demographics in the City of Philadelphia as referenced by Pew Charitable Trusts Philadelphia 2021: State of the City report, as well as Center City Districts State of Center City 2021 report, indicates that immigrants have played a big role in Philadelphia's overall population increase. Immigrants generate a need for ethnic grocery items, and typically influence the trends of cooking at home vs. ready to eat items, emphasizing the importance of spaces like public markets. Reading Terminal Market serves as a hub for global cuisine and groceries in Philadelphia.
- In 2021, The Sustainable Farm by Custom Cuisine, owned and operated by a black female urban farmer, was opened at Reading Terminal Market. This concept – the first of its kind in the building and perhaps in the city – enables customers to purchase hydroponically grown kale, lettuce, and other leafy greens and focuses on educating customers on accessible gardening options. This is a forward-thinking approach for Reading Terminal Market from the lens of urban agriculture, sustainability, and nutrition minded consumption trends.
- The Market is heavily involved in the food map beyond our own walls, with a strong emphasis on diverting food from the waste stream, and upcycling product to extend the shelf life and fulfill new needs. Since forming an active relationship with Philabundance and Food Connect in 2018, Reading Terminal Market has rescued thousands of pounds of food that have been distributed to Philabundance's network of 360+ agencies. During the pandemic, individual merchants also partnered with Too Good To Go, allowing an opportunity for merchants to sell product that might have been dropped in the waste stream for a discounted price.



- The theme of sustainability extends beyond these partnerships into the types of products that merchants are bringing to Market. Example: product grown and not sold at The Sustainable Farm is then turned into soaps and body care products. Wellness is a segment that has expanded, especially in the pandemic due to raised awareness on health, and lack of access to mass produced product, people had to shop for local, accessible options.
- We pride ourselves on supporting local growers beyond one point of sale. The introduction of e-commerce to Reading Terminal Market in 2018 has supported purveyor merchants selling fish, meat and produce getting their product to customers within 12 miles of the Market. This enables growers and producers as well as market operators to compete in a larger competitive landscape. Its success paired with the frequency of EBT/SNAP customers to Reading Terminal Market has increased the priority for access to E-EBT via Mercato.com, the Market's e-commerce provider.

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