# **Product Requirements Document (PRD)**

## **Gather: Market Management & Marketplace Platform**

## **Executive Summary**

Gather is a comprehensive SaaS platform that solves the administrative nightmare facing 8,140 US farmers markets. Market managers currently spend 40-60 hours per week on manual vendor management, payment processing, and compliance reporting. Our platform automates these workflows while enabling a full marketplace for online pre-orders with an Instacart-like shopping experience, unlocking new revenue streams for markets, vendors, and the platform.

## **Problem Statement**

### **Primary Problems (Market Managers)**

1. **Vendor Management Chaos**: Managing 30+ vendors via spreadsheets, paper applications, and "4-inch binders"
2. **Payment Processing Nightmare**: SNAP/EBT requires manual token distribution and reconciliation, consuming 30-40% of manager time
3. **Grant Reporting Burden**: Manual compilation of data for USDA FMPP/LFPP applications
4. **Fee Collection**: Chasing vendors for booth fees, tracking overdue payments manually
5. **Communication Fragmentation**: Information scattered across email, phone, text with frequent missed messages
6. **Product Catalog Chaos**: No central system to track what products are available when

### **Secondary Problems (Vendors & Customers)**

* **Vendors**: 30-45 day payment delays in wholesale channels, managing inventory across multiple sales channels, no easy way to reach customers online
* **Customers**: 51% cite "inconvenience" as barrier - limited hours, weather dependency, can't pre-order, don't know what's available

## **Solution Overview**

### **Phase 1: Core Market Management (MVP - Months 1-6)**

Essential features to capture market manager workflow and vendor/product management

### **Phase 2: Marketplace Integration (Months 7-12)**

Full Instacart-like shopping experience based on Berwyn model validation

## **User Personas**

### **Primary: Market Manager "Margaret"**

* **Demographics**: 48 years old, female (73% of managers), bachelor's degree
* **Tech Comfort**: Basic (uses email, Facebook, struggles with complex software)
* **Work Status**: Part-time paid (30%) or volunteer (40%)
* **Pain Points**: Drowning in paperwork, vendor conflicts, grant deadlines, no product visibility
* **Success Metrics**: Time saved, vendor satisfaction, successful grant applications, online sales revenue

### **Secondary: Vendor "Victor"**

* **Demographics**: Small family farm, <$150,000 gross income
* **Tech Comfort**: Low (36% of small farms use digital tools)
* **Pain Points**: Cash flow, tracking sales across markets, payment delays, reaching new customers
* **Success Metrics**: Faster payments, increased sales, simplified bookkeeping, online presence

### **Tertiary: Customer "Catherine"**

* **Demographics**: 35-45, household income $96,000+, bachelor's degree (77%)
* **Behavior**: Would shop more if convenient, values freshness over price, uses Instacart regularly
* **Pain Points**: Can't attend Saturday morning markets, wants to pre-order, doesn't know what's available
* **Success Metrics**: Convenience, quality, supporting local farms, easy browsing and checkout

## **Feature Requirements**

### **Phase 1: Core Market Management (MVP)**

#### **1.1 Vendor Management**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to manage vendor applications and assignments without spreadsheets

**Features**:

* Digital vendor applications with document upload (licenses, insurance)
* Automated application review workflow
* Stall assignment with visual market layout
* Vendor database with contact info, products, certifications
* Automated waitlist management
* Compliance tracking with expiration alerts

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* Reduce vendor onboarding from 2 hours to 15 minutes
* Zero double-bookings of stall spaces
* 100% compliance documentation tracked

#### **1.2 Fee Collection & Financial Management**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to collect and track vendor fees automatically

**Features**:

* Automated fee calculation (daily, seasonal, percentage-based)
* Online payment collection (ACH, credit card)
* Overdue payment reminders
* Financial reporting dashboard
* Vendor payout management for markets handling sales

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* 90% of fees collected on time (vs 60% current)
* Automated late fee application
* Real-time financial visibility

#### **1.3 SNAP/EBT Integration**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to process SNAP/EBT without manual token counting

**Features**:

* Digital SNAP/EBT processing
* Automated token-to-vendor reconciliation
* USDA reporting compliance
* Market Match/Double Bucks program management

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* Reduce SNAP processing from 4 hours to 30 minutes weekly
* 100% accurate USDA reporting
* Support for state-specific incentive programs

#### **1.4 Communication Hub**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to communicate with all vendors instantly

**Features**:

* Broadcast announcements (SMS, email)
* Vendor-specific messaging
* Weather alerts and market cancellations
* Newsletter builder with templates
* Vendor bulletin board

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* 95% message delivery rate
* Response tracking for critical announcements
* Mobile-optimized for field use

#### **1.5 Grant Reporting & Analytics**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to generate grant applications with one click

**Features**:

* Pre-built USDA FMPP/LFPP report templates
* Automatic data compilation (vendor count, sales, demographics)
* Economic impact calculator
* Customer survey tools
* Attendance tracking

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* Generate complete grant application in <1 hour (vs 40 hours current)
* Track required metrics automatically
* Historical data comparison

#### **1.6 Vendor Profile Management**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to maintain rich vendor profiles to showcase to customers

**Features**:

* Vendor business profiles (farm story, photos, certifications)
* Product categories and seasonal availability
* Production methods (organic, pesticide-free, grass-fed)
* Farm location and size
* Social media links and website
* Vendor performance metrics (attendance rate, sales volume)

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* 100% vendor profiles complete before market season
* Searchable/filterable vendor directory
* Public-facing vendor showcase pages

#### **1.7 Product Catalog Management**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to manage what products are available at my market

**Features**:

* Master product database with categories (produce, meat, dairy, baked goods, crafts)
* Seasonal availability tracking
* Price range management (vendors set specific prices)
* Product photos and descriptions
* Dietary attributes (vegan, gluten-free, allergens)
* Inventory status (available, sold out, limited)
* Units of measure (per pound, bunch, dozen, each)

**Acceptance Criteria**:

* 500+ product SKUs supported
* Bulk import via CSV
* Real-time availability updates

### **Phase 2: Marketplace Features (Post-MVP)**

#### **2.1 Customer Pre-Ordering System**

**User Story**: As a customer, I want to pre-order from multiple vendors for market pickup

**Features**:

* Multi-vendor shopping cart
* Scheduled pickup windows
* Payment processing
* Order consolidation for pickup
* Mobile-first responsive design

**Technical Note**: 2-4x larger baskets online ($59 vs $15-30 in-person)

#### **2.2 Vendor Inventory Management**

**User Story**: As a vendor, I need to manage inventory across farmers markets, CSA, and online

**Features**:

* Multi-channel inventory sync
* Availability by sales channel
* Automated low-stock alerts
* Price management by channel
* Harvest planning integration

#### **2.3 Order Fulfillment Coordination**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to coordinate vendor orders for customer pickup

**Features**:

* Consolidated pick lists by vendor
* Customer pickup check-in system
* Order status tracking
* Vendor delivery confirmation
* Customer notifications

#### **2.4 Customer Shopping Experience (Instacart-like)**

**User Story**: As a customer, I want to browse and shop the farmers market like I'm using Instacart

**Browse & Discovery Features**:

* Market homepage with featured vendors and products
* Category browsing (Produce → Vegetables → Tomatoes)
* Vendor browsing (see all products from one farm)
* Search with filters (organic, price range, dietary needs)
* "What's in season" showcase
* Product recommendations based on past purchases
* Visual grid layout with product photos

**Product Details Features**:

* High-quality product images
* Detailed descriptions and growing methods
* Vendor information and farm story
* Nutritional information where applicable
* Recipe suggestions
* Similar product recommendations
* Customer reviews and ratings

**Shopping Cart Features**:

* Multi-vendor cart consolidation
* Running total with fees
* Quantity adjustments
* Save for later functionality
* Quick reorder from past purchases
* Cart sharing (send to family member)

**Checkout Features**:

* Guest checkout option
* Saved payment methods
* SNAP/EBT integration
* Pickup time slot selection
* Special instructions per vendor
* Tip option for vendors
* Order confirmation with pickup details

#### **2.5 Customer Account Features**

**User Story**: As a customer, I want to manage my orders and preferences

**Features**:

* Order history with reorder capability
* Favorite vendors and products
* Dietary preference settings
* Weekly shopping lists
* Subscription options for regular items
* Family account sharing
* Notification preferences

#### **2.6 Order Management for Customers**

**User Story**: As a customer, I need to track and modify my orders

**Features**:

* Real-time order status tracking
* Modification window (until vendor starts packing)
* Cancellation policy and refunds
* Pickup reminders via SMS/email
* QR code for contactless pickup
* Substitution preferences
* Order feedback and ratings

#### **2.7 Marketplace Administration**

**User Story**: As a market manager, I need to control the online marketplace

**Vendor Control Features**:

* Enable/disable vendors for online sales
* Set vendor commission rates
* Approve product listings
* Manage vendor vacations/blackout dates
* Set minimum order quantities per vendor

**Product Control Features**:

* Approve/reject product listings
* Flag inappropriate content
* Set market-wide categories and tags
* Manage featured products
* Control what shows as "in season"

**Order Management Hub Features**:

* Dashboard showing all pending orders
* Vendor fulfillment status tracking
* Customer pickup check-in system
* Handle refunds/cancellations
* Generate packing lists per vendor
* Coordinate substitutions

**Customer Service Tool Features**:

* Customer communication center
* Issue resolution workflow
* Refund processing
* Customer feedback monitoring
* Abandoned cart recovery emails

#### **2.8 Vendor Order Management (Mobile)**

**User Story**: As a vendor, I need to manage online orders from my phone

**Features**:

* Push notifications for new orders
* Accept/reject orders
* Mark items as packed
* Update inventory in real-time
* Communicate with customers
* View pickup list for market day
* Quick add new products via photo

## **Technical Architecture**

### **Development Approach**

**AI-Accelerated Development Strategy**:

* Claude Code for initial code generation (70% of codebase)
* Human review and refinement of AI-generated code
* Rapid prototyping with v0/Cursor
* 6-month MVP timeline (vs 18 months traditional)

### **Tech Stack**

* **Frontend**: React/Next.js (mobile-responsive)
* **Backend**: Node.js/PostgreSQL
* **Payments**: Stripe Connect (marketplace payments)
* **SMS**: Twilio
* **Hosting**: AWS/Vercel
* **Authentication**: Auth0
* **Search**: Elasticsearch
* **CDN**: Cloudflare (product images)
* **Analytics**: Mixpanel

### **Key Technical Requirements**

* **Offline capability**: Markets often have poor connectivity
* **Mobile-first**: Managers work on-site via phones
* **Simple UX**: Users have low technical sophistication
* **Data security**: PCI compliance for payments
* **API-first**: Enable future integrations
* **Real-time sync**: Inventory updates across channels
* **Image optimization**: Fast loading product photos
* **Recommendation engine**: Personalized product suggestions

### **Mobile Applications**

#### **Customer Mobile App (iOS/Android)**

* Native app for better performance
* Barcode scanning for quick reorder
* Location-based market finding
* Push notifications for order status
* Apple Pay/Google Pay integration

#### **Vendor Mobile App**

* Simplified interface for non-technical vendors
* Offline mode with sync
* Camera integration for products
* Voice-to-text for descriptions

## **Success Metrics**

### **Phase 1 KPIs (Months 1-6)**

* **Adoption**: 20 markets onboarded
* **Activation**: 70% of markets using weekly
* **Time Savings**: 20 hours/week per market manager
* **Vendor Satisfaction**: NPS >50
* **Revenue**: $36K ARR ($150/month × 20 markets)
* **Product Listings**: 50+ products per vendor

### **Phase 2 KPIs (Months 7-12)**

* **Market Growth**: 100 markets
* **Marketplace GMV**: $500K monthly
* **Online Basket Size**: $59 average (vs $28 in-person)
* **Revenue**: $250K ARR
* **Browse to Buy**: >3% conversion rate
* **Cart Abandonment**: <30%
* **Customer Retention**: 40% monthly repeat
* **Search Success Rate**: >80% find what they want

## **Pricing Strategy**

### **Tiered SaaS Model**

* **Free**: <10 vendors (land grab)
* **Starter**: $49/month (10-30 vendors)
* **Professional**: $149/month (30-75 vendors)
* **Enterprise**: $299/month (75+ vendors)

### **Transaction Fees (Phase 2)**

* 2.5% on marketplace transactions
* 1% on SNAP/EBT processing
* Optional: Vendor subscriptions $29-99/month for premium features

## **Go-to-Market Strategy**

### **Launch Strategy (Leveraging Carlo's Network)**

1. **Pilot Markets**: 5 markets in Pennsylvania/Main Line (Carlo's relationships)
2. **Case Studies**: Document time savings and vendor growth
3. **Farmers Market Coalition**: Partnership for national rollout
4. **State Associations**: Target high-density states (NY, PA, CA)

### **Customer Acquisition**

* **Direct**: Carlo's personal outreach to market managers
* **Partnerships**: State farmers market associations
* **Content**: Grant writing guides, best practices
* **Conferences**: Farmers Market Coalition annual meeting
* **Referral Program**: Markets earn credit for referrals

## **Risk Mitigation**

### **Technical Risks**

* **Risk**: AI-generated code quality
* **Mitigation**: Senior developer review, comprehensive testing

### **Market Risks**

* **Risk**: Low technology adoption (only 36% of small farms use digital tools)
* **Mitigation**: White-glove onboarding, Carlo's peer-to-peer training

### **Competitive Risks**

* **Risk**: Existing players (MarketWurks, Barn2Door, Local Line)
* **Mitigation**: Focus on market managers (underserved), integrated marketplace

### **Operational Risks**

* **Risk**: Complex multi-vendor logistics
* **Mitigation**: Start with simple pickup model, expand gradually

## **Development Timeline**

### **Months 1-3: Foundation**

* Core vendor management
* Basic fee collection
* Communication hub
* Vendor profiles
* Product catalog
* 5 pilot markets with Carlo

### **Months 4-6: Enhancement**

* SNAP/EBT integration
* Grant reporting
* Analytics dashboard
* Advanced vendor features
* 20 paying markets

### **Months 7-9: Marketplace MVP**

* Customer browsing interface
* Shopping cart and checkout
* Vendor inventory management
* Order management system
* Test with Berwyn model

### **Months 10-12: Scale & Polish**

* Mobile apps launch
* Advanced search and recommendations
* Customer accounts and loyalty
* Full marketplace rollout
* 100 markets target
* Series A preparation

## **User Experience Flows**

### **Market Manager Flow**

1. **Onboarding**: Sign up → Import vendor list → Configure market settings
2. **Weekly Operations**: Review applications → Assign stalls → Send announcements
3. **Market Day**: Check-in vendors → Process SNAP → Handle issues
4. **Post-Market**: Review sales → Process payments → Generate reports

### **Vendor Flow**

1. **Application**: Submit application → Upload documents → Pay fees
2. **Pre-Market**: Update inventory → Review pre-orders → Prepare products
3. **Market Day**: Check in → Fulfill orders → Update availability
4. **Post-Market**: Review sales → Receive payment → Plan next week

### **Customer Flow**

1. **Discovery**: Browse market → Search products → View vendors
2. **Shopping**: Add to cart → Apply filters → Read reviews
3. **Checkout**: Select pickup time → Pay → Receive confirmation
4. **Pickup**: Receive reminder → Show QR code → Collect order

## **Data Model**

### **Core Entities**

* **Markets**: ID, name, location, schedule, settings
* **Vendors**: ID, market\_id, business\_info, certifications, status
* **Products**: ID, vendor\_id, category, price, inventory, attributes
* **Users**: ID, type (manager/vendor/customer), profile, preferences
* **Orders**: ID, customer\_id, vendor\_items[], status, pickup\_time
* **Transactions**: ID, order\_id, amount, payment\_method, status

### **Key Relationships**

* Markets ← → Vendors (many-to-many)
* Vendors ← → Products (one-to-many)
* Customers ← → Orders (one-to-many)
* Orders ← → Products (many-to-many via line items)

## **Compliance & Security**

### **Regulatory Requirements**

* PCI DSS for payment processing
* SNAP/EBT certification
* State-specific farmers market regulations
* Food safety and traceability requirements
* ADA compliance for web accessibility

### **Data Security**

* End-to-end encryption for payments
* GDPR-compliant data handling
* Regular security audits
* Vendor and customer data separation
* Secure document storage for licenses/insurance

## **Integration Requirements**

### **Third-Party Integrations**

* **Payment Processing**: Stripe, Square, PayPal
* **SNAP/EBT**: State-specific processors
* **Email/SMS**: SendGrid, Twilio
* **Maps**: Google Maps API
* **Weather**: Weather.com API
* **Accounting**: QuickBooks, Xero
* **Social Media**: Facebook, Instagram APIs

### **Export Capabilities**

* Vendor data CSV export
* Financial reports (PDF, Excel)
* Grant application data
* Customer mailing lists
* Product catalogs

## **Support & Training**

### **Market Manager Support**

* Dedicated onboarding specialist (Carlo)
* Video tutorial library
* Monthly webinars
* Email and chat support
* Manager community forum

### **Vendor Support**

* Quick start guides
* In-person market day support (first 3 weeks)
* FAQ database
* Peer mentorship program

### **Customer Support**

* In-app help center
* Order issue resolution
* FAQ section
* Email support

## **Appendix: Competitive Analysis**

| **Feature** | **Gather** | **MarketWurks** | **Barn2Door** | **Local Line** | **Instacart** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Market Management | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Vendor Management | ✓ | Partial | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Product Catalog | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SNAP/EBT | ✓ | Partial | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Grant Reporting | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Customer Marketplace | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Multi-vendor Cart | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | Partial | ✓ |
| Mobile Apps | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Search & Discovery | ✓ | ✗ | Limited | Limited | ✓ |
| Inventory Sync | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | N/A |
| Price | $49-299 | $1,500 | $99-299 | $79-299 | Commission |
| Target User | All Three | Markets | Farms | Farms/Hubs | Consumers |

**Our Advantage**: Only solution designed for the complete farmers market ecosystem - managers, vendors, AND customers - with both operational tools and consumer marketplace in one platform.

## **Success Stories (Projected)**

### **Year 1 Target Case Study**

"Berwyn Farmers Market increased vendor participation by 140% and generated $50,000 in online pre-orders in their first season using Gather, while reducing manager workload by 20 hours per week."

### **Vendor Success Metric**

"Average vendor using Gather sees 35% increase in sales through pre-orders and 7-day payment vs industry standard 30-45 days."

### **Customer Satisfaction**

"Customers spend 2-4x more per visit ($59 vs $28) when pre-ordering online, with 40% becoming weekly repeat customers."

**Document Version Control**

* v1.0 - Initial complete PRD (January 2025)
* Next Review: Post 5-market pilot (Month 3)
* Major Revision: Post-MVP launch (Month 6)