



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie to Help 2,500 Seniors Get Access to Healthy, Farm-Fresh Foods at Local Farmers Markets

BRIAN DWYER June 1, 2018

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State Senator Patty Ritchie is once again ensuring more seniors have access to healthy, farm-fresh fruits and vegetables by helping them become eligible to receive free coupons that can be redeemed at local farmers markets. This year, thanks to funding secured by Senator Ritchie, 2,500 local seniors will be able to benefit from the program.

“Farmers markets are a great way to showcase our area’s fresh, healthy foods and more,” said Senator Ritchie, who serves as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “These coupons ensure our seniors are getting the nutrition they need, while providing another market for our hardworking farmers. Expanding this program to reach even more seniors is the perfect example of a win-win for our communities.”

Senator Ritchie secured \$500,000 in this year’s state budget to expand the “Senior Farmers Market Nutrition” program, which provides free, \$20 coupon booklets to seniors aged 60 and over who are living on a fixed income. The coupons can be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets.

Since its inception four years ago, the “Senior Farmers Market Nutrition” program, and its expansion thanks to Senator Ritchie, has supported nearly 10,000 seniors throughout Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties. In addition, it provides a boost in sales for the farmers growing the foods, benefitting local economies.

The monthly income eligibility limits for receiving coupons are as follows:

*Household of one: \$1,872/month*

*Household of two: \$2,538/month*

*Household of three: \$3,204/month*

Coupons are now available in Jefferson and St. Lawrence County. For more information how to receive coupons, seniors must contact their local Office for the Aging:

*Jefferson County: (315) 785-3191*

*St. Lawrence County: (315) 386-4730*

*Oswego County will have coupons available later this month.*

The expansion of this program is part of the 2018-19 state budget, which saw record support for agriculture—totaling \$54.4 million—to boost dozens of programs farmers depend on, as well as launched new initiatives designed to strengthen the connection between consumers and local foods.