



# POWER DYNAMICS AT FARMERS' MARKETS



## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Underlying most conflicts are power imbalances. Awareness & understanding of these imbalances can help us become more empowered, learn to share power, and find better balance at markets. We can learn to navigate conflicts better, and develop rules & systems to help address imbalances.

## DYNAMICS AT MARKET CONSIDER ALL THE RELATIONSHIPS



Vendor to Vendor  
Vendor to Customer  
Customer to Customer  
Manager to Vendor  
Manager to Customer

Manager to Co-Manager  
Board to Manager  
Board to Board  
Board to Vendor  
Multiple roles held by one person



## COMMON IMBALANCES

- **Abuse, or underuse, of power:** people who are "in-charge" not executing their roles properly
- **Tenure at market:** some vendors have sold for 10+ years at markets, some are 1st year, some are guest vendors
- **Lack of structure:** no rules or procedures to understand accountability & shared responsibility
- **Traditional bigotry:** sexism, age-ism, racism, ableism, others...
- **Social status:** someone may be well-liked; have more "allies" in a conflict; serve other leadership roles in their community
- **Communication styles:** some folks speak loud or soft, are more or less comfortable with conflict & confrontation
- **Culture:** some folks come from different geographic areas, speak different languages, have different socioeconomic backgrounds

## LEADING TO CONFLICTS...



These imbalances can **exacerbate existing conflicts, or they can be conflicts in and of themselves.** We can be better market organizers when we practice:

- Self-awareness of existing dynamics
- Sensitivity in navigating them
- Sharing/Naming them when appropriate
- Spending time with the market team to develop relationships



## WE NEED OBJECTIVITY & CLARITY IN OUR RULES AND HUMILITY IN OUR SYSTEMS TO ADDRESS POWER IMBALANCES.



What market structures, processes, rules, and roles can we establish to level the playing field and address these power dynamics?

