

CHECKOUT

healthy



A Wisconsin resource for healthier foods & beverages in food stores

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Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity Program



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– and –

Assessing the Nutrition Environment in Wisconsin Communities (ANEWC) Project

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Introduction

What is Check Out Healthy?

Check Out Healthy is a toolkit for addressing the food environments within and surrounding food stores in Wisconsin communities. Local coalitions, local community leaders and other public health practitioners can use Check Out Healthy as a tool to increase the availability of and access to healthier foods and beverages. Promoting the consumption of healthier foods and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, and drinking water is important for creating healthy communities. Check Out Healthy focuses on improving the food environments of food stores to make it easier for individuals to make healthy choices.

Check Out Healthy provides a step-by-step guide for assessing, partnering with, and determining strategies for food stores in your community. Strategies and methods featured in Check Out Healthy are evidence-based and incorporate stories from the field as illustrations of how to put these strategies into practice.

What are healthy foods?

Healthy foods are foods that provide essential nutrients and support health¹, such as high quality fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, lean meats, poultry, and fish².

Please visit the Food and Nutrition Information Center for detailed information on healthy foods and beverages: <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov>

Why is there a need for Check Out Healthy?

In 2010, an estimated one million Wisconsin adults, or 26 percent of the adult population, were classified as obese, compared with 25 percent of adults nationally³. Moreover, in 2009 and 2011, only 23 percent of Wisconsin adults and 20 percent of high school students consumed the recommended five or more fruits

and vegetables per day. What we consume is often influenced by a complex blend of environmental, social, cultural and individual factors. Our food environment, which includes the availability and accessibility of healthier foods and beverages in food stores, plays a role in what foods people purchase and consume.

On a typical day, 32 million American adults shop at a food store—about one in seven adults nationwide⁴. Based on this figure, a food store is an ideal environment to increase access to and promote healthy foods and beverages. Food stores are the model partner for strategically addressing our food environment and influencing individual consumption towards healthier choices.

Changes to our food environment support consumer spending and promote consumption of healthier foods and beverages through increased access to fruits, vegetables, and drinking water. The evidence-based strategies and methods outlined throughout Check Out Healthy support local food stores and farmers, who can generate local economic growth and improve the health of community residents.

How do I use Check Out Healthy?

This toolkit is intended for use by local coalitions, community leaders, and public health practitioners. Check Out Healthy outlines steps for assessment, partnering, and implementation strategies. Mindfulness of program sustainability and evaluation is recommended throughout the implementation phase.

You may refer to the work you are doing in Check Out Healthy as creating an intervention; however, this term may be confusing for a food store. Using the term “initiative” or “program” rather than “intervention” is suggested.

Check Out Healthy is divided into two parts: “The Front End” and “The Back End.” The two titles reference the generic layout of a food store. (For more information on food store terminology, please see Appendix A.) Steps prior to the implementation of strategies and your program are described in “The Front End.” Steps outlining implementation methods, strategies, and maintenance of your program are outlined within “The Back End.”

Here is a brief outline of what is presented in Check Out Healthy:

Step 1: Knowing Your Community

Step one encourages you to think about what’s going on within your community. It will benefit you to have additional information to better understand where your efforts are needed and what strategies make the most sense. Additional information may be attained by reviewing existing data, observing the environment, conducting focus groups, administering surveys and looking for recurring ideas or notable challenges to achieving adequate access to healthier foods and beverages in food stores.

1 Partners in Action. Defining healthy foods. Washington State Department of Health; 2008. Available at <http://depts.washington.edu/waaction/plan/append/g.html>

2 U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th ed. Washington (DC): Government Printing Office; 2010.

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and obesity. CDC; 2012. Available at www.cdc.gov/obesity/state_programs/fundedstates/wisconsin.html

4 Goodman, Jack. Grocery shopping: Who, where, and when? The Time Use Institute; 2008. Available at timeuseinstitute.org/Grocery%20White%20Paper%202008.pdf

Introduction continued...

Step 2: Knowing Your Food Store

After reviewing assessment results, get to know the food stores with which you will partner. Use the assessment data as a resource for information on your community's food stores. Understand food stores from their perspective, such as the importance of meeting the bottom line. Know what type of language is used within the food store industry and that there are different types of food stores.

Step 3: Establishing Partnerships

Next, pick a food store(s) with which you can partner. A partnership is not defined as an individual dictating to a food store how and why they need healthier foods and beverages. Rather, a partnership is based on mutual needs and objectives. Understand what a food store needs to accomplish in order to stay in business. Show them that you can incorporate what you are doing into what they are already doing in business and how they will still be able to meet their bottom line.

Step 4 & Step 5: Developing and Maintaining Your Program

While you are attempting to build a partnership, determine which strategies are most appropriate to use with your potential partner. Use strategies based on data you have collected and information you already know about food stores in your community. Adjust your strategies to fit the type of food store with which you are partnering. Keep in mind that many of the strategies outlined in Check Out Healthy are linked. Coupling strategies that are compatible and/or using them simultaneously will strengthen your outcomes. As you begin to work through your program, consider its sustainability. Align the resources you have in your community with appropriate strategies.

It is important to provide a good foundation for your program and conduct a thorough assessment before jumping into implementation and strategies. Therefore, steps should build on one another sequentially. This approach increases the likelihood of a successful and sustainable program.

"At some point, we have to break the cycle and start teaching kids how to eat healthier, like getting more produce into their diets. That's going to help them become healthier adults."

— Jeff Mauer, Grocer, Fresh Madison Market

FrontEnd

STEP *one*

Knowing Your Community

When planning a program, it is important to understand your community's current food environment related to access to or availability of foods and beverages in food stores. An overall assessment of the food environment helps identify barriers and pathways to healthier foods and beverages in food stores. This is the first step in the process of improving your food environment. The second step will entail collecting more detailed data.

Think about the following questions:

- ▶ Do food stores in your community offer access to healthier foods and beverages?
- ▶ Do food stores in your community promote the healthier options they currently carry?
- ▶ How often do members in your community eat fruits and vegetables?
- ▶ How often do members in your community shop at a food store?
- ▶ Do food store patrons choose the healthier option when it is available?
- ▶ Are healthier items affordable?

These are the types of questions that will help assess the needs of your community and create a starting point. Through various assessment techniques, you can determine baseline information, prioritize areas for improvement, and

find the right resources to implement selected strategies to meet your community's needs. In working with food stores, it is essential to couple an assessment of your food store's environment with an assessment of consumers in your community. Knowing your food store, as well as their consumer base, is the basic foundation for the subsequent steps in Check Out Healthy.

Moreover, suggested assessment tools vary in specificity. Some tools give specific information about the food store environment, other tools provide information on the broader community food system. Both are important pieces of information to take into consideration when deciding on strategies to use with your local food stores.

tip *When assessing the needs of your community, make sure to collect objective data as well as data that captures community perceptions.*

It is best practice to use a minimum of three different assessment techniques to grasp a full understanding of your community's current food environment. Data obtained from these assessment techniques can serve as baseline or pre-program indicators and can be repeated as mid-and post-indicators to determine the impacts of your program. This may be useful when determining if improvements have been made along the course of your program.

Each approach necessitates a different distribution of resources (i.e. money, time, people) and has been categorized accordingly (minimal, medium or high resources needed).

Here are several assessment techniques and resources you may use:

1) Review Existing/Public Data *minimal resources needed*

Review existing county, city, town, village, or neighborhood-level data related to food environment indicators. There are various data sources today which can help you better know your state or community's food environment. Public and commercial data sets are both available for use.

▶ **USDA Food Environment Atlas:**

This resource provides food environment indicators to examine factors related to food choices, diet quality, and access to healthy food. www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas.aspx

▶ **USDA Food Desert Locator:**

This resource offers maps and data on food deserts, defined as low-income areas with limited access to supermarkets or large grocery stores. <http://ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

▶ **Wisconsin's County Health Rankings:**

The County Health Rankings provide county-level reports on health outcomes and health factors, including an indicator related to healthy food access. www.countyhealthrankings.org/wisconsin





► **Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW):**

This statewide research survey is modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. SHOW offers health-related data on representative samples of state residents and communities. www.med.wisc.edu/show/survey-of-the-health-of-wisconsin/35828

► **United States Census Bureau's County and zip Code Business Patterns Data:**

The U.S. Census Business Patterns data provides the number of establishments, number of employees, and payroll data by industry. Data can be used to track which zip codes, metropolitan areas, and counties have retailers located within their boundaries. www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html

► **CDC State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables:**

This report provides national and state-level data on the number of fruits and vegetables people are eating, and highlights key areas within

communities and schools that can be addressed to increase fruit and vegetable access, availability, and affordability.

www.cdc.gov/obesity/resources/reports.html

► **CDC Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report:**

This report highlights selected behaviors, environments, and policies that affect childhood obesity through support of healthy eating.

www.cdc.gov/obesity/resources/reports.html

► **SavorWisconsin.com:**

This resource can be used to find Wisconsin food products, businesses, and services. It provides an easy way to identify the locations and schedules of farmers' markets in Wisconsin.

www.savorwisconsin.com

► **Wisconsin's Farm Fresh Atlases:**

This regional food guide maps businesses selling local foods and using sustainable production and business practices.

www.farmfreshatlas.org

► **Local Harvest-Farmers' Market and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm Locator:**

This guide provides a quick way to find existing farmers' markets and CSA farms in your area. www.localharvest.org

► **Wisconsin Grocers Buy Local:**

Grocers Buy Local is an official website and database of Wisconsin grocers interested in purchasing locally grown fruits, vegetables, meats, cheese and more from local farmers, growers, producers and manufacturers. <http://grocersbuylocal.com>

2) Comprehensive Community Assessments

high resources needed

Conduct a wide-reaching, thorough community assessment that includes food environment and/or food access issues.

► **Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool:**

Developed by the CDC and USDA, this tool can be used to gather and organize data on community assets and can help plan for improvement. www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/change.htm

► **What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community and Food Assessment**

This guide includes tools for conducting and planning a community-wide food assessment and case studies on communities that have used the tool. www.activelivingbydesign.org/events-resources/resources/whats-cooking-your-food-system-guide-community-food-assessment



"To a locally-owned business like ours, local is everything. We are fortunate to build relationships with passionate farmers and artisans who share our enthusiasm for a strong community. And there is comfort in knowing exactly where our food comes from, and exactly how fresh it is, having traveled less miles to reach our shelves. We all win when we buy local."

Metcalfe's

— Kevin Metcalfe, Vice President, Metcalfe's Market, Madison

► **Community Health Assessment (CHA):**

A fundamental tool of public health practice, a CHA is a process that uses quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data to better understand health within a community. The goal of a CHA is to develop strategies that address a community's health needs and issues.

For CHA resources, visit:

www.cdc.gov/ai/resources/popular/chip.html and <http://mappnetwork.naccho.org/page/cha-chip-examples>

“Understanding the retail grocery business and how grocers operate will go a long way in helping you develop partnerships with local grocers! As you reach out and explore these possibilities, keep in mind that the grocery industry and the day-to-day operations of running a store is very complex and is not a one-size-fits all. A good place to start with a grocer in your community may be around promoting local foods, which is usually a win-win proposition for everyone.”



— Brandon Scholz,
President and CEO of
Wisconsin Grocers Association

► **Community Health Improvement Plan/Process (CHIP):**

A community health improvement process uses community health assessment (CHA) data to identify priority concerns, create and establish strategies for action, and implement structures to ensure measurable health improvement, which are often detailed in the form of a CHIP. (Communities should ask their local health department if they have recently completed a CHIP.)

For CHIP resources visit:

www.cdc.gov/ai/resources/popular/chip.html
and <http://mappnetwork.naccho.org/page/cha-chip-examples>

3) Direct Observation

medium to high resources needed

Assess food outlets in person.

► **Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS) (validity and reliability tested)**

This tool measures the type and location of food outlets, the availability of healthier and less healthy options, pricing, and quality indicators.

www.med.upenn.edu/nems

To be trained on using NEMS, visit the online training site:

www.med.upenn.edu/nems/onlinetraining.shtml

NEMS-Stores:

www.med.upenn.edu/nems/docs/NEMS_S_Detailed.pdf

► **Environment Nutrition and Activity Community Tool (ENACT), Community Strategies Tool:**

Developed by the Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments, this tool allows for the assessment of current community food environments and the prioritization of strategies to make improvements.

<http://eatbettermovemore.org/sa/enact/members/index.php>

► **Wisconsin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Outlet Audit Tool:**

This tool can be used to observe your community's food environment to measure the current availability and quality of produce in outlets including supermarkets, convenience stores, farmer's markets, food pantries, and fruit and vegetable stands.

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity



4) Community Surveys

minimal to medium resources needed

Distribute questionnaires to community members through hard copy or web-based survey formats.

► Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW):

This statewide research survey is modeled after the CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). These assessments include in-person interviews, paper questionnaires, computer-assisted surveys, physical measurements and laboratory tests.

www.med.wisc.edu/show/survey-of-the-health-of-wisconsin/35828

For information on NHANES:

www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm

► Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (CX³):

CX³ is a community planning framework that involves assessing communities in relation to a variety of nutrition and physical activity benchmarks known as community indicators and assets.

www.ca5aday.com/cx3

Marketing Program for Grocers that Helps Promote Wisconsin Foods

Something Special from Wisconsin™ is our statewide identifier that guides consumers looking for products grown or made in Wisconsin. Founded in 1983, the program assists companies with increasing sales and enhancing their brand recognition. Wisconsin companies using the brand are approved to do so through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The logo guarantees that at least 50 percent of the ingredients, production activities or services are of Wisconsin origin. Annual membership fees range from \$0 to \$200 based on gross annual sales from the previous year. Fees are invested in brand promotion, member and consumer education, program materials and activities. Members credit an average of 12 to 15 percent annual sales increase to Something Special from Wisconsin™ program activities. Qualifying companies can join online at <http://ssfwmembers.wi.gov>.



► **Waupaca Eating Smart (WES) Survey:**

WES is a collaborative community effort led by a local nutrition and physical activity coalition with participating restaurants, and food stores that aims to increase nutritious food offerings to Waupaca residents. For a sample WES survey, see Appendix B.

<http://waupacaeatingSMART.wordpress.com/>

► **Wisconsin Perceptions of Fruit and Vegetable Access Community Survey:**

This survey can help clarify community members' views and opinions on fruit and vegetable access and can be used in hard copy or web-based formats.

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity

5) Focus Groups

medium resources needed

Convene groups of eight to ten consumers to discuss specific questions related to healthy food and beverage access in local food stores.

► **Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program website:**

This site provides social marketing and formative assessment resources, including focus group guides. www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/Resources/Planning/Index.htm

► **USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit – Focus Group Guides and Materials:**

This toolkit includes focus group guidelines related to food shopping patterns and community food production. www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan-electronic-publications-from-the-food-assistance-nutrition-research-program/efan02013.aspx

STORY from the Field

Getting to Know Your Community with NEMS

Tatiana Maida and Stephanie Calloway of CORE/El Centro, a community-based natural healing clinic in Milwaukee, conducted a Nutritional Environment Measures Survey (NEMS) for stores in a predominantly Latino Southside Milwaukee neighborhood. The NEMS was spearheaded by CORE/El Centro's Proyecto Salud, a program that uses community health promoters to inspire change in the Latino community.

CORE/El Centro surveyed 225 clients of its organization and a neighboring community clinic; 85 percent of the surveys were in Spanish. The survey asked clients about their eating habits such as where they shopped for groceries. Results revealed where clients frequently buy their groceries. The data collected from the survey responses informed which grocery stores should be observed in the NEMS.

6) Key Informant/Key Stakeholder Interviews

medium resources needed

Interview food store operators and individual community members, including identified community leaders, using a predetermined set of questions related to healthy food access in local food stores.

► Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity

Program website:

This site provides social marketing and formative assessment resources, including key informant/key stakeholder interviews.

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/Resources/Planning/Index.htm

7) GIS (geographic information system) Mapping

high resources needed

Collect mailing addresses and use GIS to link locations to data on food access points in your community. To create GIS maps, work with partners with mapping expertise, such as city or county planning offices, universities, and state departments of health or agriculture.

There are several types of software available that geocode data, develop and create maps, or both. ESRI's ArcGIS is one of the most common software and geodatabase management applications. Other common software includes EpiInfo, SAS, Instant Atlas, or MapInfo.



— NEMS Team

The trained community health promoters conducted the NEMS. The survey of local food stores showed:

- A good availability and competitive pricing of fruits and vegetables in a predominately Latino neighborhood.
- Latino stores offered cheap produce but less availability and higher prices of several healthier items (whole wheat bread, milk, baked chips).
- Medium/large stores had high produce quality.

The CORE/El Centro community health promoters used the NEMS data for discussions on obesity prevention in the Southside Latino community. Moreover, with use of the NEMS data, the health promoters convened a community board to select a specific obesity/nutrition related topic to address in their community.

STEP *two*

Knowing Your Food Store

Once you have assessed your community's food environment, you will have some new information and data on food establishments in your community. You may use some of your data from the assessment to plan your program. However, you have only just begun delving into the world of food stores. It is important to get to know more about the food store(s) you are interested in partnering with. "Step 2: Knowing Your Food Store" provides information on how to better acquaint yourself with food stores and the food store industry.

Food Stores

So what exactly is a food store? A food store is a retail store engaged in selling food for home preparation and consumption. Food stores are a large part of our communities and play an important role in our day-to-day lives. They often emphasize eating at home and family meals.

There are many different types of food stores that you may find in your community. The following list defines them:

Convenience Store (corner store, corner shop, or bodega): A small, higher margin store that stocks a range of everyday items such as groceries, toiletries, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks, tobacco products, and newspapers.

Food Store: A retail operation that sells food products and other goods for home preparation and consumption.

Franchise Store: An independently owned store affiliated with a wholesale group and sharing a common name.

Grocery Store: A store that retails food and household products. A grocer stocks different types of foods from assorted places and cultures, and sells these "groceries" to customers.

Mom and Pop Store: A family-owned food store operated by a husband and wife and/or other family members.

Supermarket: A store that offers a wide variety of food and household products, organized into aisles. They are larger in size and have a wider selection than a traditional grocery store.

Super Centers: A large food/drug combination store and mass merchandiser under a single roof. Super centers offer a wide variety of food, as well as nonfood merchandise. These stores average more than 150,000 square-feet and typically devote as much as 40 percent of the space to grocery items.

Whole Sale Club/Membership: A retail/wholesale hybrid with a varied selection and limited variety of products presented in a warehouse-type atmosphere. These 90,000+ square-foot stores have 60 percent to 70 percent general merchandise/health/beauty, and a grocery line dedicated to large sizes and bulk sales, e.g., Sam's Club and Costco.

In addition to different types of food stores, there are different ways a food store is owned and operated. The following list defines different operation or management styles:

Grocer: An owner or manager of a store who sells food and small household goods.

Manager: An employee of a food store who is in charge of a group of tasks. Tasks may include: hiring and firing of employees, ordering inventory, staff scheduling, event planning, customer service, marketing and advertising, and bookkeeping and problem solving.

Operator: A food store owner or an individual who has the responsibilities of maintaining and running the business. A food store operator may also be the manager of a food store, but not always. Food store operators are often called grocers.

For a complete list of food store systems terminology, please see Appendix A.

A Food Store's Obligations

Like all businesses, food stores have an obligation to serve the customer and meet their bottom line. In very simplistic terms, the bottom line is the profit of a company. This is the net revenue—the amount made after expenses and taxes are paid. The bottom line is used to determine the financial strength of a company. Ultimately, an operator tries to structure the business's operations to generate money and keep costs to a minimum.

It is important to understand that a food store and its operator have many responsibilities and costs. Costs include a range of items, such as labor, goods sold, marketing, occupancy, repairs and maintenance, and administrative costs. When developing your program, keep in mind that the operator is often making tough decisions when balancing and determining spending within their business.



Trend data identifies patterns, or trends, within food purchasing and consumption.

Food stores highly value their customers, often basing their items in stock on consumer trends and sales. If customers aren't interested in an item or if a product isn't selling, then a food store may remove it from their stock. Simply put, food stores respond to consumer demand. When working with a food store, stay in tune with trend data and examine the importance of sales data.

Approaching a Food Store

Part of working with a food store is to understand what they hope to achieve as a business. As previously emphasized, food stores have an agenda contingent on an array of factors. Do not approach a food store with your agenda without considering theirs.

Working with food stores is a partnership. Consider outlined methods for partnering in the next step, "Step 3: Establishing Partnerships." When approaching a food store, bring methods acquired from Steps 1-3 to the table.

Before going to a food store, know the store's structure and inventory. Being knowledgeable about a food store shows the store operator that you did your homework.

You may already have assessment data for food stores in your community. Attempt to get to know your food stores a little more personally. Consider the following questions:

STORY from the Field

Corporate vs. Local Stores

Waupaca County Nutrition and Activity Coalition's (NuAct) Coordinator Bev Hall cites cold calling as her tool of choice to get to know her area food stores. This was one of the coalition's approaches when working on the community campaign Waupaca Eating Smart (WES). WES helps food stores make it easier for consumers to buy healthier foods. To establish WES presence in food stores, Bev starts by locating food stores in the community, then calls each store, explains the WES program, and asks if she can schedule an in-person meeting. If a food store shows interest, she then follows her cold call with an arranged face to face meeting, bringing along WES materials to enhance her offer.

When making the cold calls, Bev noticed some challenges in getting to know food stores. For example, Bev discovered it was a greater challenge to partner with corporate stores as op-

- ▶ Is the food store well established and well known within the community?
- ▶ What is the food store's history?
- ▶ Is the food store an independent food store or a chain food store?
- ▶ What kind of foods does the food store offer?
- ▶ What are the characteristics of the food store's clientele?

Approaching an Operator

The operator of a food store is a very busy person. On a daily basis, they make sure food store operations are running smoothly. They often work very long hours and encounter the normal stresses that accompany working with employees and customers.

If you are planning on contacting an operator to discuss your program, keep in mind the following:

- ▶ Before calling an operator or stopping by their food store, write a letter informing them of your initiative. Follow up with a phone call.

- ▶ Operators are often preoccupied with running a business or dealing with employees. If you fail to reach an operator, try again.
- ▶ If you contact an operator, be flexible and accommodating regarding schedules and meeting times. Offer to come to their food store.
- ▶ Operators schedules are busiest during peak hours. Know when the food store is busy or slow. Try not to visit or call during weekday late afternoons.
- ▶ Operators prefer face-to-face meetings.
- ▶ Come to an operator fully prepared with topics of conversation. If you plan on having follow-up meetings, schedule them in person, preferably after a meeting.
- ▶ Ask the operator about any concerns or expected barriers.

— *Bev Hall,*
Waupaca Eating Smart



posed to local or independent stores. This was because corporate stores typically have specific limitations outlined by their corporate offices. Bev comments, "It was difficult to pitch ideas to corporate stores since their stores must have everything consistent." Even though there are benefits to partnering with corporate stores (more opportunities for marketing, bigger store, and greater reach), Bev suggests, "try to start local."

WES was successful in partnering with Piggly Wiggly, as well as a corporate food store, thanks to Bev's connections. However, it is much easier to start establishing a program in a locally owned or independent food store. These stores "offer more flexibility for your program strategies," says Bev. Getting to know your food store is an important step in the process, because it prepares you for potential challenges and barriers to launching your program and reaching your consumer base.

STEP *three*

Establishing Partnerships

You now have an assessment of your community's access to healthier foods and beverages in local food stores and knowledge of local food stores in general. Using the tools you've acquired along the way, you can start establishing a partnership with a food store. This is an essential step toward improving the quality of life and health of individuals within your community. As previously defined, a partnership is a collaborative relationship between entities working toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed upon division of labor. Partnerships are the means by which we bring about practical and realistic solutions to problems in a community.

Establishing a partnership will take work. When you form a partnership with a food store, you are essentially starting a relationship. You are attempting to create a common understanding and objective. This involves the time, effort, compromise, and patience of both parties. Accordingly, it's wise to be strategic in your approach and planning.

Use methods highlighted in Steps 2 and 3 when bringing your ideas to the table. Give options the food store can choose from (Step 4) rather than only presenting one way of doing things.

Being Strategic in Partnerships

It is important to remember when meeting potential partners that although you are an expert on your topic, you are not an expert on the food store business. Therefore, mindfully craft your ideas in a way that will appeal to both sides. You might have some ideas as to why a food store should offer healthier options; let's call them "old ideas." These "old ideas" could be public health oriented. For instance, it is helpful to discuss how increased portion sizes contribute to obesity in the United States. This is important to emphasize and understand in the right context. However, when working with an operator of a food store, it is better to align your thoughts on healthier foods and beverages with their perspective. Remember, most operators are concerned with reaching their bottom line, responding to consumer demand, and fulfilling the needs of the customer.

Convert your “old ideas” to “new ideas” when establishing partnerships:

- ▶ First, approach an operator asking how you can be of help. Avoid making demands or excluding the operator from the program planning process. Involving them in the process is critical to getting their buy-in to the program.
- ▶ Avoid going into a partnership by telling the operator how they should improve their current food inventory. Remember, this is a two-way partnership. Ask operators if they would like to add more healthy options to the quality items they already offer.
- ▶ Work with what the food store is already doing. If the food store is already attempting to highlight produce, try to build on their existing

efforts. Offer your assistance in other ways, such as advertising or marketing items (See “Step 4: Developing Your Program”).

- ▶ Explain to the operator that you are looking to give their customers the option of more healthy items.
- ▶ Research and reference the consumer demand for nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole-wheat items in food stores. Show examples of success, particularly in sales, from incorporating these healthy items.
- ▶ Justify your partnership. What do you have to offer? For instance, a local coalition may offer in-kind assistance or free media and press. Talk about what your ideas can do for their business.



The Apprehensive Food Store

Sometimes a food store may be unsure about working with you or may not want to work with you at all. If you are frustrated or getting stuck, there are a few solutions.

1. If an operator is unwilling to work with you or says “No thanks,” don’t give up. Food store operators are very focused on their business and tend to concentrate on what’s already within their four walls. Look for other food stores in your community (or a nearby community) that are willing to cooperate and work with you. Invest in your relationship with those first. Then go back to the apprehensive operator and show them how your work is benefitting other food stores. You may even highlight the competitive edge other food stores have gained since working with you.

2. If an operator is unresponsive after you’ve made plans to work together, continue to follow up with them. Operators are busy people. Continue to

make an effort where a partnership is desired. You may have to make a much bigger effort than the operators.

3. If you find yourself without a partner, use the connections you’ve already made. For instance, if an operator within your community has said “No thanks” to a partnership, find out why. Are there strategies you can tweak to realize the partnership and achieve your goals?



STORY from the Field

Making a Difference with Angeli Foods

Angeli Food’s mission is to create an experience for their employees and customers that earns loyalty and meets their goals. Todd Nehls, the store director at the Marinette location, helped demonstrate this mission after Angeli Food’s established a partnership with the Marinette-Menominee Aurora Health Care Clinic. The goal of the partnership was to support healthy living and offer healthier choices to Angeli’s customer base. “You hear more and more about healthy living,” said Todd, “so we wanted to be a part of our community and support our customers to live healthy, day to day.” So, Angeli Foods approached the Marinette-Menominee Aurora Health Care Clinic after hearing about their newsletter for healthy living. The newsletter included specific recipes with healthier options, outlined by doctors at Aurora. A partnership was soon established,

Other Tips

- ▶ Use media to encourage interested parties to contact you.
- ▶ If an operator loses interests, follow up and ask why. The problem may be easy to fix.
- ▶ Seek partnerships with trade associations to enhance the credibility of your initiative and gain insight on the food store industry.

Keep in Mind

- ▶ The benefits of effective partnerships do not appear overnight. It's important to recognize this, particularly when you sit down with an operator and discuss ideas.
- ▶ A partnership involves the participation of both parties. Listen to the operator's concerns and perspective. Use "new ideas" as conversation points.
- ▶ Partnerships are organic. This means that the relationship and ideas are likely to evolve in order to achieve goals. If the program ends up looking different from the one you intended, that is

"When approaching stores, explaining how your program can benefit them will help open the door to a partnership."

— Bev Hall,
Waupaca Eating Smart

okay. Look back at the goals you developed in the beginning of the partnership and evaluate your plan's potential to reach your desired outcome.

- ▶ A partnership with a food store is not the only type of partnering for your potential program. Key decision makers in your community, food coalitions, health advocates, health care systems, or other community organizations are viable potential partners to build a stronger base for your program. You'll need these types of relationships to boost consumer demand for healthier foods and beverages, which ultimately helps the food store operator sell more of these items.



and Angeli Foods incorporated healthy living recipes into their weekly grocery ads. Recipes were featured in conjunction with items offered in Angeli's deli, produce and meat departments.

Although Angeli Food's no longer maintains a partnership with Aurora, they continue to feature their own healthy recipes within their deli, produce and meat departments. The food store even features recipes for healthier children's meals. When asked why Angeli Food's continues to maintain the recipe program despite ending a partnership, Todd stated, "There hasn't been enough emphasis put on eating well, and we feel healthy living needs to be supported among our children and adults to ensure a healthier future for everyone. Using a program like this shows that we care about our community. I encourage every grocer to go for it." Thus, the partnership left a long-lasting impression on Angeli Foods and ultimately made eating healthy easier for the food store's customer base.

Lunch Break

Before you take the actions to develop your program, pause and evaluate the previous steps you have worked on. Keep in mind the following tips:

- ▶ Look back at the work you have done so far for the implementation of your program. Try not to forget about or put aside valuable information you now have. Use it for the development of strategies. Align data and information on food stores with the strategy that will work best. **Be practical** and start small. You will gain momentum as the partnership evolves.
- ▶ What resources do you have available to develop your program? For sustainability reasons, think about what is plausible for your program. Think of the following points:
 - How much money, time, and energy can we invest in the strategies?
 - What are the resources we currently have and for how long do we have them?
 - How many staff do we have? How big is our program's team?
 - How will our efforts be sustained?
- ▶ Strategies outlined in the next section are more powerful when combined. For instance, a food store labeling initiative will work better when integrated with promotion of healthier food options.

BackEnd

STEP *four*

Developing Your Program

Now that you have assessed your community and begun a partnership, it is time to look at strategies and best practices that have worked. Step 4 outlines evidence-based strategies, potential partners in the community, implementation resources, and complimentary practices for your program. An additional section illustrates how to work with corner stores.

When deciding which strategy will work best in your community and partnered food store, remember to take into account the following:

- ▶ There might be existing assets in your community. Identify what is already happening related to the food environment or potential partners in the health community.
- ▶ It's important to take into account the operator's needs and what strategies will work with their establishment. Some strategies might work better than others, according to the type of food store, staff and community setting.

Considering these points will help you make a better decision about how to move forward.

Evidence-based Table

The strategies outlined within Check Out Healthy are evidence-based. The following evidence level tool is used to indicate the strength of the evidence surrounding each strategy.

Evidence Levels:

1 = **Strategy is proven:** Strong or sufficient evidence of effectiveness based on an adequate number of studies.

2 = **Strategy is promising:** Evidence is insufficient to determine if it works or not, but is moving in the direction of effective.

3 = **Strategy is opinion:** Evidence and expert consensus-based recommendations, guidelines or standards.

Evidence levels for Check Out Healthy strategies are designated in the Strategy Evidence Table.

Each strategy necessitates a different distribution of resources (i.e., money, time people, etc.). The strategies outlined in this step have been categorized accordingly (minimal = \$, medium = \$\$, or high resources = \$\$\$ needed).

STRATEGY EVIDENCE TABLE		
	EVIDENCE LEVEL	RESOURCE INTENSITY
FOCUS AREA POINT OF PURCHASE		
STRATEGY Food Store Labeling System	2	\$\$ to \$\$\$
STRATEGY Product Placement and Advertising	2	\$\$\$
FOCUS AREA AFFORDABILITY		
STRATEGY Coupons or Pricing Incentives	3	\$
FOCUS AREA ACCESS		
STRATEGY Increased Availability, Variety & Convenience	2	\$ to \$\$\$

The evidence base for food store strategies is ever evolving. Please consult the What Works for Health database at: <http://whatworksforhealth.wisc.edu>.

What Is My Role?

Public health practitioners, local coalitions, community organizations, and individuals working to promote health in food stores have a mission to improve health outcomes. They play an important role in bringing together different local and statewide organizations. They harness resources from a unique

group of organizations that are looking to improve health in communities through program planning and evaluation. By using resources efficiently, these individuals can utilize the following strategies for implementation within food stores.



Point of Purchase

What is it?

Point of Purchase (POP) influences customers to purchase something targeted, particularly where purchases are made. Strategies such as a food store labeling system or signage that specify healthy food and beverage choices can be used.

Program Partners

- ▶ Printing and labeling agencies
- ▶ Student assistants (for in-kind help)
- ▶ Newspaper/local press
- ▶ Radio/TV stations
- ▶ Web designers
- ▶ Distributors
- ▶ Local representatives/key decision makers
- ▶ Registered dietitian/nutritionist

Implementation Resources

Eat Well at Festival Foods

www.festfoods.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&d=3273&Itemid=194

USDA Dietary Guidelines

<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>

CDC Health and Sustainability Guidelines

www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/guidelines/food-service-guidelines.htm

NuVal

www.nuval.com

Hyvee Food Store-NuVal

www.hy-vee.com/health/nuval/default.aspx

Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity

www.yaleruddcenter.org

Cornell University Food and Brand Lab

www.foodpsychology.cornell.edu/index.html

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

www.countryhealthrankings.org

Produce for Better Health Foundation

www.pbhfoundation.org/get_inv

Awareness Day Resource

www.dosomething.org/actnow/actionguide/start-awareness-campaign-about-your-cause-your-school-or-neighborhood

Shape up Somerville Campaign

www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2009/jul/08_0165.htm

Waupaca Eating Smart

www.somervillema.gov/departments/health/sus

Center for Training and Research Translation

www.centertrt.org



Food Store Labeling System

A food store labeling system can raise customer awareness of healthier items in the store. It provides concise nutritional information for customers to help them judge, at a glance, the quality and value of products that they are considering.

What can I do with my store operator?

- ▶ Offer assistance to create a food store labeling system. Assistance may be in the form of signage development or nutrition analysis.
- ▶ To help sustain nutritional analysis to support food store labeling, consider connecting with a nearby university or college that has programs centered on dietetics or nutrition.

Learn how to speak to key decision makers in your community.

Visit <http://healthinpractice.org/>

Food store labeling is a large undertaking for a single program:

- ▶ Include a third party vendor within your program planning and development process.
- ▶ Seek outside funding in the form of grants or other community partnerships.

- ▶ Connect with public health students at nearby colleges or universities to assist in creating signage.
- ▶ Have customers or groups consult a registered dietitian who can offer advice on selecting healthier foods. You can hire a dietitian, but many colleges have programs with students willing to help.
- ▶ Ask the operator to include a section on nutrition or available healthy foods in the store's monthly newsletter.

Complementary Practices

- ▶ Meet with community members to discuss support for food store labeling programs. You may need to present goals for promotion as well.

Strategy

Product Placement and Advertising

In this approach, food stores feature an item to increase customers' exposure to it. In food stores, advertising and strategically placing foods in highly visible locations is one type of product placement. Signs are frequently used to highlight or promote the item.

What can I do with my store operator?

- ▶ Reposition stocked goods so that healthy items are more prominent.
- ▶ Focus on branding. Well-designed logos, titles, or slogans can make positive, lasting impressions.
- ▶ Help produce and distribute media and promotional announcements. This process can take place in-store or through local media outlets.
- ▶ Highlight healthy items on signage, window clings, in food store coupon pamphlets, or in newsletters.
- ▶ Using your own earned media, publicize businesses in which operators currently highlight healthy foods. *Earned media is favorable publicity gained through promotional efforts other than advertising.*
- ▶ Develop an award program for operators or food stores whose displays bring attention to nutritious foods or who create better access to healthier options.
- ▶ Create health literacy outreach programs for customers.
- ▶ Suggest that an operator join a foundation supporting fruit and vegetable consumption.

Be creative and audience-conscious. Younger residents may use unique media outlets like podcasts or independent radio stations.

STORY from the Field

Nutrition on Sale

Three years ago, Stephanie Walker Schultz was hired by Festival Foods® to develop a nutrition and wellness program. As their current Health and Wellness Director, Stephanie plays a key role in Festival Foods' multifaceted approach to improving the nutrition of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Stephanie developed a nutrition and wellness program from the ground up, which involved training 4,000 Festival Foods employees and changing the concept of nutrition in communities using their grocery store. Today, through Stephanie's diligence and input from countless others, Festival Foods now includes the Health/Wellness Department. The core of this new department is the Eat Well® program, which is coupled with the nutrition scoring system, NuVal®. An online nutrition database, dietitian resources and a weekly Wednesday blog complement Eat Well. The Health/Wellness Department highlights the multi-level approach necessary to effectively promote healthy eating and combat obesity.

At Festival Foods, the Eat Well program markets nutrition as a broad concept. One featured item is paired with several resources like NuVal and a weekly blog entry. For instance, Eat Well may feature

The Produce for Better Health Foundation allows operators and their stores to become members in the Fruits and Veggies More Matters program. Once a qualified member, the operator can promote their membership throughout their store. For more information, visit: http://pbhfoundation.org/get_inv

What can I do with my chamber of commerce?

Hold a meeting, at which you stress the benefits of establishing a community campaign. Community campaigns are composed of a group of individuals with a common goal or cause. The campaigns work beyond the scope of the individual food store program. They are directed by entities outside of food stores, can include marketing via television and magazine ads, and encourage food store participation in order to offer and advertise healthier food options. Marketing food stores that join a community campaign helps to:

- ▶ Build customer loyalty, which may lead to better sales of healthy foods.
- ▶ Reach many people with few resources (cost-effective and efficient).
- ▶ Widen the stores' customer base. If residents are looking for healthy foods, participating stores will draw them.

Complementary Practices

- ▶ Couple this strategy with a community campaign or food assistance program (SNAP, WIC, etc.).
- ▶ Push to create an awareness day dedicated to healthy food promotion.
- ▶ Talk to local key decision makers about ways to allocate funds for advertising fresh foods in your community, such as a nearby university or college that has programs centered on dietetics or nutrition.

Sales data is a useful tool for determining impacts on your program. However, be aware that it might be difficult to obtain or is altogether unavailable.

— Stephanie Walker Schultz,
Festival Foods®, Green Bay, WI



a “build your own pizza” and use NuVal to analyze each ingredient. This helps customers learn two things: how they can use the ingredients together and what nutritional value each ingredient has to offer. To supplement Eat Well posts, Festival Foods places many of the featured ingredients on sale. The grocery store advertises campaigns like “build your own pizza” on their Wednesday blog or in their customer newsletter.

Stephanie says to effectively market Eat Well foods, “it’s the little things that count.” Eat Well emphasizes that small changes in advertising can make a big difference to customers. For instance, altering an ad’s font style or prioritizing a healthy alternative (e.g., wheat flour over white) are proven strategies to increase sales of chosen items. In the end, Stephanie and Festival Foods have implemented a successful, wholesome approach to marketing nutrition. Using multiple resources and methods within their Eat Well program has worked well.



Affordability

What is it?

Employing reduced prices or coupons to promote the purchase of healthy food options.

Program Partners

- ▶ Healthcare centers
- ▶ Local/State health departments
- ▶ Food security coalitions
- ▶ Farmers
- ▶ Distributors
- ▶ Local representatives/key decision makers

Implementation Resources

Lindsay Heights Neighborhood Alliance
www.resilientcities.org/Resilient_Cities/LINDSAY_HEIGHTS_HEALTH_ALLIANCE.html

Double Value Coupon Program
www.wholesomewave.org/dvcp

Community Development Block Grants
www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD

Empowerment Zone/Renewal Communities Incentives
www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/economic_development/programs/rc

Grant resources are helpful for supplementing the cost/pricing of healthier foods.

Strategy

Coupons or Pricing Incentives

Coupons and pricing incentives make healthier foods more affordable and attractive to customers.

What can I do with my store operator?

- ▶ Ask operators in your community if they accept WIC, SNAP, or FoodShare credit. Help those who do not participate learn more about these programs as an opportunity to widen their customer base.
- ▶ Ask operators to include fruit and vegetables in seasonal sales. Seasonal produce is less expensive and often more flavorful. For instance, a store could launch an autumn “Pumpkinfest” campaign or a “Melonfest” during the summer. Offer to keep operators up to date on what produce is in season.
- ▶ Sales data is a useful tool for determining the impacts of your program. Be aware that it might be difficult to obtain or altogether unavailable.

Section 108 Loan Program

www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/108

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund

www.cdfifund.gov

WIC

www.fns.usda.gov/wic

SNAP

www.fns.usda.gov/snap

FoodShare Wisconsin

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/feligibility.htm

Grants.gov

www.grants.gov

Bell Institute for Health and Nutrition

www.bellinstitute.com/Grants_And_Awards.aspx

USDA Grant Information

www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/funding.cfm

USDA Team Nutrition Training Grants

www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/grants.html





STORY from *the Field*

Healthy. Just Around the Corner

The Healthy Corner Store Initiative in Milwaukee targets the scarcity of fresh produce in Lindsay Heights, one of the city's most urban neighborhoods. The program was piloted in 2011 by a small group of residents who partnered with the Lindsay Heights Neighborhood Health Alliance, Walnut Way Conservation Corps, and the "M.O.V.E. crew" from Alice's community garden. The Healthy Corner Store Initiative aims to boost business in neighborhood corner stores that stock locally grown fruits and vegetables by encouraging customers to purchase and eat the fresh produce.

Budgeting concerns or property disagreements are setbacks for the Healthy Corner Store Initiative. However, the program still makes progress in being able to offer healthy options to every community member. The involved corner store operators try to charge less money for fresh produce than most retail stores in north Milwaukee. Storekeepers also regularly accept EBT and WIC credit. These pricing strategies increase the number of store customer's who can shop for produce that would otherwise be unaffordable.

Complementary Practices

- ▶ Allow WIC, SNAP, or FoodShare to be accepted by food stores in food deserts.
- ▶ Consider incentives for WIC, SNAP, or FoodShare recipients to purchase more fruits and vegetables.

The Double Value Coupon Program provides participants with incentives that match the value of their federal nutrition benefits when used to purchase fresh, local produce at participating farm-to-retail venues. For more information, visit <http://wholesomewave.org/dvcp>

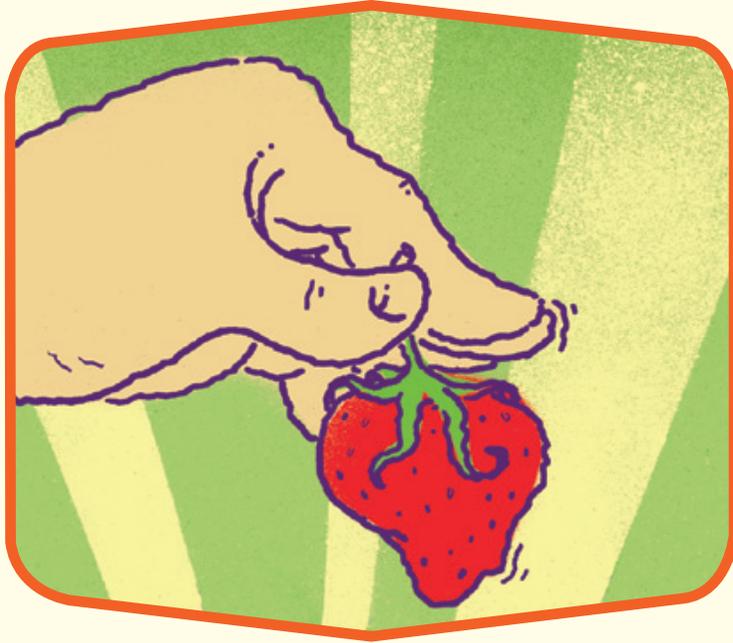
Sustainability Tips

- ▶ Monitor and evaluate sales of healthy products.
 - If you are aware of sales increases, you may be able to convince an operator to continue stocking those items.
 - If sales decrease, you may need to change tactics or use resources to promote other healthy items.
- ▶ To cover upfront costs of couponing, apply for grants or partner with larger organizations, such as health care centers. Outside funding allows grocers the freedom to experiment with different pricing structures.



— Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Milwaukee

The Healthy Corner Store Initiative emphasizes active involvement of community youths. These children and adolescents play an important role in the initiative by gardening, harvesting, and distributing produce to participating corner stores. They also spread awareness of the program by discussing their contributions with other Milwaukeeans at neighborhood or city events. "It's been wonderful watching them make the connection between growing produce and then going into the kitchen and cooking," says the Healthy Corner Store Initiative's Project Coordinator, Alex Barnett. The initiative thoughtfully encourages Lindsay Heights' youths to use their field experience and community-oriented perspective to better their own eating habits and those of their peers.



Access

What is it?

Access aims to increase the availability and convenience of quality and healthy foods and beverages in communities.

Program Partners

- ▶ Local/State health departments
- ▶ Farmers
- ▶ Farmers' markets
- ▶ Urban/Transportation planners
- ▶ Distributors
- ▶ Local representatives/key decision makers

Implementation Resources

Fresh Madison Market
www.freshmadisonmarket.com

Fresh Madison Markets' "FreshMobile"
www.marketonwheels.com/aboutus.html

ChangeLab Solutions
www.changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/healthy-food-retail

PolicyLink
www.policylink.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=IkIXLbMNJrE&b=5136581&ct=6994695

The Congressional Hunger Center
www.hungercenter.org/publications/healthy-corner-stores-for-healthy-new-orleans-neighborhoods

Fruits & Veggies: "More Matters"
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Grocers Buy Local
www.grocersbuylocal.com

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin
www.datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/index.aspx

The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI)
www.trfund.com/pennsylvania-fresh-food-financing-initiative

Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH)
www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2009/fresh.shtml

Farmers Market and Direct to Consumer Marketing
www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/farmersmarkets

Healthy Mobile Vending Policies
www.changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/mobile-vending-produce-carts

Healthy Food Financing Initiative
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/ced

Grocery Store Attraction Strategies
www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/groceryattraction_final.pdf



Community Development Block Grants
www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD

Empowerment Zone/Renewal Communities Incentives
www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/economicdevelopment/programs/rc

Section 108 Loan Program
www.portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/108

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
www.cdfifund.gov



Increased Availability, Variety, and Convenience

This strategy increases the availability, variety, and convenience of healthy foods throughout the food environment.

What can I do with my store operator?

- ▶ Help operators develop or redesign their shelves to improve the range of food options sold in stores.
- ▶ Reposition stocked goods so that healthy items are more prominent.
- ▶ Use produce vans, mobile carts or farmers' markets to reach neighborhoods with limited resources.
- ▶ Help operators equip their stores to accept WIC, SNAP, or FoodShare credit.

The Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program and The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI) are two programs that use financial incentives to promote the establishment and retention of neighborhood grocery stores in underserved communities. For more information, visit:

FRESH
www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2009/fresh.shtml

FFFI
www.trfund.com/pennsylvania-fresh-food-financing-initiative

Complementary Practices

- ▶ Work with urban and transportation planners to develop transportation routes that provide better access to healthier food.
- ▶ Provide incentives for grocers to provide healthy foods in underserved urban and rural communities.
- ▶ Encourage mobile vendors to offer affordable and healthy foods.
 - Remember, mobile markets must comply with the same health and sanitation standards as other retail food facilities.
- ▶ Consider contracts that support local purchasing. For example, work with a grocer to commit to spending 10 percent of their food budget on local products.

STORY from the Field

The Freshmobile

Jeff Maurer, owner and operator of Fresh Madison Market, started out in the food store business bagging groceries. In fact, he had no intention of staying in the business, stating, "...that was not my career goal when I was in high school... but I fell in love with it." Since then, Jeff has built a career around serving the customer. "For me, this is about serving people," says Jeff. Jeff has stayed true to his mission by creating the Freshmobile, a grocery store on wheels that brings a variety of affordable produce to underserved neighborhoods in Madison, Wisconsin.

Jeff's motivation to build the Freshmobile stemmed out of his experience with the Allied Drive Boys and Girls Club. "It was evident that the kids at the club wanted more fresh fruits and vegetables," says Jeff. Jeff devoted time to researching the neighborhood and speaking with community members about the establishment of a local food store. Through his research, he discovered that there was not enough population density to fiscally support a food store and that an alternative solution was necessary.

The Freshmobile was inspired by a program in Chicago called Fresh Moves. Fresh Moves retrofitted a donated truck in order to sell produce. Borrowing a few ideas from Fresh Moves,

The Healthy Food Financing Initiative supports projects that increase access to healthy and affordable foods in communities that currently lack these options.

For more information, visit:
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/ced

- ▶ Inform decision makers about the benefits of increasing access to healthy and affordable foods.
- ▶ Research federal and state incentives to retailers purchasing locally grown products.

Sustainability Tips

- ▶ Provide operators with good handling practices for produce to avoid spoiling. For tips, visit: www.iatp.org/files/Produce_Handling_Guide_IATP%20_June_2010.pdf
- ▶ Collaborate with operators to create an alternative/additional drop date for produce.
- ▶ Consider a Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant. Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin is an economic development program designed to increase the purchase of Wisconsin grown/produced food products for sale to local purchasers. For information, visit: http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/index.aspx

— *Jeff Maurer, Owner and Operator,
Fresh Madison Market*

Jeff purchased a racecar trailer that was built with the Freshmobile in mind. Jeff states, "The trailer supports the weight, it could be cool, it has a thermo king unit on it to keep it cool or heated in the winter, on board water supply, on board generator...it's totally self sufficient."

The Freshmobile targets six identified neighborhoods in Madison that are classified as food deserts. The Freshmobile has schedules for each specific neighborhood and delivers thousands of schedule fliers to each community. Along with fliers and media coverage, Jeff hopes to market by word of mouth with "...one community member telling another community member, in a grassroots way," says Jeff. Shopping at the Freshmobile is a savings compared to in-store prices, which include overhead costs like rent. "People perceive the Freshmobile to be expensive...but it's much cheaper to buy from my trailer than to buy from my store."

Jeff's favorite part about his job: watching kids trying new produce in the trailer. Ultimately, Jeff hopes that kids today will "...eat better, so they can educate their parents." Jeff also looks forward to other grocers in other cities creating their own Freshmobile, in order to increase the availability of and access to healthier foods.





Additional Strategies

The following strategies may be used in combination with the previously described strategies.

Strategy

Work with the community on the education for alternatives to unhealthy foods and beverages

Hold community workshops or classes that teach the benefits of eating nutritiously. Stress the importance of healthy foods and beverages and local points of access.

Strategy

Support in-store healthy food and beverage arrangement, education and sampling activities

Follow through by spreading applied knowledge: how customers can prepare, cook, and store their produce.

- ▶ This approach may require additional funding.
- ▶ Candidate stores should use evidence-based models to promote nutrition education and produce sampling.

Strategy

Establish a food council

Food councils can provide local, regional, or state governments, as well as residents, information and advice about various policies and programs that support community-based food systems. Such a food system emphasizes, strengthens, and makes

visible the relationships among producers, processors, distributors, and consumers of food at the local and regional levels. For information on food councils, visit: www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/briefingpapers/foodcouncils.htm.

Working with Distributors

Food Distributors play a big role in helping food stores increase access to healthier foods and beverages. When working with food stores, be sure to ask where foods and beverages are bought and how often they order and receive them from a food distributor. Any given food store could buy product from one or more distributors. If an operator adds items to their order book, they will need to be assured they can rely on their distributor to consistently stock the new product.



Additionally, if you are working with a food store to add fruits or vegetables, you will need to consider the perishability of the produce. Because food distributors often deal with handling produce, they can quote what types of produce can be delivered to a specific place in a certain amount of time. One thing to consider is how often a food store receives orders from a distributor, as this might influence what foods a food store can buy and adequately store. For example, a food store might not have to pay a delivery fee if their order is over a certain amount. However, if a food store needs items that are highly perishable, the delivery truck might need to make another stop during the week. This extra “drop” can lead to additional costs. If there is need for an extra drop, see if the operator can negotiate reducing this cost with the distributor.

While working with the operator, ask distributors:

- ▶ To provide a list of healthier options. Use current research on food trends from local, state, and national media sources to demonstrate a demand for healthier options.
- ▶ To provide free samples of a healthy food product or ingredient so that a food store operator can offer tastings to patrons (in order to push a new product).
- ▶ To offset the increased deliveries at no or minimal cost to the food store in exchange for increased food store demand for the distributor’s products.

Capitalizing on *Convenience*

Increasing Access to Healthier Foods & Beverages in Convenience Stores

As you work on improving the food environment in your community, don't forget about convenience stores, corner stores, or bodegas as important food outlets as well as the full-scale supermarkets and grocery stores. There is emerging work around increasing access to healthier foods and beverages in these types of outlets. In some instances, these outlets may be the only point of access for foods and beverages in a neighborhood or community. Including these outlets in your assessment and strategy can help assure overall access for residents.

By name, convenience stores are a place where foods and beverages can be conveniently obtained. Assessing what is currently available is a place to start, but there may be additional considerations, including refrigeration and storage, marketing and signage, and obtaining products from a distributor. Offering more fresh fruits and vegetables may require some strategizing in regards to refrigeration and storage. The owner might not be able to purchase large amounts due to storage. Additionally, convenience stores may not get deliveries as frequently from a distributor. So, helping the food store owner work with a distributor to get the right amount of produce will be important, as well as determining fruit and vegetable selections that can be stored longer. Thinking about signage and marketing will also be important. A convenience store may or may not advertise what is available, so helping the owner find ways to market the healthier options will be critical. Working through these extra considerations will pay dividends in terms of increasing access to healthier foods and beverages that are conveniently available.



Implementation Resources:

- 1. Healthy Corner Stores Network:** Find success stories from many local initiatives from around the U.S., upcoming trainings and webinars, and resources to increase the availability and sales of healthy foods through small-scale stores.
www.healthycornerstores.org
- 2. The Healthy Corner Stores Initiative** (The Food Trust): Learn about best-practice work in Philadelphia corner stores that exemplify a multifaceted approach to increasing access to healthier foods and beverages in corner stores.
<http://thefoodtrust.org/what-we-do/corner-store>.
- 3. Healthy Corner Store Tips** The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Report outlines different techniques to solve common challenges when working to increase access to healthy foods and beverages in small corner stores.
www.iatp.org/files/500_2_106580.pdf and
www.iatp.org/files/258_2_106578.pdf

STEP *five*

Evaluating and Sustaining Your Program

Evaluating Your Program

It is imperative to evaluate your work. Evaluation is the process of gathering data, examining it, and determining if your program has effectively reached your objectives or fulfilled activity goals. Also, evaluation is important for future funding. Once you have selected strategies to implement for your program (Step 4), remember to choose and collect evaluation measures throughout your program's completion. If your evaluation shows positive impacts, you may want to consider adding additional strategies to your program or expanding it to more food stores. If your evaluation shows no improvement or mixed results, adjust or reconsider your current strategy. Your evaluation also gives important feedback for the grocer. Make sure to share and discuss the results of your evaluation with them.

Step 1 outlines several assessment ideas that you can also use as mid-point or post evaluation tools. Refer back to these tools and consider a mix of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation measures. For example, you might want to consider repeating

NEMS-S (Nutrition Environment Measures Survey in Stores) that gives quantitative scores paired with qualitative customer intercept interviews.

Evaluation is a key component of sustainability. It's essential to analyze whether or not your program is successful in its efforts.

Sustaining Your Program

Equally important to evaluating your program is sustaining your program. As your program becomes more established, it is necessary to plan for its prolonged sustainability. Sustainability is the capacity to endure. If you are working toward strategies that alter the availability or selection of healthier options, you will have to maintain your program to keep it running. For instance, offering healthier options could require continuing a community campaign, keeping the operator on board, and evaluating sales and success of added healthy options.

As you create and develop your program, consider the following questions related to longevity:

- ▶ What are my current resources?
- ▶ How can my current resources be directed towards strategies and partnerships?

This step is among the most challenging to put into practice. It involves maintaining your program's momentum and partners' interest. Use the following section to serve as a guide for sustainability and tool for solving common challenges.

Partnering for Sustainability

Realize the potential of establishing partnerships with health departments, health care systems, or colleges and universities near you. Funding, grant opportunities, in-kind media, free promotion, and student volunteers are some of the benefits of these types of partnerships. If you invest in programs, projects, or people, they are more likely to be willing to invest in you. In addition, help establish relationships between your partners, such as operators and local farmers.



Keys to Success for Sustainability

Note the following keys to success designed to create better outcomes and sustainability of your program:

- ▶ As much as possible, support the same staff throughout the program to establish and maintain strong relationships with grocers and community members.
- ▶ Be flexible when working with grocers to meet their needs (i.e., the placement of materials and time/location of activities).
- ▶ Maintain the increased availability of promoted healthy items. Consumer demand for promoted products will lead to better sales, that will, in turn, motivate grocers to try to stock other healthy foods. The maintenance of initial stocks, which can be monitored by conducting random visits throughout the program, is key to program sustainability. (Note: Be sure to cast this activity as a positive experience for the grocer and not like a health department inspection. It can be an opportunity to assess gains the food store and its management have made.)

The Roadmap for City Food Sector Innovation and Investment provides cities with guidance for developing a local foods investment strategy and selecting the best investment opportunities to create new jobs and strengthen local businesses while increasing a community's access to healthy, local and sustainably grown foods⁵.

For more information, visit:

<http://wallacecenter.org/our-work/Resource-Library/wallace-publications/Roadmap%20for%20City%20Food%20Sector%20Innovation%20and%20Investment.pdf>

⁵ San Francisco Planning Department. Roadmap for city food sector innovation and investment. City and County of San Francisco; 2013. Available at www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3540

STORY from the Field

A Family Tradition

Gooseberries Fresh Food Market, an independently owned and operated grocery store in Burlington, Wisconsin, knows how to stay in business. The store is operated by a 3rd generation grocer, David Spiegelhoff, whose family has been in the grocery business in Burlington for almost 100 years. Gooseberries offers Wisconsin local foods, organic foods, a full service meat department, bakery, and an assortment of unique products throughout the store's shelves.

Gooseberries' focus on local and fresh foods is a priority for Spiegelhoff. "Corn is picked up from the farm at 4 a.m. and goes for sale in the store the same day," said Spiegelhoff. The grocer partners with local farmers and runs weekly and daily pickups in order to supply customers with the best in local and fresh foods. "We are very proactive and pick up products daily," commented Spiegelhoff, "We have daily and weekly truck routes to get local items." In the store, food from local Burlington

- ▶ Locate natural allies. Natural allies are people who already work in the food store business, public health, agriculture, planning, or economic development arena, especially people who might have worked on previous food access efforts.

Challenges for Sustainability and ways to get around them

Note the following points as possible challenges for sustainability:

- ▶ Intervention strategies must adapt to specific types of food stores depending on size, layout, and how grocers decide to sell items.

Solution: Work very closely with your grocer to find the best strategies for them.

- ▶ Some grocers are hesitant to risk any decrease to sales.

Solution: Apply for funding to assist with supplementing costs. This allows the food store to try new strategies during a piloting period.



- ▶ Distributors may be unwilling to regularly deliver fresh foods to corner stores, given the low demand (and subsequent high cost per delivery).

Solution: Use less perishable items or more frozen fruits and vegetables that can be stored longer. Work out a cost effective charge if multiple deliveries are needed. The grocer can also investigate how orders may be placed differently to avoid additional delivery charges.



— *The Gooseberries' Family
Gooseberries Fresh Food Market
Burlington, Wisconsin*

farms are labeled with the farm's name, while food from other parts of the state are labeled "Buy local, buy Wisconsin." With an emphasis on fresh and local foods, Gooseberries' customers are eating healthier. "We're naturally eating healthier because we're using products in their most natural form with fresh and local produce and meats," said Spiegelhoff.

Gooseberries makes an effort to offer affordable prices for local and organic foods. "We price our items very aggressively and offer them at the best value possible," said Spiegelhoff. This approach understandably goes over well with Gooseberries' customers, as Spiegelhoff is able to maintain a loyal customer base. Gooseberries traditional grocery model of excellent customer service and strong partnerships with local and statewide farmers has enabled the business to prosper as well as contribute to the local economy.

THE
Appendix

Appendix A

TERMINOLOGY

The following list is a set of words and phrases commonly used within the food store industry⁶.

Bag Stuffer

An ad circular placed in a customer's grocery bag during bagging.

Bay

The bottom shelf in a retail aisle.

Convenience store (corner store, corner shop, or bodega)

A small, higher margin store that stocks a range of everyday items such as groceries, toiletries, alcoholic and soft drinks, tobacco products, and newspapers.

Chain Store

A retail operation of a group of 11 or more stores, which operate under a similar name under one corporate ownership.

Check-Out Rack

A rack in or near a checkout lane that displays high-impulse-buy merchandise, such as candy, gum, razor blades, cigarettes and magazines.

Display

A merchandising method of highlighting a product by arranging it in a way that attracts the attention of the customer.

Distributor

A person or company that supplies products to a retailer through a distribution center.

End Cap

A massive merchandise display at the end of an aisle, which is a prime selling location for high margin, impulse items.

Eye Level

A merchandising strategy to increase sales of a product by placing it at a customer's eye level.

Faced

The pulling forward of product to the edge of the gondola shelf to make the display appear fully stocked.

Franchise Store

An independently owned store affiliated with a wholesale group and sharing a common name.

Food Store

A retail operation that sells food products and other goods for home preparation and consumption.

Front End

The designated area of a retail store for customer checkouts and bagging stands.

Gondola (wall shelving)

Display shelves and racks that form aisles in a retail store.

Grocer

An owner or manager of a store who sells food and small household goods.

⁶ Definitions were retrieved from the Food Marketing Institute's Food Industry Glossary: www.fmi.org/research-resources/fmi-research-resources/food-industry-glossary

Appendix A

TERMINOLOGY *continued*

Grocery Store

A store that retails food and household products. A grocer stocks different types of foods from assorted places and cultures, and sells these “groceries” to customers.

Manager

An employee of a food store who is in charge of a group of tasks. Tasks may include: hiring and firing of employees, ordering inventory, staff scheduling, event planning, customer service, marketing and advertising, book-keeping and problem solving.

Mom and Pop Store

A family-owned food store operated by a husband and wife and/or other family members.

Operator

A food store owner or an individual who has the responsibilities of maintaining and running the business. A food store operator may also be the manager of a food store, but not always. Food store operators are often called grocers.

Order Book

A printed catalog of products in stock and a price listing used to place orders with a wholesaler and distributor.

Retail Display Allowance

Monies paid by a manufacturer to have their products on display, usually in a certain location.

Rack

A floor or counter display unit with shelves and hooks for merchandise.

Supermarket

A store that offers a wide variety of food and household products, organized into aisles. They are larger in size and have a wider selection than a traditional grocery store.

Super Centers

A large food/drug combination store and mass merchandiser under a single roof. Super centers offer a wide variety of food, as well as nonfood merchandise. These stores average more than 150,000 square feet and typically devote as much as 40 percent of the space to grocery items.

Whole Sale Club/Membership

A retail/wholesale hybrid with a varied selection and limited variety of products presented in a warehouse-type atmosphere. These 90,000+ square-foot stores have 60 percent to 70 percent general merchandise/healthcare and beauty and a grocery line dedicated to large sizes and bulk sales, i.e., Sam’s Club and Costco.

Appendix B

Waupaca Eating Smart Formative Assessment Patron Surveys

grocery stores

1. In the past 30 days, think about where you usually shopped for fresh fruits and vegetables.
Please check the 2 places where you buy most of your fruits and vegetables.

- Aldi's
- Kwik Trip
- Pick 'n Save
- Piggly Wiggly

2. In the 2 places where you usually shop, what stops you from buying more fruits and vegetables?
Check your top 3 choices.

- Price
- Lack of time
- Poor quality
- I don't know how to prepare them
- Messiness of store
- Store is hard to get to
- Limited storage space at home
- Lack of locally grown
- Flavor
- Little variety
- I don't have recipes
- Other _____

3. What would help you buy more fruits and vegetables?
Check your top 3 ideas.

- In-store specials/more value for your money
- Trying samples
- Having recipes available at the store
- Seeing in-store cooking demonstration for certain fruits/vegetables
- Having a nutrition specialist available to answer questions
- Nice displays
- More pre-cut, pre-washed fruits & vegetables available
- Pre-cut, pre-washed in different parts of the store
- Other _____

4. In a month, how much money do you spend on food/non-alcoholic beverages at food stores?

\$ _____

*Thank you for completing
our survey!*

Acknowledgements

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