the eat good, feel good program guide to creating healthy corner stores

"Made possible with funding from the North Carolina Community Transformation Grant and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."

Produced June 2014

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COMMUNITY FOOD LAB
DESIGN. ADVOCACY. ENGAGEMENT.

The EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD program was created as part of North Carolina's Community Transformation Grant. Beginning in December 2013, five counties in the region joined forces with Community Food Lab to develop a pilot study to explore Healthy Corner Stores as a tool for increasing healthy food access. The information in this program guide and toolkit is the product of that study. Built on the findings over 6 months, involving lessons from 10 diverse stores across this diverse region, the recommendations and instructions contained here are designed to drive flexible, process-based approaches to creating Healthy Corner Stores.

We want to thank the Health Educators and county staff in Caswell, Chatham, Durham, Guilford, and Person counties for their contributions of time, expertise, and local knowledge. Logos and marketing materials were developed by Marianne Maschal. Thank you also to the store owners, farmers, and community partners who contributed time, energy, and wisdom to the project.

so you want to start healthy corner stores in your community?

This guide and toolkit will steer you through a Healthy Corner Store program that is tailored to your local needs, and builds on local resources. Every county, every neighborhood, every corner store, and every set of project partners is different. We have developed this program to give you the tools to adapt our general principles to fit your place, and to create Healthy Corner Stores that work for your community.

When we say ***corner store***, we mean a small food store that you might call a convenience store, a country store, a tienda, a bodega, or a mini-mart. When we say ***Healthy Corner Store***, we mean a corner store that has made a commitment to add healthy food options to their shelves. This matters because in food deserts these corner stores are often the only walkable or convenient source of groceries, but mostly they don't sell healthy food. If corner stores can be converted, people that struggle to put healthy meals together will have more options. Usually corner stores are independently owned and relatively small, though sometimes a chain store like a dollar store can be an important place to combat food deserts as a Healthy Corner Store, especially in rural areas where food stores of any size may be few and far between.

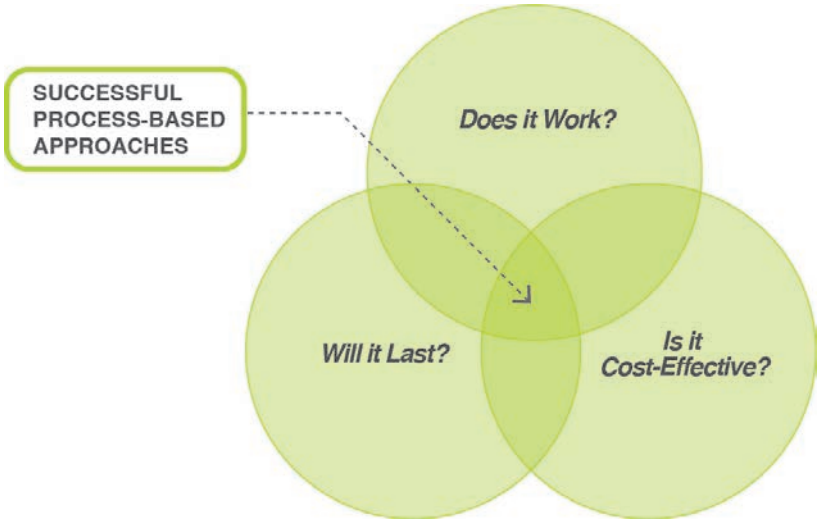
This guide and toolkit is designed to build lasting food system change in communities through ***strong social networks*** and the ***small business success*** of Healthy Corner Stores. By creating social networks around each Healthy Corner Store you can put in place the supporting elements for long-term success. Our tools are meant to give store owners new perspectives and skills for running their business, and the program will bring new customers and attention to their stores. Healthy Corner Store programs introduce healthy food options to food deserts, already exist in many shapes and sizes, and bring effective solutions for rural and urban areas.

Our approach was created out of a pilot study in Region 5 of the Community Transformation Grant. Working in Caswell, Chatham, Durham, Guilford, and Person counties, we studied corner stores work to date in those counties and helped implement new store connections. We introduced draft versions of our tools to test how they were received and how they worked. We worked in concert with a graphic designer who created program logos and marketing materials. This guide and toolkit is the result of our 6-month study, during which we realized that Healthy Corner Stores are not created through a one-size-fits-all recipe.

The major conclusion of our pilot study was that a ***process-based approach*** would be important for work in such a diverse area as Region 5. Because each community is different, we needed an approach with flexibility to build relationships around common values and bring lasting impact, not only short-term food access outcomes. This kind of approach puts great value in the process of making new connections, learning about communities, and discovering unexpected assets. We realized that an emphasis on process would give Healthy Corner Store programs lasting impact through new social networks and profitable small businesses.

build lasting change through a process-based approach

A process-based approach relies, of course, on your ability to manage a process. This guide and toolkit will support you in managing it. Our program instructions walk you through a four-to-six month outline, explaining why each step matters, and how your own experience and local conditions should be incorporated. We don't expect you to be an expert at anything, but do hope that you allow your own expertise to become an asset to the project. You'll bring listening skills and creativity in building local connections, because that's where lasting impact starts.



In this process-based approach, successful outcomes will be measured in three overlapping areas:

Does it Work? What are the primary metrics of success? Are essential indicators like food access and healthy food behaviors changed? Are project partners realizing their mission?

Will it Last? We must set the conditions for long-term viability: community buy-in, empowered and enthusiastic store owners, and most importantly a small business that can keep its doors open.

Is it Cost-Effective? With stretched budgets, any public health and community initiative must compete on a bottom-line basis against other proposals. New partnerships, resource alignment, and strategic incentives are encouraged throughout our guide.

key recommendations

Learning from our 5-County pilot study, we arrived at a set of key recommendations that support our process-based approach:

develop community partnerships

Partnerships allow greater project capacity by sharing resources, building social capital, and aligning multiple efforts.

build relationships around common goals

Focusing on shared interests keeps partners engaged and motivated to stay involved.

identify a project manager

Establishing a single project manager also helps keep internal communication lines clear, and reduces the risk of 'too many cooks in the kitchen.'

choose indicators of interest

At the start of your program define the terms of success, so that you can begin tracking them before making interventions.

see store owners as project champions

Don't underestimate the effect a store owner can have on the project's success.

keep changes simple and gradual

Start small and check in frequently. Learn as you go, adjust your approach as necessary.

store conversions aren't guaranteed

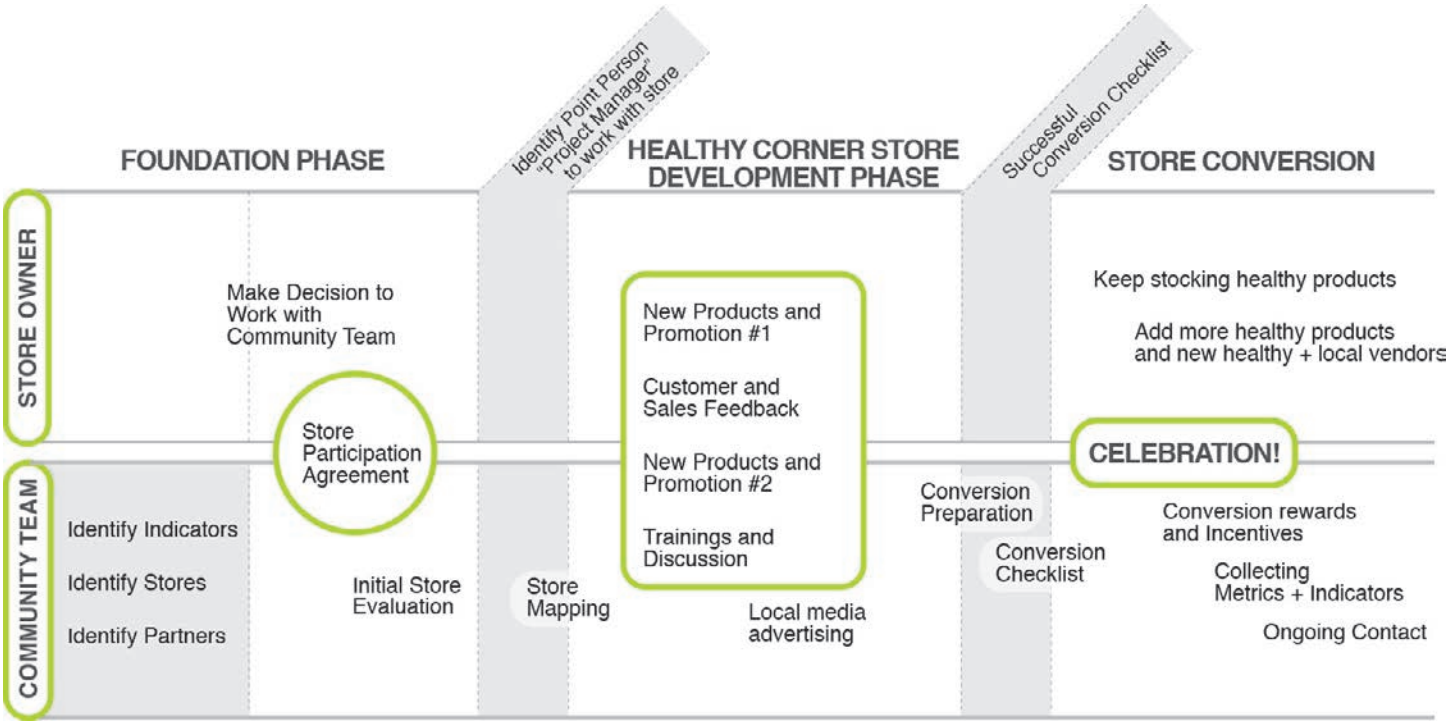
Not every store will fit the Healthy Corner Store framework; realistic expectations, honest communication, and clear program goals will keep you from forcing a store to be something it's not.

Throughout our program instruction, we point out particular opportunities to focus on your own process development. We suggest how and why you might foster familiarity and trust, and what kinds of communication styles help create common goals. We explain why frequent, short visits are effective, especially working with store owners who may only have short bits of time to talk. We use an image of healthy low-fat cheese to identify these points.

Through our pilot study, we have observed positive connections between Healthy Corner Stores and local food producers and distributors. While the major goal of Healthy Corner Stores is to provide healthy food access where little exists, other benefits come from linking local farmers or small food producers to Healthy Corner Stores. Locally-grown food is often fresher and more nutritious, and small farmers may be more willing to deliver small amounts of produce. Local connections can help build a sense of community, and in some cases the local food community can actually become an important project partner around a Healthy Corner Store. We see the inclusion of local food as a bonus to any Healthy Corner Store program, and encourage incentives or ideas that include local food. Partners that can bring more information or expertise on local food connections are NC Cooperative Extension, the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, and your local food council.

We also feel that youth organizations and youth inclusion can be important to include. Youth bring energy, community connections, and often a new perspective to Healthy Corner Store work. If youth can be involved in the planning or implementation stages, there is the potential to achieve impactful projects that bring about positive educational outcomes. Organizations like Youth Empowered Solutions, 4H and other high school clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and youth groups at faith-based organizations are good places to connect with as a first step.

timeline and healthy product goals



*The **Community Team** is made up of all the partners involved in creating Healthy Corner Stores, including you!*

Healthy Food and Beverage Categories:
fruits and vegetables
dairy
whole grain
protein
beverages

see "healthy food and beverage categories" tool for more description

new products and promotion #1

4 new healthy items

Store Owner: Add two new items in fruit and vegetable category, and two new items in other categories

Community Team: Place new signs and help with product placement

new products and promotion #2

2 new healthy items

Store Owner: Add two new items in one additional category

Community Team: Place new signs, help with product placement, place local advertising

total: 6 new healthy items

program instructions

These instructions are a step-by-step guide to implementing a Healthy Corner Stores program. They are written to foster flexibility, new local partnerships, and a process-based approach built on your assets and expertise. As with our entire tookit, the instructions are detailed to allow you to first understand the big picture and then interpret and customize if need be.

TOOLS

The apple indicates what tools in our toolkit will support work in that step.

PROCESS

The green circle calls out opportunities to build good communication and strong relationships, and points out ways to focus on the process of building Healthy Corner Stores.

A: foundation phase

Estimate 6 to 10 hours per store per week of staff time during this phase.

Estimated time: 1 to 2 months

1. Identify your capacity to run the project. Before reaching out to stores it is very important to know if you can support an effective program with staff and budget. Be realistic, but also be creative!

Time commitments can come from you or your partners. The following estimates are a good starting point, though time will vary based on your partners, store owners, and your target outcomes. Estimated hours per week per store: 4 to 6 during the Healthy Store Development phase, and 2 to 4 for the three months following a Store Conversion. After that each experience will be different, but you'll have the experience to determine what it should be.
Budget should include, at minimum, store promotional materials like signs and banners. It can also be useful to purchase new shelf fixtures and cold storage displays, local media advertising, and financial and marketing consulting time. However, there are no fixed requirements for the actual contributions you should make. Every store and every program is different. While you should make a budget for contributions, you can be flexible with your own planning and let the store experience guide decisions.

TOOLS

CTG Healthy Corner Store Indicators

Metrics and Data Collecting Worksheet

2. Identify your indicators. There are lots of ways to measure the success of a Healthy Corner Store program. Choose metrics that align with your strategic goals for the project, and that you know how to measure. Depending on project partners and store capability, you may be able to pass measurement tasks to other people, so make sure your metrics are easy to gather!

TOOLS

Store Recruitment Criteria Worksheet

Healthy Corner Store Flyer

Store Owner Letter

3A. Identify Stores. There's no magic answer for finding stores to work with. Sometimes they are obvious and sometimes a deeper effort is called for.

Start by identifying your particular communities of need, using maps or prior assessments to focus in on food deserts or areas of health and income disparities. Geographic Information Systems, GIS, can be a big help in finding local stores, but Google map searches and some street reconnaissance can work too. When you've found stores in your target areas, reach out to them or visit to get a feel for the owner's willingness to participate, and to give you an early sense of the store's recruitment potential. To introduce yourself to a potential store you can send a letter or if you are comfortable, drop by the store to start a conversation or leave marketing material. We recommend dropping by because you can learn a lot by seeing a store in person and talking directly to the owner or manager!

Use the talking points on the Healthy Corner Stores flyer as a start, but be sure to include your own expertise and goals as you share the objectives of the project.

Owner willingness to participate is the greatest determinant of success, but not every store owner will be interested. Don't overexert yourself on trying to persuade uninterested owners to join in. We've found that there are enthusiastic owners out there, so keep looking.

Try to start this stage at the same time that you identify partners. The local knowledge of partners can steer you directly to good candidate stores, or to stores already beginning the conversation.

Use any opportunity you can to talk with people at the store, listening and learning about the store and its community. Think about this store identification as the opening in a lasting relationship, not as a sales job.

TOOLS

Healthy Corner Store Flyer

3B. Identify Partners. Strong community partnerships will help build trust, increase available resources, and ensure lasting impact. Think creatively about organizations that share your goals for healthy communities, and engage them in dialogue about Healthy Corner Stores. Partners can be found through word-of-mouth, brainstorming, or directed outreach. Look for faith communities, school and youth organizations, food assistance organizations, or almost any kind of community organization or neighborhood group. Your goal is to include at least one partner organization in the Healthy Corner Stores program (at least one at each store), and to work creatively with them to find ways for them to contribute to the overall effort.

To strengthen the project, partners can bring resources, contribute labor, help identify stores, connect with potential store customers, and add marketing capacity.

Start partner conversations with the information on the Healthy Corner Stores flyer, but prepare yourself by learning about each potential partner ahead of time. You can steer the conversation into their mission areas, asking lots of questions, to find out where your goals and their goals overlap. This is how partnerships start: by indentifying shared objectives!

TOOLS

Store Owner Participation Agreement

Timeline to Conversion

4. Store Agreement. Once you've identified a store owner, get an agreement in place. This is really important! You will already have built trust in the project and a shared set of goals, but this will let you verify everyone's expectations and obligations. It may be a simple step, or may require more dialogue to create comfort. Depending on your needs, your desire for more or less formality, and your agency's potential requirement of oversight and review, you can modify the agreement tool to fit your situation. Use the timeline as a resource in talking about everyone's role and expected duration of the project.

5. Identify a Point Person. A single primary point of contact ensures clear communication, less chance for missed signals, and more accountability. Get this in place before starting Healthy Corner Store development phase.

Make it easy for the store owner and your partners to be part of a winning team! Build consistency and transparency into the communications in your Healthy Corner Store Program. This is great for creating trust, positive expectations, and enlisting everyone's best efforts.

TOOLS

Corner Store Food Assessment Tool (also consider FROST and NEMS tools)

Store Owner Interview

Customer Survey

6. Initial Store Evaluation. You have already decided on indicators and metrics to collect. Now that you are working with a store it's time to make your baseline evaluation. Make sure you assess your target indicators, but don't be limited by that at this stage. Gather as much data as you reasonably can - lots of photos, interviews, surveys, store sales records for previous months, and anything else that you can collect. Think especially about the conditions you hope to affect, and gather data on the conditions before you start. If the store owner is open to a customer survey, perform one at this time.

B: healthy corner store development phase

Estimate 4 to 6 hours per store per week of staff time during this phase.

Estimated time: 3 to 4 months

1. Store Asset Analysis. Visit the store and create a list of promotional and merchandizing opportunities. You will later use this as a starting point for discussing changes with the owner. Map out areas of food display, and locate room temperature shelving and cold storage. Are the shelves and cases full, or is there room to add new products? Where could Healthy Corner Store promotional material go? Are there current healthy offerings? How are they located and identified or promoted? Are there unused display fixtures? What is the lighting like, and are there windows? (natural lighting is great for merchandise display) Is there space near the cash register for healthy product display? What are outdoor spaces like - are there opportunities for marketing material, seasonal produce displays, or even small gardens?

Store walk-through's are great ways to allow an owner to share their ideas and vision for what the store could be. You will be amazed at how often their ideas fall right in step with yours!

TOOLS

Healthy Food and Beverage Categories

Marketing Menu

2. New Products and Promotion #1. Work with the store owner to add two new items in the fruit and vegetable category, and two new items in other categories, ***adding four new items total.*** Discuss healthy food categories with owner, and help select new products that will fit into the store and that customers will be interested in (rely on owner's suggestions or customer survey results).

Order Signs, Place Promotional Material. Work with owner to select new promotional materials, that you (or partner) will provide. Order signs with plenty of lead time, usually at least a week. As new items are stocked, deliver and help install first pieces of promotional signage inside the store, and a banner on the outside.

3. Merchandizing #1. Work with owner on multiple visits to look at and talk about merchandizing strategy. Are fresh products being stored for maximum shelf life? Are healthy products easily visible? Are displays attractive?

TOOLS

See additional resources for "Sell Healthy Guide" by Food Trust

Use weekly visits to build rapport and dependability. Ask owner about sales and their own observations to find areas of concern, and to let owner know that the store's viability is important to you.

4. Roll-out Period, Customer Feedback. Allow 1 to 2 months for first new healthy products to be integrated into store stocking and marketing patterns. Has the owner re-ordered? Are the signs in effective places? How are customers responding? You will learn a lot in this period. Pay attention and remember that this is about finding a model that works for the store. If things aren't working as well as expected, think creatively about ways to shift gears or bring more energy and attention to the effort.

Don't forget that each store will be different, and in the end some stores won't be successful. Be persistent but also realistic. If you are able to discover things at this stage that suggest a poor fit, work with the owner to figure out what's going on.

TOOLS

Healthy Food and Beverage Categories

Marketing Menu

5. New Products and Promotion #2. When the roll-out and feedback are going well, add two new healthy products in a new category, for a total of 6 new items so far. Order and add more in-store signs, thinking specifically about small product signs that attach to shelves.

6. Local Media Advertising. Work with your resources and your partners to place press releases and purchase local radio and newspaper ads. This could happen earlier, but it can be valuable to wait until the first kinks are worked out.

TOOLS

See additional resources for "Sell Healthy Guide" by Food Trust

7. Topic Trainings and Discussion. Use our toolkit as well as the Food Trust's "Sell Healthy Guide" as material for short conversations on topics important for that store. Called "trainings," these two-way conversations allow for the sharing of useful information that can really make a difference in the program's success, and for you to gather feedback from the owner on the topic.

Weekly visits are really important to keep the momentum going, but it can be hard to keep dropping by with nothing to talk about or report. These trainings are an excellent way to make a visit productive!

8. Training Consultations. If you have access to funding, set up individual or group trainings with expert consultants on topics like small business finances and lending, marketing, and merchandizing. These are great incentives and a great way to get high-level information to stores, building the success of these businesses and their long-term community impact.

C: store conversion

Estimate 2 to 4 hours per store per week of staff time for 3 months, and tapering down after that based on situation and needs.

1. Conversion Preparation. Use the Conversion Checklist as a discussion tool with your store owner to help identify areas that could be addressed, and to reinforce the idea that the store owner's enthusiasm for the Healthy Corner Store is the most important piece of its success. This is also the time to discuss equipment and fixture purchases that you can make that will be most valuable to the store.

TOOLS

Store Conversion Checklist

2. Conversion Checklist. Work through the Conversion Checklist to verify whether the store has made it to becoming a Healthy Corner Store. Remember, store conversions are not guaranteed, and not all stores, even in areas of high need, are good fits for the program. If you selected stores well and allowed the store development process to weed out stores with difficulty in the project, you will likely have most stores pass their conversion check. If a store comes close but doesn't pass, reflect honestly on the reasons why, discuss what happened with the store owner, and decide if you'd like to try again once certain points are addressed.

TOOLS

Store Equipment Menu

3. Conversion Rewards, Incentives. Based on your earlier conversations with the store owner, now is the time to invest in equipment or fixtures for the store. Other incentives can include facilitation and assistance in seeking local appearance or facade grants, connecting with service organizations to renovate parts of the store, or any other creative connecting of resources around the store's needs. In many cases the partner organizations have resources to add to the mix, and store conversion can be a good time to include them in adding more value to the store.

TOOLS

Metrics and Data Collecting Worksheet

4. Collecting Metrics. Make sure that you take the time to collect data on the metrics and indicators that you decided upon at the beginning of the project, and that you measured before the store made any changes.

5. Celebration! Now is the time for you and your partners to throw a party! Invite local officials, local press, and community members. Help bring attention to the store, and celebrate the store owner's commitment to community health.

TOOLS

Metrics and Data Collecting Worksheet

6. Ongoing Contact. Healthy Corner Stores can be fragile, even if everyone has the best intentions. Your visit frequency can slow down, but don't drop off the face of the earth. Start to drop by every two weeks, then less. Ask how things are going, and what the next new healthy products will be.

You have not only helped create a Healthy Corner Store, but also a new part of a community food system. Keep your eyes out for new ways to connect to the store, and make sure you keep learning from the store owner and their customers. The more you can bring attention to the Healthy Corner Store, the better return everyone involved will get on their investment of time, resources, and the faith that they can create a better food system for everyone.

7. Conversion is Just the Beginning! Now you're ready to take it to the next level. Follow your own leads and think big!

let's build healthy communities, healthy stores, and healthy people!
let's all eat good, and feel good!

implementer toolkit

We have designed these tools to be used by the program implementer. Some of these tools are for in-house tracking and decision-making, some are for field use, and some are designed to help you market and promote your program. Thank you to the NC CTG program, especially to Regions 1, 4, and 10 for valuable guidance and models.

The Program Instructions provide suggestions on how and when each tool will support your Healthy Corner Store work. See the Additional Resources section at the end of this guide for more tool suggestions.

healthy corner store flyer

CTG healthy corner store indicators

metrics and data collection worksheet

store recruitment criteria worksheet

store owner letter

store owner participation agreement

corner store food assessment tool

store owner interview

customer survey

healthy food and beverage categories

marketing menu

store conversion checklist

store equipment menu

EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD

healthy foods, healthy stores, healthy communities

We'd like to increase the number of corner stores that offer and promote healthy food and beverage options. Stocking healthy items can increase store revenue and attract new customers. Access to healthy food can also improve health and build strong communities.

HEALTHY FOODS CAN YIELD HIGH PROFIT MARGINS

STRONG AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

CUSTOMERS ARE STARTING TO DEMAND HEALTHIER FOOD OPTIONS

WHY DO HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS MATTER IN CORNER STORES?

Neighborhood corner stores provide a convenient location for community members to shop for groceries. Many families want to buy healthy foods, but these items may be hard to find. Corner stores are often located near schools, parks and other community gathering places, making them a frequent stop for youth and families. The products available at these stores have been shown to greatly influence the eating habit of their customers. Youth who learn to make healthy food and beverage choices at an early age have a greater chance of becoming strong and healthy adults.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Store Owners

You know your customers best; ask them about their interest in healthy food options. Talk to your vendors about healthy product options you may not know about. Your health department contact can help you identify healthy choices. Start conversations with community leaders and community groups like churches, schools, and clubs, to build strong relationships with the people that want your store to be a successful part of the community.

Customers

Stores respond to customer demand; they put the food you want on the shelf. Talk with your local store owner, neighbors or other community groups about what healthy food options are possible and how to get them in your corner stores. Whether it's a neighbor, a family member, or store owner, talking to each other is a great place to start for improving the community where you live.

Community Partners

Get to know and support your local neighborhood corner stores. Ask store owners about resources they might need to help them offer and promote healthy food options. Contact your local health department for resources and expertise around healthy food options and ideas for collaborating with store owners, other partners, and customers to bring those healthy food options to your neighborhood corner store.

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

Store owners, community groups and customers are already talking about how to get healthy food options on the shelves of their corner stores, but they still need your help.
For more information, contact:_____

CTG healthy corner store indicators

Use the list below as a starting point to choose indicators that align with your strategic goals for the project, and that you know how to measure. Discuss indicators and outcomes with your partners, and use the Metrics and Data Collection Worksheet to record your decisions.

North Carolina Healthy Corner Stores: Potential Indicators of Success
(Note: this document was prepared by NC Community Transformation Grant (CTG) Project Staff, May 2014)

Indicator	Outcome Area	Previous Users	Source
# of stores meeting guidelines (guidelines measure availability of healthy food)	healthy food access	NC CTG Project (most CTG awardees are using # of stores)	Correspondence with CTG awardees
Sales of fresh produce to WIC participants	healthy food access; economic	Healthy Corner Store Initiative Produce Distribution System (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy – MN)	Center TRT
# of jobs created/retained in economically distresses areas in PA (Note: this project was aimed at supermarkets **not corner stores**)	economic	Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (The Food Trust in partnership with The Reinvestment Fund and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition)	Center TRT
Shoppers' fruit and vegetable consumption	health behavior	Baltimore Healthy Stores and Massachusetts CTG Project	Center TRT and correspondence with CTG awardee (Bonnie Andrews; bonnie.andrews@state.ma.us)
Shoppers' knowledge of nutrition; intentions to change diet	psycho-social	Baltimore Healthy Stores	Center TRT
Shoppers' reasons for visiting store; whether they'd like to see more healthy items in store	healthy food access	MARC	Correspondence with CTG awardee (Donna Martin; dmartin@MARC.ORG)
Owners' knowledge about handling/marketing produce/healthy food	psycho-social	Baltimore Healthy Stores and Minneapolis CTG Project	Center TRT and correspondence with CTG awardee (Melissa Tibbits; mtibbits@unmc.edu)
Procurement and sales of healthy foods	healthy food access; economic	Minneapolis CTG Project and Douglas County (Nebraska) CTG Project	Correspondence with CTG awardee (Melissa Tibbits; mtibbits@unmc.edu)

CTG healthy corner store indicators

Indicator	Outcome Area	Previous Users	Source
Shoppers' awareness of healthful menu options at corner stores	psycho-social	Massachusetts CTG Project	Correspondence with CTG awardee (Bonnie Andrews; bonnie.andrews@state.ma.us)
Citizens' self-reported height and weight	health	Massachusetts CTG Project	Correspondence with CTG awardee (Bonnie Andrews; bonnie.andrews@state.ma.us)
*Store Return on Investment		Get Fresh! Initiative (Richmond, VA)	Correspondence with CDC Nutr-PA-Obesity Listserv (Abigail Johnson; abigail.johnson@vdh.virginia.gov)
Shoppers' purchases; frequency of using corner store	healthy food access; health behavior; economic	Douglas County (Nebraska) CTG Project	Correspondence with CTG awardee (Melissa Tibbits; mtibbits@unmc.edu)

*Store Return on Investment calculated by:[([quantity delivered - quantity bought back] * retail price) – new store investment]*100

metrics and data collecting worksheet

Use this worksheet to develop and record your plan for measuring indicators and outcomes in your Healthy Corner Stores Program. Print out our pdf version for immediate use, or customize the Microsoft Word document to fit your needs.

Making a plan is important, and knowing when you'll need to allot time for evaluation will help build the plan and keep partners on board with it.

Key Indicator	Proposed Evaluation Tool	Measurement Dates, Milestones

corner store recruitment criteria worksheet

Once you've identified a store in target project areas, the next step is to visit the store to get a feel for the owner's willingness to participate in a Healthy Corner Store Program, and to give you an early sense of the store's recruitment potential. The following criteria can help guide you in selecting corner stores for participation. The criteria are based on existing information about county demographics and geography, resource feasibility, and county assets and capacity. Feel free to consider additional criteria that align with your project objectives.

Is the store located in a high need area? (Determined by mapping food deserts, identifying if it accepts WIC/SNAP, talking with community members, etc)

Is the store independently owned?

Is the store owner excited to participate?

Is the store located within a community where there are potential partners who can help facilitate and sustain the store conversion?

Is the store owner willing to implement the project independently and take responsibility for maintaining changes (with assistance by partners during initial phases)?

Spend some time observing the store layout. Draw the store layout including aisles, shelving, entrance, register, refrigeration, etc. Indicate "F" for fruit and "V" for vegetable if it is sold. Also draw space that could be used for food processing (look for areas with a sink, counter space) and/or community gathering (look for space where people could gather for playing bingo or chairs and tables to gather while eating).

HEALTHY CORNER STORES

ORGANIZATION
Name
Address
City, State, zip

Dear Store Owner,

We are excited to share a potential business opportunity with you!
The Healthy Corner Store Program, a collaborative project facilitated by the [insert partner name(s)], is working to increase community access to healthy, affordable foods through neighborhood corner stores. We are seeking stores, such as yours, to participate in this community-supported project.

We believe that your store is in a location that serves a population that could benefit from this project and we hope that you will consider working with us. This type of program has seen success in not only improving people's access to healthy foods, but also ***increasing the sales revenue*** for neighborhood corner stores like yours. Fresh and healthy food often yields higher profit margins.

The initial phase of the Healthy Corner Store Program will include working with you and your employees to gain a thorough understanding of your store and your customers, products you offer, and ways to enhance and promote the sale of healthy products. After this initial process, we will work with you and your suppliers to help increase market sales and expand your customer base through selling and promoting healthy food items such as fresh produce. We are able to provide signage, marketing and promotional material, and technical assistance. With continued, lasting participation, additional supplies and store enhancement items may be offered.

If you are interested or want to learn more, call [insert name].

Phone: _____

Email: _____

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

[Name, Position] [Department or Organization]

HEALTHY CORNER STORES

Store Owner Participation Agreement

Effective [insert date], this document outlines the Healthy Corner Store Program agreement between [insert store name] and [insert name(s) of partner(s)]. This agreement applies to a period of development, implementation and evaluation of a Healthy Corner Store Program. Together, these parties agree to the following goals of the Healthy Corner Store Program:

1. Increase the availability of and access to healthy food and beverages in [insert locality i.e. county, municipality] by providing and promoting healthy food and beverage products in [insert store name], and

2. Work together to ensure that the introduction and promotion of healthy products result in long-lasting, positive impacts to the store's business

Per this agreement, to achieve the goals listed above:

[insert store name] agrees to:

- Work with community partners to assess current store environment and product options, including photos taken inside and outside of corner store
- Participate in store owner interview to gather information about the status of the store and its product inventory
- Allow survey of customers to gather information about what healthy products are desired
- Introduce and promote at least 6 new healthy products
- If possible, track sales of new healthy products to determine the desirability of products
- If possible, participate in minimal training to effectively source, maintain and merchandize new healthy products
- Inform store staff of the Healthy Corner Store Program and encourage their participation
- Manage display of promotional materials, including but not limited to healthy product labels, price tags and indoor and outdoor signage
- Allow community partners to share successes and challenges of the Healthy Corner Store Program with other parties interested in the development and implementation of a successful Healthy Corner Store Program

[insert name(s) of partner(s)] agree(s) to:

- Provide tools necessary to assess, implement, and evaluate the Healthy Corner

Store Program

- Provide frequent contact with store owner throughout project phases, including but not limited to phone calls and visits to the store
- Provide guidance for identifying and sourcing healthy products
- Provide training resources for maintaining and merchandizing healthy products
- Provide product identification and promotional materials, including but not limited to healthy product banners, labels, and indoor and outdoor signage
- Coordinate and provide media advertising
- If store is ready for a conversion, provide equipment to help display and promote healthy products

As the store owner of [insert store name], I support the Healthy Corner Store Program agreements listed above.

Sign Name: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

As the representative of [insert name(s) of community or partner organization(s)], I support the Healthy Corner Store Program agreements listed above.

Sign Name: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

corner store food environment assessment tool

After you've identified your project indicators, you need to create a baseline for the metrics you'll use to evaluate the Healthy Corner Store Program. Initially, think about the conditions you hope to affect and gather as much data as you reasonably can on the conditions before you start. Use this food environment assessment tool as a starting place, but feel free to expand the initial store assessment to include photos, interviews, surveys, store sales records for previous months, and anything else that you can collect. (Note: this tool was modeled after a tool provided by NC CTG Region 4)

Date: _____ **Evaluator Name:**_____ **Store Name:** _____

Store Owner Name:_____ **Store Address:** _____

Owner Contact Information: (Phone) _____ **(Email)** _____

Descriptive Data Section Questions	Availability	Comments
Have photos been taken of the store interior, exterior, and windows?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
What are the store hours of operation?	Sun:_____ Mon:_____ Tue:_____ Wed:_____ Thur:_____ Fri:_____ Sat:_____	Open 24/7 ☐
How many cash registers are in the store?	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ >3 ☐	
Is there adequate parking available for customers?	YES ☐ NO ☐	Off Street Parking/Street Parking
Are there handicap parking spots available?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Does the store have a ramp and/or curb cut for handicap accessibility?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Are there public transit options near by? (bus, shuttle etc.)	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Does the store accept SNAP/EBT and/or WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program)?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Does the store have a kitchen or deli space *with a grill*?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Does the store have cooler space for food items?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Are there any in-store healthy eating advertisements/promotion?	YES ☐ NO ☐	

corner store food environment assessment tool

Store Product Inventory Questions	Availability	Comments
Fresh vegetables?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Frozen or canned vegetables?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Fresh fruit?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Frozen, canned or dried fruit?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Low-fat (1%) or fat-free dairy products?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
100% whole grain or whole wheat products?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Lean protein? (beef, chicken, fish, eggs, beans)	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Healthier snack options (baked chips, oatmeal)?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Free access to dispensed water?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Bottled water?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Flavored water (no added sugars or artificial sweeteners)?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
100% fruit or vegetable juices?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Other unsweetened beverages (tea)?	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Other:	YES ☐ NO ☐	
Other:	YES ☐ NO ☐	

Fresh Vegetables Available	Quality *Indicate 1, 2, or 3 (3 = More than 50% acceptable; 2 = About 50% acceptable; 1 = Less than 50% acceptable)	Price * Indicate dollar amount *and* Per lb./each	Is the produce visible from the store entrance? *Indicate Yes or No	Comments *Including how the product is packaged and displayed
Example: Tomato	3	$0.50 each	Yes	Not Packaged, in basket
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Fresh Fruits Available	Quality *Indicate 1, 2, or 3 (3 = More than 50% acceptable; 2 = About 50% acceptable; 1 = Less than 50% acceptable)	Price * Indicate dollar amount *and* Per lb./each	Is the produce visible from the store entrance? *Indicate Yes or No	Comments *Including how the product is packaged and displayed
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				

store owner interview

Use this tool to guide you in having a conversation with the store owner. Record as much information as you can – especially the unexpected. If you have particular questions specific to this store or to the goals of your project, feel free to add them. Keep in mind that the store owner's time is probably limited; be sure to thank them for any time that they are able to provide. While we recommend that you complete the entire Store Owner Interview, this tool can be shortened based on time availability and which questions you feel are most relevant to your project; consider dividing the interview into two parts if necessary. (Note: this tool was modeled after tools provided by NC CTG Regions 1 & 10)

Suggested conversation length: 15 minutes

Store Name and Address:

Store Owner:

Store Hours:

Interview Date:

Interviewer(s):

Best times to visit the store/store owner:

Set the tone. Suggested introduction to beginning a conversation:

"We recognize that you care about your community as much as we do, and we recognize stores like yours could enhance your community even more by providing better access to healthier items for people living nearby."

Store Background Questions

1. When did the store first open?

store owner interview

2. How long have you owned the store/worked here?

3. Do you own other stores in the area?

4. How many hours per week do you work here?

5. Do you communicate regularly with other corner store owners?

Getting to know your Customers

6. What is the approximate number of customers that the store serves per day?

7. How many customers are regular? Do you know many of them by name?

8. Tell me about your customers.
    a. When customers purchase things, are they “grocery shopping” and stocking up on food, or are they just buying a few items?

    b. Have customers ever asked you to carry certain food or beverage products? If yes, which products?

    c. Who/what type of customers shop at the store most frequently? (seniors, youth, passing traffic, etc)

    d. Do many customers live in the neighborhood?

    e. How do customers get to the store? (walk, bike, drive, public transportation, etc)

Food Stamps (EBT) & WIC Sales

9. Do you accept Food Stamps?
    a. (If yes) Could you tell me more about that? What played a role in your decision to accept food stamps? What is the percentage of customers who use food stamps?

    b. (If no) What issues have factored into the decision NOT to accept food stamps? What barriers do you face? Have you considered accepting food stamps? Why or why not? (What would you need to accept them?)

10. Do you accept WIC?

a. (If yes) Could you tell me more about that? What played a role in your decision to accept WIC? What is the percentage of customers who use WIC?

b. (If no) What issues have factored into the decision NOT to accept WIC? What barriers do you face? Have you considered accepting WIC? Why or why not? (What would you need to accept WIC?)

Product Offerings & Inventory Systems

11. How do you decide what items are stocked, how much of that item is stocked, and how often is it restocked?

12. Who decides on product placement or promotion within the store?

13. What items do you sell most of? (general categories: candy, chips, fruit, meat, beverages, etc)

14. What items do you sell least of? (general categories: candy, chips, fruit, meat, beverages, etc)

15. How many different vendors/distributers do you work with to stock food and beverages? Who are they? Do you buy items yourself from larger retail stores like Wal-Mart to sell in your store?

Healthy Products

16. Tell me examples of what you consider to be “healthy” products. (For this interview, we define healthy food items as: water, whole wheat bread, low-fat dairy (1% or less), baked chips, fresh/canned/frozen fruits or vegetables)

17. Do you currently sell healthy items? If not, what makes it difficult to sell healthy items? (Listen for: Goes bad quickly, cost, storage space, low customer demand)

    a. Are people buying healthy items? (Why not? Does it go bad? Do you have to throw out some inventory?)

    b. Who buys these healthy items?

    c. How long have you sold these items?

d. Why did you decide to sell healthy items? Did customers ask for it?

18. Do you sell fresh produce?
    a. (If yes) How do you supply the store with fresh produce? Who is your vendor(s)?

    b. (If no) Do you know if your vendors/distributors offer healthy products that you don't currently carry?

Role of Store in the Community

19. Do you have/distribute/post advertisements for your store? Flyers? Newspaper ads?

20. What would people living in the neighboring community say about your store? (Listen for: "I see/meet my friends there; it's the only place in the neighborhood; that's where I buy my groceries; it's safe/unsafe because of shoplifting, drugs, violence; etc")

21. Do you have any ideas to increase the availability, visibility and affordability of fresh produce and healthy food and beverages in your stores?

22. Would you be willing to partner with us for introducing more healthy food options in your store?
    a. (If yes) To help us figure out what a good partnership might look like: Where do you see your store in one year? How can we help you meet these goals? What are some immediate needs of your store? What time do you have to work with us? When is the best time to talk?

    b. To stock healthier foods especially fresh produce, you might need a refrigeration system. If you currently have a refrigeration system, could you tell me about that?

23. Is there anything else you would like to share?

customer survey

Use this tool to guide you in having a conversation with customers. Record as much information as you can – especially the unexpected. If you have particular questions specific to this store or to the goals of your project, feel free to add them. We encourage you to be mindful of the customers' time; be sure to thank them for any time that they are able to provide. While we recommend that you complete the entire Customer Survey, this tool can be shortened based on time availability and which questions you feel are most relevant to your project. (Note: this tool was modeled after tools provided by NC CTG Regions 1 & 10)

Suggested conversation length: 15 minutes

Store Name and Address:

Interview Date:

Interviewer(s):

Set the tone. Suggested introduction to beginning a conversation:

"Stores respond to customer demand; they stock what you want. Our conversation can help inform the store owner about what customers like you really want. After this conversation, I encourage you to talk with your local store owner, church, or other community group about what healthy food options are possible and how to get them in your corner stores. Whether it's a neighbor, a family member, or store owner, a single conversation can be the first step in positive change for you and your community."

Customer Background Questions

1. Your age
2. Gender
3. Total number of household members (including children)

4. Your race/ethnicity (select all that apply):
    a. White or Caucasian
    b. Black or African American
    c. American Indian or Alaskan Native
    d. Asian
    e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    f. Hispanic or Latino
    g. Other, please specify:

5. Do you or anyone that you know who also shops here receive any of the following? (Select all that apply)
    a. WIC
    b. Food Stamps/SNAP

6. Which of the following have you or anyone in your household visited in the past six months to buy food? (Select all that apply)
    a. Grocery store/supermarket/ wholesaler (Food Lion, Wal-Mart, etc.)
    b. Corner store/convenience store (with or without gas stations)
    c. Drug Store (CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, etc.)
    d. Dollar Store (Dollar General, Family Dollar, etc.)
    e. Farmer's market
    f. Community or private garden
    g. Food pantry
    h. Church/community center
    i. Other, please specify:

7. Of the places you mentioned above, where do you most frequently get food?

8. Think about the store in which you shop most often (your answer to number 7) and select the reasons why you shop there. (Select all that apply)
    a. It is close to where you live
    b. It is close to where you work
    c. It is on your way to work/home/etc.
    d. You meet your friends there
    e. It has good prices
    f. It has good quality
    g. It has good service/You know the owner
    h. It is clean
    i. It has credit available
    j. It has a good selection of items
    k. It accepts WIC or Food Stamps

l. You know the layout of the store
m. Other:

9. About how often do you shop for food at corner stores or stores similar to the one we are in today?
    a. Never
    b. A few times a year
    c. Once a month
    d. Once every two weeks
    e. One to two times a week
    f. More than five times a week

10. About how far do you live from this store (in minutes)?

11. How do you usually get to this store? (Select all that apply)
    a. Walk
    b. Bike
    c. Your own car or car owned by a household member
    d. Car of a friend/relative not in your household
    e. Bus
    f. Taxi
    g. Other:

Customer Purchasing Habits

12. What items do you usually buy from this store?

13. What items would you like the store to sell that it doesn't sell now?

14. What would it take for you to buy more of your groceries at this store? (Select all that apply)
    a. I already buy most of my groceries here
    b. Finding a more convenient way to get to the store
    c. Better prices
    d. Better quality
    e. Better customer service
    f. Better safety
    g. It needs to be cleaner
    h. It needs to have a wider selection of items
    i. It needs to accept WIC or Foods Stamps
    j. Other:

15. Over the past 24 hours, how many servings of fruit did you eat? (A serving of fruit is like a medium sized apple or half a cup of fresh fruit.)

16. Over the past 24 hours, how many servings of vegetables did you eat? (A serving of vegetables is like one cup of green salad or half a cup of cooked vegetables.)

17. The main reasons why I don't eat more fruits and vegetables are (Select all that apply)
    a. I like to eat other foods more
    b. Fruits and vegetables are too expensive
    c. I don't know where to get them
    d. I don't know how to prepare them
    e. I don't have time to prepare them
    f. They are of poor quality at the stores where I do most of my shopping
    g. Other:

18. The type of fruits or vegetables you usually buy is:
    a. Frozen
    b. Canned
    c. Dried
    d. I don't usually buy these

19. Why do you buy that type?
    a. Tastes better
    b. It's cheaper
    c. It's healthier
    d. It's the only option available where I shop
    e. Other:

20. If this store sold more fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits or vegetables, how likely would you be to buy fruits or vegetables here at this store?
    a. Likely
    b. Unlikely

21. Are there any specific fruits or vegetables that you would be likely to buy from this store if they were sold here?

22. The type of beverages you usually buy are:
    a. Soda (specify regular or diet)
    b. Milk (specify whole, 2%, 1%, skim)
    c. Water

d. Juice (specify if it is 100%)
e. Other: (energy drinks, coffee, tea, alcohol)

23. Why do you buy that type of beverage? (Select all that apply)
    a. Tastes better
    b. It's cheaper
    c. It's healthier
    d. It's the only option available where I shop
    e. Other:

24. Are there any specific beverages that you would be likely to buy from this store if they were sold here?

25. If this store sold more whole grains like whole wheat bread, pasta or tortillas, how likely would you be to buy these products here?
    a. Likely
    b. Unlikely

26. If this store sold more lean protein like beans, eggs, or lean cuts of meat, how likely would you be to buy these products here?
    a. Likely
    b. Unlikely

healthy food and beverage categories

The Timeline for Healthy Store Conversion refers to categories of healthy foods that are described below. Health educators can help store owners choose new healthy foods or beverages for the store based on customer interest, availability, profit margins, and ability to stock particular items and keep them fresh.

Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables are preferred.
If fresh fruits and vegetables are difficult for store to stock, then canned, frozen or dried fruits meeting the following criteria may be counted as healthy: canned fruit packed in its own juice or water with no added sugar; low sodium or no added salt canned vegetables; frozen or dried fruits and vegetables with no salt or sugar added.

Dairy

Low-fat (1%) or fat-free dairy products (yogurt, unsweetened milk, and non-processed cheese products).

Whole Grain

100% Whole grain or whole wheat products (bread, pasta, brown rice, cereal and tortillas).

Protein

Lean cuts of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dried beans, peas, and soybean products. Preference will be towards products with no added sodium or preservatives.

Beverages

Water, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, unsweetened tea, flavored waters (no added sugars or artificial sweeteners), and/or free access to dispensed water.

Local Food Bonus

Locally grown food tends to be fresher and more nutritious, and small farmers may be more willing to deliver small amounts of produce to a small store. In building your Healthy Corner store program, keep in mind the many benefits that come from linking local food to Healthy Corner Stores, and be creative in sourcing local foods. One way to imagine local food is food sourced from the state of North Carolina or within 100 miles of the store (if outside North Carolina), and labeled with the source farm or producer.

marketing materials menu

Use the examples on these pages to help select signage and marketing materials to use in your Healthy Corner Stores Program, and to place in your participating stores. The following are marketing and promotional materials created for participating counties that can be inspiration for your own.

logos

varying sizes

marketing materials menu



banners
varying sizes

sign
24" x 36"

window decal
3" x 8"

HEALTHY CORNER STORES TOOLKIT

EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD
healthy food, healthy stores, healthy communities

marketing materials menu

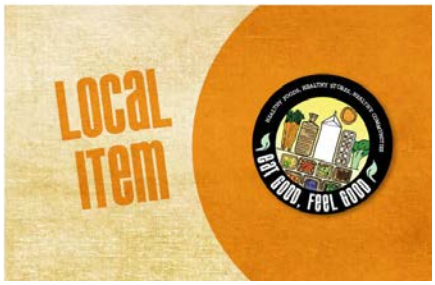
letterhead

top of 8.5” x 11” page

HEALTHY FOODS, HEALTHY STORES, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

shelf tags

1.5” x 2.25”



flyer

8.5” x 11”

EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD

healthy foods, healthy stores, healthy communities

We’d like to increase the number of corner stores that offer and promote healthy food and beverage options. Stocking healthy items can increase store revenue and attract new customers. Access to healthy food can also improve health and build strong communities.

HEALTHY FOODS CAN YIELD HIGH PROFIT MARGINS

STRONG AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

CUSTOMERS ARE STARTING TO DEMAND HEALTHIER FOOD OPTIONS

WHY DO HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS MATTER IN CORNER STORES?

Neighborhood corner stores provide a convenient location for community members to shop for groceries. Many families want to buy healthy foods, but these items may be hard to find. Corner stores are often located near schools, parks and other community gathering places, making them a frequent stop for youth and families. The products available at these stores have been shown to greatly influence the eating habit of their customers. Youth who learn to make healthy food and beverage choices at an early age have a greater chance of becoming strong and healthy adults.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Store Owners	Customers	Community Partners
You know your customers best; ask them about their interest in healthy food options. Talk to your vendors about healthy product options you may not know about. Your health department contact can help you identify healthy choices. Start conversations with community leaders and community groups like churches, schools, and clubs, to build strong relationships with the people that want your store to be a successful part of the community.	Stores respond to customer demand; they put the food you want on the shelf. Talk with your local store owner, neighbors or other community groups about what healthy food options are possible and how to get them in your corner stores. Whether it’s a neighbor, a family member, or store owner, talking to each other is a great place to start for improving the community where you live.	Get to know and support your local neighborhood corner stores. Ask store owners about resources they might need to help them offer and promote healthy food options. Contact your local health department for resources and expertise around healthy food options and ideas for collaborating with store owners, other partners, and customers to bring those healthy food options to your neighborhood corner store.

WHAT’S THE NEXT STEP?

Store owners, community groups and customers are already talking about how to get healthy food options on the shelves of their corner stores, but they still need your help.
For more information, contact:_____

EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD
healthy food, healthy stores, healthy communities

HEALTHY CORNER STORES TOOLKIT

EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD
healthy food, healthy stores, healthy communities

corner store conversion checklist

Use this tool as a checklist to determine a store's conversion potential. The criteria below can guide you in determining a store's eligibility for a conversion and ability to sustain the conversion. Stores with high ratings are ready to undergo and sustain a store conversion. Stores with lower rankings can improve their rankings if they make significant healthy changes and demonstrate a commitment to the Healthy Corner Store Program. (Note: this tool was modeled after a tool provided by Philadelphia's Healthy Corner Store Initiative)

Guide to Store Rankings Total
13-16 = Ready for conversion/Able to sustain conversion
10-13 = Not ready for conversion but with changes could be
< 10 = Not ready for conversion

Store Conversion Potential Checklist	Yes/ No	Notes	Store Owners' Feedback and Challenges
Store Location and Customer Frequency			
Is the store located at a busy intersection or near public transportation?			
Is the store near other businesses, schools, or other public buildings?			
Is the store busy? Does there seem to be a lot of foot traffic?			
Store Maintenance and Feel			
Does the store appear to be clean and well maintained (even if equipment, windows, etc. are old)?			
Is the inventory organized and well stocked?			
Is the store staff active and working or seem to be just hanging out?			

corner store conversion checklist

Does the store give you a positive feeling or impression? Would you be willing to shop there?			
Store Inventory and Promotion			
Is the store selling a minimum of 6 new healthy products?			
Are healthy products displayed in an accessible and attractive way?			
Has healthy product marketing or promotional material been maintained in a visible and effective way?			
Owner's Knowledge and Attitude			
Do the owner and/or staff positively engage their customers?			
Does the owner express an interest in providing healthier options for the community?			
Does the owner believe that selling healthy products will be successful?			
Does the owner show enthusiasm for the Healthy Corner Store program?			
Has the owner been an interested and involved participant in the Healthy Corner Store Program?			
Does the owner seem to have a good understanding of basic business management capabilities?			
Store Rankings Total	Total # of "Yes"		

store equipment menu

On this page are ideas for new equipment and store fixtures that can be introduced to support Healthy Corner Stores Program. Use in conjunction with the Marketing Materials Menu to create attractive and effective displays. The equipment included here are only starting points - feel free to explore other options. Don't overlook used equipment! If a local grocery store upgrades, you can sometimes find lightly used and very inexpensive options.

	Product	Price + Source
	**Five Tier Bakers Rack** with Locking Wheels and Adjustable Shelves with Top Sign Holder Coils and Side Panel Sign Inserts 22 1⁄4” x 44 3⁄4” x 13 3⁄4”	$66 http://www.storefixture.com/
	**Countertop Woven Basket** Comes in Plastic w/ Metal Base 25” x 17” x 13”	$31 http://www.storefixture.com/
	**Wood Basket Display - Nine Baskets** 38 1⁄2” x 44” x 11 1⁄4”	$107 http://www.storefixture.com/
	**Produce Scale** Easy Weigh PX-Series Digital Scale Weight Capacity 6 lb - 60 lb	$150 http://www.scalesgalore.com/
	**Refrigerated Glass Door Merchandiser** True GDM-10-LD Black, 10 Cu. Ft. 25 7/8” x 25 1/2” x 53 1/2”	$750 http://www.webstaurantstore.com/

store toolkit

The following pages contain tools meant to be shared with participating store owners. They can be left at the store as guides and as tools to help steer discussion when you visit.

See the Additional Resources section, at the end of this guide, for other tools that can support your work in stores.

Of particular value is the *Sell Healthy Guide* by the Food Trust, listed in Additional Resources. This is an excellent resource designed to be shared. We recommend downloading a copy and using it to frame conversations with your store owners,

healthy corner store flyer

healthy food and beverage categories

timeline to conversion

nutrition education resource

EAT GOOD, FEEL GOOD

healthy foods, healthy stores, healthy communities

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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Store Owners

You know your customers best; ask them about their interest in healthy food options. Talk to your vendors about healthy product options you may not know about. Your health department contact can help you identify healthy choices. Start conversations with community leaders and community groups like churches, schools, and clubs, to build strong relationships with the people that want your store to be a successful part of the community.

Customers

Stores respond to customer demand; they put the food you want on the shelf. Talk with your local store owner, neighbors or other community groups about what healthy food options are possible and how to get them in your corner stores. Whether it's a neighbor, a family member, or store owner, talking to each other is a great place to start for improving the community where you live.

Community Partners

Get to know and support your local neighborhood corner stores. Ask store owners about resources they might need to help them offer and promote healthy food options. Contact your local health department for resources and expertise around healthy food options and ideas for collaborating with store owners, other partners, and customers to bring those healthy food options to your neighborhood corner store.

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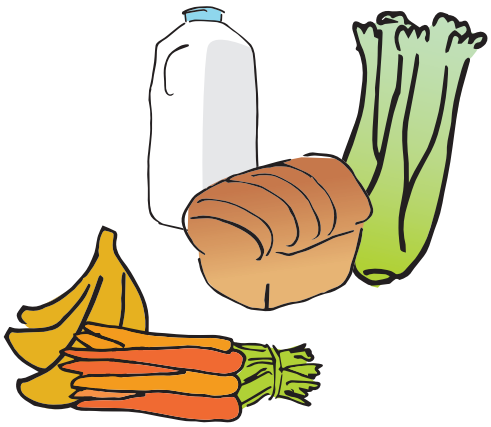

Fruits and Vegetables

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Dairy

Low-fat (1%) or fat-free dairy products (yogurt, unsweetened milk, and non-processed cheese products).

Whole Grain

100% Whole grain or whole wheat products (bread, pasta, brown rice, cereal and tortillas).

Protein

Lean cuts of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dried beans, peas, and soybean products. Preference will be towards products with no added sodium or preservatives.

Beverages

Water, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, unsweetened tea, flavored waters (no added sugars or artificial sweeteners), and/or free access to dispensed water.

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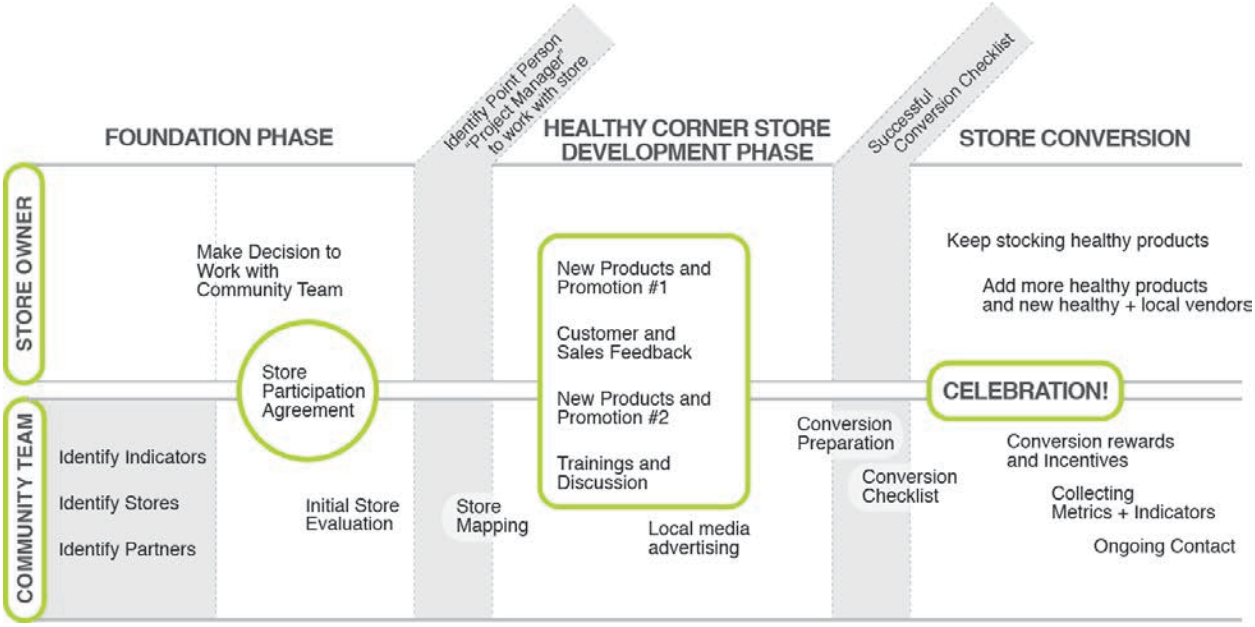
timeline to conversion

The following timeline is a suggested sequence designed to gather partners with a store owner to create a Healthy Corner Store. Details on the individual steps may vary based on the local needs and resources. The length of time to achieve the sequence will also vary, but we estimate a 6 month process if the community team can dedicate regular time to the effort.



New Products and Promotion #1

Store Owner: Add two new items in fruit and vegetable category, and two new items in other categories: **4 items total**
Community Team: Place new signs and help with product placement

New Products and Promotion #2

Store Owner: Add two new items in one additional category: **6 items total**
Community Team: Place new signs, help with product placement, place local advertising

Section 1: Nutritional Objective

What is “healthy food”?

There is no set definition for what a “healthy food” is, but health professionals agree that traits of healthy food include being fresh or minimally processed and naturally dense in nutrients. These foods are typically low in fat, particularly saturated fat; low in added salt and sugars and high in dietary fiber.

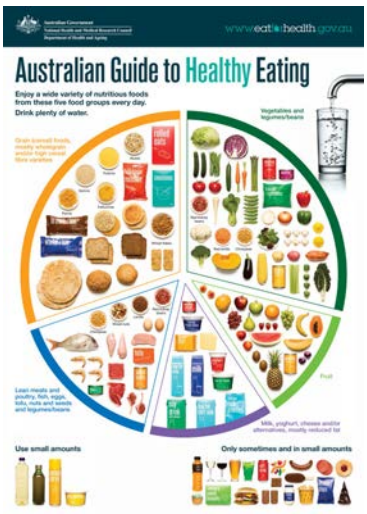
Some examples of healthy options you may want to bring to your corner store include:

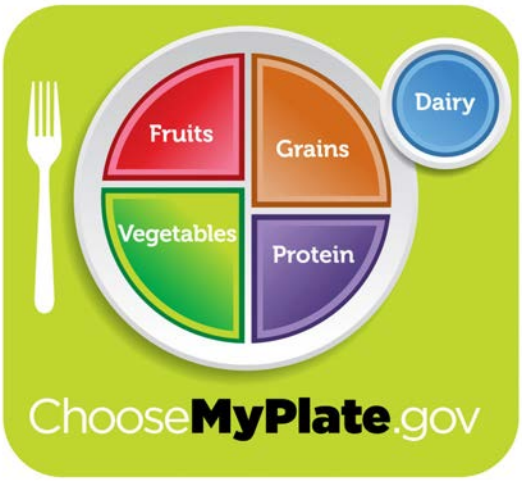
- Fresh fruits and/or vegetables
- Low fat milk, yogurts, cheeses
- Whole wheat breads, bagels, and/or pastas
- 100% fruit juices
- Dried fruits and nuts
- No sugar added or low sugar cereals

How do I eat healthy?

Bodies need many things to function properly including complex carbohydrates, vitamins, fats, fibers, minerals, and proteins. To meet the nutrient requirements essential for good health, you need to eat a variety of food from each of the five food groups daily.

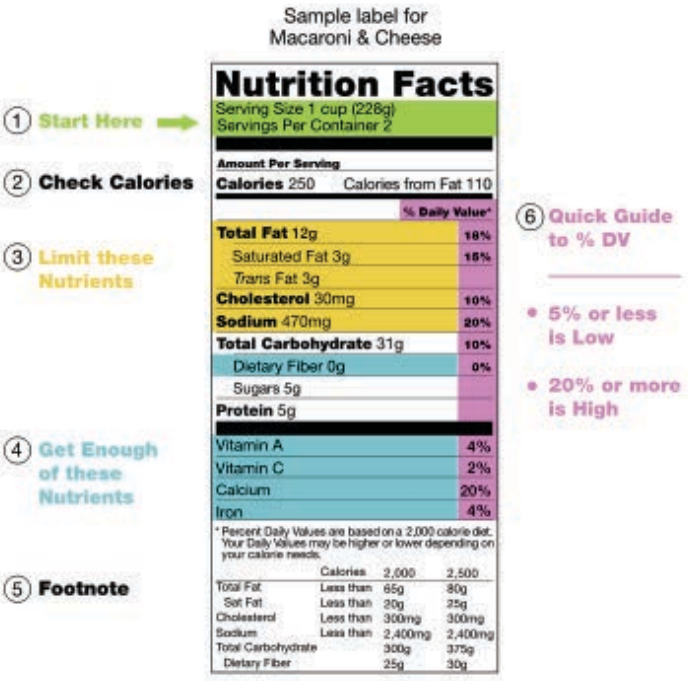
The USDA highlights five food groups as the building blocks for healthy diets: Fruits, Vegetables, Dairy, Grain, and Protein. Foods are broken into food groups based on the key nutrients they provide. For example, foods that belong to the dairy food group such as milk, yogurt, and cheese include calcium and protein.





Selecting Healthy Food: How to Read the Nutritional Label

One tool for selecting healthy food is the nutritional label. Below is the FDAs guide to how to use the current nutritional labels.



1. Start here
Begin your review of nutritional information at the top of the label. The important information from this section is what makes up a serving size and number of serving per container.

2. Check Calories
A calorie is a measurement of energy consumed by a particle food. One gram of carbohydrates and proteins yield 4 calories, while one gram of fat yields 9 calories. The calories labeled in this section correlate with one serving of food. Calories from fat are also called out in this section. The FDA defines low/moderate/high calorie foods as:

40 calories = low
100 calories = moderate
400 calories = high

3. Limit these
Watch out! The nutrients in this section, total fat, sodium and cholesterol should be consumed in smaller quantities. The ideal amount of these nutrients listed in the % daily value should be less than 10%. Eating foods high in fats, saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol and sodium is possible to increase the risk of some diseases, like coronary disease, high blood pressure and some kinds of cancers.

4. Get enough of these
Nutrients listed in this section have a variety of health benefits including reducing osteoporosis, heart disease and lowering cholesterol levels. The ideal amount of these nutrients listed in the % daily value should be more than 10%.

5. Footnote:
This section calls out the % daily value recommended based on a 2,000 calorie/day diet.

6. Percentage of Daily Value
These are the percent of a nutrient that is provided by a serving of the food you are choosing based on a 2,000 calorie/day diet. Values less than 5 % are considered low and values greater than 15 % are considered high.

Section 2: Choosing from the Food Groups

Fruit

Best: Fresh
OK: Canned or frozen in light syrup
Skip: Canned or frozen in heavy syrup

Tips: Majority of intake should come from whole fruit, not juice. Most affordable, nutritious (high in vitamin C, fiber, folate and potassium) options are: banana, prunes, raisins.

Vegetables

Best: Fresh
OK: Canned or frozen in light syrup; canned or frozen with less than 290 mg of sodium
Skip: Canned or frozen in heavy syrup; canned or frozen with more than 290 mg of sodium

Tips: Majority of intake should come from whole vegetable, not juice. Eating from a spectrum of color helps you get a variety of nutrients. Include dark greens (broccoli, collards, romaine lettuce, mustard greens and parsley) and red/orange (carrots and tomato juice)

Dairy

Best: Non-fat, skim, 1% low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese
OK: Whole milk/sugar added milk, yogurt or cheese
Skip: High-fat cream, butter, ice cream, cream cheese

Tips: Milk - most economical and healthy buys are low-fat and nonfat dry milk. Cheese - most economical and healthy buys are cottage cheese, queso fresco and ricotta.

Grain

Best: Whole grains listed as first ingredient in pasta, rice, bread and flour
OK: Refined Grains with whole grains listed as an ingredient, but not the first
Skip: White or Refined Grains with whole grains not listed as an ingredient

Tips: Puffed corn and toasted oats are inexpensive and whole grain breakfast options. Barley is quick cooking whole grain that is relatively inexpensive and can substitute for rice.

Protein

Best: No Sodium added; Dry beans, nut, seeds, tofu, and lean low-fat fish, poultry, eggs, beef, and pork
OK: Low-sodium canned beans with less than 290 mg of sodium; Non-lean meat such as steak, ground beef, and poultry with skin
Skip: High-sodium canned beans with more than 290 mg of sodium; Processed meats with high sodium and high fat such as bacon, deli meat, and sausage.

Tips: Beans - black beans, black-eyed peas chickpeas, lentils, pinto and red kidney beans are all good sources of protein and fiber. Nuts & Seeds - walnuts are a great source of heart healthy omega-3 fats. Meat - turkey is a lower cost meat that typically fits into the best and OK categories below.

Section 3: Cooking with Your Healthy Food

Example Recipes

Quick Hummus and Vegetable Stuffed Pita

Ingredients

1 whole wheat pita bread, halved
1/2 cup hummus
1/3 cup lightly packed shredded lettuce or baby spinach
1/2 cup assorted raw vegetables such as halved cherry tomatoes, shredded carrots, sliced cucumbers or avocados

Slice assortment of raw vegetables. Spread half of the hummus inside each half of pita then fill with lettuce and vegetables and serve.

Serves 2.

Spicy Chicken Quesadillas

Ingredients:

1 cup chopped skinless, boneless rotisserie chicken breast
1/3 cup refrigerated fresh salsa
1/4 cup canned no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup frozen whole-kernel corn, thawed
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped pickled jalapeño pepper
8 (6-inch) flour tortillas
1 cup shredded reduced-fat Monterey Jack cheese
Cooking spray
1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream

Combine first 5 ingredients in a bowl. Divide mixture over 4 tortillas. Sprinkle with cheese. Top with remaining 4 tortillas. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add 1 quesadilla to pan; cook 1 minute on each side or until golden. Repeat with remaining quesadillas. Serve with sour cream.
Serves 4.

Resources

Additional Recipes
- http://www.cookinglight.com
- http://www.eatingwell.com
- http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/recipes
- http://hr.umich.edu/mhealthy/programs/nutrition/recipes.html

Additional Healthy Tips
- http://www.letsmove.gov
- http://www.choosemyplate.gov

additional resources

There are many excellent examples of Healthy Corner Stores projects across the country. We include a sample here:

Healthy Corner Stores Network
www.healthycornerstores.org

Sell Healthy Guide, The Food Trust
http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/phcsn-sell-healthy-guide.original.pdf

The Food Trust
http://thefoodtrust.org

Philadelphia Healthy Corner Store Network, Food Fit Philly
http://foodfitphilly.org/

Minneapolis Healthy Corner Store Program
www.minneapolismn.gov

Market Makeovers
www.marketmakeovers.org

D.C. Healthy Corner Store Program, D.C. Hunger Solutions
www.dchunger.org

MountainWise, NC CTG Region 1
http://mountainwise.org/

Local Strides, NC CTG Region 10
www.localstrides.com

Local and state resources can help you source local food and connect with community organizations. Here are organizations and suggestions that can support your local explorations.

Local Food Systems Resources, North Carolina Cooperative Extension
http://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu

North Carolina Alliance for Health
www.ncallianceforhealth.org

Eat Smart Move More NC
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
www.carolinafarmstewards.org

North Carolina Farm Fresh Program
www.ncfarmfresh.com

Local Harvest
www.localharvest.org