

Healthy Communities Strategy #7: Healthy Food Retail Designation

Increase the number of retail venues that meet the North Carolina Healthy Food Retail (HFR) Designation.

Expected Outcomes*:

Increased number of retail venues that newly meet the North Carolina HFR Designation.

*Interim outcomes for current state program year include:

- Increased number of retail venues that complete the HFR Assessment for Small Food Stores and
- Increased number of retail venues meeting at least two new requirements of the HFR designation

Health Equity Planning Principals:

Health disparities are often influenced by the different levels of access that people have to healthy foods. Food inequity can occur because certain communities with limitations in resources and income do not have access to high quality foods in their area. Projects should prioritize settings that serve food to individuals with lower incomes and/or access, not only offering a healthy selection, but also making healthy items appealing and financially accessible to those with the greatest health disparities.

Priority populations should be engaged in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the strategy. This includes groups that have an increased susceptibility to adverse health outcomes and may be defined by demographic factors such as race/ethnicity, income level, age, gender, education attainment, marital status, or health care coverage status; and/or geography such as a region of a state or a specific community. For example, people living in rural and isolated communities can experience food inequity due to the cost of transportation increasing the price of fresh fruits and vegetables. Once you identify the priority population for the strategy, you can select the best setting through which to reach the group.

Recommended Partners:

• public health educators • community groups • local food councils or other community coalitions • community members that represent the population at greatest risk for health disparities related to nutrition • store owners • health organizations (e.g. hospitals) • cooperative extension • farmers • schools • local civic groups • faith communities • local chambers of commerce

Intervention Examples:

A. The local food council identified several store owners that were willing to stock fresh produce in their convenience stores but found that existing distributors did not offer small quantities of produce at cost-effective prices. After some investigation, the local food council facilitated the development of a store-owner coop which enabled the stores to pool their produce orders for lower prices. Because the produce was delivered to a central location rather than to individual stores, the cooperative buying process allowed for even greater cost savings.

- B. A store owner was hesitant about stocking healthier food and beverages since she didn't think her customers would buy them. She offered a few healthy items but said they didn't sell well. Local community partners completed a store assessment and noted the few healthy items available in the store were hard to find. Partners then surveyed customers to identify healthier products they would be interested in buying and barriers to purchasing these items. The survey results indicated that customers didn't know which products were considered healthy. Results also showed that customers enjoyed eating fruits and vegetables but didn't feel confident in their ability to choose or cook a healthy meal. After reviewing the survey results, the store owner was willing to stock a few varieties of fruits and vegetables and a few specific items her customers mentioned. Community partners provided training to the store owner on how to properly place and promote healthier options in the store so that her customers could identify them. Partners purchased signage and promotional materials to showcase the healthier foods being offered. Partners also placed cards with easy recipes in the store along with grouped ingredients from the recipe for easy access to customers. These strategies, along with the local cooperative extension staff offering cooking demonstrations on how to prepare healthy meals with products found in the store, increased the sale of healthy foods.

Related Programs:

The Healthy Food Small Retailer Program was created by the NC Legislature to address the issue of food deserts. Through this program, small retailers can apply to receive refrigeration and freezer equipment to help increase their food options such as lean meat, low-fat dairy, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. This program is housed in the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

www.ncagr.gov/markets/healthyFoodSmallRetailer/index.htm

Recommended Tools/Resources:

- A. Healthier Food Retail: An Action Guide for Public Health Practitioners
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/state-local-programs/pdf/Healthier-Food-Retail-guide-full.pdf
- B. The National Healthy Corner Stores Network
<http://thefoodtrust.org/what-we-do/administrative/healthy-corner-stores-network>
- C. USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Healthy Corner Stores, Making Corner Stores Healthier Places to Shop (June 2016)
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/Healthy-Corner-Stores-Guide.pdf>
- D. The Food Trust's Why Sell Healthy Food? Stocking more healthy foods could mean better business for you.
http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/phcsn-sell-healthy-guide.original.pdf
- E. Retail Fruit & Vegetable Marketing Guide (June 2011)
<http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/datastore/234-2083.pdf>

- F. Providing Fresh Produce in Small Food Stores - Distribution Challenges & Solutions for Healthy Food Retail (2014)
www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Fresh-Produce-Distribution-Small-Food-Stores_FINAL_20140131.pdf

North Carolina Resources:

- A. North Carolina Healthy Food Retail Assessment and/or Designation Application (Online) – **Required** for completion of each store assessment and/or for applying for designation.
www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCHealthyFoodRetail
- B. North Carolina Healthy Food Retail Assessment/Designation Application (pdf) – for purpose of previewing online assessment/application for designation
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nc_hfr_assessment_application.pdf
- C. Healthy Food Retail Toolkit for Small Food Stores
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/resource/healthy-food-retail-toolkit/

Data Sources:

Reviewing data from the following sources can assist you in identifying your priority population(s) for this specific strategy.

- A. Social Determinants of Health by Regions
<http://nc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=def612b7025b44eaa1e0d7af43f4702b>